

As on the morning of the second day Guffar had not arrived with the ponies, we loaded the yaks with our baggage, and started to rejoin the caravan. When within a few miles of Kiziljy (or Camp 25) I met the ex-Beg of the district, his tent being close to my route. He invited me to enter, apologising for not having given me a suitable reception, and expressing the hope that I was not annoyed at the absence of formality, which, he assured me, was due solely to his desire to avoid the appearance of asking for my intercession with the Chinese for his reinstatement in office. I made out that the reason of his dismissal had been the permission he had granted to the Kanjuts to occupy and cultivate the land at Azgar. This invitation was connected, though only remotely, with the Kanjut question, but to decline it would have been offensive, and entering his tent I seated myself on a numnah in front of a small fire which gave his abode a cosy look. He produced excellent chapatties fried in butter; but the tea, which had been stewing for a long time in a dirty-looking copper vessel, called a "chagan," was stronger than I could swallow. The weather happened to be uncommonly warm, the shade temperature at 2 p.m. being 28° F., and on this ground I begged to be excused the drinking of the hot tea. My host's wife and daughters, one of whom was quite pretty, were not at all discomposed by my presence, but continued their domestic duties while listening to the conversation. Then old friends from Zad came in and gave me interesting information concerning the country and the routes. I detailed my recent experiences, and had the consolation of listening to vehement denunciations of the Tajiks, who were roundly described as liars and the offspring of liars. One of the company informed me that he had travelled three times along the easy route which, from Mariong to Serai (or Camp 136), was only a three days' journey, practicable