

weather and the long days set in, the people migrate with all their herds to the pastures in the neighbourhood of the Yarkand-Leh trade route. There the yaks are hired by the Indian traders for the transport of goods along the difficult portions of the route; the Kirghiz are paid mostly in kind, and when the season for traffic ends they return to their valley with supplies for the winter.

One night at Zad was sufficient for taking the requisite observations, and on the following morning I set out for Tir, where I intended to have my headquarters for several days. Marching down the Kulan Urgi valley, I met the Beg of Zad, and with him the men who had preceded me over the Mamakul Pass to Raskam. They told me that the route had been known to only one of their party, and that they had found the utmost difficulty in taking their ponies up the glacier at the head of the Pil valley. Their yaks had become so tired and footsore that they had to be taken to a patch of grass in the Kulan Urgi valley and left to rest. The men would never willingly take that route again.

As I approached Tir, the Yuz Bashi of which had been beaten on account of the trouble he had caused me a year before, I could not help considering whether the reception awaiting me would be favourable or the reverse. When still several miles from the village I saw a large number of people coming towards me, and on meeting them I found that their purpose was to welcome me. Among them was the ex-Yuz Bashi, who showed no animosity, but, on the contrary, expressed his pleasure at my return, and promised to accompany me on my excursions to the Kuramut and Sandal Passes, where I meant to test the statements of the Asgan Sal villagers as to the merits of the respective routes.

From Issok Bulok Agzi I had sent a man to examine the ice on the Yarkand River and ascertain whether it was