

One day I had a visit from Pundit Boota Ram, but remembering former dealings with him, I declined to see him. He was not offended, but went away and sent me repeated messages, requesting that I would give him what many Indians love, a letter of recommendation. He came to me again and "with bated breath and whispering humbleness," holding his hands palm to palm, shaking his head, and blinking with his eyes alternately, but never looking me straight in the face, begged me to believe that I was quite mistaken about his character. He denied having entered into any arrangement to my disadvantage, and offered to cash a bill for me at the rate current in Kashgar. Now, however, there was no difficulty in obtaining fair terms; the conspiracy had broken down, and I sold a bill at a rate about one-seventh higher than this man had offered a month before.

As the time drew near for setting out from Yarkand, various annoyances occurred. One man, Kunchuk, a Ladaki, requested his discharge on the ground that, being accustomed to live in a very cold climate, he found the weather so intolerably hot that it would certainly cause his death. The man was a hard worker and exceptionally intelligent, and I was very desirous of retaining his services. I paid no attention to his assurances that the heat would kill him, but tried to find out the true reason of his desire to leave me. In my service he fared much better than he did at home. He was well clothed and fed, receiving daily rations of meat, and he was paid twenty rupees per month; yet he preferred to go back to Ladak to live on suttoo (parched barley, ground) and water. He mentioned as an additional reason for his resolution, his father's circumstances, his age and dependence, but probably his determination was due to dislike of Raju, who made him fag for the other caravan men, and as I could not persuade him to reconsider the matter, I had to let him go.