

side over a succession of difficult snowy passes. But the route that appealed to me perhaps most by its varied geographical and ethnographic interest as well as by its historical associations, was the one followed in 1906 at the start of my second expedition. So I may choose this route as the one on which to conduct the reader to the scenes of my Central-Asian explorations.

This route, ordinarily closed to the European traveller from political considerations, was to take me from the Peshawar district, at the north-western extremity of the Indian administrative border, through the tribal areas of Swat and Dir into the Dard territory of Chitral. Thence the uppermost Oxus valley and the Afghan Pamirs could be gained across the Baroghil saddle. My lamented late chief, Colonel Sir Harold Deane, then Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province, had readily agreed to my project, while an auspicious political constellation had caused the late Amir Habibullah, King of Afghanistan, to grant me permission to cross a portion of his territory, otherwise jealously guarded, with a promptness I had not ventured to hope for.

The end of April, the earliest time for a start northward across the snowy passes, saw my small party duly mobilized. As on all my three expeditions, it included only Indian assistants. The Survey of India Department, from first to last ever ready to help me with my topographical tasks, had once more deputed with me one of its excellent native surveyors, Rai Ram Singh, who had accompanied me on my first journey. Then there was Naik Ram Singh, a corporal of K.G.O. First Bengal Sappers and Miners, who, thanks to sound technical training in his corps, was to prove