

a very capable 'handy man'. Jasvant Singh, a wiry little Rajput from Kangra who has acted as the surveyor's cook on all my journeys, was included in the party (Fig. 11). I wished I had ever myself been able to benefit by the services of an Indian follower so reliable and so gentlemanly in manners. But unfortunately his high caste precluded ministrations in such a capacity to a European, so the position of cook to my own person had to be filled by a Muhammadan Indian, about whose qualities, professional and personal, the less said the better.

I just mention these details, as my modest staff remained much the same on my other expeditions also. Of course, Turki pony and camelmens had to be added after I had reached on Chinese soil the proper field of work and there had to organize my own transport for explorations in the desert. Among those local men, too, I secured a nucleus of faithful followers. Considering all that our equipment had to include in the way of scientific instruments, photographic apparatus and glass plates, and a minimum of indispensable stores likely to last for two and a half years, there was reason to feel satisfaction that fourteen mules at the start sufficed for the whole baggage.

By April 27 we set out from the fort which guards the Malakand pass (Fig. 12) and with it the approach to the great valley of Swat. Since the important military route to Chitral had been first opened in 1895 the Malakand and the valley beyond had been the scene of much hard tribal fighting. It was appropriate ground for the start on a journey which was to take me not only to distant regions, but also far back in the ages. For those first stages led through trans-border valleys which more than twenty-two