

safe passage of my eighty heavy camel loads of antiques to India. But the summer floods in the valleys of the K'un-lun would not allow the valuable convoy to be started at once towards the Kara-koram passes. So R. B. Lal Singh, to whose care I had to entrust it, had set out in the meanwhile for a survey of the high snowy mountains which extend the great range of Muztagh-ata northward to the headwaters of the Kashgar river and join it to the T'ien-shan.

Before he rejoined me for manifold final instructions I could enjoy a week of delightful peace, much needed for many urgent writing tasks, in the seclusion of a small fir-clad alp above the Kirghiz camp of Bostan-arche (Fig. 129). Lower down in the valley my brave camels, those hardy companions in the wastes of the Lop desert and elsewhere, had enjoyed weeks of happy grazing in coolness. When the time came for my start from that alpine retreat I felt the final separation from them almost as much as the temporary one from devoted Lal Singh. Of my remaining Indian assistants I kept by me only young Afrazgul Khan, whom I knew to be ever ready to make himself useful even where no surveying or digging could be done.

With a delightful sense of freedom regained after weeks of toil I sent off on July 19 my last mail-bag, a heavy one, for Kashgar and India from my mountain camp and started for the high Ulugh-art pass and the Pamirs beyond. On the following day we crossed the difficult pass at a height of about 16,600 feet. From the narrow saddle, gained after a very steep ascent, the clouds lifting at intervals revealed a grand view across the broad valley of Moji towards the mighty eastern rampart of the Russian Pamirs. Below the pass there were to be seen the middle and lower reaches of