

which I here transcribe, show that I had not been mistaken in my apprehension.

“It rained and snowed through the whole night, and mist and grey, drizzling rain covered what little I could see of the valley when I got up. There was nothing for it but to sit in the tent and write up notes and letters that were to go down to Tashkurghan to catch the next Dak for India and Europe. Karm Shah Beg came to pay his respects and to sit in happy disregard of time and weather under the little awning in front of my tent, but what I could elicit from him as to the arrangements for my further journey was far from cheerful. It was easy to notice that the want of instructions from the Chinese at Bulunkul was sorely disturbing his peace of mind. In a tone intended to convey a sense of mystery and secret devotion, he assured me that *he* was ready to render any service—if it were not for the distrustful Chinese. To give me yaks and men for my intended visit to the Yambulak Glacier and the slopes of Muztagh was a thing he could do in safety. But to supply animals for a move to Kashgar might bring down upon him the wrath of the Amban. Even to send a few yaks to my last camp at Karasu for the baggage of the Sub-Surveyor, who was to join me, seemed an act of grave risk. The Beg’s faltering excuses gave me a good idea of how well the Chinese manage to keep their roving Kirghiz in hand, but equally little hope of the help I needed for my immediate movements. I accordingly sent the Sarikoli Beg, who had come with me from Tashkurghan, back to Karasu with orders to provide there locally for the transport needed by Ram Singh. At the same time I got Karm Shah Beg to despatch a messenger to Bulunkul who was to show to the Amban the local passport issued to me by his Tashkurghan colleague and to bring back orders for my Kirghiz host.

“In the afternoon the clouds lifted a little and showed the mountain slopes down to a few hundred feet above the level of the valley clad in fresh snow. No encouraging prospect