

trouble had gradually changed this tumbledown mud-built garden house into a residence which in its cosy, well-furnished rooms now offered all the comforts of an English home, and in its spacious out-houses and "compound" all the advantages of an Indian bungalow. Built on the very brink of a high loess bank overlooking the broad bed of the Tümen-Darya, the house and the adjoining terraces command a delightfully open view over the fertile belt of village land and gardens which skirt the city to the north. Even through the light dust haze which is so common a feature of a Turkestan summer day, the picturesque outlines of the low hill-range beyond gave a setting to the scene. On repeated occasions when rain had cleared the atmosphere, I enjoyed distinct views of the great ice-crowned range north and north-east of Muztagh-Ata, and also of distant snowy peaks belonging to the Thian-shan mountains.

After the fatigues and daily "rush" of the preceding two months of rapid marching, it was a delightful change to the well-ordered surroundings of my friends' home. Free for a time from the petty cares of camp life, I could enjoy in their genial company all that makes the contact with European ways of life and thought attractive. Yet I felt as safe as before from the bustle and outside interference which seem so difficult to evade during an ordinary European existence. There was ample reason to feel grateful for the peace and leisure thus assured to me; for I needed them badly for the manifold labours that now claimed my attention.

Foremost among them was the organisation of the fresh caravan which was required for my onward journey, and the explorations in the desert. I realised that my chances of success in covering within the limited period allowed the whole of the wide area I desired to visit, depended largely on the careful selection of the men and animals that were to make up my party. It was essential to limit the baggage with a view to rapidity of movement, and at the same time