

to my old archaeological hunting-grounds around the Taklamakan desert, and thence far away eastwards to within the Great Wall of China. Owing to the kind interest shown by Lord Curzon, then Viceroy of India, and the help of devoted friends able to realize how closely the proposed explorations touched the sphere of India's historical interests, my scheme obtained, in the spring of 1905, the approval of the Indian Government and the Secretary of State. Their favourable decision was facilitated by the Trustees of the British Museum, who agreed to contribute two-fifths of the estimated cost of the expedition, £5000 in all, against a corresponding share in the prospective 'archaeological proceeds,' as official language styled them.

I had originally tried hard for permission to start during the summer of 1905. But my efforts were frustrated by the difficulty of securing that freedom from routine work which I needed for the completion of my scientific Report on the former journey. At last by the 1st of October 1905 I was released from administrative duties. Rarely have I felt such relief as on that day when I could set out from my alpine camp in Kaghan, the northernmost corner of the Frontier Province, to Kashmir. There six months of 'special duty' were to enable me to complete in strict seclusion my scientific Report, and also to make the multifarious preparations indispensable for the fresh explorations before me.

It seemed quite a holiday, and at the same time like an appropriate training, when, by six days' hard marching, largely over mountain tracks which probably never before had seen any laden traffic, I managed to move my camp with its respectable array of book boxes across the high passes above the Kishanganga into Kashmir. It was pleasant, too, to find myself, after an enforced absence of over five years, again in the beloved Alpine land to which many seasons of congenial antiquarian labour had attached me. Yet soon those happy summers seemed as if passed in a previous birth.

Incessant desk-work, more fatiguing to me than any hard marching or digging, kept me imprisoned in my little