

be done during my single day's halt. The advantages of the last telegraph office I was to see for a long time were not to be lightly forsaken; for by its use I could send news and instructions to far-away Europe with a saving of nearly two weeks. It is at the last outposts of Indian civilization that one appreciates most the boon of 'post-registered' telegrams *via* Bombay—and the general cheapness of the Indian telegraph system.

From Mastuj I sent ahead two of the Wakhis from Sarhad to announce my approaching arrival on the Oxus. I myself, still escorted by the attentive Khan Sahib, set out on the morning of May 13th for the journey northward. The Yarkhun Valley, so difficult during the summer months when the melting snows render the route by the river-bed quite impracticable, proved owing to the early season still easy in its nearest portion. A double march that first day brought me past barren rocky slopes, descending from ranges with a crest-line of about 17,000 feet, to the hamlet of Miragram. At Mastuj I had said farewell not only to the glittering pinnacles of Tirich-mir but also to the last Chinars. Yet in the midst of all the rugged waste of rock and detritus the scattered hamlets along the route showed blossoming fruit-trees, with a first crop of spring flowers in their stony little fields.

At Brep I surveyed the remains of an ancient fort, built of large sun-dried bricks on a small hillock of conglomerate rising over the rubble-strewn debouchure of the Brep stream. Local tradition ascribes the structure vaguely to the time of the 'Kalmak' or Chinese domination. Judging by the size and make of the bricks, and the hardness of the potsherds mixed up with them, the trapezoid-shaped fort, measuring 180 by 130 feet, might well go back to some earlier Chinese occupation than that of the middle of the eighteenth century. But how could one hope to recover datable relics at old sites in valleys which until a few years ago knew not the use of coined money, nor could ever have possessed many objects in metal or other hard materials capable of artistic ornamentation? Of the arrow-heads said to have once been found here, I could not secure a specimen.