

Then we had to cross the tossing river, with its water reaching well above the ponies' girths, for a track quite as bad on the left bank. Heavy avalanches here choked the mouths of side gorges. Three times more had we to repeat these crossings in greyish-green water dashing against boulders, until I got thoroughly drenched at the last ford. Then a steep zigzag track led us up a spur overlooking the Shaor stream, where for a short distance we got easier going on the summer route leading down from the Daliz Pass. Soon after the sharp eyes of our Wakhi guides sighted a herd of *Ovis Poli* on a narrow ledge high above the left river-bank opposite, and in the fading light of the evening the old Colonel, keen sportsman as he is, vainly tried a long-range shot at them with his Martini.

Finally we dropped down again to the river, where a sandy reach, covered with stunted trees and brushwood, and known as Baharak, offered a convenient camping-place for the night in the midst of these gloomy defiles. The baggage on hardy Wakhi ponies, though started well ahead and with an adequate number of Sarhad men to watch and help it on, did not struggle through till hours later. But thanks to the cheerful company of Shirin-dil Khan and the hospitable solicitude of his Afghan attendants, who had spread a felt rug on the ground and got tea ready long before mine would bestir themselves even to light a fire, I scarcely noticed the long wait.

It was delightful to listen during these hours of common marching and camping to all this amiable warrior could tell me of the varied experiences of an active lifetime spent among the old-world conditions which political seclusion has helped to preserve in Afghanistan. He had fought through all the troubled times preceding and immediately following Amir Abdurrahman's succession, and had gained the present congenial billet in his beloved Badakhshan after much hard service in far less attractive regions. He had fought against Turkoman rebels and in the rugged mountains of the Hazara. For years he had struggled to maintain order on the barren border of Khost and Mangal against wily Wazir tribes.

I found him not only full of interesting information