

## CHAPTER IX

### FROM SARIKOL TO KASHGAR

THE journey down the Taghdumbash Pamir, on which I started on May 28th from K  k-t  r  k, took me over ground already familiar from 1900, and therefore my account of it may be brief. After a refreshing night's rest at Tigharman-su, where Muhammad Yusuf Beg's clean and comfortable Kirgha might almost have tempted me to forsake my own little tent, we rode down in a long march to the Karaul or watch-station of Bayik. It was pleasant to listen en route to all my host had to tell. Things had fared well with him since our first meeting, and now as the happy owner of a thousand sheep (Fig. 32) and dozens of camels and yaks the jovial Sarikoli was a man of substance fully equal to the dignity of Beg, newly won or rather purchased from the Chinese Amban of Tash-kurghan. With his tall figure, fair hair, and blue eyes, he looked the very embodiment of that *Homo Alpinus* type which prevails in Sarikol. I thought of old Benedict Go  z, the lay Jesuit, who when passing in 1603 from the Upper Oxus to 'Sarcil' or Sarikol, noted in the looks of the scanty inhabitants a resemblance to Flemings.

At Mintaka Karaul, where the route to Hunza branches off southward, I had the good luck to catch the two Dak runners carrying the mails despatched by Mr. Macartney some ten days earlier from Kashgar (Fig. 33). Of course, I did not hesitate to detain 'H.M.'s Mail' for a couple of hours, in order to use this chance of early conveyance to India and Europe for a rapidly-written-up mail-bag of my own. How often did my rather bulky correspondence thereafter add to the burden which these hardy and fleet