

Indian cantonments, whom in Peshawar I had been obliged to fall back upon as a last resource. But his physique was manifestly not equal to the fatigues of such travel, and besides, the occasions had been painfully frequent when he failed to produce digestible food, even of the simplest sort. He persistently ascribed his failure to want of ways and means for the due execution of those culinary rites which orthodox Khansama practice in Indian 'stations' ordains. It was wholly beyond my power to produce such regulation conditions as he claimed; and as the Macartneys were then without a proper cook, and their fully equipped kitchen just the place which he declared that he needed for giving proper scope to his talents, I was glad to leave Nur Khan behind at Kashgar.

The only available substitute was Ramzan, a young Kashmiri, clever but otherwise far from prepossessing, who a few years before had drifted up to Turkestan with a party of Sahibs, and with the versatility of his race had during periods of service with the Swedish missionaries picked up there a practical knowledge of Western cooking sufficient for my needs. My long acquaintance with Kashmiris has, in spite of all my attachment to their land, always made me fight shy of employing any of them for personal service, and I soon realized that Ramzan possessed more than an average share of such racial failings as fickleness, churlish temper, and ingrained habits of dirt. While still at Kashgar, he lost heart more than once at the prospect of dreaded hardships and tried to back out. But there was the encouraging example of my old men, all safely brought back from the Gobi and now eager to take service again, and probably a sneaking hope of cutting the rope whenever he might have had enough of travelling—and a more than liberal pay. In my own mind I was determined to keep him to his contract wherever I might go, and to assure myself through him the food I needed for full fitness. The contract was kept, indeed, to the end, but the worries from the start were greater than I now care to recall.

There had been another applicant for the post in the familiar person of Sadak Akhun, my former Turki cook,