

warrior prophets of Islam, who are such popular figures in Khotan tradition. I wondered whether we should ever learn to which Buddhist shrine this local worship traces its origin. We were here some 7300 feet above sea, and a minimum temperature of thirty-seven degrees Fahrenheit under a perfectly clear sky felt delightfully refreshing. On the same day, August 8th, after marching along the crest of the high Pomaz spur, which gave a grand view of the mountains, we reached Polur, nestling low in the valley.

This large village proved an excellent base of supplies, thanks to the ample arrangements made by Muhammad Yusuf Beg under the orders of the new Keriya Amban, whose help I had taken care to enlist in March. Stores of flour, fodder, etc., were ready to be taken over, as well as a dozen sheep which were to supply us with meat during the long wanderings in the mountains. Extra transport, too, had been collected to help in moving these stores up to the nearest Tibetan plateau; for I knew well the difficulties to be expected on the route immediately above Polur, and was anxious to lighten the task of our Khotan transport as long as possible. My only regret was that the yaks I had hoped to obtain for this auxiliary transport column proved quite unaccustomed to loads, and after careering wildly through the one long village lane had to be exchanged for more donkeys. I found later that, owing to the absence of grazing, yaks would have been of little use.

All these arrangements cost time and labour; and what with abundant accounts, the despatch of a last big mail-bag *via* Khotan, and anthropological measurements among these 'Taghliks,' who interested me by their type so different from the people in the plains, the start could not be effected until the morning of August 12th. The whole of Polur was assembled to see us off; for though this route to Western Tibet had been used about half-a-dozen times by European travellers since the 'Pandits' of the Forsyth Mission first traversed it in 1873, the novelty of such an event had not worn off. But I confess that I was more impressed by the farewell to honest Turdi, the Dak-man, who was to take my mail-bag for the last time back to