

may to the reader seem vague, but there was only one direct route from Yarkand to Tashkurghan, and from that place Islam would easily be able to find my position on the west side of the Khandar Pass. In that region, seldom visited by Europeans, the movements of any British traveller are well known, and the tidings of his advance precede him. In order to avoid delay on my return to Yarkand, I arranged that Raju should remain behind to buy ponies for the summer journey into Tibet, animals suitable for travelling in that country being difficult to find; and I engaged a native of Yarkand, Mohammed Yoo by name, to accompany me as temporary caravan bashi.

On November 3rd I set out, and on reaching Takla, the last large village where supplies could be obtained, I added 700 lbs. of Indian corn and 400 lbs. of flour to my stock. As our march was to be over ground not only new to me, but apparently unknown to others, I had no idea how long the journey would take, and it seemed prudent to lay in as abundant supplies as our sacks could hold and our animals carry.

As I went on, I picked up news of the retribution with which the embezzling Yuz Bashi of Oshbeldu had been visited. Tidings of his misdeeds had reached the ears of the Chow-Kuan of Yarkand, who promptly had the offender whacked and then dismissed from office.

After a monotonous journey I reached Langar on November 8th, and found some difficulty in crossing the river. The temperature was still so high that the water was quite free from ice, and though there was a ford a little above the village, it was so deep that all the animals had to swim across. The Beg of Sarikol, who spends part of the year at Tashkurghan and the remainder at Tung, a few miles from the Yarkand River, kindly sent some of his camels to carry the baggage across. The