

Macartney of my whereabouts, and to set his mind at rest as to the suspected case of plague. At Kosarab, as at smaller villages, there was trouble in making payment for supplies received; not that disputes arose between me and the vendors, but these were so numerous, and the separate contributions were so small, that it would have required a large amount of copper coin to pay them individually. My usual method of procedure was to instruct the caravan bashi to give public notice that I would pay for whatever provisions were supplied, and to tell the Ming Bashi or Yuz Bashi to have the accounts ready. Having compared the quantities received with those stated by the villagers to have been supplied, I paid the Ming (or Yuz) Bashi in the presence of as many of the inhabitants as could crowd round us, and then asked him two or three times whether I had paid him in full for everything. Doubtless squabbles arose as to the amount due to each, and these squabbles were complicated by the sharp practice of the official, who (as at Kosarab) would try to satisfy the villagers with payment at ordinary rates, he having been paid at the high rates expected of British sahibs. This liquidation of accounts, however, was not my business, and only in very exceptional circumstances would I interfere.

The most difficult part of my task was now almost accomplished, only the short stretch of the Yarkand River between Kosarab and the mouth of the Tashkurghan remaining to be surveyed. With a few men and animals we ascended the main valley as far as Sawas, the furthest bivouacking ground to which ponies could be taken. Next morning Ram Singh and I paced up the valley to a point within sight of the country surveyed from the south side of the Tashkurghan River, and we passed a remarkably sharp loop of the Zarafshan River, as the Yarkand is there called. In several places here, as well as further