

rope which had seldom been used before. A short distance below the ford the river narrowed, while the banks there were much higher. At the edge of the rocky bank I erected a pair of shears made of two baulks of timber and some rope of the country; this structure was kept steady by means of guys, and, the stouter rope being passed over it, food and fuel were hauled across to the opposite bank.

When Niaz Akun's men had thus got supplies for the night I went back to my own quarters, turning over in my mind the question of how to get rid of Raju. It was a delicate matter, for if he were formally dismissed he would certainly do his utmost to draw away the men, and new men could not be found at or near Polu. I told Ram Singh, who, in common with all the men except Guffar, cordially disliked him, that, owing to the opposition of the Chinese, I feared I would have to return to Khotan, and Ram Singh, of his own accord, repeated my words to Raju, so that when I consulted him on the same matter and asked about a route to Kiria I wished to explore, he was not taken by surprise. Then I instructed him to go to Kiria where he could borrow enough money to pay his expenses to Yarkand, whither I enjoined him to proceed and forward by the Indian traders' postman to Kashgar a roll of paper which I spoke of as an important map. Fortunately, the balance of pay due to him was very small, as he had obtained a large advance at Yarkand, and I was therefore not required to reduce my small stock of Chinese money. When Raju had set out I told the men they were to obey the orders of Mohammed Joo, and we set about preparations for immediate departure.