

The numerous repairs and additions the camp outfit needed were also among the practical preparations demanding early attention. Saddlery, mule trunks, 'Kiltas,' and most other articles of equipment bore marks of the rough wear to which they had been subjected on the long journey from Kashmir. Ever since we emerged from the gorges of Hunza, yaks and Kirghiz ponies seemed to have vied with each other in doing damage by knocking and rubbing their loads against every rock passed on the mountain tracks. The stay at Kashgar seemed none too long for effecting the needful repairs, for the Turkestan artisan has none of the imitative skill of the average Indian craftsman; and finding it apparently easy to make a living, he takes little trouble to accommodate himself to the requirements of the passing European traveller. In view of such leisurely habits of work and the need of constant supervision, I soon ceased to be surprised at seeing Mr. Macartney's outer courtyard more or less permanently occupied by the few 'Ustads' (masters) who cared to attend to my orders.

The most troublesome operation of all proved to be the preparation of the additional water-tanks which I decided to get made for use in the desert. The pair of galvanised iron tanks which had been specially constructed for me at Calcutta had been safely transported across the mountains. But the total quantity of water which with due regard to the carrying capacity of camels they had been designed to hold, amounted only to seventeen gallons a-piece. The supply of water thus assured would have been, of course, wholly inadequate for the needs of a party such as I proposed to take to sand-buried sites in the desert, and the construction of at least four more tanks proved indispensable. It was found that the only material locally available for this purpose consisted of iron tanks in which kerosene oil is transported into Turkestan from the Transcaspian railway. The adaptation and strengthening of these much-battered "tins," together