

before alluded to; and had I had more time at my disposal, and had the weather been more favourable, I might have done very valuable work. As it was, owing to the antagonism of the elements my diary shows one almost continuous succession of disappointments, most disheartening under the circumstances that it was the beginning of the journey, and that I did not know but that circumstances might prevent any work being done after entering Yárkand territory. Climbing hills at the great elevation we were then at was very hard work, and of course occupied considerably more time and labour than similar ascents at a lower level; and in nine cases out of ten when one did arrive at the top of a high hill, snow and clouds entirely obscured both distant and neighbouring peaks. This cloudy weather combined with the necessity of regulating halts and marches according to the places where supplies had been laid out, soon made it evident that it was useless to attempt a continuation of the triangulation. The length of some of the marches and the shortness of the days made the execution of a careful traverse, as impossible as the triangulation, and after some very hard work, I reluctantly came to the conclusion that nothing could be done by myself (*i.e.*, in addition to astronomical work), but to make what use I could of the plane-table. Even with this but little was done owing to the extremely unfavourable state of the weather; but I fortunately succeeded in fixing my position satisfactorily at two or three places on the road to Sháhídúla, the most northerly point where I did so was at Chíbra, south of the Sugét Pass. Throughout the journey the cold was so intense that even the Bhots* who were with me used, on arrival at the top of a hill, to lie down in hollows or crouch behind stones in order to avoid the bitter blast. Under these circumstances, satisfactory work could not be expected, and although I kept my own health in a wonderful manner, I had the misfortune to knock up more or less nearly every man who accompanied me.

From the 24th September, the day on which we reached Gogra, until the 17th October on arrival at Sugét, I was never at a lower level than 15,500 feet, and during the whole of that period the thermometer seldom rose as high as freezing point (32° F.), whereas at night the minimum would vary from zero to 26° below zero.† From 26th September to 8th October I was never below 16,300 feet, my highest camp being at Dehra Kompás‡ 17,900 feet above the level of the sea.§ Snow was frequently falling throughout the whole of this period, and for three days was the only substitute for water, for both man and beast. Captain Biddulph, who travelled by a more easterly route than Dr. Stoliczka and myself, was living at even a greater elevation.

On the 13th of October Dr. Stoliczka and myself reached Áktágh, where we joined the head-quarters camp. It had originally been arranged that Captain Biddulph, accompanied by a Pundit, was to cross the Kárákorum line of road and explore the country to the west of Áktágh towards Kufelong. Dr. Stoliczka, accompanied by the other Pundit, was to have crossed from the Kárátágh Lake by a new route to the Kárákásh River, but his illness, as well as the weak state to which the camp followers were reduced from lengthened exposure to cold and hard work, made it necessary to alter these arrangements.

I was now directed to go up the Kárákásh River, and endeavour to find the road which was believed to exist between some point up the river and the Kárátágh Lake, and which it was supposed might turn out a good alternative route. I returned from this expedition, the details of which are given in another place, on the 20th October, and left the following day with a party under the orders of Colonel Gordon for Sánjú with instructions to await Sir Douglas Forsyth's arrival at that place.

As Sháhídúla was the first point where we struck the Atálik's dominions and met his people, I briefly give the result of survey operations up to that point.

* *Bhots* are inhabitants of Ladakh.

† *i.e.*, 58° below freezing point.

‡ So called from having been used as a camping ground by a former Survey Officer or Kompas (compass) wala, the native designation for all surveyors.

§ It was the hardships encountered while traversing this elevated region that brought on the illness which subsequently cost Dr Stoliczka his life.