

while on the moustache and beard icicles form, which can only be got rid of by melting before a smoky fire of dung. The work at Tapin Chat was undoubtedly trying, but that at the pass itself, from 16,000 to 17,000 feet in height, was much more so. On Christmas Day, 1897, we began early, and, after measuring a base with the subtense bar, entered on a difficult ascent towards a commanding spot where Changfûnchuk had already erected a pillar. The steep slope was slippery with fresh-fallen snow, and by the time we had reached the pillar and had fixed the theodolite in position, a strong wind had arisen which, with the temperature several degrees below zero, made observations difficult. A sudden gust would impel me against the eye-piece, or blow my coat-tail against the stand of the theodolite, and, unless I used a piece of paper or cardboard to screen my face from the instrument when reading the vernier, my beard or moustache invariably got frozen to the metal. Such matters seem trifling, but attention to them rendered the work slow, while neglect of them retarded it still more. When we had completed these observations, we found it more difficult to descend from this hill station than it had been to reach it. We tried a more direct line, but the slope was too steep. There was serious risk of falling down the mountain-side or of spraining the ankle by treading on the treacherous pieces of shale, and it was necessary to wait till the trusty yaks, managed by one of the sure-footed Kirghiz, had made a series of footholds for our descent.

At the pass there was no fuel to be found. We had brought two sacks of dung and boortza from Tapin Chat, and this sufficed to make hot tea in the morning and to cook our dinner. But the supply we had ordered Mohammed Amin's men to bring did not arrive, and our operations at the pass were therefore shortened. As soon