

me to procure large specimens. The invariable reply was, "If you get the stones, we will cut and polish them according to any model you may show us, but we cannot get stones both large and good."

On May 18th we set out from Khotan towards Polu, where we knew the climate was cooler and the surroundings more pleasant. At the long, straggling oasis of Chaka I remained for ten days. This oasis is close to the Tekelik Tagh range, which, though not in itself of great importance, contains two peaks whose positions have been carefully determined by the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India. I hoped, therefore, to obtain the longitude of Chaka by triangulation, but the season of thick haze had set in, and, for the present, the attempt had to be abandoned. On May 31st, the morning when I left the Chaka oasis, there were two hours of clear atmosphere, and I had an excellent view of the great Kwen Lun mountains, still covered with snow at the higher altitudes.

In this region European visitors were very rare, and as I proceeded from village to village news of my approach went before me. Beggars and Yuz Bashis desired to welcome me, and so often were their demonstrations repeated, with escorts and other display, that such performances became intolerably wearisome, while the coloured eggs, bread, and sweetmeats which I received by the wayside proved costly, as they had to be acknowledged by presents of much greater value. All but the very poorest inhabitants of Sin-Chiang were accustomed to ride, and a sahib who wished to be respected among them required to be well mounted, and attended by a numerous retinue. In short, compliance with the usages of the country became unendurable, and I sought means of escaping unwelcome attention. In the hot weather I set out early in the morning, alone and on foot, so that my day's march was