

This village, about half a mile from the point where the track to Tashkurghan leaves the valley, is called Khurak. The whole of the valley is commonly known as Wacha by the Tajiks, but is called Uchi by those who speak Turki. For a few miles above and below Khurak the valley is mostly cultivated, but trees are wanting, and on the neighbouring mountains there is no vegetation whatever. While daylight lasted the tents were beset by a crowd of villagers eager to get a glimpse of the strangers. Though they talked and gossiped together, their presence caused no inconvenience, but the noise of the barking and fighting dogs which accompanied them was a great nuisance. Finding no ground at Khurak suitable for triangulation purposes, I returned to Gombaz. The two tents with which the villagers supplied us were so old and ragged that, the minimum thermometer which hung close to my head always showed a temperature within 2° F. of that in the open air. These tents, however, had this advantage over mine, that one could light a fire inside them. Abdul Karim and Dass burned boortza and dung on the ground, while I used a small portable stove, which served its purpose well, its only drawback being the shortness of the flue. This defect was remedied by setting two boxes under the stove, from which the upper was separated by a layer of stones and earth. But for this luxury it would have been impossible to write after dark, as the ink rapidly froze when at a distance from the fire. The alternations of temperature by day and night caused annoyance. At night ink and other liquids froze and burst the bottles, and during the day the melting substances streamed out, soiling and damaging whatever they touched. A little experience taught us never to fill bottles, but to leave room for expansion. Apart from this precaution, vulcanite burst as readily as glass.

From the hill station, about 15,140 feet high, almost