

proved most useful as snow-ploughs, and by 1 p.m., after a descent of over two hours, I found myself at K ok-t or ok ("the Blue Boulder," in Turki) on the flat of the Taghdumbash Pamir.

An imposing cavalcade met me as I approached the place where my camp was to be pitched. Munshi Sher Muhammad, the Political Munshi stationed at Tashkurghan under the orders of Mr. Macartney, had come up from his post to greet me; and attracted, no doubt, by his example, the Sarikoli Begs in charge of the several portions of the country above Tashkurghan, also awaited my arrival. Munshi Sher Muhammad, a fine-looking, active man, introduced himself as an old pupil of the Oriental College at Lahore of which I had held charge so long. The arrangements he had made for my journey down to Tashkurghan were all that could be desired and showed his influence with the local authorities as much as his eagerness to help me. It was bitterly cold during this first day on the Taghdumbash as, soon after my arrival, a strong wind sprung up blowing across the valley from the north-east and bringing light snow at intervals. The observation of Captain Deasy, who had encamped at the same spot in 1897, shows that its elevation is close on 14,000 feet.

On the 30th of June the sun shone brightly when I rose, and though the temperature at 6 a.m. was only 37  F. in the shade, it felt pleasant enough as the air was still. The surrounding ridges, all snow-capped, stood out with perfect clearness against the blue sky. The conditions were exceptionally favourable for the survey work which was to be commenced here, and by 8 a.m. the surveyor and myself were on our way to the top of the Khushbel spur which was to serve as a station. This spur descends from the high range on the east of the Kilik Pass towards the valley, and by its detached position offers an extensive view over the upper portion of the Taghdumbash. We were able to ascend close to its top, 16,820 feet above the sea, by means of yaks