

kept about 25° F. Fortunately there was little wind, so I managed to do the photo-theodolite work without much trouble. But I was glad when, after an hour and a half's exposure, I could again warm my benumbed fingers. The aneroids showed a height of 15,300 feet.

By half-past one our work was finished; Ram Singh had been able to verify by good intersections the plane-table work of the last ten days. Once back on the pass our yaks could be used again for the descent northwards into the valley which drains the Iskuram peaks. But an unexpected difficulty retarded the descent. About half a mile from the pass where the track enters a narrow ravine we suddenly came on hard ice below a crust of detritus dust. It was the recent snow that had melted in the few hours of sunshine, and had subsequently got frozen. Even the yaks slid uncomfortably on this treacherous ground, and the slopes below the path were sufficiently steep to make a slip dangerous. The leather mocassins ('Charuk') of my companions here gave safer foothold than my boots with Alpine nails worn flat by previous marches. So I gladly availed myself of their assistance at the worst bits.

Ice and dust—the combination appealed to me as characteristic of this strange and forbidding mountain-land of Khotan. But I felt grateful when, after about an hour's cautious progress, we had got clear of this trying ground. Lower down the ravine somewhat widened, and just as it was getting dark we arrived at the little grazing ground of Chash, which gives its name to the valley. My tent was pitched on a small plot of withered grass; behind it under the shelter of a projecting rock-wall my men established themselves. Close by, huddled under the side of some rock cavities, I found a couple of small felt huts inhabited by Taghlik families who live here summer and winter. They owned only a few sheep, and were said to subsist mainly upon charitable gifts from the shepherds of the Borazan canton who drive their flocks up