

below me in the endless plains. Could it really be that terrible desert where there was no life and no hope of human existence? I knew that I should never see it again in this alluring splendour. Its appearance haunted me as I sat shivering in my tent, busy with a long-delayed mail that was to carry to distant friends my Christmas greetings. At last, about ten o'clock, a cheerful commotion in the camp announced the arrival of Islam Beg and the water-filled gourds he had managed to get brought up. The supply was small, and scarcely sufficed for a cup of tea for each man. Nevertheless Sadak Akhun succeeded in cooking my modest dinner, and after a last look at the magic city below I could retire to rest close upon midnight.

Next day when I rose a little before 7 a.m. the sun was just rising above a lower ridge to the east. He shone brightly into the tent, but light fleecy clouds were floating in the sky. Fortunately the horizon to the south above the mountains was clear, and I lost no time in beginning the work of triangulation on our "hill-station" close by. It was no easy task to select in this vast panorama the peaks that were the best landmarks of the numerous ranges within view and also likely to be recognised again from other positions. But after five hours' steady work twenty-six prominent points were safely triangulated. The light clouds that gathered as the day advanced luckily kept clear of the mountains; but coupled with a breeze from the north-east they made it cold on the exposed height, for which the triangulation results have indicated an elevation of 9,890 feet.

I took a round of photo-theodolite views, and then we set about building a mark to enable us to identify our position with accuracy from the next triangulation station. No stone could be found anywhere. So the men from Pujia had to collect the low withered scrub and heap it up mixed with loose earth. When I descended to the tent I was glad of a cup of tea. But even more delightful it was to get enough