

observations. It was not long before my apprehensions were verified. A strong wind, passing from the plains southward, carried the haze further and further into the mountains; there was no mistaking the dust of the desert that was threatening to overtake our work. Luckily the identification of the peaks to which previously angles had been measured by us, caused no delay, and though it seemed like a race with the veil of dust that was steadily rising, the round of theodolite observations could be carried through with all needful accuracy. The peaks in the outer range of hills nearest to Khotan, by which the longitude of the town itself might be determined thereafter, were first in danger of being wiped from our horizon. But we were still in time; and when the haze, two hours later, had also obscured the view of the distant high ranges above the Kara-kash Valley, all but three out of the twenty-six peaks requiring triangulation had been safely observed. It was with a feeling of relief that I saw this task completed; for I knew how persistent an obstacle the foglike haze of this region can prove to survey operations. Had I delayed but for a single day—and, I confess, there had been strong temptation—the chance of this triangulation might have been lost to us completely. The triangulated height of the ridge was 10,820 feet.

An hour's scramble down the steep slopes brought me again into the ravine, where the ponies were waiting. As there was no water at the camp beyond that which had been brought up from Langhru on donkeys, I had sent word to my people earlier in the day to move back to the village. The ponies which had been left behind for us seemed eager too to get at water, and hurried down the valley at a good pace. But it soon got dark and our progress slackened. In the end our guide missed the track, and in order to make sure of nothing worse happening, took to the boulder-strewn bed of the dry stream. It was terribly bad ground for the ponies, and we all felt thoroughly tired by the time when a big camp-fire guided us late at night to camp in a field near Langhru.