

AN ACCOUNT

OF A

THREE MONTHS' TOUR

FROM SIMLA

THROUGH

BUSSAHIR, KUNÓWAR AND SPITI, TO LAHOUL.

BY

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P R E F A C E.

THINKING that possibly some of my sister tourists may be wishing to make the same round as ourselves but feel doubtful of its feasibility, I venture to put forth this account of our three months' tour in a part of the Himalayas but little known to English travellers. This short sketch will show them that it is possible, and also how it can be done.

English sportsmen who go to Spiti in search of big game usually take the shorter route up the Wangtu valley and over the Babeh pass (only possible for pedestrians). This brings them into Spiti a few miles above Dankar. As far as I can learn, few (if any) English ladies have ever marched the same way as ourselves; nor would I advise any one to do so unless provided with a good strong mountain pony, and also with some means of being carried over certain of the most difficult places. A steady head is also required, for at times it is absolutely necessary to walk along ridges of rock or the edges of steep precipices of slippery shale.

My Ashantee hammock, by the addition of ropes of goats' hair and some pieces of wood, was made to answer the purpose of a dandi ; it had also to be protected by canvass underneath, as its meshes caught on the rocks. It was at best only a makeshift, as it could not be raised up high enough to prevent my frequently coming in collision with rocks and stones.

I should recommend the tourist who intends to make this expedition (I speak of my own sex only) to procure a Simla dandi of the lightest possible construction and without a hood, for the rains where we went are very slight : we did not once get really wet.

Supposing Sugnam in Kunowar to be the starting point for Spiti, it would be necessary either there, or previously, to engage a native as interpreter who can speak both Thibetan and Hindustani. Once in Spiti, it is rare to find any one, even the Mookiar, or headman of a village, who can speak or understand the latter language.

H. G. M. M. A.

KAILUNG, LAHOUL,
August 30th, 1881.

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CHAPTER I.

WHEN we were in the Himalayas in 1878, bad weather, and the grave accounts we received of the scarcity of food in Kashmir, and consequent distress in that country, prevented us from carrying out our intended plan of going through Kulu, Lahoul, and Ladakh, to Srinagar. When not far from the summit of the Bara Lacha pass, we considered it expedient to return, and have since learnt from more than one person that it was most fortunate we came to that decision. We had, however, never entirely relinquished the idea of another tour in the Himalayas, and once more this year (1881) we made up our

camp. We left Simla on May 25th, and as far as the place called Nagkanda (or the shoulder of the snake), four marches from the former place, we followed the same road we took three years ago ; but from that point our path now diverges—we keep rather to the left and skirt the base of the Huttoo mountain (10,000 feet). The natives have a great dread of ascending it, particularly after the annual wash which they are supposed to indulge in, for they say that the demon of this mountain invariably revenges himself on any of them who tries to go up it with clean clothes on, though Europeans may do so at any time with perfect safety.

The road from Nagkanda to Kotegurh is most picturesque, the distance is little more than 12 miles, but a descent of about 3,500 feet is necessary. The path winds round the shoulders of several hills, and passes through a pine forest, which skirts an enormous ravine. The wild rose trees were just then in full beauty, in many cases they have swarmed up a deodara, or some other tree of the same species, and their support has become entirely hidden ; the mass of rose blossoms being so luxuriant, that, when seen at a little distance, one may fancy them pillars of snow.

Kotegurh is a small missionary station, it possesses a neat little church, a school-house, and a few houses built in the European style. In one of these, the missionary and his wife reside ; in another, their married daughter ; and a third is set apart for the accommodation of any sick missionaries or zenana ladies in the plains, who may require rest or change of air. The climate of this place early in June resembles that rare thing—"a really fine English summer."

Three varieties of the ilex, or evergreen oak, seem to be indigenous here ; we also saw the same kind of horse chestnut, which we had previously found both in Kashmir and in Kulu. White or table rice is grown down below near the Sutlej river ; red rice and other kinds of grain flourish at a higher level.

A species of caladium is cultivated as an article of food ; it bears tubers at its root, which are boiled and eaten. At Kotegurh, and even nearly a thousand feet higher up the hill, all kinds of English fruits seem to do well, especially apples and pears ; peaches also are grown as standard trees. We remained there eight or nine days, partly because it was a pretty spot, and also because we hoped to get news of a friend who we believed was not far off.

When leaving Kotegurh, we had first to ascend at least 700 feet to Bareri, where Mr. W. Stewart has a tea estate, in order to get upon what is called the Hindustan and Thibet road, and afterwards to make a rapid descent of from 4,000 to 5,000 feet to the river Sutlej. Before reaching Nirth, our next halting place, we entered native territory, that of Bussahir, one of the Cis-Sutlej States. Its ruler is of Rajput descent, and claims to trace back his pedigree for 120 generations from a mythical hero of Benares. Between the years 1803 and 1815, the Goorkas overran Bussahir, and held it in subjection. When in the latter year the Goorka power was subdued by the British, the then Rajah of Bussahir was replaced in possession of all he had previously owned, except Bawain, which was transferred to Keuntal, another hill state.

The Rajah of Bussahir pays tribute to the English Government to the amount of nearly £400 per annum; and is bound, if necessary, to furnish troops in aid of the British in time of war, and also labour for the construction of roads in his territory. If this latter condition were a little more strictly enforced, it would be pleasanter for travellers in that district.

It is now high time I should describe the members of our caravan. It consists of my husband and myself,

ten servants,—*viz.*, a head table servant, who is our factotum ; a cook, (the less said about him the better, for he is a thoroughly dishonest fellow, and we have written to Simla to have another sent after us) ; a *dhurzie*, or tailor, to pick up the pieces, a most necessary person on a long march ; a *dhobie*, or washerman (no such persons where we are going) ; a *bhisti*, whose duty it is to procure water for ourselves and our animals ; a *masalchi*, or cook's boy, who, like Diogenes, carries the lantern when on the march, but there the resemblance ceases, his fondness for petty pilfering and general want of intelligence caused us to dismiss him at Kilba. Besides these, we have a sweeper and three *saises*, or grooms, one for each horse. Our stud is composed of three horses : a Kashmiri (lent to us by a friend for the trip), a Turkestanti, and a Yarkundi ; the two latter we purchased at Simla. The first named, a pretty little animal, has evidently vivid recollections of the days gone by when he formed part of string of laden animals ; and it also appears pretty certain that he was not the leader, for he is never happy unless one of his friends precedes him. The Turkestanti, an iron grey, prefers too being second in the line if his opinion is asked, but no animal can excel him in

going up or down rough or steep hills. The worse the path looks, the more he seems to put his will into it ; and though not more than 13-2 or 3 in height, he feels like a rock beneath one. The Yarkundi is about the same size as Turki (as he is familiarly called) : his coat is of a pretty Isabelle colour ; his mane and tail are almost white. He is an animal which, up to this time, has shown no particular idiosyncrasies ; he does his work well and cheerfully, that is all.

Nirth lies in a narrow part of the Sotlej valley, not a breath of air was to be had and sleep was impossible. Supplies there are almost *nil*, its population is very small, and the difficulty of getting coolies considerable. We went on ourselves the next morning to Rampore, a few men having been found to carry our most necessary baggage ; the rest, and some of our servants, we were forced to leave behind with orders to follow as soon as they could.

The next day about three miles beyond Nirth, we passed through a purely Brahmin village, called Datnagar. We did not know this at the time, nor that there are several such villages on the lower slopes of the hills in that district. These Brahmins possess large rice-fields, but they do not plough or culti-

vate the land themselves ; they keep a set of low caste men, called *Kolis*, to work for them. These may, I fancy, be rather styled slaves than servants, as their labour is said to be compulsory. The *Kolis* are a dark, ugly looking race ; they live in small hamlets apart from their masters, who are fair and good looking. Whilst we were stopping under a tree in Datnagar to ask for some water to drink, a yogi (or Hindu devotee) saw me admiring his brass water vessel, which was of a rather peculiar form, and came up to us. I asked him where he came from, and he said Bangalore, (two thousand miles distant ;) and added, that he had wandered up there to see the mountains. His intention, he said, was to return to the plains, *via* Ladakh and Kashmir.

The existence of these Brahmin villages greatly enhances the difficulty of procuring coolies throughout that whole district. The Brahmins not labouring themselves, employ as cultivators the other inhabitants of the villages on that line of route ; most of the coolies which the passing traveller may require to carry his baggage have to be collected with some difficulty from small villages lying high up on the mountains.

Rather less than half-way between Nirth and Ram-pore on the right bank of the river, and consequently

in Kulu and in British territory, here only to be approached by a rope bridge, is a village called Nirmand amongst the people of which a curious custom prevails ; every 15 or 20 years (it occurred last in 1879 or 1880) a low caste man is chosen to make the passage across the river in a peculiar manner. He must go through a course of fasting and religious exercises for some time beforehand ; and on the day appointed, in the presence of a vast number of people assembled to witness the feat, the man, with heavy sand bags tied to his legs to weight him, is placed in a kind of a sling, so arranged as to run freely up and down a slackish rope, which is stretched across the Sutlej, each end of this rope being attached to a high post. When all is ready, the performer is let go ; he slides down the incline with sufficient velocity to carry him up the other side ; but so great is the friction, that I was told the rope sometimes catches fire, and it occasionally breaks, in both which cases the man perishes : nothing can save him, for the current is very rapid, and he is heavily weighted. Should he reach the opposite bank in safety, he and his family are thenceforward considered most holy persons ; they need never work for their livelihood, and are entitled to

receive a fixed amount of food from the inhabitants of certain villages.

The lower part of the Sutlej valley is at this season fearfully hot ; any meat you may have with you goes bad, as happened in our case. Before we got to Rampore, the piece of cold mutton we had with us was too elevated for my taste, though my husband ate some *faut de mieux*. My fare all day was but dry bread till late in the evening, when a khilta (or basket covered with leather) turned up ; this fortunately contained a tin of preserved meat.

When our baggage finally arrived, we found that the loaves of bread we had brought with us from Kotegurh had become quite mouldy from the moist heat, and from this time I was obliged to make bread myself when occasion required, for we neither of us like the native chupatties for a continuance. I had brought some dough made from yeast with me, but that was also spoiled by the great heat of the Sutlej valley ; therefore I adopted bi-carbonate of soda and cream of tartar as a means of making the bread rise, putting a small teaspoonful of each and the same quantity of salt to three lbs. of flour, and employing either butter-milk or sour milk to mix it with. The bread, when thus prepared, was

baked in a portable iron oven, the carriage of which has caused me many an anxious moment : the coolies are very careless, and often bump their loads against a rock when they put them down to take a rest. This precious article has been damaged more than once, but I have been able to get it repaired after a fashion, though its action is not so certain as at first.

The following morning we secured a sleep, and had it instantly made into mutton. About 1 P.M. our bhistic put in an appearance, giving us the discouraging information that, when he left Nirth, no more coolies had come, nor did there seem to be a prospect of getting any ; we must, therefore, send people to the mountain Nirth, as there seems no hope of its coming to us, and also make up our minds to remain at Rampore a day or two longer than we had intended. The small engineer's bungalow in which we were staying is about a mile beyond Rampore, and, fortunately for us, in a nice breezy situation, though the distance from the town is a disadvantage as regards procuring supplies. The Sutlej comes tumbling down at this point, a seething muddy mass of water; the mountain on the opposite side of the valley is terraced up to a considerable height. In sheltered spots on both sides of the river plantains seem to flourish on the mountain side.

We arrived at Rampore on June 7th, and were forced to remain there till the 11th on account of the non-arrival of our baggage; even then, two of our servants had been obliged to stay behind to bring on the last one or two coolie loads; these eventually caught us up at Gaura.

Whilst we were at Rampore, I observed a singular looking girl pass by the bungalow each day driving a mare and her foal to feed. This girl attracted my attention from being very Chinese looking, and totally different in dress and appearance from the natives of the district. One day I stopped her, asked her where she came from, and how long she had been in those parts. She answered me in Hindustani, that she and her father and mother had come there three years before from *Chota Chin* (or Little China). Her old mother, whom I saw afterwards, was better looking than her daughter, who was *very* plain, but had a good tempered open countenance. I cannot say much for the beauty of either. By *Chota Chin* I learnt afterwards they meant a part of Thibet; but since we were at Rampore we have seen a good many coming from that district, none possessing their peculiar type of features however, which makes me inclined to think that these

women were pure Chinese from some part of China Proper.

The march from Rampore to Gaura is a short one as regards distance (only seven miles), but it took us four hours ; I was obliged to dismount several times, though in our previous mountain wanderings I had ridden up and down many bad places. Flights of steps I do not object to, except when, as in this case, the stairs are too close together and the steps so deep that the horse cannot feel his way properly down, and when ascending them they are at such a steep angle that one feels slipping off by the tail. My good Turki did not refuse anything I put him at, but even his strength and patience may be too sorely tried.

Our road first ascended to the top of a mountain, and then wound round two high spurs ; when within sight of Gaura, we came to a considerable obstacle ; a torrent has caused the displacement of a large mass of the hill. This happened about two years ago. A great quantity of earth has come down, bringing with it enormous stones, and the result has been that the road has been carried away for some distance, the footsteps of travellers have made a little zig-zag path by which it is possible (after a steep descent and

crossing the stream) to regain the path on the opposite side. About a mile and-a-half further on, we came to the little bungalow which we found occupied by two gentlemen, heads of the Forest Department. They very obligingly vacated its one room for us and went into their tents.

At 6-30 A. M. the next morning we left Gaura, the scenery became much bolder than before ; towering far above the high hills, which rise on either side of the Sutlej valley, are lofty peaks, some of which are covered with snow. The road for the first three miles is tolerably level, after which is a steep descent of two and-a-half miles to the Manglad stream ; then a stiff ascent of about three miles, from which point a fairly level path, though at a dizzy height above the river, leads to Sarahan (11 miles). Several other European travellers being on this road, we remained there one day as there were not sufficient coolies.

Sarahan is distant from Turanda 14 miles ; the first five miles are easy and level ; after this is a descent of about five miles, the latter part of it very steep ; it leads down to a bridge over a tributary of the Sutlej. After the bridge has been crossed is a very stiff ascent of nearly four miles ; from the top of this hill a short ride through a deodara forest leads

to the bungalow. An event of considerable importance to us happened at Turanda; we got our English letters and newspapers; when in the wilds they are a boon, though after a time one ceases to look for one's daily budget.

The road from Turanda to Nachar (10 miles) is very beautiful; it consists of ups and downs the whole way. The paths between Kotegurh and Nachar are in parts little better than native tracks, the District Engineer told us that for the past three years no money has been spent on that part of the road; and, in consequence, some of the *galleries*, as they are called, are in a most unsafe state. These galleries have been made in places where, without going to great expense in cutting away or blasting the rock, no road could have been carried. They are formed by drilling holes into the rock, into these holes, logs of wood or, occasionally, iron stanchions are driven, on these is laid a pathway of planks or brushwood, covered with a little earth; sometimes the pieces of iron are stolen by the natives, the logs of wood also decay with time, and these galleries are thus rendered unsafe.

When nearly half way between these two places, we saw the first signs of a Buddhist population. A

Lama (or Buddhist monk) was seated near the path dressed in a red robe and wearing a yellow cap, a little further on, at the bottom of a ravine, we came upon the first *mane* or wall of stones we had hitherto seen in these parts. It was small compared with others we had seen in former years in Thibet and Lahoul, but on the top there were similar engraved stones inscribed with the sacred characters "*Om mani padme haur*"* in the Thibetan character.

Buddhism seems to be gradually encroaching upon Hinduism in this valley. This *mane* was quite a new one; it had only been made three or four months.

About six miles from Turanda we entered a grove of fine deodaras; the spot was such a lovely and

* "*Om mani padme haur*."—These words are commonly held to signify "all hail to the jewel in the flower of the lotus." This rendering received a singular confirmation in an article of old brass work which I picked up in the native bazar at Benares some three years ago, and which seems to connect the lotus with snake worship and with the worship of Shiva. At the base, is the Nandi or humped bull of Shiva, from its back springs a lotus blossom, which, when a few turns are given to it, opens its petals and discloses a small oviform piece of marble. The lotus blossom is overshadowed by a cobra which is placed behind it; from the hood of the snake a ring projects, within which rests a tiny brass lotah or drinking cup, pointed at the bottom; a small hole allows the water in this vessel to escape in drops, its position being such as to cause the liquid to fall in the centre of the flower, and thus is poured a constant libation on "the jewel in the flower of the lotus."

tempting one that we dismounted and laid down under these trees for an hour or more, conning our home letters. A large wooden temple stands in the midst of this grove; it was some little distance below us, and I was sorry afterwards that I did not go and examine it, though, if it were a Hindu building, as we imagined, we should probably not have been allowed to see its interior. The last four miles of this march was mainly through a deodar forest; we staid that night at Nachar in the bungalow belonging to the forest officer; which is situated high above the river. We had intended remaining there one whole day, but a threatening bank of clouds which we saw in the Simla direction decided us to push on the next day to Kilba (16 miles), where our friend Mr. G. M——, the forest officer in charge of this district, has his head-quarters.

After leaving Nachar, we descended rapidly to the Wangtu bridge (3 miles). The Sutlej at this point is said to be 5,000 feet above the level of the sea; at Kilba it is fully 6,000 feet; the fall of this river from the Chinese frontier to the Wangtu bridge is supposed to be about 70 feet per mile. Here the climate and vegetation suddenly change most completely; the monsoon rains are scarcely felt,

which only a few miles lower down are experienced in all their force; the wild olive and other plants belonging to a dry district first appear. This singular transition is probably due to monsoon storms, which come up the Sutlej, changing their course at this point and following up the Wangtu river. Whilst we were at Kilba we often saw intensely black clouds coming towards us from that direction, but no rain fell; the clouds appeared as if arrested before they reached us.

CHAPTER II.

EVEN more than a change of climate and of vegetation is perceptible ; we are now in lower Kunówar, amongst a different population, speaking a different language, supposed to be the old language of the country, in which I believe a good many Thibetan words are intermixed. There is one village high up in the mountains in the Kulu valley where this same language is said to be spoken ; its inhabitants are very jealous of any strangers coming near them ; they are believed to have gone there long ago from Kunówar.

The old road to Kilba followed the left bank of the river, but except for forest purposes, it is almost disused, we had to cross the Sutlej at a place called Chargawn ; about a quarter of a mile further is also another bridge over the Wangtu, a tributary stream, which there forms a grand cascade, as it comes tumbling down amidst huge rocks, one of which has been utilized to form a pier for the centre of the bridge.

Our road was after this, for some miles, along the right bank of the river, rising far above it at times, and occasionally going down to the level of the stream. When we were about five miles distant from Kilba, we had to re-cross the Sutlej, and then commence a rather fatiguing ascent. At two different points the road had been completely carried away by slides which had been made for the purpose of sending deodar logs down them from high up the mountain to the river beneath; in the first instance, the half of a steep flight of steps had been carried away by the impetus of the falling logs, and till we got assistance, it was not possible to get our horses over the gap thus made. As it was, when the path had been repaired after a fashion, the Yarkundi was got up with great difficulty; at one moment, I thought he would have gone down the precipice; had the rope broken by which he was held, nothing could have saved him; but the saïs held on manfully; another man went behind him and urged him on, which gave him courage for the necessary effort. The second obstacle was not such a serious one, it only required a few minutes' labour to make it passable. Including about an hour's rest, we were from 7 A.M. till 4 P.M. doing this march; it

is called 16 miles, but I think it must be somewhat more.

Mr. G. M——'s house is beautifully situated, it is raised upwards of 500 feet above the left bank of the Sutlej, the village of Kilba is about half-way between the two. On the opposite side of the river, and high above the forest bungalow, we could trace, for some distance, the path which we intended following later on ; and also see the bungalow at Oorni perched on a point of a high mountain, just where a side valley comes in and allows one a peep of some snowy summits at its upper end. On our extreme right a lofty mountain bounded the view ; the natives of these parts call it the Kailas, though it is not *the* Kailas in Thibet we see marked in Montgomerie's map. It is the sacred mountain of Shiva and is visited by pilgrims from all parts of India ; the people of the district say that the souls of the dead spend 500 years upon it. It has never been ascended by man, of its three peaks the highest, called the Raldung, is known to be 21,000, and another is 19,000 feet.

Some of the slides for sending timber down to the Sutlej commence at a height of nearly 4,000 feet above the river ; its rapid stream conveys the logs to

a certain point where the Forest Department has a depôt ; they are there made up into rafts, the current being no longer strong enough to take them down as before. Their final destination is a place a few miles north of Loodiana, where the railway crosses the Sutlej. Just beyond Mr. G. M——'s bungalow, there are two timber slides; all day long we used to hear logs come crashing down at intervals ; they do not go the whole distance down the hill at once, of course ; there are steep pitches, alternating with flat spaces, which arrest their descent; when one lot has reached the bottom, there is a general and gradual move of the timber above. The work is done by contract ; it was found to be more expeditiously performed on this system ; the men frequently rest during the heat of the day ; they labour early and late, sometimes I believe, into the night. It is a curious sight to see the way in which these men handle the logs ; some of them are 22 feet in length and of enormous girth, two or three of these hill laborers, with sticks which do not look much thicker than stout alpen-stocks, seem to move them easily ; it is marvellous to see the dexterity with which the one who stands below manages to jump out of the way of the rolling log exactly at the right moment, though accidents do

happen occasionally. The logs are often piled one upon another like the bits of wood in a game of spili-kins ; it must be therefore difficult to know in what direction the timber may roll.

On July 2nd, about 9 P.M., we saw the long-talked of comet ; it was then over the mountain above Oorni ; it very soon disappeared from our sight behind this hill. The following evening was cloudy, we looked for it in vain, and I fear that when we cross to the other side of the river we shall not be able to see it at all, judging from its present situation.

We remained at Kilba rather more than a fortnight ; we were obliged to wait for money to come to us from Simla, as we feared we might fall short later on. Our friend, Mr. G. M——, also, during that time, sent messengers in different directions to endeavour to find a blacksmith who could re-shoe our horses, more than one man came, who on trial was found to be incompetent. On July 4th, we started once more. We had to retrace our steps five miles as far as the Kilba bridge, cross it, and go down about a mile in the direction of the Wangtu bridge ; at this point, another path winds in rapid zig-zags up the mountain, this brought us on to the great road, and after riding about four miles along this, on turn-

ing a corner, the bungalow at Oorni came in sight, it must be at least 8,000 feet above the sea-level. We rose at 5 A.M. the next morning, but laid down again for an hour, on finding that we were in the clouds; it was raining, and a thick mist covered the hills on both sides of the valley.

We were on the road soon after 7-30 A.M.; the march from Oorni to Rogi (10 miles) we both thought afforded us the grandest scenery we had as yet passed through. The path is a continual ascent, for Rogi is perhaps a thousand feet higher than Oorni, we went through more than one forest of deodaras, and observed some fine old trees; but the number of young ones does not seem to be very great.

When within about three miles of Rogi, on going round the shoulder of a mountain, we came suddenly upon some grand cliffs, in which, where feasible, the road has been cut out; but in many places the path rests only upon wooden or iron supports driven into the rock, on which stones and earth have been laid. We were told that, not many months ago, some natives had stolen some of these iron supports—a cruel thing to do, for it might have cost many lives. The men were caught red-handed and imprisoned for a time; but the consequence of this theft is, that the road is

now, in parts, very unsafe, for it has been only temporarily repaired with planks and stones, and I was obliged to dismount more than once.

The Indian Kailas mountain seemed to be not more than a mile distant, as the crow flies, from the Rogi bungalow, its base rises straight from the left bank of the Sutlej; the following day, on our march to Pangi, it was the great feature in the scene; about four miles beyond Rogi, after passing round some precipitous cliffs and through a deodara forest, we reached Chini.

There was formerly an excellent bungalow at this place, built during the governorship of Lord Dalhousie; but it has been suffered to go to ruin, and the natives now use this building as a stable for their cattle. It struck us that Chini might be made a charming summer resort for the Supreme Government,—of course a railway to it would be necessary. This site possesses many advantages over Simla, it has a fine climate, plenty of good water, ample space for houses and villas, and it is also beyond the reach of the monsoon rains. In a sanitary point of view it would also be far preferable, for all the drainage could be carried down to the Sutlej and be removed by its rapid current. We amused ourselves with

planning a station, and found an admirable site for the Viceroy's house, a small grove of trees would be near it, and a certain space of level land available for ornamental grounds ; the house might overlook the river, though a considerable height above it. On the hill sides above, are gentle slopes for a mile or two on either side of this central point ; on these slopes are splendid situations for private houses and Government offices. A detached knoll, with trees round it, at once suggested that an English Church might be placed there ; we also found about half a mile further on, in the Pangî direction, a flat piece of ground suited for a gymkhana ; about a mile beyond this, a capital polo and race ground might be made.

At Pangî, distant about six miles from Chini, we still more directly faced the Kailas mountain ; from thence we had a view of a large snow field which had hitherto been hidden from us. We made a pleasant stay of some days at this place, where on our arrival we found the Civil Engineer of the district, and two officers on leave from Dugshai ; a day or two later, three others came, two from the military station of Subathoo, who were projecting a shooting tour in the Asserung valley, and another from Delhi.

Hearing, that the Moravian Missionary, the Revd. E. Pagell, who resides at Poo in Upper Kunówar, was returning home from a missionary tour in Spiti, we waited at Pangí till he arrived, for we wished to get more certain information than we had been able to procure from other sources as to whether it would be possible for us to ride over the several mountain passes which intervened between us and Spiti, for our horses, though capital animals, are not like the ponies of that country which climb like cats, and seem to be able to go anywhere. Finding from Mr. Pagell that, by my occasionally walking or being carried in the Ashantee hammock, we had brought with us, the tour we projected would be feasible, we started altogether from Pangí on July 13th and reached Jangi (16 miles) the first day. The nine miles to Rarung was a steepish ascent; we had there to change our baggage coolies; these again, at a place called Akbar, gave their loads to others.

At Rarung we were amongst a population composed entirely of Buddhists, though their religion is anything but a pure form of Buddhism. Inside their sacred buildings are images of Hindu gods; Hindu emblems, such as the trident of Shiva are also seen; not that they would appear to use a Hindu form of

worship, but many men of the upper classes amongst them go down to the plains, there see paintings and images which take their fancy, and then cause them to be reproduced on their return home. At Sugnam, where the Hindu element seems first to entirely disappear, we were struck with the different character of the people: it would seem that the Hindu religion inspires fear and dread; those who are even ever so little under its influence look grave and are depressed in spirits. The contrast from this point of our journey was most striking; for the Buddhists are always singing and laughing. The women, even when carrying heavy loads up a high pass, keep up a wild sort of chaunt, begun at first by one or two, the rest joining in.

When we were about half-way between Pangi and Jangi, we encountered a small procession: two men were carrying another in a blanket suspended from a pole; on enquiry we learnt that this latter was a prisoner whom they were thus conveying to the nearest magistrate. He had quarrelled with another man at Sugnam, and with a sword had inflicted a deep gash on his face, and nearly cut off his left ear; we saw the wounded man also the following day on his way down to give evidence.

At Jangi I saw a poor little lame boy hopping about; he was I should say seven or eight years old; two or three years ago he had fallen from the roof of a house and broken his leg—a compound fracture. The natives do not seem to know how to treat such cases, and for some time the bone projected, causing a running sore, till at length his people took him to Simla, where his leg was operated upon. He there, no doubt obtained a small wooden toy, an animal out of some Noah's ark. It was touching to see the way in which he scarcely ever ceased playing with or looking at it, and when he moved from one spot to another, he placed it carefully inside his little coat. Some English child, in giving him this toy, performed a kind action which will long live in his memory.

CHAPTER III.

ABOUT three miles beyond Jangi, the Hindostan and Thibet road ceases, it was finished thus far about 16 years ago ; (the original intention was to continue it as far as Shipki, the Chinese frontier).

From this time begins the real tough work. We had to climb about 600 feet up an almost perpendicular mountain in order to reach the old road (we thought Government might at least have made some zig-zags up to the point of junction). Our path still kept on mounting in order to get round the shoulder of a hill. When we had got so far, we almost settled that we must turn back again, the rocks at the summit proving an almost insurmountable barrier to our horses. They had to go up a very steep stony bit, then a flight of stone steps so steep and short in the tread as to be rather inconvenient even for us ; after that came immediately a piece of bare rugged rock and a sharp corner to be turned. Turki came up splendidly, losing one hind shoe however ; the Yarkundi refused for a long time, till at length they gave him

a lead by sending the Kashmiri just before him, had the Yarkundi still been obstinate, we must have retraced our steps.

The path being still an indifferent one, I had, with small exceptions, to walk the whole of the last four miles to Leepe (or Leet, as it is sometimes called). On this occasion I conclude the Kashmiri thought he had done his duty for the day in going so boldly up the bad bit of rock, for when I mounted him, Turki being unfit to ride, he refused to stir : whipping, coaxing, pulling, were tried ; he then began backing, not pleasant on a narrow path, and ended by sitting down ! I slid off as rapidly as possible, fortunately not on the precipice side ; this, though a march of only seven or eight miles, took us six hours and half, including a short stoppage for luncheon. At Leepe we had to pitch our tents for the first time. Close to our encampment the hollyhock was growing wild ; its flowers were of two colours, a dark mauve and a deep crimson.

A Lama, (or Buddhist monk), a veritable Chinese, coming from far to the east of Lhasa approached our tent ; his was not in the least the type of face associated in our minds with a China man ; he had not the usual oblique eyes and flat face ; his

eyes were of a rather bluish grey colour ; his mouth small, lips thin ; his nose delicately formed, and slightly aquiline. He wore the ordinary red dress and yellow cap of a Lama ; he carried in his right hand a tiny drum, by twirling the handle attached to it some small shells or stones struck the parchment ; this noise he accompanied by the ringing of a brass bell which he held in his left hand. A quaint and curious bell it was too ; the upper part in form like a crown, or rather a bishop's mitre, the lower part ornamented with curious devices. I tried hard to persuade him to accept a bell of Benares brass work in exchange ; but no, after considering awhile, he said he preferred his own.

The first part of the road the next day was simply a climb up the rugged rocks which form the commencement of the ascent of the Ruhang pass (14,353 feet). We therefore had the Ashantee hammock slung on a tent pole ; I had six bearers, they could not have carried me up the places they did, but for their bare feet or soft shoes, which enabled them to use their strong and almost prehensile toes, and gave them a hold on the ground which a Swiss might envy. This ten-mile march took us eleven hours. That night we pitched our tents half-way up the mountain,

at a height of about 12,000 feet. Before our tent could be fixed, a heavy storm of rain set in, we crept into a small servant's tent, and ate some food we had brought with us after a fast since 6 A.M., our dinner was necessarily a late one, and we were glad to turn in as soon as possible.

The following day we completed the ascent of the pass, I was again carried in the hammock, for my saddle having had a strap broken during a short ride the day before, I feared to use it in that state. Towards the end of this march, we met with what might have been a disagreeable adventure ; but all's well that ends well. We had crossed the pass, and Sugnam, our next halting place, had long been in sight, though far beneath us, for the descent is a long and a very steep one, and were every instant in hopes of seeing our tents come in sight on the opposite side of the river, which is one of considerable size, and feeds the Sutlej a few miles lower down. But no, we scrambled down a steep staircase of rocks too bad to ride down, or even for me to be carried down ; and then we heard with blank dismay that the bridge which spanned this stream had been carried away only the day before, the river having risen very suddenly, owing, as we concluded, to the

same storm which we had experienced the night previously on the mountain. We had to creep along the rocks near the bank of the river which, I believe, was still in flood, at one point we had to make a jump down of four or five feet, and it was then easy walking to the place where the bridge should have been. The coolies who were in advance had given notice of our arrival, all hands had already set to work to make a temporary bridge to enable us to cross the river, for the people of Sugnam are used to this sort of thing, as most years this bridge is carried away; the banks of this stream are so low at that point, that the structure is necessarily but a short distance above the water. By about 6½ P.M., they had fixed two logs parallel to each other across the river, each of their ends resting upon a heap of stones, on these logs they placed a number of old bits of wood, and passed some ropes of goat's hair round them. On this frail erection we crossed the boiling stream, its spray almost dashing over us. I took my husband's hand, and followed in his steps, Mr. Pagell following me; this *impromptu* bridge shook so violently under us, that our leader stopped half-way unable to proceed; however I begged C— to go on, and we passed over safely, our horses following, each

being led, and having another man holding his tail; for had they swerved in the least, they must have fallen into the torrent and have been swept away.

It was 7-30 P.M., and almost dark, before we reached our camping ground; tents had to be pitched, fires lighted, and dinner prepared, and it was nearly 10 P.M. before we sat down to our evening meal. Mr. Pagell and ourselves were getting rather tired of eating mutton—mutton, always mutton. This, perhaps, had made our ears more keenly alive than usual to the sounds of crowing the next morning. We enquired whether fowls were to be had in the village; they assured us there were none. Mr. Pagell and I both declared that we were certain we had heard sounds which betokened the presence of these animals. At last it came out that one single cock was there; some sahib had bought up and eaten all his companions. Under the circumstances, knowing the difficulty his owner would have to procure him new friends, we considered it best to put an end to his lonely life; he turned out young, tender, and juicy; it was the last fowl we had till two months later when we reached Kulu.

The next day was Sunday, and we and our servants were very thankful for a day's rest at Sugnam, we

had also to get our horses re-shod, which we had not been able to do since leaving Simla. On Monday, July 18th, we again started early ; on this march too I had to use the hammock for a considerable part of the way, owing to the nature of the ground ; and it was nearly dark before we got to our encampment on the Poo side of the mountain. Our servants had fortunately arrived before us, and on this occasion we found our tents ready and hot water prepared for tea. The view from the summit of the Sugnam pass is one which is rarely equalled, and in our experience has never been surpassed. Around and far above us (though we were here at a height of over 14,000 feet) was a circle of snowy peaks, before us the mountains of Chinese Thibet, and behind us the Hindu Kailas, which from that side looks even grander than as seen from Pangi.

During our descent the following day, when still at a height of between 13,000 and 11,000 feet, a glorious plant (*Eremurus spectabilis*) was very abundant. Its flower-stems are from 18 inches to 2 feet 6 inches in height ; each flower (of which there are hundreds on each spike,) is of a delicate greenish cream colour, and hangs on a slender little stem about 2 inches long : these fragile blossoms tremble with

each breath of wind. None of the plants were sufficiently advanced for us to procure any seed; but a fortnight later when we crossed the Hangerung pass on leaving Poo, we found some perfectly ripe seeds of this lovely plant.

On the left bank of the Sutlej river, and almost immediately opposite Poo, is a high rugged mountain. Mr. Pagell told me that more than one native of Poo has related to him how that, in former days—no one seems to know exactly how long ago—this mountain was the abode of an evil spirit, which, from time to time, took the form of a scorpion; it was as large as a goat, entered villages, seized and devoured children and cattle. At length, as the tale runs, a Lama came from a great distance and banished the bad spirit to a cleft in this mountain; in order to propitiate him, it was customary every year to sacrifice a boy of eight years old and a young calf; this was performed by throwing them down alive into this cleft. This barbarous usage ceased, they say, ever since a second Lama came, who was able entirely to destroy the demon's power.

We reached Poo about 1-30 P.M. on the 19th of July, having started from our night quarters at 7-30 A.M. On this march also there was no path to boast of,

where one could be traced, it was encumbered with large boulders and loose stones, which made the navigation of my hammock very difficult for the bearers. The village of Poo is situated at a height of 9,400 feet on a lovely green oasis between bare rocky hills. It is such an out-of-the-way spot, that it is not even named on Montgomerie's map or in the list of Himalayan routes.

Mr. and Mrs. Pagell have lived there for 17 years quite isolated from intercourse with Europeans. Their son and only child went to Europe a few years ago for his education. Mr. Pagell makes a missionary tour every year either to Spiti or elsewhere, and every second year he goes to Simla to buy supplies of grocery, &c. During the whole time of their residence in that place only two European ladies had visited Poo; I was the third; one of the former, a German lady, staid one day only; but every year perhaps one or two officers pass by on shooting expeditions. A few, though not a great many, Christian converts have been made. The summer is the missionaries' least busy time, for then the natives and any of their children old enough to come to school are employed either in gathering in their crops, or in preparing the ground for a second harvest; but

in the winter the children attend school regularly, and on Sundays their little chapel has as large a congregation as it will hold, numbering about 90, the greater part of these are still heathens, who come Sunday after Sunday to listen to Mr. Pagell, but still adhere to Buddhism; the idea of an all-powerful GOD they can comprehend, but they seem to feel no need of a Saviour or a Mediator, though the missionary's moral teaching seems to have a decidedly good effect upon them.

The dress of the women in Poo is peculiar, when fresh and clean, (which I grieve to say it rarely is); it may be called picturesque. On the head they wear a regular porkpie hat, in which is usually put a bunch of the largest and brightest flowers they can procure; quantity is preferred to quality. Their ornaments (consisting of large earrings and often several necklaces) are of silver, profusely hung with coral beads and pieces of amber and rough turquoise. The women wear a long woollen coat reaching almost to the ankles, and confined at the waist by a sash either of woollen material or of calico, over their shoulders is usually a small square of woollen stuff, which just meets over the chest, and is there confined either by an iron pin

or a brass brooch of a peculiar form. This shawl is about the same size as the sheep skin worn in the same manner by the women in Ladakh, both summer and winter. In neither district do they think it necessary to protect the chest.

This square cloth worn in Kunówar and Spiti by all classes, has a peculiar use, the poorer women carry their babies inside it as soon as they are old enough for this to be possible. The child is put in the middle of this little shawl, the mother swings it round over her back, and secures the cloth in front; the little one does not look at all uncomfortable; it is often in an upright position resting its feet on the folds of the band round its mother's waist; she can, by this method of carrying her child, use her arms freely, and do the field-work, which, for the most part, falls upon the lower class of women assisted by the young lads of the various families. The older male members of every house leave their homes every summer and make trading journeys into Ladakh and Chinese Thibet.

A public vaccinator comes at stated periods to Upper Kunówar; the people have no objection to be operated upon by him, but they are very anxious his visits should not take place just before they start

for Chinese territory, for there the idea prevails that vaccination is inoculation, and that the traders may bring small pox with them. On one occasion so strong was this fear, that a bridge was removed, I believe the one which spans the Para river, and one road into Chinese Thibet closed.

Dark red and dark blue seem the favorite colours for the dress both of the men and the women of this district ; here and there a little yellow is introduced as an ornamental bordering. Apricots are the main product of Poo, the trees are of a large size, and during our stay were heavily laden with their golden fruit, they are not grafted, but are grown from the kernels. We thought them very palatable when stewed with a little sugar, but rather sour uncooked. The apricots are dried in the sun, and form an important item in the food of the people during the winter. From the kernels they express an oil, which serves them for lighting purposes. Brick or Thibetan tea is much drunk by those who can afford it.

Our tent stands below the missionary's house, on open ground, where, on festive occasions, the natives meet to dance. It is the place of Poo, a raised bit of ground in front of our tent

is the general gossip spot ; it is there that the moo-kiar, or headman, of the village sits the greater part of the day and sells grain, &c., &c., at prices fixed by a list sent him by the Deputy Commissioner of Simla. We should have preferred a rather more retired spot, but none was available—either the crop was standing, or the land was being ploughed to put in another. We were detained nearly a fortnight at Poo, we had expected to have to wait there some days for the return of a coolie whom we had sent to Simla, to fetch stores ; but we also found that Turki had sprained one of his hind legs just above the fetlock ; and no wonder, considering the rocks he had had to scramble over. His lameness did not show itself for two or three days, and was at first attributed to bad shoeing at Sugnam. By July 30th, he was so much better that we determined to start again on August 1st.

Whilst we were at Poo, I went one afternoon with Mrs. Pagell to see the house interior of one of the richest natives in the place. Their dwelling is two storied, and covers a considerable extent of ground ; it has more than one courtyard surrounded with buildings for storing grain. The family we visited consists of four generations,—an old woman

of 68, a widow ; her daughter-in-law, also a widow ; this latter has three sons and one unmarried daughter ; the wife of one of these sons and her infant, all live together. The two eldest sons were then absent ; they had gone to Thibet to sell grain, &c., and make purchases, as do most of the heads of families in the summer season.

At this time of the year, this family live during the day-time in a large room closed on three sides with sleeping chambers opening out of it, the fourth side is open, supported on wooden pillars and looks into a courtyard. The infant had a black smudge upon its nose and forehead, and I concluded it had been crawling about amongst the ashes ; but Mrs. Pagell informed me that, in that part of the world the mother each day purposely blacks her young child's face in this manner ; with the view of protecting it from evil demons ; also that, amongst the richer class, no child is permitted to go beyond the house precincts till it is at least two or three years old. I conclude pride is at the bottom of this, and that the rich wish to show that they are not obliged to take their children about with them wherever they go, like the poorer people ; but have servants who can take care of them. In this

house we were regaled with tea made in the Thibetan fashion ; and the young married woman, to oblige us, put on all her ornaments, which are only worn at a bridal or on very great occasions. Hers were valued at Rs. 500, or about £50. Some of the pieces of amber she wore strung on one of her numerous necklaces were as large as an egg. The perak, or head-dress, of the women in Ladakh also formed a part of her costume. In that country it is worn always, but in Upper Kunówar apparently only on state occasions. It is here of a different form and put on differently ; instead of, as in Ladakh, coming to a point in front, and being fastened to the hair parting on the forehead, and increasing gradually in size till it terminates at the waist in the form of the head of a cobra, in this district it is somehow kept in place on the crown of the head ; is at least ten inches wide at that part, and narrows gradually down to the waist ; its whole length and breadth being covered with seed pearls, torquoises, and other stones ; when seen in front face, it resembles in form the head-dress of a Roman peasant woman.

In this house, one large room formed the private family oratory. We were not allowed to pass the threshold, which is, I think, an unusual prohibition ;

at least when in Ladakh five years ago, we were freely permitted to enter the Lama Serai at Lama Yuru and witness a religious service. We could see the arrangement of this little chapel from the doorway. It was on the same plan as the sacred building in the Lama monastery, and had two or three shelves on its backwall, one above the other, on which were ranged small figures of Buddha, bells, &c. Flowers and other daily offerings were strewn about.

CHAPTER IV.

AT 6-30 A.M., on August 1st, we left Poo, taking with us, in addition to our staff of servants, a native of that place called *Danni*, recommended to us by Mr. Pagell. He could speak both Hindostani and Thibetan, and was to act as interpreter for us in Spiti, none of our servants speaking the latter language ; and few, if any, even of the heads of villages in Spiti understanding Hindostani. *Danni* was also to act as my special attendant on all the marches, directing and keeping my bearers in order if the hammock were necessary. I found him most useful, he was unwearied in his attention, and many times helped me along difficult places where neither yák, horse, nor hammock could take me, and where it was as much as my husband could do (as he told me afterwards) to make his way safely alone ; *Danni* assisting me to pick my steps over rocks or along mountain sides covered with fine loose shale, where the slope, always steep, was often so abrupt that every footstep was instantly obliterated by the falling debris.

One word, *Chucko* (I give it as pronounced), was constantly in Danni's mouth. When I heard it I had to prepare myself for a knock against the rocks beneath or on either side of me, for not unfrequently the warning to lift or hoist me up came too late to the ears or understanding of my bearers, to my considerable discomfort.

A march of little more than four hours brought us to our camping place for that night, about 3,000 feet above Poo. I that day rode for the first time *bos gruniens* (the grunting ox) or *yák*, as it is commonly called; it is well named the grunting ox, I was once quite deceived, and thought a herd of pigs were near our tent. Turki, besides being scarcely recovered from his sprain, could, under no circumstances, have carried me up the stony ascent.

The *yák's* tail is the part of him which is best known to fame; it is much used as a fly-flapper for horses. I conclude the animal I rode that day had an extraordinarily fine tail, for it was most carefully sewn up in a bag. In Thibet, though not in Ladakh, these animals are found in their wild state; when tamed, it is found they cannot live in health at a less altitude than 14,000 feet, and if they are required at Poo, they must be sent down from the heights above.

These animals have an enormous girth of body, very short legs, and a massive head ; all I have seen are either black or black and white, and have long hair on their flanks, which almost reaches to the ground. In their natural state, the whole body is, I believe, covered with long hair, but when they have to carry loads, it is kept cut short on the back. As I was feeling far from well the morning we left Poo, I rode the yák up the worst part of the ascent, and was then forced to take to the Ashantee hammock.

A sleepless night did not improve matters, and the next day I was unable to ride a step of the way, but was lucky enough to get some good bearers, who carried me safely up the Hangerung pass which a yak could hardly have done, owing to his short legs, which are inconvenient where the rocks and stones are large. According to Montgomerie's list of routes, this pass is 14,710 feet ; higher than any pass we had as yet gone over in this tour, but it was an easy one on the whole, not so rocky or steep as the two former ones in either its ascent or descent. From our camping place on the mountain side, we had to ascend the next morning somewhat over 2,000 feet to reach the summit of the pass. The greater part of the way we were in the clouds ; it was a dull day on

the whole; the top of our pass and of the other mountains round us were much obscured. After we had reached the highest point, a descent of about three hours took us down to Tsuling, an island of verdure and cultivation, having bare hills and rocks on all sides of it. Apricots flourish here also, but I imagine this village must lie somewhat higher than Poo, for some of the grain crops were still standing.

Up another valley, about an hour's walk from Tsuling, is a large oasis of cultivation, on which stands the village of Hango, at the foot of the pass, which leads directly from Sugnam, the traveller thus avoiding the detour by Poo. This pass must be, I think, also over a part of the Hangerung range, though if so it crosses it at a much lower elevation than where we went over it in going from Poo to Tsuling. Being myself still unequal to much exertion, and three of our servants complaining of feeling unwell, we decided to make a day's halt at Tsuling.

The Poo side of the Hangerung pass was not rich in flowers, but as soon as we began to descend on the Tsuling side, which having a more northern aspect was moister, many which were unknown to us came in sight, as well as more than one species of gentian. The coolies who carried our loads and my bearers

also, one and all, rushed at the bright blossoms with the delight of children, and stuck them in their caps ; one or two made a regular fringe of gentian buds round their head gear. One woman carried in her hand, down to Tsuling, a bunch of lovely greyish blue flowers with a black centre like a fly, and presented it to an old Lama there ; she then took off her cap, and bent before him ; he touched her head, and uttered a few words, I suppose a blessing.

When leaving Tsuling, it was necessary for me to use the hammock down to the river, and up again to a certain point, after which I mounted a yák and rode him till we rounded a point of rock, when I was obliged to dismount and be carried down the steep descent to Lio (10 miles). I was advised to engage bearers for the next day's march to Chango ; as it turned out, I did not ride at all, for though there were places over which I might have ridden a yák, this could only have been for a few yards at a time, and it would have entailed incessant mounting and dismounting to avoid the risk of being struck by the projecting sharp corners of the rocks. Leaving Lio (the next morning) about 7-30 A.M., we descended to the Spiti river ; at that point a wide stream containing a large body of water.

We marched up its right bank for a mile, our path going up and down, till we arrived at a point where we had to cross this river by a bridge, which was anything but inviting looking. The stream being wide, three lengths of logs were necessary to span it, those in the centre being raised above those at either end ; there were no side rails, and the whole structure was a very great height above the water. The flooring was composed of split planks of wood laid loosely down, not fastened in any way to the principal supports, but here and there steadied by a stone. It did not rock like the one near Sugnam, but from its greater length was perhaps more difficult to traverse. My husband and I arrived at this bridge amongst the first comers of our caravan, and were the first to pass over it except a portion of our coolies. C—— as before went in front, and I followed immediately after. Our servants were behind ; they all got over easily, with the exception of the cook ; on looking back I saw him seated in a most melancholy attitude on the other side of the river, the rest standing the same side as ourselves and laughing at his dilemma. The longer our cook looked at this bridge the less he seemed to like what was before him ; in the end, one of his fellow

servants returned to fetch him, and he got across, but then only on his hands and knees, being dragged along by the other man.

Not long afterwards we had to cross two largish side-streams by bridges formed of a couple of logs having large stones laid upon them : our horses had to be pulled through the river as best they could. It was a long march to Chango (14 miles), and over difficult ground ; the last hour or so we went down a steepish slope, formed entirely of rocks and large boulders,—the result apparently of a whole mountain having come down at some time or other ; possibly a stream may have become dammed up above or some convulsion of nature have occurred. The scene was a perfect chaos.

Chango is situated on the lowest slope of a high mountain, on either side of it is a deep ravine, through which a large torrent flows down to the Spiti river. As at Poo, and at Tsuling, there is at this point an oasis of cultivation, but at Chango the fields are more scattered, and are interspersed here and there by barren stony tracts of land, the mountains around are very precipitous, and do not appear to have a blade of grass upon them. We had hardly reached our tents before

a group of wandering musicians came and danced and played before us. It consisted of a man who played a sort of clarionette, a woman who accompanied him on a tambourine, and a girl of 10 or 12 who danced with the kind of slow movement of hands and feet customary in India and also amongst the Arabs in Algeria. Our horses, which have only been led, have lost five out of their twelve shoes since leaving Poo. We have still five days' march before we reach Dankar, the capital of Spiti (British territory), where we hope to get new ones put on ; the only man in Chango who understands the work is now away.

We stayed one day at this place, in order to give the mookiar, or headman of the village, time to make arrangements, as for two days and nights (one of our marches will be partly through Chinese territory) we shall be away from any village. We must take food for selves and servants, and also a small flock of goats to give us milk by the way. On the third day we expect to reach the lowest Spiti village.

We found after leaving Chango that the paths were not improved ; we had immediately to ascend another pass, the Lapcha-Ghati (13,680) ; it was a

steep rocky climb for some distance, then tolerably flat ground for about a mile ; after that, another long climb ending in a steep descent down to the Para river, which comes down from Chinese Thibet. We encamped the first night on the left bank of this stream ; the only vegetation near, was some stunted bushes and a few small crooked trees of a peculiar species of ash, which seems to grow where there is a stony soil and absolutely no moisture. There were no villages or signs of cultivation on the heights above ; about half a dozen Lamas from Spiti came up as it were out of the ground to look at us ; they were dressed quite differently to the Lamas in Kunówar, went bare headed, with close shaven hair ; they wore a tawny orange coloured under-dress, like a petticoat, and coming down to the ankles, and a loose dark red jacket, with long and wide sleeves. This was a long and tiring march of 12 miles, and including short rests occupied $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

The following day we crossed over the Para river at starting, by a bridge similar to those I have before described, but we have been over so many of the kind that we have almost ceased to care for their apparent insecurity. We were then for a short time

in Chinese territory ; as far as we could make out from our map, we left it again after we had descended a ravine and crossed another stream. On this march also, no population, and barren mountains. Whilst in these regions we endeavoured to start as early in the morning as possible, in order to reach our destination in good time ; for daily, about 3 P.M., such a strong wind gets up, that unless our tents were fixed before that hour I doubt whether it would be possible for them to be pitched. On this march a plant with bright green leaves and large white blossoms (*Caprifolium Horridum*) was very abundant, I was able to secure some of its seeds, and I think if this plant thrives, it will be an acquisition at home.

Soon after we had arrived at our camping ground, which was a somewhat similar one to that of the night before, only more raised above the stream, a number of our coolies, both men and women, came near our tent and began to sing, presently also to dance, at least a dozen together, first with a slow movement, the pace gradually increasing as they warmed to their work. The dancing was afterwards varied by some of the performers seating themselves on the ground and keeping time to their singing by knocking two stones together, whilst the rest continued dancing.

One of the most active of the dancers was a young Lama, who had been one of my bearers in the early part of the day. When we, and they too I think, had had enough, we sent them away quite delighted with some tea, a beverage which the people of that district as well as those of Thibet and Ladakh are very fond of, when prepared in their own fashion, *viz.*, the tea leaves are boiled and mixed with soda, butter, and salt, and parched meal is stirred into this mixture just before it is drunk. I have tasted the compound as prepared in a rich native's house, but I must confess I prefer our own method of making tea.

The scenery on the first part of our third march from Chango was of the same character as during the two preceding ones ; we marched up the left bank of the Spiti river at various elevations, and as the French say, I had more than one bad quarter of an hour, where we had to pass along unusually steep slopes of shale, which extended almost from the top of the mountain down to the river beneath ; I was once carried along such a place before I perceived the nature of the ground, and it was very nervous work, for with one false step of the bearers I must have rolled helplessly down to

the bottom of the mountain. I once saw a native slip down some 10 feet at such a place, he managed somehow to throw himself on his face, and then remained quiet, till several others from above helped him up again. After this, I each time got out of the hammock and walked along such awkward places. This march including a short halt for luncheon took us about $6\frac{1}{2}$ hours. We encamped at Laree the lowest Spiti village.

According to the list of Himalayan routes, the road formerly taken by travellers into Spiti entailed crossing the Spiti river by a rope bridge just above Chango, going through Somra, the last village in this direction in Bussahir territory, and situated on the right bank of the river; and again recrossing the river at this point, where a bridge no longer exists, though its piers on either bank are still standing.

CHAPTER V.

WE had hardly paid and sent off our old coolies before the fresh ones arrived who were to carry our loads on the morrow. The Lamas in Spiti are even more numerous than in Kunówar ; on this occasion, the greater part of the male portion of our coolies were Lamas, I believe it is the fashion in Spiti that all the sons of a family, except the eldest, should be Lamas ; each mother seems to have one or two little boys round her clothed in the distinctive Lama robe belonging to this valley, it is of a tawny orange color, the red jacket over this is worn by some adult Lamas, but as I think, by the wealthier ones only. The Lamas have the entire head shaved, the other men shave merely the front part of the head, and wear a pig-tail, Chinese fashion. The Lamas wear no ornaments except a kind of rosary round the neck, the layman, however poor, has invariably a necklace and earrings of some kind, the latter often composed of two or three coral or turquoise beads

strung on a bit of wool, which is passed through the ear, and knotted at both ends.

Laree has a certain amount of grain cultivation, but its trees may be easily counted ; they number seven, one of which is an apricot, it has never yet been known to bear fruit ; the rest are willows.

Before we came in sight of Laree, the character of the mountains had changed ; their forms became grander, the stratification of two high ranges in front of us is most singular ; it consists of many horizontal bands of different shades like those in an onyx. The range furthest from us is scarred in perpendicular lines, which run right across the stratification. The summits of this latter range form a serried line, broken at one or two points by some still loftier peaks ; a thin thread of snow marks the sky line ; but the slopes are too perpendicular on this side for the snow to lie on them.

The colouring of the mountains in Spiti is so infinitely varied as almost to baffle description ; some pass through all the shades of brown from the deepest to the palest fawn colour, the gradations insensibly blending into one another. Their forms, in many cases, are architectural, one might imagine that the Gothic style borrowed much from them—one sees

spires and pinnacles, towers and buttresses, though the arch is wanting.

From Laree, which we quitted the next day at 7-30 A.M., we went to Pokh, about 11 miles. I was able to ride the greater part of this march, but had to walk occasionally, and also to make use of the hammock. On the three previous marches I had been supplied with a weak little cow or ox to ride, these animals could never carry me up any very steep bit of hill ; my husband one day even found them useless when he merely took hold of the animal's tail with the object of its assisting him to climb a short but steep ascent. This day, however, I had a *dsopo*, as it is called, half yák, half cow, a much stronger creature. On this march we had to cross a most insecure-looking small bridge, and later on a fragile gallery like those I have before described, this was up a very steep incline, and beneath overhanging rocks ; our saddles had even to be removed from the *dsopo* and C——s horse that they might not be injured by contact with them.

The march from Pokh to Dankar, the capital of Spiti (9 miles), was much easier than many of the preceding ones. Dankar lies at 12,774 feet above the sea ; the houses of its inhabitants are perched

along the top and down one side of a singular mountain ridge of water-worn earth and stones, apparently of lacustrine formation. This ridge has been thrown up between other mountains of a totally different character; we had already seen similar deposits lower down the valley, none however were so marked or so extensive. Wheat and other grain crops flourish even at this elevation, a few small poplar and willow trees were trying to grow.

From Dankar to Kaja (14 miles), we first descended a very rough track, for some little distance; our path afterwards wound at times at a dizzy height above the Spiti river, and round and over jagged points of rock and earth intersected by deep fissures. We at length went down to its bank, this stream is of an immense width at that point: we had twice to ford its tributaries. At a small village about half-way between the two places we changed coolies, and there, to our great astonishment, we saw a couple of small European tents, they turned out to belong to two Englishmen, who were on a shooting expedition towards Hanle, in Ladakh. They kindly asked us to join them at breakfast, and we spent an hour there listening to some of their former experiences when crossing the rope bridge near Chango. This rope bridge,

it appears, was then of the kind where the would-be passenger over the river is slung beneath a single rope stretched across from one side to the other ; a piece of bent bamboo tied at the two ends in the form of a horse-shoe goes over this rope, and in a sling below the traveller sits ; he has to steady himself by holding either side of the bamboo with his hands. On this occasion, after several persons had passed over, a strand of the principal rope broke near the centre ; and, in consequence, for fear of an accident, the one of the party who was then to be passed over was let go slowly ; he got as far as this point, and there stuck ; the bamboo could not be made to go over the hitch. The poor man remained thus in mid air amidst the shoutings and screamings of the coolies and the servants. At last, one of the poor victim's friends suggested that they should pull him back again. The incline was so great, that all their efforts could only move him one yard. This done, some one was of opinion that if they let him go again with a jerk, he himself helping at the right moment, the obstacle in the rope might possibly be passed over. He understood the signs made, for the torrent drowned all voices, and they at length succeeded in pulling the unfortunate man to the other side.

After our fresh start, the path was a very good one for some time, I was able to ride nearly the whole way on a hired pony. At Kaja a blacksmith met us, and replaced all the missing shoes on our horses. We had dispatched Danni from Dankar to the Nono, or head native official for all Spiti, begging him to give us a letter, or *purwana* as it is called, in order to facilitate our getting supplies and coolies whilst passing through his district, and asking him at the same time to send us this workman, who did his shoeing fairly well, but no horse can long retain his shoes when he has to traverse bare rocks, the Spiti ponies are usually unshod, except when their owners take them into Thibet.

The next day I was able to mount my faithful Turki once more ; owing to his shoeless state and his sprain, I had not ridden him since we left Jangi. During this march of 12 miles, I was obliged to take to the hammock on two different occasions when steep rocky ascents, and sharp turns in them, rendered it unadvisable to ride. We had also this day to ford a large unbridged stream, before mounting up to and passing by the village of Ki, above which, on a solitary rock, is the famous Ki Buddhist monastery. Its buildings appeared to be very extensive ;

it is said to be 700 years old. After going over a certain amount of level ground, we again began ascending a steep and rugged path up a side stream and at last Kiwar came in sight (13,400 feet).

The following morning, when going from thence to Kiotro (12 miles), the first half hour was tolerably good riding ground ; after that was a short but sharp descent, a stream to be crossed, and then a long and rocky ascent. This accomplished in the hammock, I had a pleasant straightforward ride of perhaps four miles. Two short ascents were overcome, when, to our agreeable surprise, we found ourselves in a narrow green valley clothed with herbage which extended up to the tops of the hills on either side. This was perhaps three miles in length ; it terminated in a plain which was evidently once a lake, and is about a couple of miles or so in circumference ; its surface is now covered with verdure, on which numerous Spiti ponies were feeding. The green grass was quite refreshing to the sight after being so long amongst the bare and arid mountains. On emerging from the lake, we again entered upon a desolate and stony region.

More than once we crossed stone avalanches of from half a mile to one mile in length ; a lacustrine

formation like that at Dankar was this day a marked feature. Once I thought we were coming to a village, I was for a time completely deceived, and fancied this must be our halting place. At a considerable height above and overhanging the stream, pillars of lacustrine conglomerate were numerous, they were flat and square at their summits, and resembled native houses which are often clustered together. After passing this point, we at once descended to the level of the river, and went for some distance up the partially dry bed of a side stream which we eventually crossed by a natural bridge of rock which perfectly spans it ; but one half being lower than the other, stones have been laid down to make the surface level. A steep climb up from this bridge landed us upon a path which was tolerably easy as to its incline, but it was encumbered with huge stones, the debris of the mountain above, and consequently a horse must carefully pick every step he takes. After a couple of miles of such work, Kiotro came in sight, a low hill hid it from us till we were close upon it.

Including a short halt in the green valley, this march took us $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours, which will give some idea of its difficulties. Our tent at Kiotro was pitched in a curious spot between two small old moraines.

On August 16th, we marched to Lósár (13,395 feet) about 10 miles. It was a good riding road the whole way, and the first time since leaving Nirth that I have not been obliged to dismount from my horse or yák and either walk or be carried a greater or a less distance. We had on this march to ford three side streams, all of them containing a considerable body of water. When opposite Lósár we had also to ford the Spiti river itself ; it is there a wide and rapid flowing stream. Some of the men engaged to carry me in the hammock gave their assistance in leading our horses ; it was advisable to let them do so, they knew the deep places, and where one could cross best ; I observed that if any of the natives forded it by themselves, they went three abreast for security.

We found ourselves obliged to remain two whole days at Lósár, one not being sufficient to enable the mookiar (or head-man of the place) to make arrangements respecting the coolies who would have to accompany us for six marches, there being no villages on our road between this place and Darcha in Lahoul.

We were glad to leave Lósár ; it is in a most exposed situation, with no trees to shelter it or break the

force of the wind, which is very violent and cold ; it begins to blow each day about 1 P. M., and continues pretty well throughout the evening and night. I suppose the inhabitants of the place being used to them do not mind these bitter winds, for I never saw a merrier or more lively set of people; an hour or two after our arrival, from 16 to 20 of the villagers, both men and women, came down and danced before our tent to the accompaniment of their own voices ; they performed four or five different dances, most of their songs were in four or common time. One piece of music was very curious ; it had four bars of singing, and four of hissing alternately.

On the 19th our preparations were complete ; 160 lbs of grain had been ground to supply our servants with food by the way, we also had to take live sheep with us, of which when made into mutton we give them the largest half every second or third day ; we had found from former experience that though the natives of the plains of India are not usually meat-eaters, when they come to these cold climates. and have much walking to do besides, they need stronger food than ordinary to keep them in health. Below Dankar the grain crops were all ripe or nearly so ; but beyond that, and up to Lósár, where cultivation

ceases in Spiti, they were green, and would not be fit to cut for another month at least. The wheat is a bearded variety, and though I sifted some for our own use, it does not give white bread.

On crossing the previous mountain passes I had not felt much inconvenience from the rarefication of the air, but after reaching Dankar (12,774 feet) we had to remain for more than a fortnight at a great height above the sea, and I suffered much from nausea and a dry hacking cough, which caused me many sleepless nights. I could only take soup, corn-flour, and such like food, the rarefication of the air had no such effect upon my husband, though one or two of our servants complained of feeling symptoms, which may have arisen from it.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR departure from Lósár must have resembled in some respects that of the patriarchs of old when they started on their wanderings ; our livestock consisted of seven horses, our own three, and four others,—two to carry our large tent, and two to give our servants lifts by turns, and besides a number of milch goats to supply us with milk, and a mixed flock of sheep and goats, each carrying their load in two small bags hung over their back ; these bags contained the coolies' food for the six days' match. These animals will either be sold in Lahoul at a profit, or else be employed to carry back grain, salt, or other merchandise.

Two mookiars, one belonging to Lósár, and another much less important individual, came with us, we found the head-man very useful and attentive. His attire was somewhat like that of a wizard, or magician, in a pantomime, a long black robe reaching almost to the feet, and confined at the waist by a girdle ; on his head, a peaked red cap of peculiar form, with embroidery on it, which might be taken for

cabalistic characters ; this cap I fancy was his badge of office, for he always removed it when speaking to us, or rendering us any service. The second mookiar was dressed in a suit of white woollen stuff like the laymen, only of a finer texture and cleaner. The head mookiar was invariably at hand to assist us at any difficult point, such as fording a large stream ; and he also kept his own people in order, when, as was sometimes the case, they tried to shirk their loads ; this our servants could hardly have done, with their ignorance of the Thibetan language.

Though there are no villages on this route, the camping grounds have each a name. The first march from Lósár, a short one of 8 miles, brought us to Chittikar, a green slope at the foot of the Kansum pass, we forded a considerable river, and encamped near the spot where two paths divide, the one on the left hand, going to Kulu—*viâ* the Shigri glacier ; the one on the right, which we were to follow, leads into Lahoul by the Bara Lacha pass. One mountain, which was for sometime in our right hand on this march, looked like brown velvet in some parts, this was in places shaded off into a soft tender green ; towering high above these lower ranges are snowy peaks of fantastic form.

Lhakim, our next halting place, is distant 14 miles from Chittikar. This is not an easy march, though I rode at least half the way, it took us nine hours. We commenced by a rapid ascent to the top of the Kansum pass ; at the part where we crossed it, it is over 15,000 feet. The descent on the other side is very slight, barely a thousand feet ; on our left and almost level with us for sometime, were the bases of two grand glaciers, and a little further on, on our right, a lovely lake, perhaps two miles in length, the only one of the kind we have as yet seen in the Himalayas ; owing I presume to its glacier origin, in some lights it looked emerald green, and when the sky was reflected in it, it appeared to be of a deep blue colour. A short distance beyond this lake, a pair of splendid golden eagles continued circling for some minutes at a short distance over our heads.

A succession of deep ravines and avalanches of stone ended this march, and made riding impossible. On this and the three following marches the ground is carpeted with "Edelweiss ;" so thickly does it grow that the most enthusiastic lovers of this plant might pick as much as they desire and no sensible diminution appear. One evening our tent was pitched on a thick bed of it.

We rose the following morning at 4 A.M., for we were told that we must leave Lhakim early ; a glacier stream had to be forded, and it was necessary to cross it before the middle of the day. We started a few minutes after 5 A.M., but riding being impossible, except at short intervals, owing to the enormous masses of mountain debris which we had to go over, we did not reach the torrent till nearly eleven ; fortunately for us, the morning was cloudy and dull, we were told the stream was not nearly so much swollen as it had been at the same hour the day before, when there had been a bright hot sun. We and all our people passed through it safely ; the attentive head mookiar himself being in waiting to lead my horse.

Topoh, the name of our encamping place that night, is a small knoll of verdure slightly raised above a stream ; it began to rain just before dark, and during the night I was rather anxious lest our tent might be flooded by the rising of the water. No such catastrophe took place, but it continued to pour till past 5 A.M., the hour we had fixed to rise, and when we were half dressed, a deputation came, I conclude from the mookiars, to say that it was impossible for us to start then. I suspect both they

and the coolies felt chilled and uncomfortable after the night of drenching rain. Snow had fallen in the night less than 200 feet above our tents.

Quite unexpectedly, at 11 A.M. the mookiars were all impatience to be off. We had previously been told that a moderate-sized and also a large glacier stream had to be forded on this march, we soon crossed the former, and about two o'clock were suddenly pulled up by seeing a formidable seething torrent obstruct our way. At that time of the day it would have been impossible for either man or horse to have passed through it with safety, the sun's rays having melted the ice above, and caused an immense body of water to come rushing down. We were informed that only a month or six weeks before, three natives had been drowned at this spot, possibly owing to their attempting to cross this stream in the middle of the day, not liking the icy coldness of the water in the early morning. There was nothing for it but to encamp that night on the bank above the torrent. We asked the exact hour in the morning when the water would be at its lowest, and were told $6\frac{1}{2}$ A.M. was the best time for fording it.

We were at the water's edge at 6-15, it took us considerably more than an hour before our whole

cavalcade of men and horses, sheep and goats, had passed through. I rode over on Turki, who had again lost all his shoes, trusting to his greater strength, enabling him to battle better with the current than the smaller Spiti horses. There were three separate streams to ford, the centre one the strongest and deepest, Turki was evidently much frightened, and after we reached the other side, he, as well as the Yarkandi, which my husband rode, trembled for half an hour in every limb. The coolies crossed four and five abreast, I understand that, when going through such streams, they much prefer carrying a heavy load ; the weight helps to steady them, and prevents them in some degree from losing their footing. When it was the turn of the sheep and goats to be driven into the water, they did not relish it at all, at one moment I saw two of them taken helplessly down stream by the force of the current ; their legs went up in the air, and I thought it was all over with them, they recovered themselves, however, and managed to reach the small bank of stones which divides the second from the third torrent ; as soon as we had seen every one safely across, we started again.

For about a mile the hammock was indispensable, we then got on to an excellent riding track. This

led us up to the summit of the Bara Lacha pass (16,000 feet), which is an almost level table-land about five miles in length, it had (August 28th) not long been free from snow. It was necessary to ford two large glacier streams at this part. On our left, and only separated from us by the Chundra river, was a magnificent glacier, terminating in three broad and serpentine streams. The glacier views on this march are said to be the finest in all the Western Himalayas. After we had traversed the plateau, a comparatively slight ascent brought us on to the engineer-made road which leads over the Bara Lacha in the direction of Ladakh, and it was a great relief to get upon it after so many days of rough work.

Before this such a high and bitterly cold wind had set in, that I was fain to cover myself over head and all, leaving only one peep-hole open to take note of the scenery ; my hands were fully occupied in keeping my wraps close round me ; the wind rendering this no easy matter, and I trusted to a native to lead my horse. In no time, as it seemed, we accomplished the remaining eight miles down to Zing-zing-bar and were fairly in the Lahoul valley.

At the commencement of our descent, the Bhaga, which there takes its rise, was a tiny trickling rill of

water, we presently came upon a lake about a mile in length, at the lower end of this lake was a mass of rocky debris ; I was beginning to wonder how this lake emptied itself, when about a hundred yards further on, I saw a small stream issuing from amongst the stones, another mile or two beyond, having been fed by numerous glacier streams it had become a foaming torrent.

We now felt quite at home, for we had been snowed up at this place six days and nights three years before, in the early part of the month of August ; not a pleasant predicament at a spot where there is no village, and little or no fuel to be had. I shall not easily forget, how, on that occasion, our bhistic (or water-carrier) a native of the plains of India, came to the door of our tent, and said in a lamentable voice, (tears running down his cheeks), Mem Saheb ! Mem Saheb ! we shall all die, we have seen snow !

In the countries and districts where Buddhism prevails, there is a vast difference in its outward forms and customs. For instance, in Kunówar, the Lamas (or monks) are permitted to smoke, but they may not marry ; in Spiti, the case is reversed, they may marry, but they must not smoke. When on the march in Spiti I often observed such of my

bearers as were Lamas, carefully seat themselves to leeward, when any of the laymen indulged in a hookah.

Spiti is a valley possessing an inhospitable climate; its inhabitants exhibit the rudest manners of any people we have met with, though I doubt their intending to be uncivil; much must be put down to curiosity, for the high mountains which surround Spiti shut it out completely from the rest of the world. It is no easy matter either to enter or to leave the country, and to see an European face is an event to its people, the few Englishmen who go there for sport make no stay. The small intercourse they have with others, and their natural surroundings contribute to form their character, which is in most marked contrast to the gentleness of the Hindu and the self-respect of the Mahomedan. For those interested in studying the manners and habits of different races, the people of Spiti afford a perfectly distinct type, and again, those who admire nature in all her grandeur of desolation may gaze in wonder at the forms she here assumes.

Marching for some days consecutively at a height of seldom less than 13,500 feet, we did not see the mountain peaks towering at a great height above

us ; but we lived in the midst of them. We were not unfrequently on a level with the middle point of the descent of some of the largest glaciers in these mountains, and not many hundred yards distant from them. The scenery of the Himalayas differs in many respects from that of the Alps. In the mountains of the former, until an elevation of 10,000 feet is reached, there are no wide valleys, but only deep gorges through which rivers have cut their way; so that the mountains rise steeply from either side of the streams, leaving no level ground for cultivation. Kulu, and the vale of Kashmir, are exceptions to this rule, but in both these cases the nature of the ground shows that lakes must have existed at some former period. I suppose the explanation of this to be, that the Himalayas have not passed through such glacial periods as we see signs of in the Alps.

FINIS.