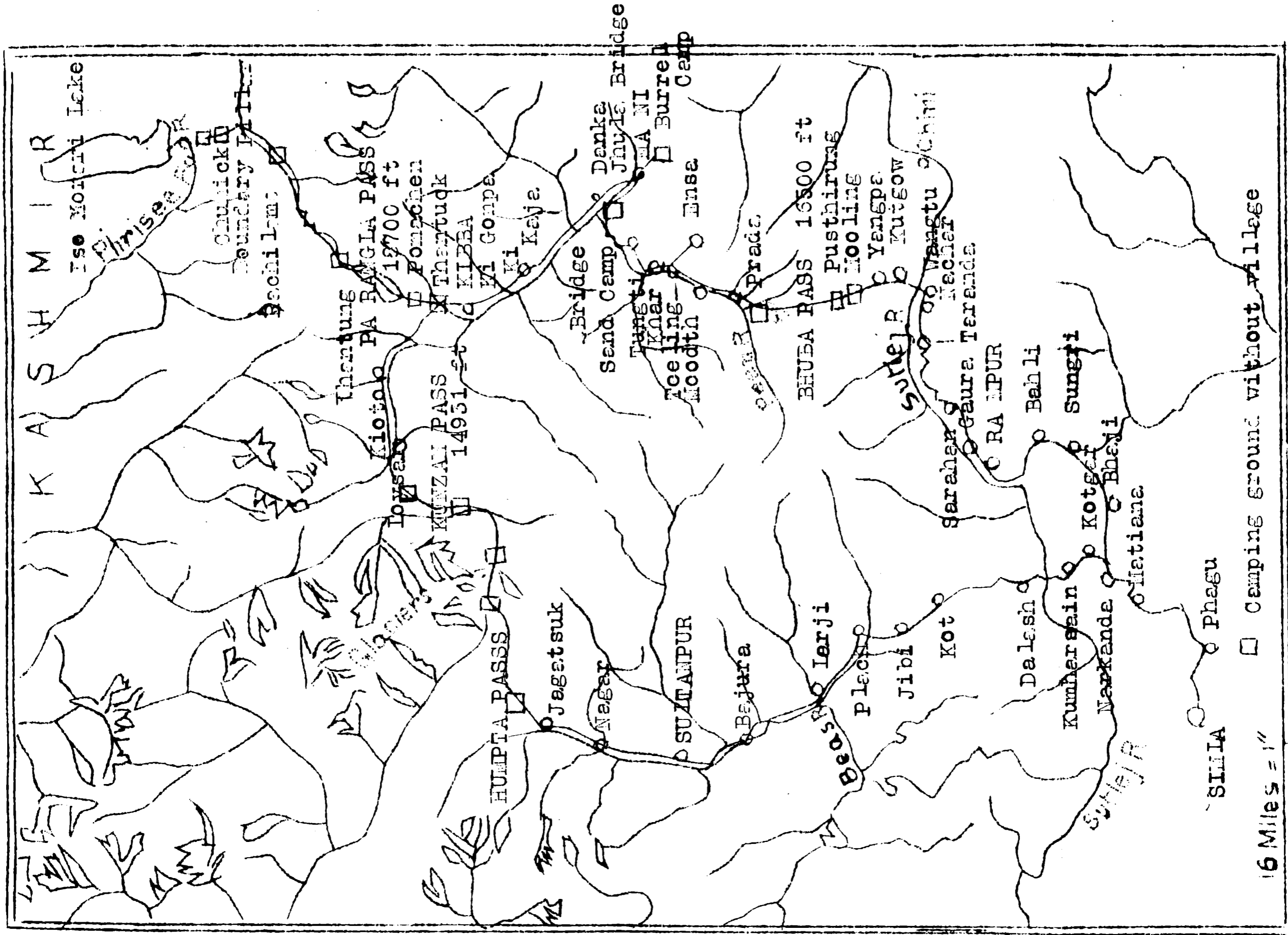


**ACROSS THE HIMALAYAS**

**by**

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MAP SNOWING ROUTE & HALTING PLACES



## P R E F A C E.

To those that have not seen even the lower ranges of the Himalayas the description given in the few pages that follow this preface will convey but an infinitesimal idea of the great range of mountains that form the northern frontier of India. I shall therefore, in as few lines as possible, endeavour to give the reader an idea of this immense agglomeration of mountains and its influence over a great part of India.

Without these mountains some of the richest tracts of India would be deserts; from their snows they give India her principal rivers which even with only their natural courses render many a thousand square miles rich culturable land, and since the hand of the engineer has done its work an additional 46,000 square miles have been converted to agricultural land. This commanded area is every day being extended. Further, the water power from some of these rivers is utilized to generate electricity for commercial and domestic purposes and the power thus generated at present represents some 10,385 nominal horse power or roughly 7,750 brake horse power. Now these are remarkably low figures considering it is within practical possibilities to develop 11,000 horse power from one of the Himalayan rivers alone which flows through the United Provinces. However, before long we may hope

to see the present brake horse power increased a hundred fold or more and with cheap power available India will embark on a new era as, I venture to forecast, a manufacturing country of the first order.

The Himalayas extend from west to east for some 2,000 miles and its average distance from its southern to its northern edge exceeds 500 miles, that is the range rests on a base of 1,000,000 square miles.

Many people, I feel sure, have the impression that this vast mountain region is bleak and bare and clothed in a spotless white mantle of perpetual snow. This is true when the elevation exceeds 13,000 feet on the southern slopes, but when the first heights are crossed the perpetual snow line is not seen below 17,000 feet. In the intervening valleys cultivation is possible and on the lower elevations stretching towards India some of the richest vegetation may be seen.

Great variation in temperature is also met with. In striking contrast to the freezing cold on the glaciers stand out the high temperatures met with in some of the valleys. For instance in crossing from Lahul into Kulu, in a march of two days I dropped from the perpetual snows of the Humpta Pass to a temperature of 99° at Sultanpur which is only 2,000 feet above sea level.

The highest peaks hitherto measured in the Himalayas, for the most part, are

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found on the southern side of the watershed between India and Tibet, at a distance of about 100 miles from the plains of India. Mount Everest rises up to 29,002, feet and there are many other peaks that are over 25,000 feet above sea level.

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## ACROSS THE HIMALAYAS.

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From the time of my arrival in Simla in 1906 it was my ambition to cross the Himalayas but it was not till very recently that I was able to realise this ambition, and the following is a brief description of the journey which was undertaken in company of a friend.

Having procured the necessary permits from Government and the Kashmir Darbar, and having given Government a formal undertaking not to cross the Frontiers of Tibet, I set out from Simla early in May in company with Blake. Our first day's march concluded at Fagu, eleven miles north of Simla on the Hindustan-Tibet road. Here we pitched our camp which we struck again the following morning. Continuing our journey we reached Matiana (25 miles from Simla) about an hour before the arrival of our servant accompanied by the muleteer and the mules carrying our baggage. No sooner had our baggage arrived than we pitched our tent on the grass lawn directly in front of the Dak bungalow and had scarcely settled ourselves comfortably when the rain came down in torrents, but our tent stood the wetting remarkably well so that we emerged the next morning perfectly dry. After a rather late



Narkanda, seventeen miles further on. As we arrived there drenched to the skin we gave up the idea of pitching camp and stayed for the night in the Dak bungalow. While here, our cook thought it advisable to buy a sheep and convert it into mutton. Having received our consent he started negotiations with a villager, and, after settling the price, he advanced the money and waited patiently for the arrival of sheep, but the next morning when we were about to start neither the sheep nor the villager was visible.

A few miles beyond Narkanda the road enters the Bagi forest, which with its stately deodars and scrubby undergrowth makes a pleasing and imposing picture for those not accustomed to the wilder grandeur of the denser Indian forests. While marching through we heard the drawled-out cry of a barking deer, and intermingled with this weird sound, and in marked contrast, the sweet music of numerous song birds that make the place their home, met our ears. While we were still in the forest it commenced to rain and when we reached the Bagi bungalow, which stands on the left of the road, it was still raining; so, rather than pitch camp, we took shelter for the night under the friendly roof of the bungalow. Here again our cook made strenuous efforts to secure a sheep, and in the early hours of the following morning I heard a villager calling out to a hamlet about six

miles across the valley to send in the animal, but all his efforts to meet our requirements were in vain as the flocks had already been sent out to graze. In this connection I may mention that what struck me at the time as remarkable was the manner in which the natives of these hilly districts make themselves heard over long distances.

Our next two days march lay through Sungri and Bahli, while still another march brought us to Rampur. Within a mile of our destination we were caught in a shower of rain that soaked us to our skins and in a few moments the road was converted into the bed of a rapid stream. Through the water we splashed till we reached the Public Works Rest House. The Chowkidar of the place noticing our sorry condition and seeing that our baggage had not arrived was roused to an act of kindness and produced two rough but clean blankets in which we wrapped ourselves. In this garb we remained till our mules arrived an hour later.

While here we got for the first time some really reliable information of the difficulties the traveller through Spiti has to contend with; and, as Rampur is the last place from which all supplies can be had we decided to stay in the place a day. Early the following morning we sallied forth into the little town and the first object that attracted our

attention was the "Dhangir" or Bhuddist temple which is built after the Chinese style of architecture. On our enquiring whether we could enter, a Bhuddist priest who was standing at the entrance of a court-yard in front of the temple, invited us within. We walked into a room about thirty feet square at the farther end of which was mounted a prayer wheel nearly twelve feet in high and five in diameter wrought in embossed silver, copper and brass. On the floor, a few feet away from the wheel sat an old man who was chanting in a monotonous voice the words "oom Mani Padmi Hun" and at the same time turning the wheel on its perpendicular axis by means of an ingenious but simple contrivance. Hung from the roof and reaching down to the floor were lengths of silk of the most sombre colours which were in striking contrast to an occasional strip of bright yellow cotton cloth. Along the back wall, either in niches or on shelves, were idols of Bhudda and Hindu Gods, signifying, I take it, that the religion of the worshippers at this temple is far from pure Bhuddism. From here we turned our steps towards the Bashahar State hospital about a quarter of a mile further on where I was able to get a little lint. This I thought advisable as most of the supply which we had brought from Simla had been used up on my feet which suffered badly from blisters and what remained had been damaged by the spilling of a bottle of photographic chemicals. The doctor of the

hospital further assisted us by getting such paper money as we had with us changed into silver, and directing us to a shop where we could get European canned provisions. The obliging shop Proprietor from whom we purchased a few articles of food undertook to get made up for us "kiltas" bound with hoop iron. The binding was suggested by the friendly tradesman; and a very sensible piece of advice it proved to be. These baskets, I may mention, were necessary to enable us to split up our baggage into loads suitable for transport by coolies whom we had to employ further on.

Leaving Rampur at 10.30. A.M. on the 20th May, we started for Gaura eight miles off. The road between these two places is rough, very exposed, and winds a good deal. On reaching Gaura we pitched our tent in front of the Public Works Department rest house which stands on a knoll that runs out northwards. The following morning we were up early, and at about 8 O'clock saw coming up the road a flock of sheep and goats. Leading the flock and calling it after her was a woman with a Tibetan cast of features, who, at regular intervals called out "Ohai"; starting in a low drawn out "Oh" and ending in a abrupt and high pitched "Ai". Behind were two men and a woman who strove, by whistling shrilly, to urge on the lagging animals. As they approached I noticed that every sheep and goat carried a load of two bulging woollen bags. On making enquiries I learned that the owners of the flocks were no-

madic traders (called "Bigaris"). Remarkable indeed are these hardy Bigaris. At the approach of winter they start from Tibet and Spiti with their flocks carrying wool and borax, and on they come over snow covered mountain passes, steep slopes and rough country, till they reach Bashahr on the one side and Kulu on the other; the watershed of the Beas and Sutlej intervening. Some of these traders even find their way to Simla. At the villages at these places they exchange their goods for rice, tobacco and sugar and return to their native land at the close of the winter. Rough Turquoises, Garnets and Topazes may frequently be purchased from these people at a few annas a piece.

From Gaura we set out for Sarahan, seventeen miles distant by the new road and ten by the old. For the first three miles we followed the new road and then dropped by a steep foot-path to the old. Shortly after we gained the lower way we crossed the Maglad river by a rough wooden bridge, and from here there is a steep ascent which continues for three miles, and the road strewn with stones, and broken up into ruts, is impassable for loaded animals; consequently for all animal transport the longer but more level road that was constructed in 1910 must be used.

Our next halting place was Taranda, fourteen miles from Sarahan. The road between these two places is like a switch

back railway, crossed in a number of places by rough bridges spanning mountain streams that find their way to the Sutlej which can now and again be seen winding its way at the foot of precipitous hill sides.

Striking camp at 10. A. M. on the 23rd May we marched nine and a half miles to Nachar, passing Pounda on the way.

At Nachar there is a pretty two storied bungalow intended for forest officers whose duty occasionally requires their presence at the place. Here the traveller bound for Spiti leaves behind him all means of communication with his friends, as this is the last village at which there is a post office.

On the Morning of the 24th we were up early, and after paying and dismissing our muleteer we set to work to split up our baggage to make it suitable for coolie transport. This we did by putting into the kiltas we had brought with us from Rampur our canned provisions and other belongings that could not be easily damaged by exposure. Photographic materials and other perishable articles were packed in a couple of light steel trunks, while our bedding and clothing were inclosed in Willesden canvas valises. The remainder of our baggage, which consisted of a 40 lb. tent, two camp beds, two gun cases and our servants shuldari was put into jute bags. The parcels thus made up

numbered fourteen and were made over to as many coolies, who set out in Indian file with our cook following close on their heels and ourselves bringing up the rear.

So far I have not gone into detail as the would-be traveller along this part of our journey can get all the information required from a book entitled "Guide to Simla" published by Messrs Thacker Spink and Co.

From the forest kungalow at Nachar the road enters a wood of fine spruce and deodar, and when it emerges lies along barren hillsides that descend steeply to the waters of the Sutlej which is spanned by a steel cable suspension bridge at Wangtu or Angtu as the place is sometimes called. It then continues in a north-easterly direction as far as Shipki on the borders of Chinese territory. At Wangtu we left the road and took the path that runs along the right bank of the Wanga river which empties itself into the Sutlej just a few feet towards the east of the suspension bridge. Once on the path, which is nothing but a narrow mountain track, we started the actual ascent of the Bhuba pass; one of the passes of the mid-Himalayan range. Higher and higher led the path following the course of the river, - a surging torrent - along its steep and rocky bed. Here and there the river banks came down to almost water level and at these spots grew a few

stunted pine or deodar trees. After a while the path turns away about a quarter of a mile to the west of the river, and then turns again to the east till it crosses the Wanga. Shortly after crossing the stream we reached a small village called by the folk of the place Kutgow, but spoken of as Bhuba by the people of Nacher. Here we changed our coolies and continued our journey through much the same sort of scenery till we reached Yangpa at 5.30 P.M. where we pitched camp a few yards away from a large tree under which there was a stone platform raised about two feet above the ground. Here a pitiful sight met our eyes. Lying on the platform were two emaciated sick men who informed us that they had met with accidents while coming over the pass that we were about to cross. One man had his knee badly swollen and ulcerated and the other was suffering in the same manner from injuries he had received to his thighs. We rendered them what medical aid it lay in our power to give; but it was with heavy hearts that we left these two patient sufferers who were here lying exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather, and depending solely on the bounty of the villagers to allay the gnawing pangs of starvation.

After administering to the best of our ability to the wants of these two sufferers we turned towards our tent, and after paying up and dismissing our coolies we interviewed the village headman who had



arrived on the scene and was waiting to receive our instructions. The first thing we told him was that we wanted coolies to be in readiness early the next morning to enable us to continue our journey up the pass. The man shook his head and with a smile said, - "But you came up with fourteen coolies". To this we replied saying that we had loads for only fourteen men. The headman admitted the fact, but politely informed us that it would be four days before we touched another village and that a good part of this time would be spent on the snow where marching would be slow and extremely difficult. All this information came as a surprise, as we were under the impression that there would be villages up to the foot of the final ascent of the pass. After a discussion that occupied the better part of an hour we found it necessary to engage twentyeight coolies; sixteen to carry baggage, six to carry their own blankets and food, four to carry fuel and two to cut paths, when necessary, through the snow. Having settled these details we told the headman that we wished to make an early start the following morning and that the men should be in readiness by eight O'clock. But he said that this would not be possible as the men would have to make snow shoes which would take a whole day. There was nothing left to us but to accept the situation. We now turned our attention to our cook, and, after telling him how matters stood, enquired whether there were sufficient provisions

to go on with for the next five days without touching the canned things. As a result of the enquiry and a personal inspection of what was in hand, we found it necessary to get a few fowls and a few pounds of potatoes. In this connection I may mention that Yangpa is the last place at which one can get any poultry and vegetables.

On the morning of the 25th May, as there was nothing in particular to be done, we did not turn out of our tent till about nine O'clock; and when we did tie back our tent flaps it was to see a group of inquisitive villagers who watched our doings with keen curiosity and wherever we went the little crowd followed. Leading them, I noticed, was a short but sturdily built young man who, whenever we asked a question, acted as spokesman and answered in good Hindustani. This little man, on our return to our tent, advanced, and after a polite Salaam held out a small packet of papers, telling us that they were certificates given to him by sportsmen to whom he had acted, through Spiti, as guide and interpreter. As the result of a conversation we had with him we gleaned that Tibetan was the only language spoken beyond the Bhuba; we therefore decided to engage him.

I have dealt at some length with our stay at Yangpa, but before passing on, I think, a few words about the people of the village, would not be out of place.

These simple honest folk, small in stature, with a tartar cast of features, clothe themselves in rough woollen trousers and long double-breasted coats, resembling very much a gentleman's dressing gown, but with sleeves that extend well beyond the finger tips. Round the waist a girdle of wool or goats hair cord is worn. The space between the body and the coat above the waist is used as a receptacle for small articles such as a drinking cup a tobacco pouch and a pat of butter wrapped in a dirty piece of cloth. Men and women dress alike with the exception of the head covering. Men in this case wear small caps with flaps that can be turned down so as to cover the ears, whereas women throw over their heads small square shawls folded diagonally. Both men and women wear slippers made of goat's hair with soles of untanned goat's skin.

On the morning of May 26th we were up early and with the assistance of the coolies, camp was quickly struck and by 9.30 we were on the march. From Yangpa the path ascends sharply for half a mile or so and then continues over undulating ground through pleasant groves of spruce and fir with a fair amount of undergrowth and with occasional beds of forget-me-nots and violets brought to a state of perfect beauty by the fostering and artistic hand of nature. Our next halt was at Mooling where we arrived at four in the afternoon after having made a halt of two hours on the way.

Mooling itself is a wide slightly undulating valley covered for the greater part with rich grass. The flat is surrounded by a ring of mountains whose tops and slopes, at the time we were there, were covered with snow, and across the centre of the plain runs the Wanga river on the left bank of which we pitched our camp. Almost immediately after we arrived an elderly man, accompanied by two children, approached us and salaamed. On our enquiring what he was doing at this desolate spot, away from all human habitation, he informed us that as the spot was a rich grazing ground he had brought his ponies and sheep to fatten on the verdure and pointing to a dark object away in the distance said that that was his tent abode. He also volunteered the information that the place was a good shooting ground where burrel brown and black bear were plentiful. We saw none of the latter but the following morning we saw three or four herds of burrel about which I shall presently write a few lines.

. Our conversation with the nomad ended when the cook announced that tea was ready. Tea was followed in a couple of hours by dinnor, after which we retired for the night. The guide and the coolies slept in the open, lying on sheep skins and covered with course blankets.

The morning of the 27th dawned bright and clear and by half past nine camp was struck and a start made. We were scarcely

on the march when we sighted a herd of burrel, and I started after it; but had to give up the chase after two hours hard climbing as I happened, owing to the herd having changed its direction, to get on the side from which the wind was blowing from me towards the animals. The herd stopped; the females that usually form a cordon round the males, raised their heads, sniffed the air about them, and almost immediately the whole herd moved off rapidly. I mention this instance as the burrel stalker must be extremely careful of the manner in which he approaches his game as the creature is possessed of exceedingly keen sight and scent. In this case there were quite a thousand yards between myself and the herd when it scented me.

After I gave up the chase I rejoined the rest of the party and we began our ascent of the Bhuba in right good earnest. Directly we began moving we stepped on to snow and tramped steadily on for about an hour, when we came to a patch of bare ground which we covered in half an hour or so, and then again got on to snow below which lay the frozen Wanga. Our progress was very slow, but we plodded along upwards till we reached a place called Pusthirong at 4. 40 P. M. and pitched our tent on a sloping bit of ground about twenty by thirty feet the only piece of bare earth visible on the great snow covered mountain slopes. About two hundred yards beyond rose up a great wall of snow

a hundred feet or more in height, our guide informed us, we would have to climb the next day.

We had scarcely pitched our tent and settled down when it began to snow and the temperature dropped so low that the water in a wash bowl froze in about twenty minutes. Our cook, dressed in his heavy clothes and with a coarse woollen blanket covering himself from head to feet, showing only his face and hands, was making strenuous efforts to keep alight a fire that sent up dense volumes of smoke. Although the process was a trying one he stood it manfully and would not get under his own little tent till he had served us up a hot cup of tea each and quite a nice dinner of chicken. While we were still at our meal the snowing stopped. When we had finished our dinner we stepped out to see how the coolies intended to take their night's rest. The guide told us that they would sleep in the same manner as they had done at Mooling. When all was still I went out with my electric torch to see how the men had actually retired, and I found that they had spread their sheep skins out in a line on the snow and had laid themselves down on these, touching each other; a number of doubled blankets covering the whole line.

We left Pusthirung at half past seven on the morning of the 28th May and were soon at the foot of the great wall of snow referred to earlier. I wondered how

we were to get to the top. It seemed so utterly hopeless. Just then the two men we had brought with us to cut paths stepped forward and with their axes began making notches in the snow, each notch about a foot above the preceding one. Two parallel sets of notches were made and our party began the ascent in two rows. From below it looked as if they were climbing two invisible ladders laid against the snow. Up we went, my companion just behind one of the axemen with a few coolies following, and I at the end of the second line, till we reached the top. This climb took about three quarters of an hour to accomplish. When we had surmounted it our coolies told us that we were fortunate that the next ascent had been rendered uneven by the rush of a recent avalanche. This made the final ascent easier and only a few notches had to be cut occasionally to take us over small ridges. Thus we proceeded till we reached the top of the pass, 16,500 feet above sea level, at half past ten. Here the coolies laid down their loads and walking round a pile of stones above which were stuck a number of small coloured flags bearing Tibetan inscriptions, chanted a prayer in thanksgiving for the safe ascent. After this they approached us in a body and after salaaming asked for "Jodh Ka Bakshees", i.e., reward for crossing the pass. In reply to an enquiry as to what form of Bakshees they wanted, they said that they would like to have a sheep from the next village. This we promised and they sat

down for a short rest. After half an hour had elapsed we gave the signal for a start. The men soon had their loads strapped to their shoulders and started off at a brisk pace down the northern slope which dropped sharply after about ten minutes going. As each man arrived at the edge of this slope he took a flying leap into the air and alighting on the snow in a sitting position slid down the four hundred yards or more in a shorter time than it takes to relate. We followed suit. The descent was so rapid that the sensations I felt are hard to describe, but when I reached the bottom I felt the blood tingling in my veins and a warm glow in my face. We continued our march along the glacier for about four miles when we came in sight of the river Peen. The water of this river was frozen on both sides and only a narrow stream of a beautiful pale green colour flowed along the centre. The ice was a deep green in the shade and gave out prismatic tints where the sun light struck it. Turning our gaze from this stream, a thing of delicate beauty, to the great wilderness of snow slopes which were dazzling white where the sunlight fell, and showed a deep blue or purple where huge towering mountains cast their giant shadows, we left ourselves held to the spot we were standing on and compelled to gaze on the grandeur and the magnificence of the scene that forced itself on our vision.

At 4. 40 P. M. we arrived at Prads,



(also called Buldthur) a spot clear of snow and forming a fine camping ground. Our guide, after he had seen to the pitching of the tent and the settling of the camp, came to us and asked whether we could give some medicine for the men that had their eyes badly swollen and sore owing to the intensity of the glare while on the march. I called for our medicine case and with warm boric lotion bathed the eyes of the men, who the following morning appeared to be quite recovered.

By eleven O'clock on the morning of the 29th May we were on the march once more. For about half an hour or so the going was easy, and then we had to ford in quick succession three large streams that flowed into the Peen river. The way then ran along steep slopes and occasionally we had to cross snow that lay in ravines. While crossing one of these, one of our coolies lost his footing and rolled down the steep snow slope, but by some miraculous means he managed to check his descent and thus saved himself from certain death which awaited him, had he gone over the edge of the precipice.

We sighted Mooth, the first village in Spiti, Via the Bhuba pass, long before we actually reached it. It consisted of a few flat roofed huts built up of stone and mud. When we were about a furlong away we saw a wall of piled up stones about fifty yards long And with a thickness and height of five feet, on the top

of which were strewn small stone tablets bearing the inscription "Oom Mani Padmi Hun" in Tibetan characters. On reaching the village our guide set to work to pitch the tent and had it up in position after a bit of a struggle owing to the strong wind which brought with it a good deal of snow. Our cook in the meanwhile had unpacked his cooking pots and was making strenuous efforts to keep alight a fire from fuel which consisted of dry grass twisted into rope--the only fuel available at the spot--not a tree or shrub being visible as far as the eye could see. As soon as our camp was pitched and everything settled our guide came to the tent door and informed us that the coolies would like to be paid before we retired for the night, as they intended starting on their return journey back to Yangpa early the following morning. We paid the men their wages and told them to get the sheep we had promised them at the Pass and that we would pay for it. Off went a couple of men to get the animal, but there was none available, so they set out to get the desired sheep from the larger village that nestled in the mountain slopes across the river; they returned, however, about an hour later disappointed men. Rather than see the men returned to their homes without some recognition for the cheerful way in which they had done their duties, we handed them each an eight anna piece and they turned away to prepare their evening meal quite content and happy men.

Having now touched the first village in Spiti a few words about the country and its people would not perhaps be out of place. Spiti, called by the people of the place "Pithi" is completely hemmed in by lofty mountain ranges with an average elevation of 18,000 feet which divide it from Lahul on the west, Bashahr on the south, Tibet on the east and Ladakh on the north. It includes the upper valley of the Spiti river, which rising in the western Himalayas, at about 16,000 feet above sea level flows south-east into Tibet and thence enters Bashahr at an elevation of 11,000 feet and ultimately finds its way into the Sutlej: the upper valley of the Para river which falls into the Spiti, and the valley of the Isamp whose waters empty themselves into the Indus. Of these four valleys only that of the Spiti is inhabited. The mountains of Spiti are more lofty than in the neighbouring country of Lahul. In the outer Himalayas there is one peak which is 23,000 feet and there are many others that are over 20,000. Of the Mid Himalayas two peaks exceed 21,000. From the main ranges transverse lines of mountains project far into the valley on either side, leaving in many cases only a narrow interval through which flows the Spiti river. Even these minor ranges contain peaks the height of which in many instances exceeds 17,000 feet. The mean elevation of Spiti is about 12,000 feet above sea level. There is scarcely any natural vegetation to be seen on the bare mountain slopes

and we were often on the march for four or five hours without seeing even a single blade of grass. Near all villages, however, there is, as a rule, a plentiful supply of gorse, which, with grass is used by the villagers as fuel. The bare mountain slopes and rugged cliffs, are not devoid of a grandeur when seen standing out in red and yellow in marked relief against the distant mountains which show up in deep purple or blue, capped with glistening white snow.

The people, Tatars by race and Eudhists in religion are very quaint indeed in their manners and customs. As a rule they are exceedingly honest and simple folk of rather dull understanding. In most of the villages we passed through man had but one wife and woman one husband, but at two villages I noticed that there were very few women in comparison to the men; and on making enquiries I was told that polyandry was practised, and for this the villages had received special dispensation from the Lamas. Extraordinary are the means adopted by these people for disposing of their dead. Bodies are sometimes burnt, sometimes buried and on other occasions the dead are thrown into the nearest river or cut into pieces and cast on the hill side, there to lie and decompose. I tried my best to get some reliable information as to how they decided what manner to adopt in disposing of the body from which life had departed. To all my enquiries I always received the laconic

that they did the biddings of the Lamas. I probed further into the matter by enquiring whether the life the person lived before the soul left the body had anything to do with the decision of the Lamas. An emphatic denial of such a contingent was the answer I invariably got, with always the addition that the Lamas decided in accordance with what was laid down in the holy books.

On the 30th May we struck camp at Moodth and started for Ensa (via Teeling) with our baggage loaded on five yaks and two ponies. At Teeling the baggage animals were dismissed and coolie transport engaged. The path from Moodth descended gradually till the Peen river was reached. Here we had either to ford the river or go along a precipitous and rough faced cliff which would have done credit to a plumb line. Our guide led us on to the cliff saying that the river was not fordable even for our baggage animals which had gone a mile or two up-stream to effect a crossing. We followed the guide for about a quarter of the way across the cliff when we found that we had to ascend for want of foot hold along the waters edge. By this time my companion was well ahead of me and our guide was not far behind me. After a while I came to a smooth water course which descended right down the face of the cliff and which was too wide for either our guide or myself to step across. I did my best, by shouting, to ascertain from my companion how he

managed to get across, but all my efforts were in vain as a howling wind which had suddenly sprung up put an end to all hope of my voice being heard. Retreat was out of the question as the path we had come by was already submerged in the rapidly rising river caused by the snow melting under the warm rays of the sun that was ascending in the heavens. My only chance therefore of reaching my companion was to ascend right to the top of the Cliff, cross the water course there, and then descend. The wind continued its furious course, and clouds were fast gathering overhead. Snow soon followed, and in a few minutes it became bitterly cold. My hands were losing their sense of touch. Would this storm stop as suddenly as it had come? Would my hands have the power of feeling till I reached the top? These were the questions I found I was asking myself. Bit by bit I ascended, using both hands and feet, till I reached the top, chilled to the bone and with blood oozing from cuts on my hands. I was now able to relax my muscles, and felt a great sense of relief after a couple of puffs from a cigarette, the lighting of which with matches was impossible owing to the wind. Our guide, however, ignited a piece of tinder with the aid of his flint and steel used with a skill acquired by long practice, - matches being unknown in Spiti.

The descent to the north, where my companion and the rest of the party had halted, was fairly steep but not difficult

After we were on the move for about ten minutes the snow began to thin off and I found that I would have to cross a fairly large stream that joined the Peen at the foot of the slope that I was on. On reaching the edge of the water I saw that fording it on foot was out of the question, so with our guide I was looking for a suitable crossing place, when through the veil of falling snow we saw faintly two dark objects hastening towards us. They proved to be my companion and our cook mounted on yaks. Following them on foot were two of our coolies. Their surprise when they saw us was great. They thought we would not be able to proceed across the Cliff without assistance as long as the storm raged. The two riders dismounted and the yaks were driven across the stream to us. We mounted, and, after digging our heels into the sides of the animals for quite a couple of minutes induced the sturdy sure-footed animals once more to enter the ice cold water. When we reached the rest of the party, the men were in the act of setting up the tent in accordance with an order given by Blake before he set out to assist me. I stayed them; and as there was still time to reach Ensa before darkness set in, we decided to move on. The yak men were paid and dismissed; the necessary number of villagers from Teeling picked up our baggage and we were once more on the march. Before we started I turned to have a last look at the formidable cliff and then it flashed across my mind that Scott must

have had in his mind this part of the world and not Scotland when he wrote the lines:-

"At length they came where stern  
and steep

The hill sinks down upon the deep  
Here Venachar in silver flows,  
There ridge on ridge Ben Ladi rose.  
Ever the hollow path twines on  
Beneath steep bank and threatening  
stone;

An hundred men might hold a post  
With hardihood against a host".

While walking by my companion I asked him how he managed to cross the water course of the cliff. "Well" he said "I could not cross it where I was so I sat in the trough and slid down, checking my descent with my hands, till I got a foothold lower down; then I stepped out on the other side. Shortly afterwards I struck a path as it emerged from the water and then going was not difficult".

We reached Ensa at 4.30 P.M. and pitched camp. It was bitterly cold and we were glad to warm ourselves at the camp fire as soon as it was lighted. Hot Bovril followed; and when that was swallowed we felt almost warm. The village of five flat roofed stone huts stood in a valley about three quarters of a mile wide through the centre of which ran a small stream which supplied the villagers with the necessary water for cultivating their



few acres of barley and green peas. From the 31st May to the 3rd June this stream was frozen every morning and it was only about ten O'clock that it began to flow.

While our dinner was still in the cooking pot Blake and myself got into conversation with an old man of the village who knew Hindustani. He informed us that Ensa was one of the few villages in Spiti that had received dispensation from the Lamas, and polyandry was practised. "Old age is creeping on", continued the sage, "and in a few years--probably three or four--my property, including fields, sheep and goats,-- I am a poor man and do not possess yaks and ponies-- will pass into the hands of my eldest son; and then I shall have to leave the house occupied by the head of the family and be dependant on him for food, clothing and shelter for the rest of my life".

Strange as it may seem, this custom of allowing property to pass from father to son during the life-time of the former is one that prevails also among the Namboori Brahmins of Travancore and some other parts of southern India. To forge a link connecting the two peoples should prove interesting to Ethnographers.

Our time during the three days spent at this village was partly occupied in ibex shooting and partly in resting after the particularly difficult marches of the few previous days spent in crossing the

## **Bhuba Pass.**

On the 3rd June camp was struck and we retraced our footsteps as far as Teeling. From here we first turned N. N. W. as far as Khar and then N. E. till Tungti was reached at 4. 30 P.M. Here, for the first time after we left Mooling, we saw trees, and if not for the grasping and objectionable curiosity of the villagers our halt might have been restful and pleasant with the gentle cooing of a large flock of snow pigeons that were fluttering about our camp.

The way from Tungti for the first part ran along mountain slopes and fairly easy cliffs; it then descended to the stony bed of the Peen river which had to be forded twice in order to avoid a steep climb. After marching for a while along the edge of the water we had to get over a fairly easy cliff as the river was not fordable. After crossing the cliff we trudged for an hour along the valley in which the river ran and then pitched camp at half past four in the afternoon by the edge of the water. There was no village here, and the coolies we brought from Tungti stayed on to carry our baggage for the next day's march. After the tents were set up and everything settled in camp my companion and myself sallied forth to look at the country around, and as we passed a group of coolies we noticed that our guide was entertaining half a dozen of the women who were among

the number. There was a good deal of laughing and merriment going on in the group, while one of the maidens was pouring, from a cylindrical wooden vessel, a steaming dark liquid into wooden cups held out in turn by each member of the group. I was curious to know what this was, and on enquiry was informed by our guide that it was tea, which, it may interest the reader to know, was not made up in the orthodox fashion. They make theirs by putting the leaf, which is chiefly Chinese, with a pinch of borax into cold water which when brought to the boil is transferred to a wooden cylindrical vessel where it is stirred up with an ounce or so of butter. This horrible mixture, to which is added a pinch or two of powdered salt, is swallowed with evident relish.

From a comfort point of view this camp was far from pleasant owing to the quantities of coarse sand that was being blown about by the high wind. Grit found its way into everything,-- even between our teeth we could feel it.

From our camp, nestling on the dark blue mountain slopes across the valley, could be seen Danka, the capital of Spiti, where resides the Nona Sahib, a descendant of the hereditary rulers of Spiti of days gone by.

From Sand camp, as we named this place, we started for Mani at a quarter past

nine on the morning of the 5th June. The way, as we set out, lay along the bed of the river which we had to ford four times in quick succession. The second of these crossings required every caution; to attempt it singly would have been certain destruction owing to the extreme rapidity of the current. When we left the river we ascended for a while and then continued our journey along almost level and smooth country till we reached a stream running hard by the village of Mani. The path then ascended till we reached a camping ground close by the centre of the village.

Mani, by far the biggest village in Spiti, with a population of about three hundred souls has quite a number of trees and fairly large fields of wheat, green peas and barley. Here too there were quite a number of flour grinding mills worked by water power. In the centre stood a small Bhudist temple in front of which, when I visited it, was a group of excited men casting dice for a stake of a few paltry coppers, while within were a lad and two old men chanting the magic words "Oom Mani Padmi Hun". Half a dozen hand looms before which were seated men dexterously plying shuttles too and fro were another feature. I also saw quite a number of men and women occupied in getting ready for the looms wool yarn. Their method of spinning the yarn, though slow, is very ingenious and simple. From a bundle carried under the left arm, wool is drawn out and attached to the hooked end

of a wire about eight inches long, at the other end of which is fastened a weight of about eight ounces. This weight is set spinning by quickly rubbing it with the open palm down the thigh. The right arm, carrying the yarn between the thumb and forefinger, is extended over the head while the suspended weight continues spinning. When the yarn is sufficiently twisted, the twisted portion is wound on the wire, a knot made on the hook and the process repeated.

A strange custom, which I observed and could not understand, was explained to me by the headman of Mani. On approaching a village the inhabitants invariably turned out en masse, and as we passed them they put their tongues out as far as possible, and closing their fingers raised their hands to shoulder level, the thumbs pointing upwards. This, the headman informed me, was their method of saluting a person in authority over them.

While I was still in conversation, the thought struck me that it would be interesting to know what the Spiti folks idea of feminine beauty was, so I told the old man that I would like to take a photograph of the prettiest girl in the village. He turned round and spoke to a group of villagers who were seated near by. There was a good deal of merriment and then a couple from the group got up and went towards the huts. In a little while practically the whole village

turned out, and after a good deal of discussion the headman got up and led forward the voted belle. An uglier girl it would have been difficult to find in the village.

On the 6th June we left Mani and went south east to where we were told burrel shooting could be had. The path, for such there exists, ascends the whole way except for a short distance where it dips into a hollow. From the hill opposite the entrance to this hollow a stream, chocolate in colour, descends with great force and disappears into a deep chasm but a few feet wide and the bottom of which is lost in darkness. Across the yawning gap were laid a few rough planks to do the duties of a bridge. At mid-day when I crossed the stream, just at the place where it dropped into the chasm, the sunlight falling on the spray caused a remarkably beautiful rainbow effect.

A little beyond the hollow we selected a spot for our camp and then set out with our guns and guide. We forded a stream and then started climbing to the top of a ridge from where we scanned the country around with our glasses. Not a sign of animal life was visible. The shades of evening were descending upon us and we decided to return to our tent, Blake suggesting that we should take different ways. My companion chose to return by the way we had come, while I took a more easterly route and our guide took the way

that lay between my friend and myself. Silently I trod on with my rifle slung over my shoulder till I came to a rising from where I could see our tent. Here I stood and raised my glasses to my eyes, and to my surprise, I saw, away in the distance to my left, about fifteen burrels coming towards me. Darkness was coming on. I was feeling tired so I decided to remain where I was and watch their progress. If they came within firing distance within the next half hour I would shoot, if not I would return to our camp. On they came, closer and yet closer. There was now only a couple of thousand yards between us. The distance was decreasing. It was only a thousand yards. I noiselessly unslung my rifle and adjusted the sight to six hundred yards, drew the bolt, pressed a cartridge home, closed the breach, lay in readiness and selected my target. These arrangements were completed none too soon for the animals were now on a spot six hundred yards from me. I raised my rifle and taking steady aim pressed the trigger. A fine horned burrel rolled over, never to rise again. I got up and ran towards where the animal lay; and when I looked down upon it I felt as if I had done a most unsportsman like act, but it was useless regretting, the animal was quite dead.

The 7th June was spent in a vain pursuit of a burrel. On the 8th we returned to Mani and on the following day we broke up camp and started for Danka.

The path from the camp dipped down to the Mani stream and ran up the opposite bank and then continued to ascend till the last huts of the village were passed. After this it ran level for about half an hour when it again descended abruptly to the Spiti river. Once the river was reached the path ran along the bank for three or four hundred yards. Here a jhula bridge spanned the river. This bridge consisted of two twig ropes running parallel to each other, and of a plaited track, also made of twigs, supported on loops secured to the parallel ropes. The ends of these ropes passed over piles of stones on either bank of the river and were then carried under the stones to the edge of the water. As the bridge was not in good condition, we had to send out four men early in the morning to mend it, but even this did not prevent the parallel ropes from meeting in the middle; hence one man had to be stationed in the centre to hold the ropes apart. This he did by resting his back against one of the ropes and pushing the second away from him with his feet, with the result that we had to step over his legs-- a by no means easy performance, as the space was very limited and the bridge was swaying.

After the bridge was crossed the path ascended sheer for a few paces. It then continued easy right into Danka which we reached at four in the afternoon.

Danka the capital of Spiti, is a fair-



ly large village, perched on the top of a cliff looking like a huge castle. A noticeable feature on approaching the village is the curious formation of the earth which rises up in enormous cones.

On the 10th June we left Danka and marched along an easy and well defined path to Kaja, passing three small villages en route. On this occasion the coolies were very slow with the result that Kaja was not reached till 7.30 P.M.

On the 11th June we left Kaja and started for Kibba. The path throughout was well defined but one ford had to be crossed and some stiff climbing done towards the end of the march. Kibba was reached at 4.40 P.M. after passing on the way the village of Ki with Ki Gonpa (monastery) situated on the top of a prominent rising of the ground close by.

Just a day short of a month of hard and extremely difficult marching brought us to this village which rests at the foot of the southern slopes of the Parang La Pass-- a pass of 18,700 feet above sea level which provides a means of crossing the main ridge of the Himalayas.

Blake and myself accompanied by our guide were the first to arrive at Kibba. Unobserved by the villagers we selected a spot for our camp and sat down to await the arrival of our baggage. We had rested only a minutes when we saw a string of

coolies followed by our cook coming up the path. This undue influx of strangers carrying strange looking parcels did not escape the eyes of the Kibba inhabitants, and in a little while the whole population of about two hundred souls was streaming down the slope that led from the village to the flat we had selected for our camp. Quickly a cordon formed round us. Some were standing with knees bent; some were standing in the rational way, but all had their mouths wide open and tongues thrust, out. Thus they presented a most ludicrous sight.

On our coolies setting down their bundles they were bombarded by the suspicious villagers with a volley of questions; possibly concerning the object of our presence. All suspicion being removed by evidently satisfactory answers from our guide and coolies, the headman of the village who knew no other language than Tibetan asked through our guide what our requirements were. Soon messengers were despatched to fetch fuel, milk and butter. When these articles had arrived the headman once more came before us and asked what our further wishes were. On being informed that we wanted a sufficient number of men the following morning to start on our journey across the pass, he informed us that it would not be possible for him to make arrangements so quickly as the men would have to be carefully picked and he would have to send into the neighbouring villages to make up the number we

would require, adding at the same time that it was not every man that could climb the Parang La with a load, and then, he continued, each man's load would have to be restricted to a weight of fifteen pounds. This meant that we would have had to engage thirty five men for our own baggage, nine to carry coolies blankets and food, six to carry fuel and two to cut paths in the snow and act also as helpers while on the march,-- making a total of fifty two. This number the headman said it would take him a week or ten days to collect, so we decided to leave at Kibba all articles which were not absolutely necessary for our march to the Tso Morari lake and back. We quickly looked over our belongings and found that by taking just bare necessities, including a camera and a few spools of films we were able to cut down our transport to about eighteen men; this number the headman told us he could have ready to start on the morning of the 13th and not before, excusing himself for the day's delay by saying that time was necessary for the men to get ready new snow boots, to collect food &c.

By this time camp was pitched and our cook had got ready the tea which we went into the tent to take. When we came out again it was to find our guide in company with another man waiting for us. On enquiring from our guide what he wanted he said that, as he did not know the country beyond Kibba, the man that was with him

would take up his duties while he himself would return to his home in Yangpa. We agreed to the change and enquired of the man relinquishing duties when he intended starting on his homeward journey. On our being informed of his intention of starting on the morrow, I asked whether he would go into Nacher and post a few letters. This he promised to do; so both Blake and myself went back into our tent to write the letters. The next morning we handed the man his wages, a tip of three rupees, the letters and finally another five rupees for undertaking the duty of posting the letters. The man saluted, picked up his few belongings and started his weary lonesome journey back to Yangpa. It was with a certain amount of misgiving that I handed the letters to the man as I was rather doubtful whether he would go to the trouble of doing an additional day's march just for the sake of posting the letters; but our trust in the man was not misplaced. Every letter reached its destination in due time.

After this Blake and myself picked up our shot guns and left the camp to shoot a few snow pigeons. While wandering round the neighbourhood we noticed what looked like a dried up artificial water course skillfully constructed along the sides of the hills. We followed the course for an hour or so and then returned to camp with a bag of five birds. Later on in the day I enquired of the villagers as to what the object of the water course was and

where it led to. From the various people I questioned I got the same answer, and that is, that the channel had been constructed by the villagers many hundred years ago and that it led down from the perpetual snows about seven miles off. This channel, they said, was used only when the stream, that normally supplied the village with water, dried up. This they told me happened last in 1906. What struck me as remarkable was the skilful manner in which the illiterate villagers had carried out such an intricate piece of engineering without the aid of any levelling or aligning instruments.

About two in the afternoon I heard coming from away in the distance what sounded to me like some one skilfully playing on a cello--clear true notes of a tuneful air arranged to waltz time met my ears. I listened attentively for about ten minutes and then the music suddenly ceased. I rose and went round to the back of our tent from where I hailed our guide who was in conversation with the cook, and asked him whether it was possible for him to bring the musician to me. He said he would try and started in the direction from which the sound came. In less than half an hour he was back, in company of a man, a girl of about nineteen, a woman and a child. I was rather surprised to see that none of them carried stringed instruments, but instead the man had a couple of brass instruments that in general appearance looked like clarionets,

and the woman had with her a crudely made tambourine. The man and woman sat down, the former drew his right forearm across his mouth and raised the two instruments to his mouth. He then shook his head and started the same tuneful air that I had heard a while before, while the woman gently struck the membrane of her tambourine in perfect accompaniment to the melodious notes of the clarionets. I was listening attentively when suddenly the girl, who was standing behind the players, stepped forward and started a most graceful dance. A gliding step, a supple body that swayed gracefully, arms that moved in perfect time to the music, all lent themselves to impress upon me the strangeness of seeing such grace in dancing among such rough folk. An hour or more I spent, in company with my friend, in listening to the beautiful music and watching the varied yet always elegant movements of the maiden.

The rest of the day was spent in getting ready for the start the following morning which, however, turned out to be very windy and snowy; hence the start had to be postponed. On the 14th June we were still at Kibba owing to bad weather.

The morning of the 15th dawned bright and clear so we made over to the headman of the village such portion of our belongings as was not absolutely necessary and made a start at 11 A.M. The path ascends for a walk of a few minutes; then

begins a descent along the rugged side of a deep and precipitous canyon. Down, down we went till we reached the bottom where ran a stream not more than twenty feet wide. Standing here and looking upwards one sees nothing but the dark blue sky and the edges of the gorge towering above. In this cold, deep dismal gap, where the sun's rays strike but for an hour or so every twenty four hours, one wonders what the feeling would be if one was taken down while unconscious and left there to wake up and find oneself alone. I feel convinced that the stoutest heart would quail a little on seeing the awe inspiring surroundings. However things are not so bad; there is a rough narrow path which leads up the opposite side of the canyon. Up this path we climbed till the top was reached. The way then continued in an undulating manner till we reached a slight depression where we pitched camp at 4 P.M. This place our baggage carriers called Thantuck.

It was about five in the afternoon; Blake and myself were seated in front of our tent and having a quiet smoke when we heard the noise of what sounded like somebody hammering on the ground, the interval between two strokes being about fifteen seconds. Each bang was accompanied by a shout of "whoup" We went to where the coolies had quartered themselves in a little hollow, and found that half a dozen were seated in a circle in the centre of which was laid a blanket folded in four

and on which rested a wooden cup about four inches in diameter in which was placed three bone dice. Each man, in turn, raised the cup with the dice above his head and brought it down with a bang, mouth downwards, on the folded blanket. The points were quickly counted up and the caster of the dice either gave a few stones to the other players or received stones himself from the others. At the end of the game each man counted his stones and then after a good deal of argument a few pice changed hands, but on what principle this was done I was unable to understand. It seemed so complicated to the uninitiated.

After the close of the first game my companion and myself returned to our tent but at nine O'clock at night we still heard the gambling going on.

Between nine and ten, a few minutes after Blake and myself were tucked in comfortably between our blankets, we heard in the stillness of the night, the chanting of prayers by the more devout members of our followers. The night was bitterly cold and in the morning everything, even our mutton, milk and butter were all frozen hard.

After an early breakfast we went after a herd of burrel but gave up the chase at about ten O'clock and returned to our camp at noon where everything was packed and ready for the next march on which we



started at a quarter past twelve. The path for a while lay along undulating ground and then dropped into a canyon of much the same aspect as the one passed on the previous day, with the only exception that we had to go up along the edge of the stream for half an hour, after which we began to ascend.

On reaching the top we halted for an hour while fuel was being collected.

At five in the evening a halt was made under an overhanging rock where there was a small flat which was just sufficient to cramp our camp into. This spot the coolies called Pomachen.

At nine the following morning we were on the move and in five minutes we were on the snow covered slopes which constitute the final ascent of the Parang-La. Slowly and steadily we advanced till we reached the crest of a ridge. Here our men called a halt and discussed the course to be followed in the crossing of a hallow. As no final decision was arrived at some took a diametrical route while others preferred going along the slopes that lay to our right. My companion and myself followed the men that chose the way across the hallow. It took us about twenty minutes to cross the depression and then commenced a stiff ascent. Steadily up we went for an hour, making occasional halts of a couple of minutes' duration each. I felt that my breathing was

becoming rather more laboured than I had ever felt it before. I asked my companion whether he felt the difference and his answer was in the affirmative. Higher and yet higher we climbed. I found that the pressure on my chest from the straps of my camera and haversack were impeding my breathing, so with my left thumb hooked in them I released the pressure. Halts were now getting frequent, in fact, one was made after every thirty or forty paces. My temples began to throb and exhaling became decidedly difficult yet not sufficiently bad to necessitate my discontinuing the climb. On moved the party and the only sound that broke the silence was the crackling of the snow under our feet and the occasional exchange of a few words among our baggage carriers. I began to feel a sensation of nausea and I noticed that our servant had lain down on the snow and was tossing from side to side. I went up to him and asked what was wrong and in short gasps he told me that he could not breathe and that it was impossible for him to continue. I told him to rest a while and when his breathing became easier one of the two free men who were brought as helpers would assist him to the crest. We rested for about ten minutes and started again, our guide assisting the cook. Loads were now frequently changing hands, the two free men taking their turn. Stops were made every fifteen or twenty paces but every man seemed determined to reach the top. When the crest of the Pass was in sight each man seemed

to put forward all his strength in an endeavour to reach the top first. The honour however, rested on Blake who was the first to lay his hands, at 2 P.M., on a pile of stones in which were fastened tiny pieces of cloth with Tibetan inscriptions. One by one we all reached the top. The cook assisted by the guide being the last. Our coolies now laid down their loads and gathered round the cairn and chanted a short prayer. After this they came before us, salaamed, and asked for "Jodh ka bak-shees", just as the men with us when crossing the Bhuba Pass had done. The reward of a sheep being promised, they thanked us and sat down to a well earned rest.

Seated here, 18,700 feet above the level of the sea, and looking down south one sees pile upon pile of mountain tops till the far away peaks are lost in the haze of distance. Sloping to the north stretches a great field of glacier six or seven miles long. This stretch of glistening whiteness we had yet to pass over before we could rest our already tired bodies. At 2.30 we were once again on the move and tramped on till we were about two thirds of the way across the glacier, when one of the coolies in advance stopped and held up a warning hand. On looking in the direction he pointed we saw a great mass of snow coming down the slope that lay to our front left. In a few minutes from the descending mass came a rumbling sound like a roll of distant thunder. Down went the avalanche carrying

everything before it till it subsided in a great heap on the glacier about a quarter of a mile ahead of us. When all was still again, we moved on, and I was surprised to see the enormous quantity of debris that had been deposited. At half past seven, after ten and a half hours' hard going, we arrived at a suitable camping ground which our baggage carriers called Thantung. There was not a member of our party that was not glad that the day's march was completed. Every one was worn out and tired. As we were still at an altitude of 14,000 feet it was bitterly cold, but fires were quickly lighted and the coolies were not long in preparing their black greasy tea.

While Blake and myself were having our evening meal our servant informed us that eight of the men had their eyes effected by the glare and that he had washed their eyes with warm boric lotion. Owing to bad weather on the 18th we were compelled to stay where we were, but on the following day camp was struck at 11 A.M. We tramped along by the edge of the Pari Chu river which later on had to be frequently forded. Our next camping ground-- Rachilamo-- was reached at 7. 30 P. M. At a little after ten our guide came to our tent and informed us that the coolies said that they would go with us up to the Tso Morari Lake, but as that portion of the country was under the jurisdiction of the headman of the next village it would be the part of that village to give us

transport for our return journey to Kibba. We told him that the arrangement with the headman of Kibba was that the men were to carry our baggage to the southern shores of the lake and back to their home. "That may be so" said the man, "but this is the custom, and the men say they cannot break through it". I tried to reason with the man, pointing out that we were not going up to the next village which was at the northern extremity of the lake; but it was in vain, the man stuck to his point and would not yield. A few of the coolies were called up and the matter put to them but they stood resolute and unyielding. I then asked them whether they would return with our baggage if the Karzok man could not give us the required number of men. A little discussion took place, I suggested that a couple of the free men should go on by forced marches to Karzok and give the headman my message. This was readily agreed to and early the following morning the two men selected for the purpose started on their mission. At ten A.M. camp was struck and our march along the river continued till a Kashmir boundary pillar was reached. Here we left the Pari Chu and proceeded along a plain till we arrived at 5.30 P.M., at a place called Cheumick where camp was pitched for the night. At ten O'clock on the morning of the 21st June we were at the lake after an easy walk of two hours.

Never was it my good fortune to see such colour and grandeur of scenery. A

sheet of water about sixteen miles by six miles surrounded by lofty snow capped mountains on which the sun's rays played hide and seek between fleeting clouds which cast their dark purple or blue shadows on parts of the still lake below, would, I feel sure, have perplexed even the most famous landscape painters. The sunset was even more glorious. Slanting rays of the setting sun kissed the snow capped mountains on the east. Giant shadows fell half way across the lake leaving the surface inky black. Away at the northern extremity a streak of light fell right across the the lake leaving it like a bar of burnished gold. The mountain slopes to the east of the lake were bathed in light which was reflected back on the surface of the water in delicate shades of red and yellow, while the clouded sky was a marvel of beauty.

It was twilight when the two men we had despatched to Karzok arrived with the headman of that village who came straight up to us and said that his village was small and that he could not give us the number of men we wanted, and himself suggested that we should ask the Kibba men to return with our baggage. The Kibba men were called up and told what the headman had to say and they consented to return with us. "But" they said "as the Karzok men cannot do their duty they must compensate us". I told the man that that was a matter with which I had no concern and to settle the question with the headman.

They all moved off, and it was not long before they prevailed on the Karzok man to give them a goat. This being settled, our guide came and asked us whether we would stay by the lake the whole of next day as the men wished to enjoy a good meal. He said that they would kill the sheep we had offered them as "bakshees" for crossing the Pass as well as the goat and that it would be uncomfortable for the men to start on a hard march after a heavy meal. We assented and told the guide to procure the sheep and that we would pay for it. In a few minutes we saw him in company with the Karzok man going towards three tents pitched by nomads who had come to the shores of the lake to graze their yaks, sheep and goats. It was an hour later; darkness was just casting her shroud on the landscape when the two men returned leading a sheep and a goat. Following them was a lad who came to receive payment for the sheep. The animals were tethered for the night and all was still except for the rhythmic lap of the water of the lake that was slightly disturbed by a gentle breeze that had sprung up.

The morning of the 22nd June dawned bright and clear. My companion and myself set out for a stroll of a few miles along the western shores of the lake. We crossed the Phrisee Floor which flows from the south west and enters the lake at its southern extremity. We walked northwards for a couple of hours and then turned

back. On coming up to our camp I observed that the men were having their meal and I was surprised to see them eating with evident relish the uncooked flesh of the goat and sheep which they had got the previous day. Having described some what in detail our journey through Spiti and the crossing of the Parang La, which is the intention in this article, I will now confine myself to stating as briefly as possible the return to Simla, touching mainly on the route taken and the marches. On the 23rd morning at nine O'clock we left the Tso Morari Lake on our return journey to Simla. Retracing our steps we arrived at Kibba on the 26th June where we rested the following day. At noon on the 28th we left Kibba and started for Kioto where we arrived at 6 P.M. after a comfortable march. On the 29th we reached Loysar at 5 P.M. after an easy march of six hours. Here again a halt of a day had to be made for the men that were to go with us over the Kunzam and Humpta passes into Kulu, to get ready.

Just after sunset on the day of our arrival at Loysar the women of the village asked us whether we would like to see them dance. We assented; a large fire was lighted and the women with arms linked formed up in a semi circle facing the blaze and danced for half an hour or more to the music of their own melodious voices.

On the 1st July we struck camp and



started with twenty coolies, two donkeys and a pony carrying our baggage and a quantity of fuel sufficient to last two days. This march concluded at a spot midway between Loysar and the Kunzam Pass after being on the move for four hours. On the 2nd we crossed the Kunzam which is 14,931 feet, and entered Lahul. Both the ascent and descent were not difficult and not a scrap of snow was visible any where. On the 3rd we crossed the Shigri moraine and camped at the foot of the Perad glacier about ten miles from our previous camp. The crossing of the moraine was most trying as it was a veritable maze of cones and ridges through the intricacies of which one has to be careful in picking a way. The chances here of wandering off the track are very great indeed.

The next march of nine miles, to the foot of the Humpta Pass, was not difficult; but here we had to halt a day owing to bad weather. The Humpta, though not quite as high as the Kunzam, was completely under snow, and proved to be a far greater obstacle than the latter. The march of thirteen miles was a difficult one and was not completed till late in the evening although we were on the move by nine in the morning.

We were now in Kulu and pitched camp in the seclusion of an overhanging rock in front of which grew large quantities of wild strawberries. The fresh green foliage that lay to the south was a

refreshing and restful sight after weeks spent among the bare mountains of the mid and main Himalayas.

On the 7th camp was again struck and the downward march continued till 5 P. M. when Jagatsuk, a former capital of Kulu was reached. Here there is a post office and a bazar from which we were able to procure a few vegetables, sugar, eggs, poultry etc. The following day we broke up camp and started, with newly engaged coolie transport, for Nagar, eight and a quarter miles beyond. We were now once more on a well constructed road and marching was easy.

Nagar, standing between 5,700 and 5,800 feet above sea level, the capital of Kulu for many years, contains a castle built by Jagat Singh out of the ruins of a place which for over half a century harboured the rulers of Kulu. The structure is built of stone without mortar and between every few courses of stone is placed a thick beam of wood. This style of building I noticed even in the humble homes of villagers.

Captain Kennedy who visited Simla in 1822 was so fascinated with the place that it was not long before the public were informed of its beauties and salubrious climate. This officer, built the first substantial house in Simla,-- Kennedy House-- which was dismantled by Government in 1908. The Station from this

date onwards steadily grew in popularity; and practically from 1826, when Lord Amherst, the then Governor General of India, visited the place, Simla became the Summer headquarters of the Government of India. This is rather a digression from my subject but I hope to be excused. The point I wish to bring out is that had these persons who had travelled up all the way from Calcutta in the days when transport was not what it is at the present time foreseen that Simla was going to acquire its present proportions and importance they would have gone further north and, in my opinion, Nagar with its undulating formation of firm soil, a good water supply from the blue Beas, and a climate which is all that is desirable would have at this day been the Summer Capital of India.

On the morning of the 9th we started for Sultanpur which is thirteen miles from Nagar. The road all the way lies close to the Beas and is for the most part shady. At times it enters beautifully wooded country with a profuse undergrowth of ferns and flowers among which may be heard the tuneful music of numerous song birds.

Sultanpur, the present capital of Kulu 4,090 feet above sea level, contains a post and telegraph Office and a hospital with an Assistant Surgeon in charge. The town also has a well kept Dak Bungalow and several grocers shops where European

stores can be obtained. Here we stayed for a day to look round the town and get our clothes washed by the local dhoby.

On the 11th July we started from Sultanpur, with mule transport, for Bajura. The ten miles of road are level and practically the whole distance is shady. Close to the Dak Bungalow stands Colonel Rennick's house with its large orchard, the fruits of which are so well known in Simla to which it is transported mainly through the Post Office.

Our next halting place was Largi, twelve miles from Bajura. Here there is a small Dak Bungalow. Close to Largi the scenery of the gorge where the Beas turns, after receiving the waters of the Tirthan and Sainj, is worth seeing, but the only means of crossing the gorge is by means of a crude ropeway.

The next two marches of eight miles each lay through Plach and Jibi while the following one of ten and a quarter miles brought us to Kot; having crossed EN ROUTE the Jalori ridge which is 10,680 feet above sea level. From the top of this ridge one gets the first glimpse of Jakko, the highest point of Simla.

From Kot to Chawai, a distance of nine miles, was our next march. The day following we proceeded to Dalash (8 miles) and on the evening of the 18th we arrived at Kumarsain.

On the 19th July we left Kumassain and went on to Kotgar, a distance of three miles. Here a Christian Mission has established itself and built a little church which is said to be one of the oldest in the Punjab. We left Kotgar the same afternoon and went on to Narkanda nine and a half miles beyond. From here we left on the 21st and arrived at Simla in time for lunch on the 23rd, having spent the 22nd at Matiana.

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