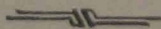
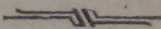


A WALKING TOUR
THROUGH
THE HEART OF THE HIMALAYAS
AND
MIDDLE TIBET



BY
M. H. CHALMERS.



ILLUSTRATED

PRICE RE. 1.

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DEDICATED

TO

“ LOVERS OF THE OPEN ROAD ”

And to express my grateful thanks to the Government of His Highness the Maharajah of Jammu and Kashmir for permission accorded to undertake this Journey through Ladakh and especially to **Major-General Rai Bahadur Thakur JANAK SINGH, C.I.E.**, Revenue Minister, through whose good offices, arrangements for transport were made over the uninhabited stretch of territory on the Ladakh Lahaul Highway.

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PREFACE.

*Love not to talk, love not to boast,
Who doeth his best he doeth the most.*

EVERYONE has a hobby in life. Mine is confined to walking—a Lover of The Open Road. This book does not pretend to aim as a guide but equally serves its purpose to relate a story how a simple walk was done by a simpler man in the simplest manner.

Many travellers make a lot of "Heavy weather" over the route taken, whereas actually facilities exist throughout the journey from Rawalpindi to Simla *via* Kashmir, Ladakh and Kangra to undertake the whole journey on horseback.

Details of the route will be found in the chapters dealing with each sector of the march. The wishes of the author will be more than fulfilled if his experience will encourage admirers of pedestrianism to undertake the same adventure which will give health to their bodies and peace to their minds and let them into the Great Fellowship of those who are Lovers of the Open Road.

M. H. C.

September, 1929.

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Mr. M. H. CHALMERS.



This picture shows a "GUN STICK" which was the only weapon of defence used throughout the Tour. This stick created a stir and profound consternation amongst the hill men and mountaineers throughout the journey and attracted greater attention than the tourist himself.

CHAPTER I.

MY ARRANGEMENTS.

*"When inclined to confess in the race for success
That the pace is beginning to kill,
Don't admit to yourself that you're making a mess
Of the contest, but swear an*

I will".

*When you're given the tip that you're losing your grip
And you find that you're going down hill:
When in business affairs you're beginning to slip,
You can come to a stop with*

"I will"

*And no matter how tough or how rude or how rough
The treatment you get in life's mill:
Just prove that you are made of the best sort of stuff,
By packing a good stiff*

"I will".

Everyone has a hobby in life. Mine is confined to walking—a Lover of the Open Road. And many are the roads that I have travelled, many the experiences I have encountered, many the benefits I have derived. But the greatest thrill is surely to break new ground. Struggling up hill and down dale through long stretches of uninhabited country—that is real pedestrianism, bringing health to the body, peace to the mind and an entry to the great Fellowship of those who are Lovers of the Open Road.

So much then for the object and driving force behind my proposal to tramp from Rawalpindi to Simla, viâ Kashmir, Ladakh and Kangra—a distance of 816 miles. But treks such as this require a certain amount of "staff work."

Maps were the first desideratum, and for these reference was made to the Survey of India, Dehra Dun. The publication "Routes in the Western Himalaya, Kashmir, etc." by Major Kenneth Mason, R.E., sufficed for the journey from Pindi to Kyelang (Lahaul), and from there to Simla was secured from Dr. Neve's Tourist's Guide to Kashmir, Ladakh, Skardo, etc. (published by C. and M. Gazette, Lahore). Both publications proved of considerable assistance during the tour.

Having mapped out the route I divided it into 65 stages, varying from 10 to 15 miles per stage, and on the whole was fortunate enough to keep more or less to this itinerary, completing the whole journey in 52 days.

Animal transport and domestic servants played no part in my curriculum. I have met too many travellers whose programmes have been frustrated by the pack ponies, let loose to graze at night on the mountain side, they are not traceable the following morning. Domestic servants not accustomed to hill climbing are more of a hindrance than a help. If servants are needed it is as well to engage them locally. I was confronted with none of these obstacles.

For the journey, I equipped myself with a Rucksack. This accommodated my bedding (consisting of a sleeping bag with four folds), a change of clothes, toilet requisites, an extra pair of boots and my mackintosh. For its conveyance I employed one coolie.

Food.

As each of my prescribed halting stages between Rawalpindi and Srinagar was equipped with a dāk bungalow where food was procurable, I made no catering arrangements for that portion of the journey.

The major portion of the journey, from Srinagar to Simla, viâ Ladakh and Kangra, a distance exceeding 600 miles, had no dāk bungalows. Between Ladakh and Lahaul, a distance of 190 miles, the route not only touched altitudes ranging from 12,000 to 18,000 feet above sea-level, but traversed regions void of any shelter and perfectly barren and uninhabited.

Over this stretch it was necessary to provide myself with provisions, and as carrying sufficient

for the whole trip would have entailed enlarging the size of my party and utilising animal transport, I devised the scheme of getting certain quantities posted to me at post offices en route.

Every stage is not provided with a post office. This obviously required varied types of parcels to contain rations for the number of days it took to journey from one post office to another. These types were marked from A to F, corresponding with three to eight days' rations, respectively. For the whole of this journey I entertained the services of Messrs. Kellner and Co., of Calcutta, to cater for me. This the firm accomplished by post offices en route, the provisions meeting me at these post offices. These provisions took the staple form of Heinz' vegetable products, and for this strenuous journey proved to be a perfectly sustaining, palatable and digestible diet.

By submerging the tins into boiling water I obtained a hot meal and a hot bath, which eliminated the formalities and difficulties associated with cooking.

At Srinagar I purchased a Yakdan to carry my provision. For this additional load I engaged another coolie, confining my transport to a maximum of two coolies for the entire journey from Srinagar to Simla.

REST HOUSES.

Rest houses accommodated me at each stage, and where there were no Rest houses caravansarais were resorted to. Beyond Ladakh, there are five stages covering a distance of about 100 miles which

provide no shelter of any description and remain uninhabited. For this portion of the journey I purchased a 10 lb. (Nomad's) tent for a trifling sum. It was an apology for a tent, but served its purpose admirably well.

Through the courtesy of the Wazir of Ladakh I procured two coolies for the onward journey from Leh to Kulu, a distance of 250 miles. Ordinarily, it is not possible to obtain coolie transport from Leh as it is obligatory for the traveller proceeding to Lahaul and Kulu to engage pack transport, subject to a minimum of two animals. My luggage was inadequate to justify engaging two pack ponies, and a little on the heavier side for conveyance by one coolie. I was fortunate that my two Ladakhi Tibetan coolies were acquainted with Hindustani. Their fidelity and utility helped me considerably on the journey over this uninhabited and God-forsaken territory. To overcome the difficulty of crossing the Tagalaung La Pass, 17,500 feet above sea level, in one day, on the fifteen mile stage journey between Gya and Debring, I engaged a yak, but for which the journey could not have been accomplished in less than two days.

THE "MAGIC" STICK.

My only weapon of defence was a gun-stick of 410 bore calibre. This stick attracted much attention. Villagers and town people alike were awe-stricken and bewildered when they became acquainted with the fact that a mere stick also served the purpose of a gun. They surged around me, and with a nervous hand some youngster

would touch the stick and make good his escape in the crowd.

To avert the evil experienced on mountain tours by the absence of chowkidars at rest houses, I posted a card in advance to the chowkidar or khansamah of the respective rest houses or dāk bungalows notifying the date of my arrival—with fruitful results.

ILLUSTRATING THE TOUR.

Messrs. Laurie and Co., of Lucknow, despatched Kodak films in boxes of eight rolls each to prescribed post offices. The used films were in turn reposted in the same boxes. For convenience sake these boxes had their lids fastened with screws and the reverse of the cover or lid bore the address of the photographer, with postage stamps affixed to cover the return freight.

My arrangements had for their objective the elimination of pack transport and domestic servants for the entire journey. By so doing, I was able to cover a distance of approximately 1,000 miles, including side trekking to monasteries and other historical places, to a prescribed itinerary in 49 walking days, resting every night. A halt of a few days was made at the principal towns and cities, which pleasantly diverted my mind from the daily routine of trudging.

MONSOON PROVES KIND.

I preferred to undertake this adventure in the monsoon and risk the rain, in preference to a later period when early snows intensify the cold and mar further progress by obscuring the beaten

track over passes of exceptionally high altitudes. Although the monsoon was selected for this tour, I had the miraculous good fortune of escaping the rain throughout. Bright sunny days and starry nights befriended me from Rawalpindi to Kulu, through Himalayan Tibet. From Kulu onwards to Simla, in the depth of the monsoon season, with the exception of occasional and momentary drizzles, bright and sunny weather favoured me throughout. The clouds had, previous to my arrival, emptied themselves over the fair hills of Kulu and Simla, where the rainfall registered was

84 and 30 inches respectively. Whether this was the reason for my escaping the monsoon, I am not sure but my readers are sincerely advised to select the monsoon months in preference to any other part of the year for an adventure similar to mine. After all, any obstacle encountered, however slight, mars the happiness of the journey.

Very careful forethought and intelligent preparations are vitally necessary before long journeys are undertaken over tracks far distant from the railheads of India, and where post and telegraph offices are seldom, if ever, found.

CHAPTER II.

RAWALPINDI TO SRINAGAR.

*Across the bare mountains I roam,
No matter when or where ;
But few they be who know my lot
And fewer still who care.*

This route is known as the Jhelum Valley Road and is passable for motors and other vehicular traffic at a speed not exceeding 14 m.p.h. Bullock carts are allowed to travel by night only. In mid-winter, on account of the heavy snows in the Murree hills, this route is closed and the Abbottabad-Srinagar highway is resorted to. It meets the Jhelum Valley Road at Domel. In exceptional cases motor-cars can ply by night on application to the Superintendent of Police and on payment of the usual fee.

Twenty-five years ago I bid farewell to the fair hills of Murree, where I was an inmate of the Lawrence College, to embark on the journey of life. At that time vehicular transport was confined to tongas, ekkas and bullock carts. Had anyone then suggested the probability of motor traffic substituting the animal driven vehicle, he would have received a similar reception to that accorded George Stevenson when he applied to the House of Lords to place his first locomotive on the track.

THE MOTOR MART.

On June 27 in the early morning I was roused from sleep by the

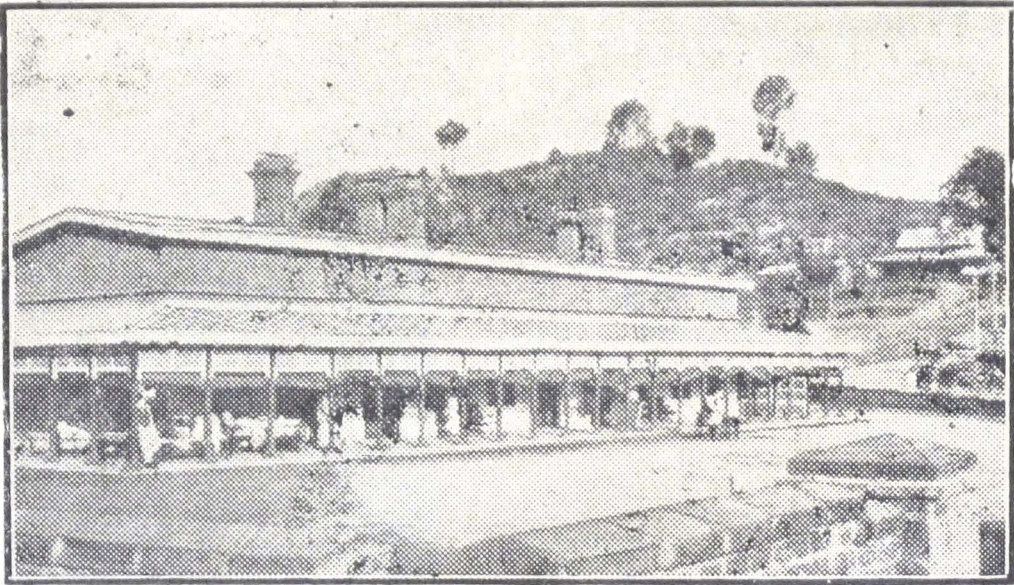
noise and bustle of motor-cars in the perimeter of Rawalpindi sta-



Aerial ropeway across the Jhelum. It was a sight worth seeing; the car owners busy endeavouring

to secure passengers by cutting their prices. I was actually offered a full car for Rs. 35 from Rawalpindi to Srinagar to compensate light running of a fleet of cars which were required for the return journey from Srinagar the next day, and it struck me how preferable it is to make one's motor arrangements—if one must—on arrival at Rawalpindi. The golden opportunity did not influence me to change my original decision to com-

apliances by the agricultural department. The temperature rose to 112 degrees when midday found me emerge into Barakao, 14 miles from Rawalpindi, where I had breakfast in the dâk bungalow. There is a military camp at Barakao. At a steep corner near mile 17 toll is exacted. The pretty garden of Chatter, with its flowing streams, is a few miles beyond and affords a pleasant resting-place for slow travellers. A little further



The Dâk Bungalow at Tret, the first resting place on the journey.

plete the tour on foot.

Rawalpindi to Tret (26 miles).—Rawalpindi is a frontier station of strategic importance on the North-Western Railway and has a large city and civil administration. I embarked on my journey with the thermometer registering 90 degrees in the shade. Leaving 'Pindi, a large area of land, stretching for miles on either side of the road, was being cultivated with modern

on the ascent begins. Lemonade shops are frequently met and are well patronised by thirsty travellers. The dâk bungalow at Tret commands a fine view and the khansamah is a good fellow. He served me to a nice dinner which renewed my energies for the next day's march.

Tret to Murree (12 miles).—The road passes Ghora Gali bazaar with its Post and Telegraph offices. At this point, a path leads to the

Murree Brewery. A picturesque avenue of fir trees leads on to the estate of the Lawrence College, which was founded by Sir Henry Lawrence. I found the Union Jack flying—not to greet me, however, but owing to it being the anniversary of Sir Henry's birthday—June 28. It was a welcome surprise to see three additional buildings answering the purpose of a new Boys' School, an Intermediate College, and a College for Training Teachers in India, not to speak of other minor buildings, including an Isolation Hospital.

The uplift of this College reflects the greatest credit on the Principal, the Reverend Colonel Wright, M.A., who is assisted by his capable deputy, Mr. T. G. Prince, B.A., B.T., and Professor of the Teachers' Training College for India. The College is three miles from Murree proper, which I reached by the eastern road, passing the Convent of Jesus and Mary, which was completely destroyed by fire in 1904 and has since been rebuilt on modern lines from contributions mainly received from Irish regiments.

Murree to Kohalla (29 miles).—I traversed through the Gullies by the Bridle path, reducing the distance to 20 miles. The weather was invigorating and the road had a steep descent of 4,000 feet, winding through a beautiful forest where birds have happy sanctuary. Dewal is met en route. The dāk bungalow closed down with the opening of the motor road and now serves the purpose of a Primary School for Indians. From Dewal, the descent leads down a shadeless

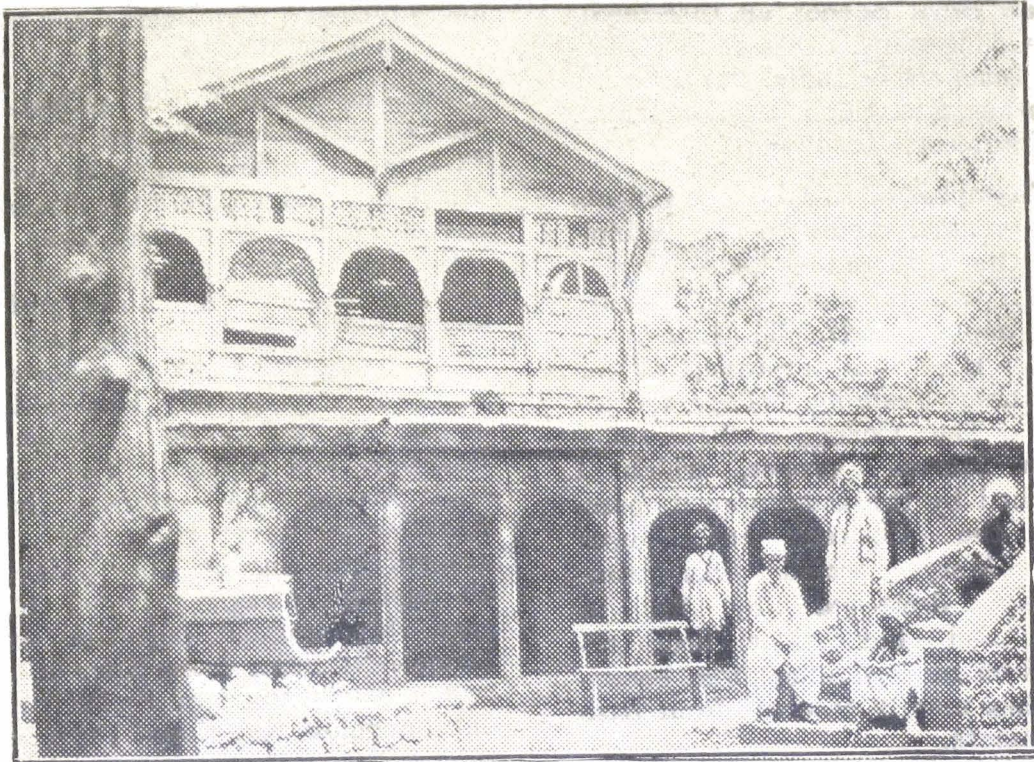
slope and joins the motor-road on the banks of the Jhelum, a short distance from Kohalla. A village is passed where the Punjab Government have erected a monument in memory of the local villagers who served in the Great War. The altitude of Kohalla is negligibly higher than that of Rawalpindi and the temperature that evening was 92 degrees. The dāk bungalow provided a night's stay and the menu was not too bad.

Kohalla to Garhi (35 miles).—The short cut viâ Chatter is only 22 miles. Kohalla marks the spot of the old bridge across the Jhelum River, which was washed away in 1893, and the abutments remain to tell the tale. A lofty girder bridge has taken its place and is being strengthened by re-girdering, which is in progress. This bridge is the connecting link between Kashmir and India. The left bank marks the entrance into Kashmir territory, where toll is exacted and custom duty paid on all imports except personal luggage. My original objective was Domel—21 miles from Kohalla. It was a shock to learn that Domel dāk bungalow had closed down, although Domel is an important junction stage on the Jhelum Valley and Abbottabad roads. It is a fallacy that Kohalla and Barsala dāk bungalows should exist within a mile of each other on either bank of the Jhelum, whilst a stretch of 35 miles beyond to Garhi is debarred of any shelter for travellers. My only alternative was to make for the nearest dāk bungalow, at Garhi, and trudge the precipitous bridle path leading from Chatter across the hills and reducing the journey by 13 miles, thus avoiding

Domel. A sign-board at Chatter is stencilled "His Highness the Maharaja's Resting Place," referring to the late Maharaja.

This day's march was the most trying throughout my tour. The road leads through the bed of a dry river, where the thermometer registered 116 degrees in the sun. A literally perpendicular ascent was

positively *kala* in appearance, alleviated my distress by fanning me with the branch of a tree. Later in the day the scenery changed from bold precipices to shady avenues of fir and fruit trees, a vigorous breeze mitigating the toil and heat of the day. The pace was slow. The sun had long set and the stars illumined the sky, and



The resting stage of His Highness the late Maharaja of Kashmir at Chatter. It was used in the days before motor-cars were introduced on the Jhelum Valley Road.

encountered after passing the bed, and continued for a distance of eight miles. I almost collapsed from heat exhaustion and made for the shade of a tree in a bath of perspiration. I stripped to the waist, courting the possibility of pneumonia against the certainty of death from heat-stroke. My faithful coolie, Kala by name and

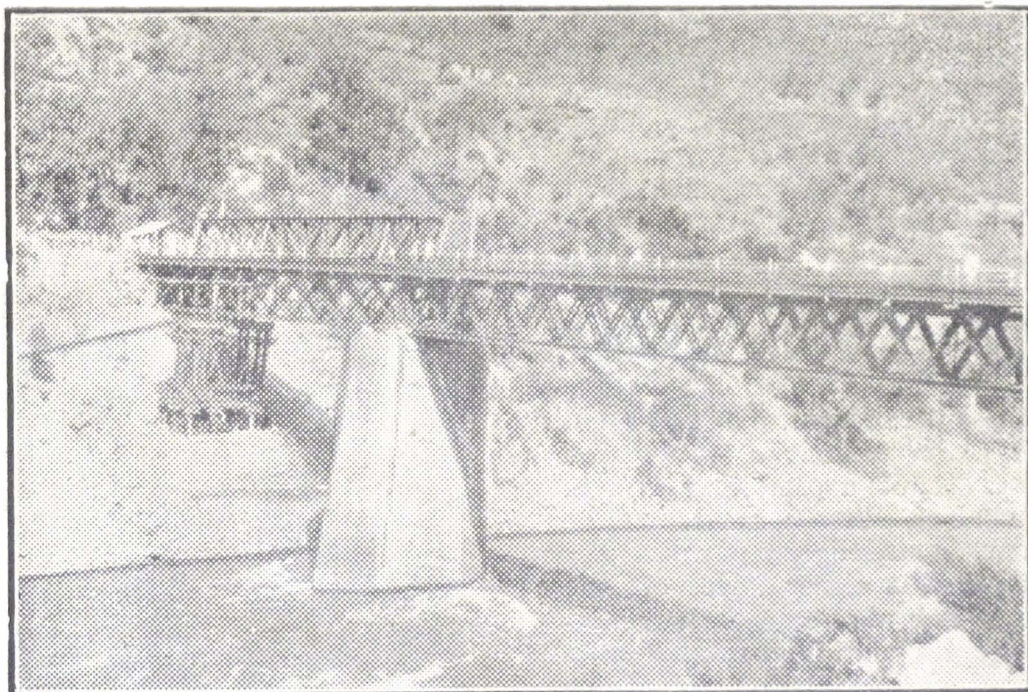
still my objective had not been reached. I followed a precipitous descent strewn with boulders, my flashlight illuminating the path. Kala yelled in the hope of attracting some villagers' attention to place us on the right path, but to no effect. Eventually we worked out our own salvation, reaching Garhi dâk bungalow a few hours

before midnight. The comforts of the dāk bungalow more than compensated for the hardships encountered, even though the evening temperature was 82 degrees.

"DANGER—DEAD SLOW"

Garhi to Chinari (16 miles).— Beyond Garhi the road leaves the river, crosses a low spur and rejoins the river at a higher level. Chenar trees abound and the march

North-Western Railway. Many logs drift ashore and are refloated by hill men, who are quartered at various stages for this purpose. Safety conditions are elaborate on this highway. On curves the road is intersected by a low wall of stone to prevent driving on the wrong side. The motor road in places traverses precipitous cuttings, running a considerable height above



The connecting link between Kashmir and India, the Kohalla Bridge being re-girdered

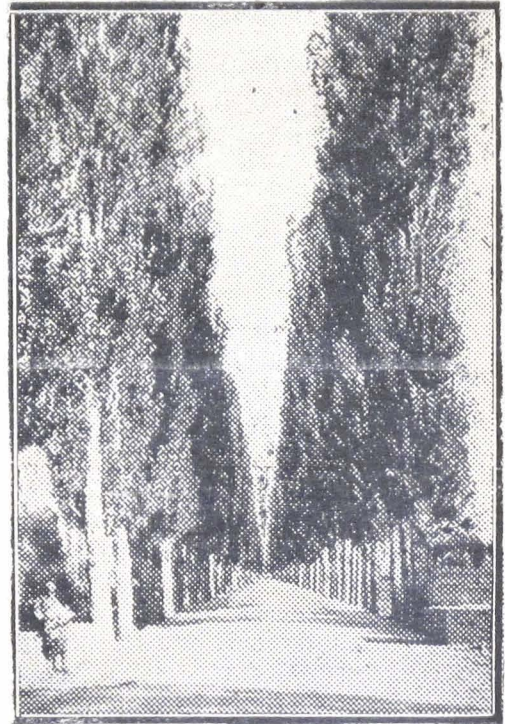
is shaded by high hills. A suspension bridge crosses the river and leads to an old fort, which marks the annihilation of the Sikh Army which was routed by hill-men rolling huge stones down the hill slopes, completing the rout with the sword. Timber traffic is seen floating down the Jhelum River, being collected at the timber depôt at Jhelum station on the

and almost perpendicular to the river below, and the approaches are marked with conspicuous red boards stencilled "Danger—Dead Slow." Indiscriminate driving would readily find a burial place in the river for the occupants of a car. At one place the road cuts through a majestic hill and the tunnel has a very striking appearance. Chinari dāk bungalow was

reached before sunset with the thermometer registering 94 degrees, making it obligatory to sleep in the open to secure a decent night's rest.

Chinari to Uri (18 miles).—A little beyond Chinari Bazaar a striking waterfall above the road meets the eye. Near by an aerial ropeway spans the Jhelum River at an elevation of 300 feet and serves as a means of transporting human beings and small animals across the river. At Chinari itself, and again at a village some miles beyond, the hill-men complained of the devastation of their maize crops by ravaging bears and appealed for my assistance, promising in a short space of time to confront me with this dreaded beast. The Post Master and accredited landlords corroborated this story, but unfortunately my shot gun stick of 410 bore calibre was inadequate defence to meet Mr. Bruin. This should rouse the interest of sportsmen, who will find a promising field of sport about these parts. The scenery is strikingly bold with lofty precipices on either side of the river. The road cuts through narrow gorges and is excavated from the solid rock, with overhanging cliffs. Olive plantations are seen on the sides of the road and majestic deodar resemble pagodas on the hillsides. Nearing Uri, the Fort and village can be seen above the river, and below the Fort is a new suspension bridge with the motor road running underneath. The Power House of Mahaura supplies electric current to Srinagar and its environs. The town of Uri and adjacent villages are electrically lighted for a round sum of nine annas per lamp, irrespective

of the current consumed. Uri can boast of a new Tehsil, a large hospital and a Primary School with 142 boys and four teachers. Uri is a picturesque town with a well equipped bazaar, over stocked with a varied assortment of fruit, which is a staple produce of Kashmir and is exported in large quantities to the Punjab. Apricot trees are plentiful on the wayside and the children reap a big harvest—without payment. Uri dâk bunga'ow is more requisitioned by travellers than any other. It is undoubtedly the most efficient and up-to-date bunga'ow on the Jhelum Valley road. The evening temperature was 80 degrees.



The famous Poplar Avenue.

A LONG DETOUR.

Uri to Baramullah (29 miles).—The road makes a long detour up

Uri Valley, then rejoins the Jhelum Valley and is cut across the face of some interesting rock. Beautiful forest trees abound amid a verdant wealth of flowers and ferns. The ruins of an ancient Buddhist temple stand on the side of the road. Like other ancient temples met *en route*, it is in a dilapidated state though the carved stones and pillars display the architecture of bygone years. Between Uri and Rampur the extensive electric power works of Mahaura are to be seen and there is a flume six miles long with a fall of 400 feet. Through the courtesy of Sardar Damodar Singh, Electrical Engineer, I was shown around the works. Fountains play in the compound, throwing the water to a height of 100 feet, which is a glorious spectacle for travellers who pass that way. Diverting from the road, I walked over the hydro-electric flume, which terminates in the head works beyond Rampur stage. The flume passes through a tunnel with a perpendicular precipice over 600 feet high. Loose rocks from the overhanging cliffs frequently destroy this wooden structure and an emergency telephone is connected with the Power House to give the alarm. Imprest material in abundance is stacked at different points. Each sector of the flume is patrolled night and day, and a mechanical Time Recorder ensures the patrol being constantly on the move. Long after sunset I reached Baramullah where the dāk bungalow has been transformed into an engineer's office. The traveller is more than compensated by the comfortable and homely boarding house under the management of Mrs. Jones,

Sadhu caravans were sent at Baramullah on their yearly pilgrimage to Armarnath caves. The route taken is Srinagar and Phalgaun, which is easier than the one offering over the Zoji La pass on the Treaty High Road to Ladakh.

DILAPIDATED HOUSES.

At Baramullah the Jhelum River is navigable and travellers frequently complete the journey to



A waterfall near Chinari

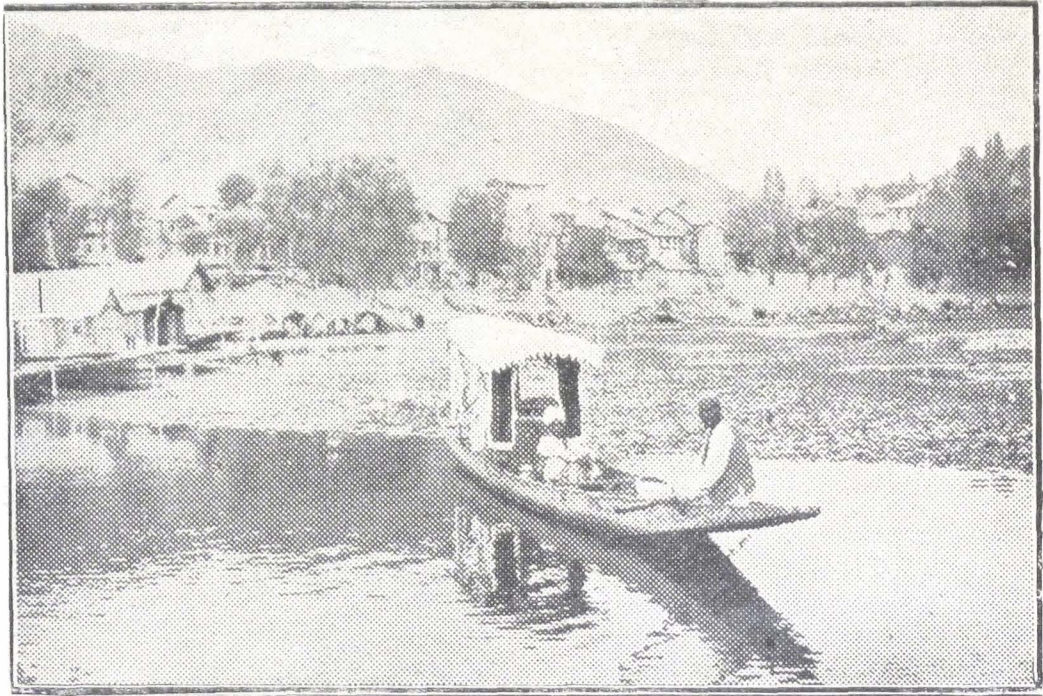
Srinagar by boat. Pine trees are planted along the banks and a rough wooden bridge across the Jhelum River connects the main road with the town. Closer acquaintance betrays the inferiority of the houses, which are in a dilapidated condition. There is a Roman Catholic Mission school where the nuns do all in their power for the uplift and welfare of the

people. The emerald green rice fields play their part in beautifying nature. The inspiring grandeur of Mount Haramouk, 16,000 feet high, is visible, and the ranges of the Pir-Pangal and Kaj-i-Nag form a beautiful background. The most striking scenery encountered on this journey takes the form of the stately Poplar Avenue, stretching for 34 miles from Baramullah to Srinagar, which was

second to none in the valley of Kashmir. The freight for transportation of fruit is considerably greater than the value of the fruit itself, and this disadvantage is also associated with the orchards in the Kangra and Simla valleys.

WEALTH OF COLOUR.

Baramullah to Gulmarg (17 miles).—I availed myself of the opportunity of a transitory visit to



A shikara on the Dal Lake at sunset with some house boats just visible on the left.

planted under the guidance of the Moghul queen, Nur Jahan, and stands for time and eternity as an everlasting memory of the Moghul reign. This Royal Avenue, with all its majesty and splendour is undoubtedly the prettiest avenue in the world, and is worthy of a place in any tourist's itinerary. The orchards in Baramullah are

Gulmarg by taking advantage of the bridle path from Baramullah. The path has a steep ascent amid a wealth of colourful scenes of varied splendour, flanked by shady trees. Its ever-changing scenery, with leaping waters making their flashing play amid mosses, ferns and flowers, is sufficient recompense for the trudge. The

trunk of a tree with its surface planed answers the purpose of a bridge across a torrential stream which it is obligatory to cross. The unobstructed view of the snowy peak of Nanga Parbat (27,000 feet) was the first glimpse I had of the eternal snows. Kontour village, with its three-storied houses, is passed on the way. The familiar sight of meeting Kashmiris with receptacles containing fire near their bosoms to ensure warmth fills one

Masses and masses of flowers encircle the wooden huts, which serve as residential bungalows and hotels. In June the place springs suddenly into life—and it is deserted by the end of September. The British Resident in Kashmir has his summer residence in Gulmarg. Below Gulmarg is another space called Killanmargh—the Meadow of goats. Marghs abound in this vicinity, the largest of these being Toshmaidan, some ten miles south-



A Hut with its flower garden. Vast expanses of flowers like this are common sights in Kashmir.

with a thrill. What risks they run of their robes catching fire! The sight of wooden huts surrounded by beds of vari-coloured flowers was my first glimpse of the fair holiday resort of Gulmarg—the meadow of roses—which eventually I reached after passing through a long bazaar. Sunshine and a starry night marked my transitory stay at Gulmarg, with the temperature registering 58 degrees indoors.

east. Many of these contain large ponds or lakes.

Gulmarg to Patan—via Tanmargh and Margaum (14 miles). -- The bridle path to Tanmargh—the motor terminus—throughout its length of three miles forms a gradual descent through pine forests, flowers, ferns and running streams helping to transform it into a paradise of its own. Transport from Tanmargh up hill takes the

form of riding ponies and coolies, and there is a dāk bungalow where food is procurable. Onwards to Margaum the poplar avenue for the most part lines only one side of the road—sentinels overlooking the valley. Timber in large quantities occupies the dry bed of the Ferozepore nullah, waiting for the rising water to float them into the Jhelum river. The pony path from Margaum to Patan is very rugged with scanty shade, and the temperature registered 78 degrees in the sun.

EMERALD FIELDS

Patan to Srinagar (17 miles).—The road enjoys the shade of the poplar avenue, which stretches for 34 miles. The whole country for miles around is an emerald field of rice, which due to low lands and abundance of water is easily cultivated. Not far from the rest house of Patan there is a temple built in a tank. It owes its origin to snake workship, which is the most ancient of all forms of worship even pre-dating Buddhism. The people imagined that huge snakes lived in every mountain, and especially near the springs at their foot. Tanks were built at these spots for the snake god to occupy at his pleasure. The word Nag, which is part of the names of many places in Kashmir, owes its origin to the place being dedicated to one of these snake gods. Patan can boast of a bazaar well stocked, and not far from this place there is a large Chenar tree which spreads its branches over an area capable of giving shelter to a company of

soldiers. The people live in crude houses, with mud walls serving as a fortification. There is a telephone exchange alongside the road for state purposes, and it connects Srinagar with Gulmarg and Baramullah. The relics of a Buddhist Temple of ancient fame, with carved pillars as testimony of the architecture in past centuries, is a feature. A State Nursery Garden is seen from the road. The Fort of Hari Parbat, which was built by Akbar, the Moghul Emperor, to tempt back the people by offering them liberal wages, stands on a hill and marks the outskirts of the fair City of Srinagar. Crossing a maidan brought my day's journey to an end, and found me in Srinagar. The Boy Scouts were in vigorous training and the Scout Master very kindly deputed two Sikh Scouts to show me the road leading to Nedou's Hotel. These lads had scarcely walked a few hundred yards when they began lagging and finally disappeared, which does not credit them with the stamina needed these days. I emerged on to the banks of the Jhelum River, where the boatmen thronged around offering a swift *shikara* to glide me up the river to a convenient spot on the bund in close proximity to the hotels. After trudging 17 miles in the heat of the day, with the temperature registering 98 degrees, the boat row brought me to the end of a perfect day, gliding up the river seeing many sights of interest. By this time I was quite ready for a rest and a meal.

CHAPTER III.

SRINAGAR AND ITS ENVIRONS.

*"When life runs through the valleys,
We have the shady trees.
Or if it's over mountains,
The vigour-giving breeze.
So high and low in every state,
Are given things to compensate."*

The traveller's **first experience** when coming upon Srinagar is to find himself in a city supreme in smells and sights. Smells, like the poor, are ever with you, and remain from the time the boatmen surge around to secure your patronage, throughout your transitory visit to the bazaar, till the final inevitable baksheesh claimed by the Kashmiri coolie is paid, and for a further duration till the odour from his oily clothes leaves the luggage which he has carried.

Coming up the river, the eye catches the Takht hill, which overlooks the city and on which stands the Sankara Charaya temple. This temple is electrically illuminated at night, displaying its outline, and its beauty attracts great attention from all quarters of the city. A steep ascent leads to the temple, which commands a perfect view of the European and Indian quarter of Srinagar and the floating gardens on the Dal Lake.

Srinagar has many Baghs which serve as camping grounds. Prominent amongst these is Munshi Bagh, which is an orchard stretching half a mile along the river.

Near the European quarter of the town is Chenar Bagh, a beautiful grove of trees lining the banks of the canal which joins the Dal Lake to the Jhelum River. The locality is pleasantly cool and its shady encampment grounds are a much-frequented resort.

MOGHUL GARDENS.

The most famous of the Moghul gardens are known as Nishat and Shalimar. Shalimar was the Emperor's garden, Nishat was that of the Empress, Nur Jehan, and each in its own way is beautiful. Fretted marble water slides, long fountains filled with channels, masses and masses of flowers, with Chenar trees of immense size casting their shade over velvet lawns. Every Sunday the fountains play and the gardens throng with inhabitants in gorgeous raiment. This is where the Kashmiri is seen at his best.

Not far from Munshi Bagh stands All Saints' Church, whose resident Chaplain is supported by the European community. There is also a nursing home for Europeans. The Mission Hospital is a boon to the Kashmiri, and its

guardianship is in the hands of Dr. Neve, an eminent physician. The Mission Chapel is attached to the Hospital.

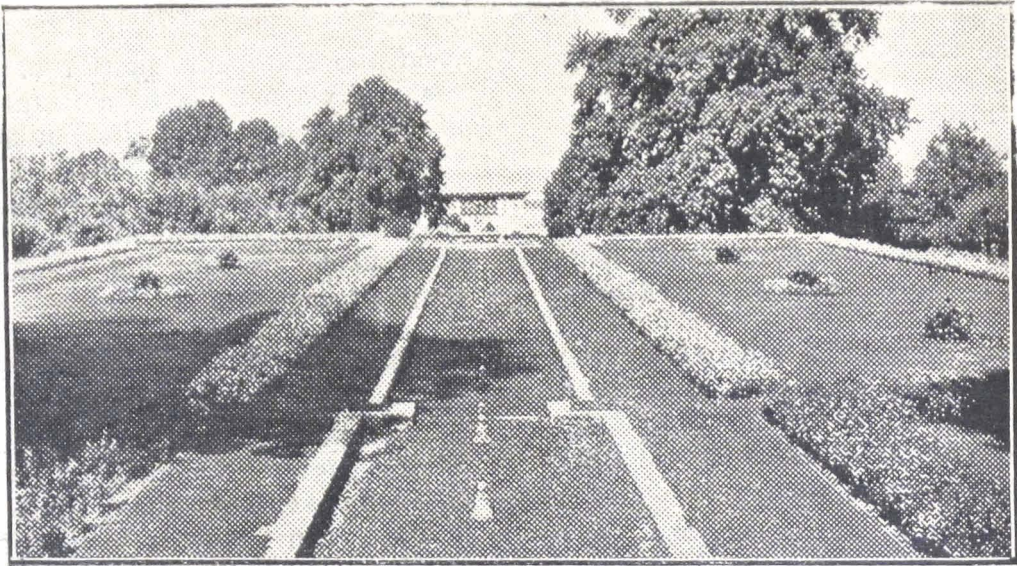
PALATIAL BUILDINGS.

Srinagar has many palatial buildings, prominent amongst which stands Nedou's Hotel, with its annexes and large fruit and flower gardens. The Club specialises in many fields of sport, and the Residency is amidst wooded grounds

The Post Office and principal shops are situated on the Bund. The Mission High School, of which the Reverend Tyndale Biscoe is Principal, is worthy of a visit. The boys specialise in sports, in which swimming competitions play a very important part.

SILK INDUSTRY.

The Silk Factory assumes the foremost place in the manufacturing area of Kashmir, and is the largest factory of its kind in the



A sector of the Nishat Bagh, one of the Moghul gardens that add to the natural beauty of Kashmir.

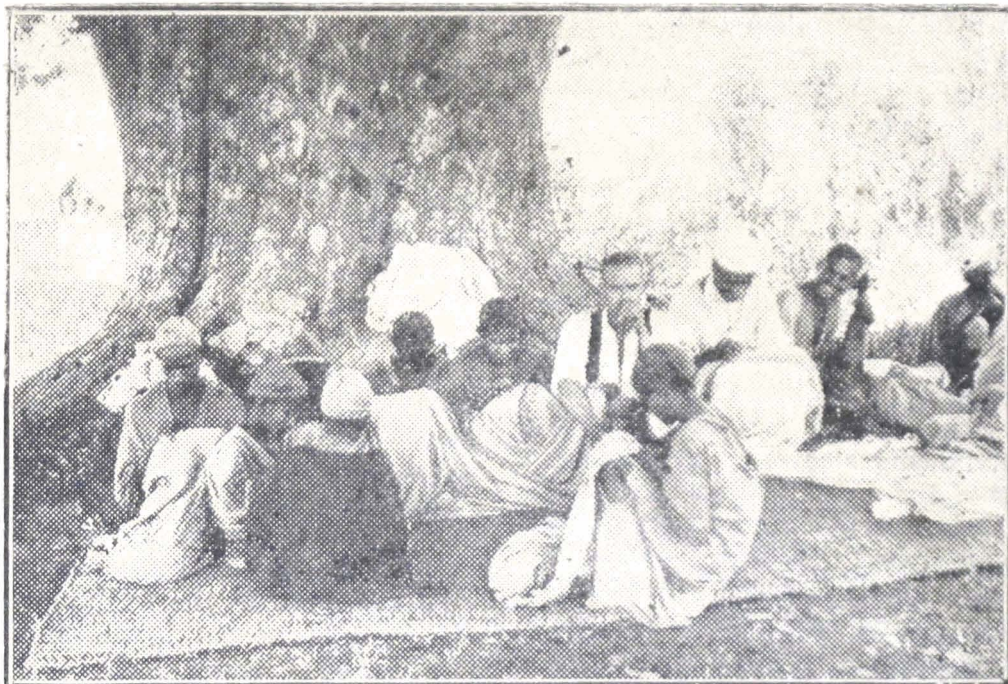
with a poplar avenue in the background which adds to its majestic splendour. The floods of 1928 wrought havoc in this town and the High Flood Level marked on the buildings lucidly depicts a gloomy tale of the extent of inundation and destruction. There are seven State Houses for the guests of His Highness the Maharajah of Kashmir, and the Palace itself is beautifully situated on a hill on Gupkar Road, not far from the Moghul gardens.

world, obtaining its electric power from Mahaura and bringing in a large revenue to the State. About 4,000 men, women and children are employed daily in the factory, while no less than 150,000 people take silk worms' eggs from the factory, rear and bring in their cocoons, and receive a remuneration of approximately six lakhs of rupees. Permission to visit the factory must be obtained, but His Highness the Maharajah prohibits any photographs being taken.

PARASITIC DENS.

The romantic innovation, in years gone by, of living in boat-houses on the Jhelum River, is not so popular now-a-days. My first observation gave me the impression that these boats, anchoring in stagnant water and clinging to the banks, were parasitic dens, with a further danger of disease from the Kashmiri families who

nected by seven bridges, each with a separate name with the affix Kadal, which is the Kashmiri word for bridge. Below the seventh bridge is the Chatterbal Weir, which is lowered in the first week of every Hindu month. The Weir raises the water level and increases facilities for navigation about the city, enabling large boats to traverse the canals and enter the lakes



Kashmiris busy on embroidery work under the shade of a convenient tree.

permanently live in a boat adjacent to the kitchen boat—both of which are component auxiliaries to a houseboat. Precautions are generally taken by the European community to anchor their houseboats in side streams, lakes and even as far as Gundarbalan, the Sind River—a distance of twelve miles from Srinagar.

The town on the right and left banks of the Jhelum River is con-

freely. I spent a pleasant hour in a shikara, gliding across the river below the seven bridges, which brought me to a Yarkandi caravanserai which was well stocked with the produce of Tibet and China.

OVERTURNED BASKETS.

This is the land where the "women wear the trousers" and have more fighting stamina than the men themselves, even controlling

their husbands and settling their quarrels for them. I was confronted with a very amusing incident. Two Kashmiri women were standing on their boats on either side of the river engaged in a wordy battle, with prolific phrases of abuse thrown in. Having exhausted their energies with the matter still undecided, a basket overturned on the boat floor signified that the fight would be resumed on the next opportunity.

From the seventh bridge I traced my steps to the Hotel through a continuous bazaar, stretching for three miles or more on the left bank of the Jhelum River. Here Kashmiri life, with all its customs and creeds, is seen in a high and low degree. The filthy bazaars endorse the indifference which the Kashmiri attaches to his personal cleanliness. Both Kashmiri men and women don long robes with wide, flowing sleeves. The head-dress of the women takes the form of a handkerchief and that of the men, a ribbed skull cap. Bazaar life reminds one of towns in Mesopotamia, and the dress of the women emulates the fashion of Baghdad.

STRINGENT LAWS.

The city of Srinagar has a population of approximately 142,000 people, of whom more than three-fourths are Mahomedans. Stringent laws prohibit cow-slaughter throughout Kashmir under the penalty of ten years' imprisonment—and probably execution for a second offence.

Motors are the principal means of conveyance in Srinagar. A direct motor road leads to Gulmarg, which takes off the Jhelum

Valley Road at Mile 8 and terminates at Tinnagh, which is three miles from Gulmarg. Pony transport is in operation beyond Tinnagh. During the months of July and August, when Srinagar is exceptionally hot in spite of its elevation (5,000 feet), visitors emigrate to Gulmarg—the meadow of roses—or camp up the Sind Valley as far as Sonamagh.

LIFE AT GULMARG.

At Gulmarg life threatens to be monotonous unless one is an adept at sports, in which tennis and golf predominate. Skiing in mid-winter attracts certain sportsmen. The State has erected many wooden huts, each surrounded with its flower garden. The little Church of St. Thomas', with its beautiful garden, stands on a knoll, and the residence of His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir is built on a hill by itself and commands a perfect view of the surrounding country. The snow-capped peaks of Nanga Parbat (26,000 feet) are clearly visible and provide the finishing touch to the natural beauty of the sanatorium of Gulmarg.

There are endless books on Kashmir, innumerable also are the pictures one sees of it. Those who have never been there expostulate that the colouring is too impossibly beautiful to be true. Those of us who know Kashmir expostulate in different terms and complain that the pictures are drab and dull compared with the real thing. No living man can set down fully, in our crude mediums, the beauty that Nature has spread about Kashmir with such a prodigal hand.

CHAPTER IV.

LADAKH OR 'MIDDLE TIBET.'

*"And many a glistening glacier
Gave birth to a shining stream,
That bore the life-giving water
To where the great rivers gleam."*

Ladakh is known as Middle Tibet and is a large tract of country including Rupshu, Zana-kar and the lofty plateaux south of the Karakoram ranges. It contains the loftiest inhabited districts of the world. No part is below 10,000 feet. A large portion of the population live at elevations

ranging from 12 to 15,000 feet above sea level. While this is the height of the valleys and plateaux, the mountain ranges average from 17 to 21,000 feet with peaks 25,000 feet high.

Almost all the Ladakhis are agriculturists. Wherever there is level ground, and irrigation is



The author's Ladakhi coolies.

possible, there are villages which are as verdant in their oasis beauty as the mountains are grand in their barren massiveness. The zho, a hybrid between the yak and common cow, is used for ploughing. The Lamas in many places are the chief landholders. Wheat and barley are the only cereals. Grim, a kind of loose grain barley, grows at high altitudes, ripening at 15,000 feet above sea level. Apricots and apples grow in altitudes lower than 9,000 feet.

POLYANDRY.

The population of Ladakh is roughly 190,000. The restricted amount of cultivable land has enforced the custom of polyandry. The eldest son of each family chooses a wife and his brothers also become minor husbands of the woman. Thus, and by the celibacy of hundreds of monks and nuns, the growth of the population is restricted to cope with the produce of the land.

The people are of Mongolian type, short and ugly. The men wear woollen caps with ear flaps, and, with the exception of Mahomedans, wear pig-tails. The women wear long gowns with a flat head-dress ornamented with large turquoises and sewn to black sheep skins which protect the ears. They are a contented, cheerful race, neither quarrelsome nor revengeful, or rarely so under the influence of *chang*, a sort of barley beer. They are honest and simple-minded and not so given to habitual lying as their neighbours, the Kashmiris. They conspicuously lack in cleanliness, never bathing in winter to avoid the intense cold and dispensing with ablutions in summer by choice.

MONASTERIES ABOUND.

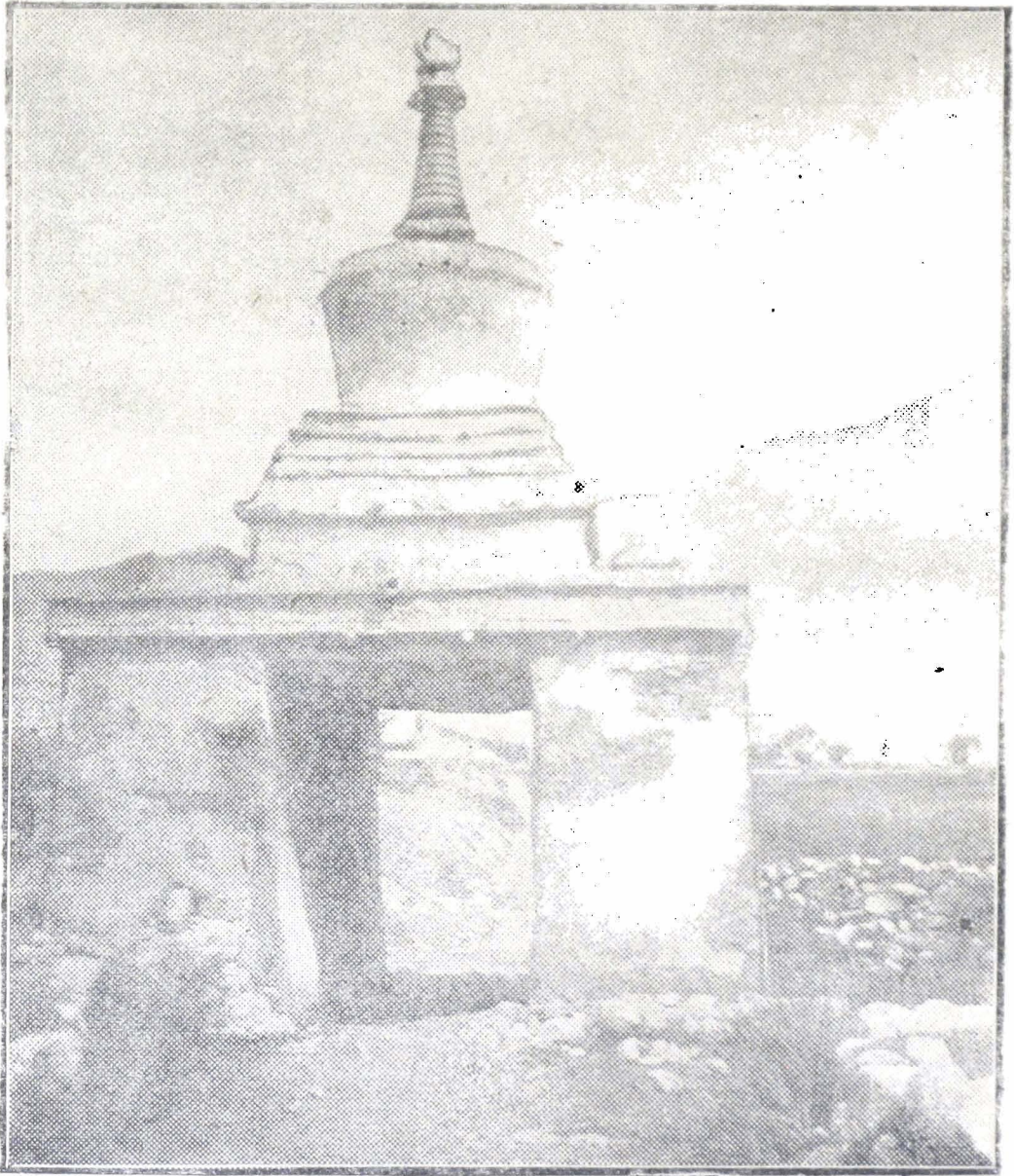
Ladakh was closely connected with Tibet for many centuries and the majority of the inhabitants are Buddhists of the Red or Yellow sect of Lamas. Throughout the country monasteries abound, and Chortens mark the entrance and exit of every village and the approaches of monasteries. A Chorten is a four-sided structure converging to a cone-like point. It has five steps and thirteen spirals, the steps representing the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. The spirals represent the thirteen ages of the Buddhist, each of a duration of 100,000 years. The ashes of the dead are the foundation of Chortens but it is believed that when a Lama dies, his body is salted and preserved in a Chorten. Actually speaking, Chortens are graves built to keep down in the ground some evil spirit that has caused misfortune.

Mani walls are less frequently seen and for the most part outline the road leading to important monasteries or towns. They are masonry structures built to a height of approximately four feet, the top of which is covered with flat stones. These stones bear the Buddhist inscription "Om Mani Padme Hum" (Hail to the Jewel of Lotus) and have, from time to time, been placed by Buddhist pilgrims. As simple as these walls may appear, it takes a century or more to cover the surface of a structure, fifty feet long and five feet broad, with a single layer of stones. They are built along the centre of a thoroughfare. Superstition dies hard. It is believed that great calamity will befall any pilgrim or

caravan that does not pass by the left side of a Mani wall.

Ladakh is the chief trade route for Central Asia with Tibet, Yarkand, Kashmir and the Punjab. All routes lead to Leh, the capital of Ladakh, where the

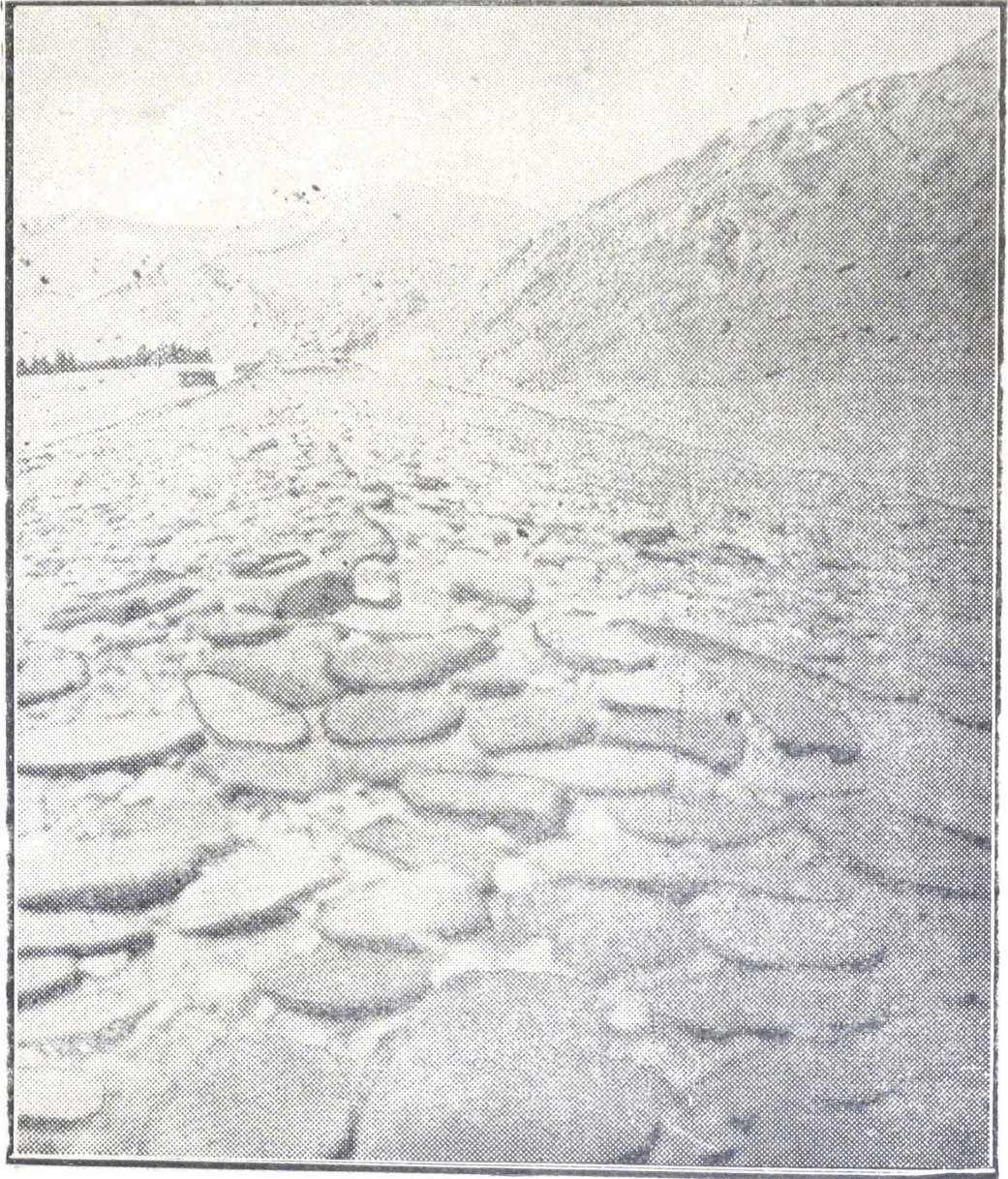
British Joint Commissioner resides during the summer to supervise the trade traffic. Leh is a town of several thousand inhabitants. There is a broad bazaar, close to which rises a spur on which stand the old palace, a monastery and other



A Chorten forming an archway through which every traveller on the Treaty Highroad to and from Leh must pass.

buildings. There are numerous plantations, in one of which is the residence of the Joint Commissioner. The bazaar thoroughfare is completely monopolised by yaks and zhos when the caravans come in. The Moravian mission has a

hospital and school here with Father Peter as its head. Father Peter takes a keen interest in the life and welfare of the people and showers his hospitality on travellers of all denominations. Leh can boast of a band consisting of



The longest Mani wall outside Leh.



Ladakhi men and women, showing front and rear views of their head-dresses.

flageolets and kettle-drums which herald the arrival and departure of any dignitary. It plays a prominent part at the annual sports which take the form of horse racing and polo of a most primitive style where rules are conspicuous by their absence.

The ex-King and Queen of Ladakh reside in an adjacent village to Leh and receive an annual grant of Rs. 6,000 from the Kashmir Government. Ladakh was formerly made over to Gulab Singh by the treaty which gave him Kashmir and every year His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir presents His Majesty the King with six Kashmir shawls of the most beautiful design. The King or Queen distributes them among their dependants. Most of Her Majesty's ladies-in-waiting pos-

sess one. The Maharaja of Kashmir follows the time-honoured custom of sending presents to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, every third year. A close connection still exists between both the countries. Ladakh is a country with peculiar charms, utterly devoid of the verdant beauty of Kashmir, its lofty sandy plains and rugged granite ridges have a beauty of their own.

Doctor Hebbert's work "In Himalayan Tibet" is an authoritative work which interestingly explains every phase of life in Tibet. It is commended to prospective travellers so that they may familiarize themselves with the country and its customs before they embark on a journey through the land of Lamaseries with its Mani walls and numerous Chortens.

CHAPTER V.

Srinagar to Leh.

*Hope, like a beaming taper's light
Adorns and cheers the way—
And still as darker grows the night
Emits a brighter ray.*

This route is known as the Treaty High road and is under the executive administration of the British Joint Commissioner, Leh, whose permission must be obtained to travel on this highway. On account of the scanty food supply the number of passports is limited.

The excellent facilities for travelling, with a rest house at every stage, coolie and pony transport secured at negligible rates, granaries at defined stages on the march, and a circulating library at every stage from Mochoi to Leh, should encourage the most pessimistic and nervous traveller to undertake the journey.

The passport takes the form of documentary details for the guidance of the traveller and embodies these facilities. These regulations are described as the "Ladakh Res Rules"—a system by which a group of villages is bound to supply transport (coolies and animals) at every stage on this caravan route. This highway is the route for central Asian Trade and caravans also enjoy the privileges of the Res regulations.

The Kashmir portion of the road is green and comparatively fertile. Beyond the Zoji La (a Tibetan

name meaning the Place of Four Demons) where the Tibet, Yarkand, Baltistan and Kashmir roads pass a common highway, the hills are bare of vegetation.

HOT JOURNEY.

The journey is hot in summer but the passes encountered are comparatively easy in ascent. The last stage to Leh is across a long sandy plateau where the glare and heat of the summer is very trying.

There are no mile-stones beyond Zoji La and the Ladakhi mile seems almost endless. Dāk huts have been built every four miles for mail runners who carry the mails by relays. They enter into the spirit of their duties with energy and enthusiasm, a mail runner's only protection being a spear. The Ladakhi calculate distances by means of these dāk huts. Lama-series, Chortens and Mani walls manifest themselves from Mulbekh where Buddhists are met for the first time, and the traveller enters Tibet.

There is no purdah in these parts and the people lead a simple life.

Srinagar to Kangan (23 miles).—The journey to Ganderbal, 14 miles distant, can be undertaken by boat across the Anchar Lake. Kashmiri boats are met in

numbers on the way to Ganderbal taking bouquets of flowers as temple offerings, a pilgrimage being undertaken yearly.

By mid-day, with the temperature registering 100 degrees, I reached Ganderbal, a village at the mouth of the Sind Valley, where I engaged two coolies for my journey to Dras.

The road crosses the Sind river near Wayil where a suspension bridge marks the terminus for vehicular traffic from the direction of Srinagar. The river, however, provides a cheap means of transport—by boat.

GOOD SPORT

Evidence of good sport is manifest by the many camps which dot the valley where snow trout fishing is popular. At sunset I reached Kangan, a pretty village with a walnut grove. Two Canadian ladies, of advanced age, were met in the rest house. They were undertaking a journey over the Zoji La with hopes of visiting the Amarnath caves. The first of my provision parcels met me at Kangan to help me tide over a territory barren of all supplies.

Kangan to Gund (13 miles).—A pretty path winding through woodlands leads to Gund. More European camps were met en route and I was able to play the part of a Good Samaritan by rendering first aid to a poor fellow with a septic wound. These men being far from medical aid depend greatly on European travellers' aid to alleviate their sufferings.

In many places the road is breached by mountain streams which have to be forded. Crude bridges are to be seen across the Sind river.

The inhabitants here are so accustomed to receiving *baksheesh* from the European traveller that they make a demand for it before they pose to be photographed and the slightest manipulation of the camera is readily understood, showing the extent to which cameras have been used in these re-



Wayil Suspension Bridge.

gions. I was pleased to meet a caravan which kept me company for the seven stages up to Kargil. The journey was exceptionally hot, the thermometer registering 102 degrees in the day. The road gradually ascends to Gund which is a pleasantly situated village above the river. Here many travellers (including the two Canadian ladies) were met encamping within the perimeter of the rest house.

Gund to Sonamargh (15 miles).

—Dawn found everyone up and doing, ready for the day's march and by sunrise the place was completely deserted. Temperature 68 degrees. Beyond Gund the valley contracts. The road runs by the mountain side to approach the strikingly pretty village of Revil. The road pursues its way through pasture land crossing and re-crossing the Sind river. During my journey clouds mitigated the glare and heat of the day. Caravans were met en route on their way to Srinagar.

PRECIPICES.

Nearing Sonamarg are precipices 3,000 feet deep. Above the gorge the valley opens and lovely meadows fringed by forest catch the eye. This is Sonamarg which touches an altitude of over 8,000 feet. A more delightful spot it would be difficult to find. At one time it was the chief sanatorium in Kashmir. The ruins of its church may still be seen. Amongst the many visitors camping at Sonamarg was Dr. Neve whose popular work "The Tourist's Guide" is of great benefit to the traveller. A pleasant walk is that up the Valley of Glaciers, but falling rocks should be guarded against and some knowledge of mountaineering is necessary for the bigger climbs. Snow trout can be caught in the main river. The Postmaster, Shumboo Nath, was very courteous during my stay and helped to pass away an idle hour with his amusing tales of travellers. One of these related to a gentleman from Hungary who arriving at Sonamarg in a hungry state "ate the Postmaster out of house and home." Fortun-

ately the second instalment of provisions was awaiting my arrival at the Post Office, averting a recurrence of the incident. The temperature at night was 76 degrees.

BEAUTIFUL SCENERY.**Sonamarg to Baltal (9 miles).—**

The scenery on this journey is beyond description. The road takes the form of a path through

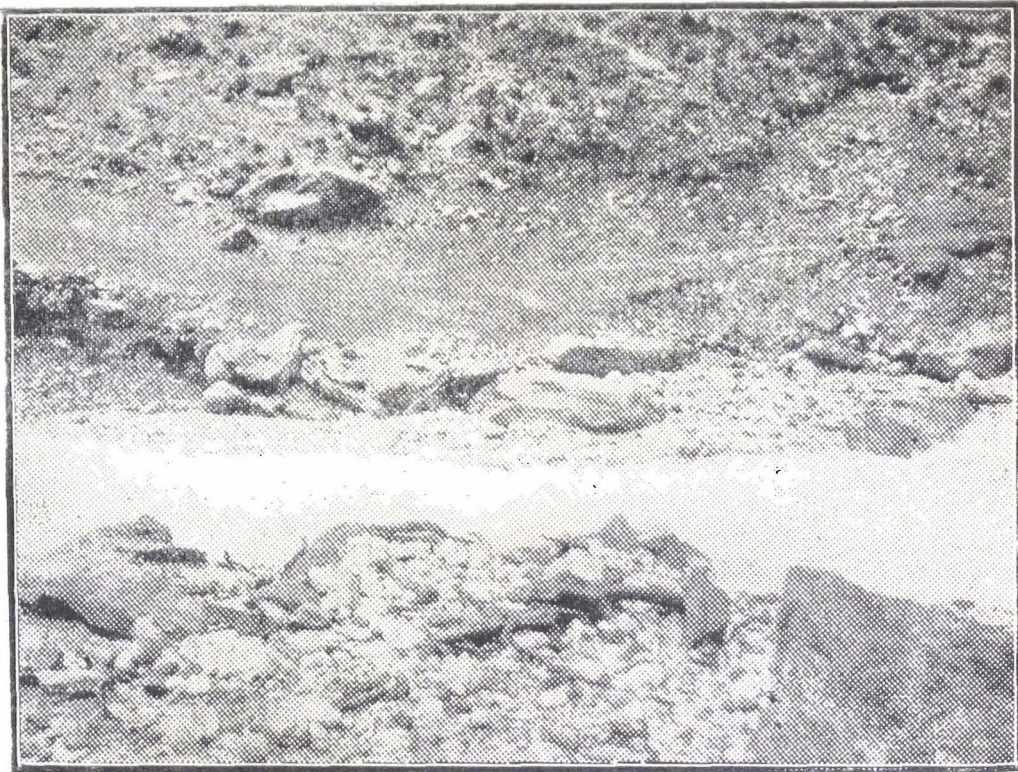


Half yak, half cow. Ladakh's beast of burden.

fragrant meadows, interspersed with forest. Waterfalls emanate from the snow-clad peaks and many snow bridges are passed. The stream in one place had breached the road to a depth of three feet. My stage coolies after fording the stream waited in suspense for my arrival with my greybearded Baltese coolie, Kalik

Meer, who pointed out that but for his presence I should have been carried away by the rushing torrent. He carried me pick-a-back across the stream and the stern, serious expression on his face was converted into a smile as he had held out his hand for the traditional *bakshesh* these men demand for any service rendered, however trifling.

caves are only nine miles from this spot and my endeavour to visit them the same day was frustrated by the melting snow bridges giving rise to unfordable streams. I retraced my steps in sad disappointment after successfully covering half the distance to the caves. I enjoyed the company of Reverend and Mrs. Llwellyn who were in the rest house, with the hopes of visit-



The Treaty High road breached by a stream.

A PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE

Nearing Baltal, scenery of the utmost grandeur meets the eye, an endless variety of ferns and many different species of flowers being met on the day's march. The rest house at Baltal is across the Zoji stream, situated among birch glades surrounded by snow-capped peaks. The famous Amarnath

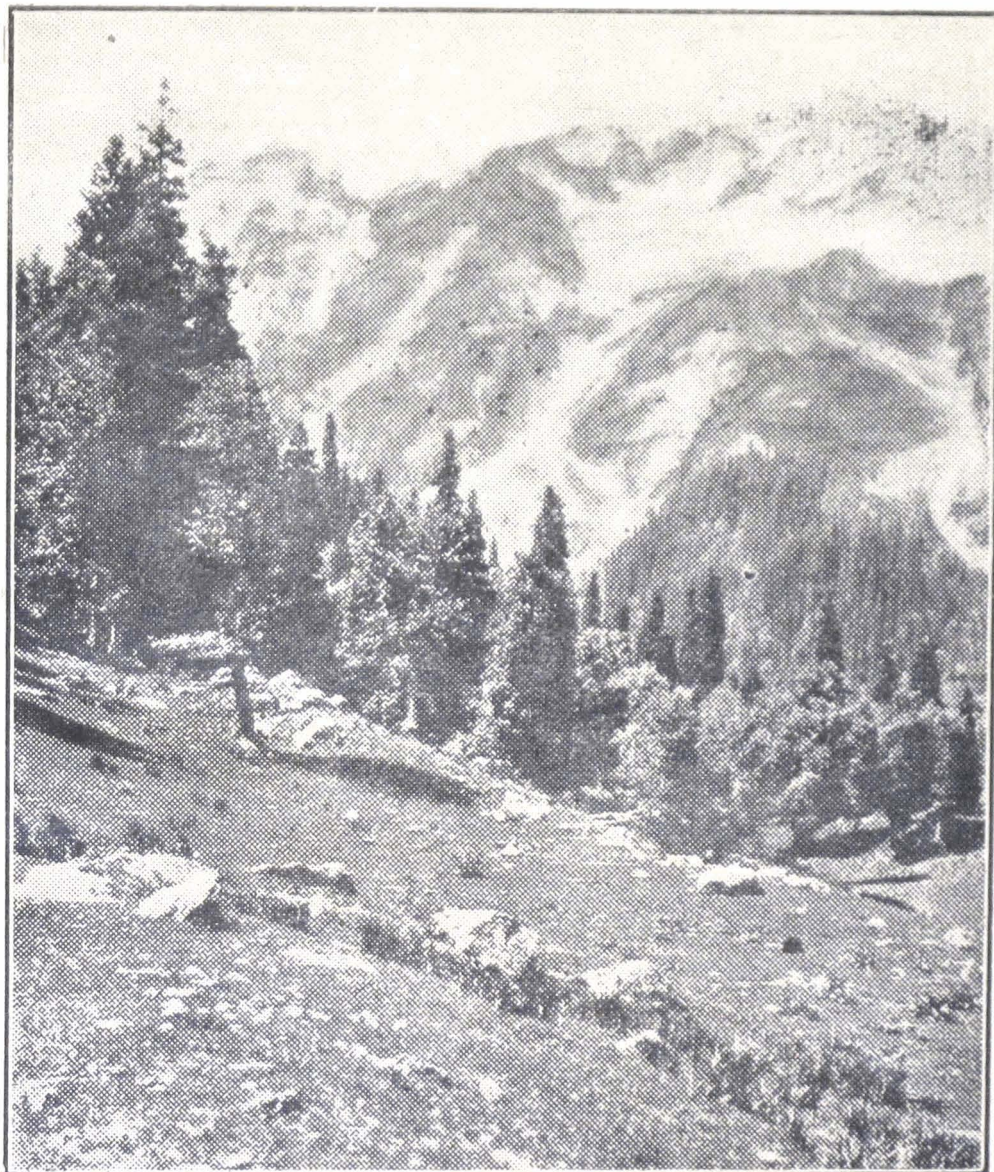
ing Zoji La Pass the following morning. Just a 100 yards away from the rest house is a permanent snow bridge and the glazed weather beaten bark of trees lying in the vicinity can be peeled off in strips of ten feet. This bark is used by caravans to light fires. At night the thermometer registered 54 degrees.

ACROSS THE PASS

Baltal to Matayan (15 miles).—The route lies across the Zoji La Pass. It was a bright sunny morning when I crossed the Zoji La, 11,000 feet, in the company of a caravan. The ascent becomes gradual after the first

three miles which provide difficult climbing.

Many snow bridges were passed and my coolie pointed out a spot where a terrible tragedy occurred in November, 1928, a caravan being swept away by an enormous avalanche. Three men and twelve



The glacial valley leading to the Zoji La.

pack ponies were killed and costly merchandise buried.

Salvaging operations for the recovery of a *churru* consignment—a valuable drug—were completed a month before I crossed the pass, where one lone carcase remained. His Royal Highness the Duke of Albruzzi tells a story of the hardships endured when crossing this pass in winter or early spring when caravans take great risk in ascend-

and the Kashmir Government take great precautions for their protection.

On the summit of Zoji La is the rest house of Machoi, an ideal place for a "rest cure". Here the mountain air and the scenery act as a tonic to the visitor. The cold was intense during my visit, the temperature being 50 degrees.

A telegraph office remains open from November to May to serve as



A crude bridge over the Sind River.

ing this rock-bound ravine, in which snow accumulates to an immense depth.

At the base of the Zoji La there is a shelter hut to keep communications open. An army officer and his family were encamped there in the hope of visiting the Amarnath caves which are twelve miles distant. Pilgrims visit these caves in August each year

a "Saving of Souls" during the critical winter months. The visitor's book records the fact that His Royal Highness the Duke of Spoleto and party passed this spot in April, 1929, on their way to explore the Baltora glacier.

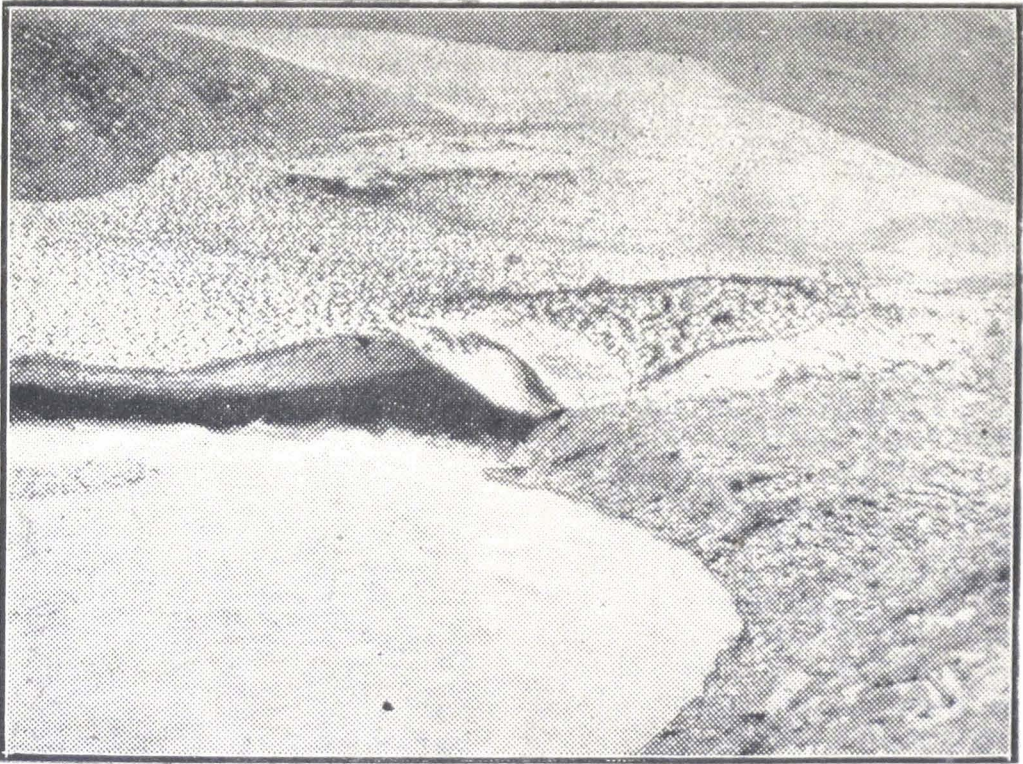
The people of Baltistan are content with small mercies and their houses are constructed out of boulders six feet above and three

feet below the ground. They burrow down into the earth to cheat the cold—like the Kashmiree they pest the traveller for *baksheesh* but are quite content with matches as the primitive methods of lighting a fire with flint and grass is still prevalent in these remote areas.

At Matayan the two rooms in the rest house were occupied by two English ladies returning from Leh,

and even black. The Baltese women have invested themselves with the Insignia of the Star of India by decking their robes with brass star-shaped ornaments. The men have extracts of the Holy Koran enclosed in leather wallets stitched to their right coat sleeves.

The pony men make themselves understood by varied whistles



A melting snow bridge on the Zoji La Pass

so I occupied the verandah which was walled in at one end and afforded me a night's rest. Temperature in the evening 58 degrees.

Matayan to Dras (13 miles).—Trees and vegetation are left behind and are substituted by barren hillsides with snow in the ravines. The bare mountainside possesses the most astonishing colours emerald, yellow, purple, red

which the animals in the caravan understand. These men never lose time. They wear coarse wool of their own weaving and most of them carry a wheel, spinning as they go. Their watch dogs guard the caravan by night while during the day's march they are carried on the bundles of pack ponies where they sleep during the day to renew their energies for the night.

Blue pigeon are common and seen in large numbers within the vicinity of serais and camping grounds. Nearing Dras, massive rock cliffs are passed overshadowing the road and the remains of an ancient Sikh Fort, associated with a stormy past.

At Dras I parted with my coolies and the faithful Israelite, my grey-bearded Kalik Meer. Evening temperature 78 degrees.

Dras to Shimsa Kurbu (21 miles).—Meteorological observations are taken at Dras by the Post-master and telegraphed daily to Poona. There is also a granary and a primary school.

The mountain dogs to be found in these parts have delightful coats but they are very timid animals, though, in size, they resemble Newfoundland dogs. The road leads through a cliff following the Dras River and flowers cover the mountain slopes, which though bare of trees, have a peculiar charm of their own. Birch plantations are seen wherever irrigation facilities exist and make good camping grounds. Huge rocks from the mountain side find a resting place in the river and are economically used as piers for bridges.

The road at an altitude of 11,000 feet clings to a perpendicular cliff towering thousands of feet higher. These massive rocks are a menace to passing caravans while the river frequently rises and obscures the narrow road. During the floods of 1928 many bridges were swept away. Of these only fragments of timber projecting from the abutments remain to be seen.

The Dards—a fighting race—are met in this vicinity. They have a

legend which states that the Gate of Heaven is guarded by a Kashmiri, who is reluctant to admit one of this tribe. In order to secure entrance therefore the corpse is buried with a bow and arrow with which it is expected to vanquish the keeper of the Gate.

All along this route ravines and gorges are repeated in tiresome monotony.

The rest house at Kurbu is in close proximity to the Dras River and is very comfortable. The chowkidar is an extremely obliging



Mail runners.

person and understands his job thoroughly.

Shimsa—Kurbu to Kargil (15 miles).—For miles the road is precipitous with the muddy waters of the Suru River on one

side and towering cliffs on the other. The mountain ravines are the haunt of sportsmen in search of big game: but the permission of the Secretary of the Game Preservation Department, Srinagar, must first be obtained.

Nearing Kargil, the Kharal Suspension Bridge across the Suru River leads to Skardu. The road winds up a steep ascent. What is called a rough road in this country is calculated to make one's hair stand on end.

A novel method of threshing corn is in vogue in this part of the country. Village belles with arms interlocked shoulder high, walk round in a circle, stamping out the chaff.

A broad bazaar marks the entrance into the town of Kargil which is the capital of the province of Purig. The road runs parallel to the Suru River and the rest house is reached after crossing over a beautifully constructed bridge named after the late King Edward. The interior of this rest house with its kuttcha floors is far from clean and a night's experience forced on me the belief that the caravan traders secretly hire the durries and beds from the chowkidar.

A branch of the Central Asian Society has its activities centred here for the conversion of people to Christianity, and their dispensary is greatly in requisition even more than the one provided by the State. The inhabitants are good humoured and frank in expression and wear a variety of peculiar shaped hats. Evening temperature 78 degrees.

Kargil to Mulbekh (23 miles).—The custom of

baksheesh never seems to end. Here it takes the form of asking for a "penny" but the Tibetan trader whose journey takes him through the hardest roads in the world would prefer your newspaper which assists in lighting fires.

The road runs along ledges of rock, overhanging precipices, for many miles and under the scorching sun the temperature during my trip registered 98 degrees during the day. This long journey takes two days if camp is pitched in a willow plantation at Lotsun where the angler can try his hand in neighbouring streams.

The defile now opens out and on a spire like rock, hanging miles up in the air, is perched the first lamasery or monastery, which in Tibetan is known as a Gompa. This quaint structure painted white with red bands is a striking object with the village of Mulbekh clustering at the foot of the hill.

The walls of this monastery, it is believed, will some day transform themselves into a staircase with its summit forming the threshold of the Kingdom of Heaven through the activities of thousands of Buddhists who are constantly at work on the structure with bricks bearing sacred inscriptions.

The road leading to this Gompa takes the form of an almost perpendicular ascent and is only accessible on horseback to a certain point.

Here the chief Lama welcomed me in his robes of office and led the way repeating the prayer "Om-mani Padme Hum" and swinging a prayer wheel.

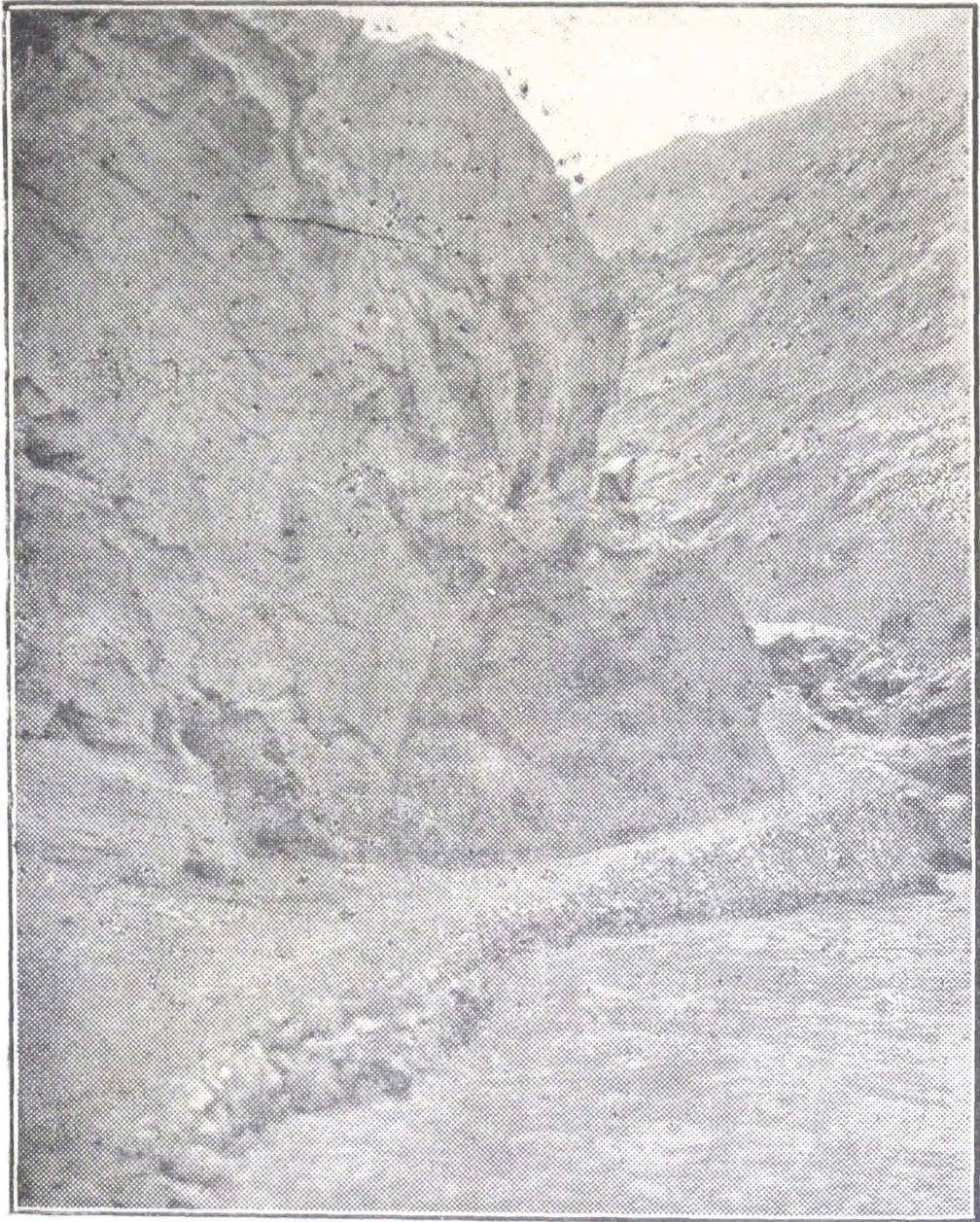
Chortens marked the approach to the monastery till we passed

through a dark passage and up a rickety staircase where the Lama opened a trap door and I found myself in the monastery. Here hung prayer flags. The shelves were filled with religious teachings and altars

clustered with idols while in an adjoining passage thirteen cylindrical prayer wheels revolved.

DEVIL DANCING.

The Lama appeared in a strikingly grotesque mask which is used



The roaring Dras River almost level with the road.

for the Devil Dance in Tibetan monasteries.

The Buddhists, too, have a High Mass in which the Skushog or Abbot touches the head of each communicant with the vase of life, whilst other Lamas administer the bread of life and wine of life with a burning of incense.

From here onwards, through Ladakh and even stretching into Lahaul Districts, Chorten and Mani walls haunt the traveller. Every house top is seen flying either a prayer flag or with a yak's tail hoisted to guard against evil spirits. On the route is a large figure of the Goddess Chamba carved on the face of a rock. (See Page 40.)

STRANGE HEADDRESS

The headdress of the women takes the form of a strip of leather shaped like a snake and studded with turquoises. The richer the woman, the larger and finer her turquoises, and some of them carry all their earthly wealth on their heads. This headdress is attached to pieces of black sheepskin shaped to protect the ears from cold. From the back it is readily mistaken for the head of a bear, I actually made this error when I saw one of these weird figures rising out of a barley field.

In these days of ever changing fashions it may not be long before this headdress is placed on the market as an ideal winter model for ladies.

The Ladakhi is met for the first time at Mulbekh where he smilingly greets the traveller with a "Ju Leh" conveying the highest form

of respect and literally meaning "I am thy servant," and a substitute for the word Salaam used in India.

Mulbekh to Bod Kurbu (14 miles).—The road rises by easy stages to Nimikha La, a pass 13,000 feet high. But for a slight difficulty in breathing I would never have taken it to be a pass. Snow is seen at a great distance as compared with the Zoji La Pass—many thousands feet lower, which is shrouded with snow throughout the summer.

The slightest variation in the weather materially alters the temperature which at midday fell from 84 degrees to 72 degrees following a momentary drizzle, the rain being transformed into sleet.

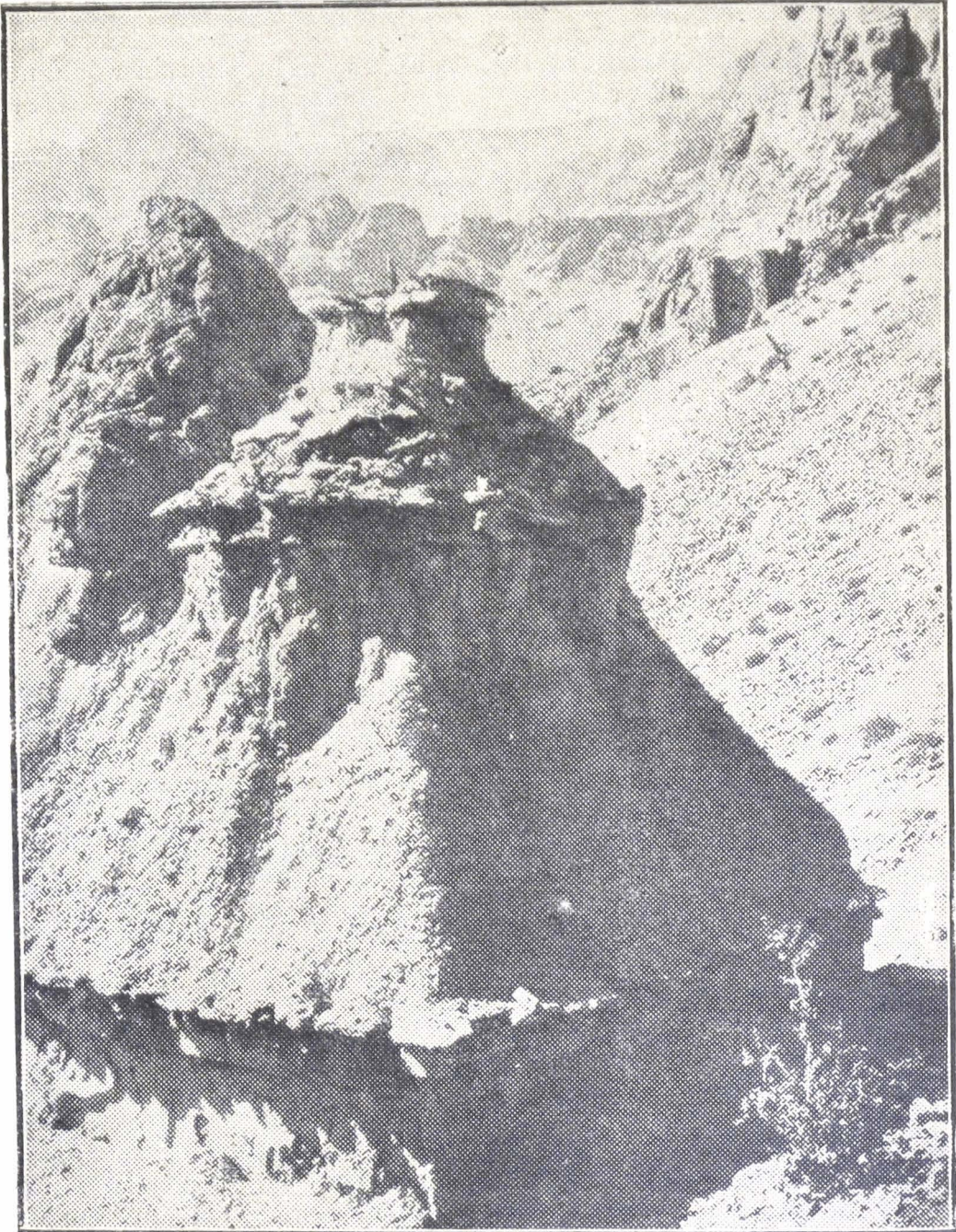
The chaos of rocks and sand is relieved by the appearance of the Kurbu Valley with its wide stretch of vegetation and barley fields variegated with mustard patches.

The high rocks are crowned with ruined forts and castles, indicating that this sleepy place possesses a stormy past. The rest house is not too bad and the caravansarai was fully requisitioned.

Bod Kurbu to Lama Yaru (15 miles).—This march after ten miles crosses the Fotu La Pass, 13,500 feet. The ascent is gradual. The summit, those of all other passes in Lama Tibet, is marked by a mound with prayer flags hanging from a cedar branch where the Buddhist repeats a prayer in gratitude that no calamity has befallen him in his ascent. The traveller is presented with a strip torn from a flag by his coolie in return for the recognised *bukshcesh*.

On this journey I often caught a glimpse of the ibex with its large curved horns, which frequents these parts. The view from the

top of this pass is extraordinarily beautiful. A steep descent leads to Lama Yaru with its monastery on the crest of a projecting rock. The



Chortens on the precipitous ascent to a Lama monastery.

Lamas certainly choose most impossible positions for their monasteries. No country in the world perhaps is more church-ridden than

Tibet where the people believe in letting the Lamas regulate their lives. I witnessed the services in this monastery. The Lamas sit in



A Lama performing a Devil Dance.

a row repeating prayers whilst the chief Lama regulates the pace by beating a drum with a hooked stick.

Occasionally, they break into a chant to the accompaniment of weird sounds emitted from enormous trumpets, some exceeding ten feet in length.

Nearly every village has its Gompa, the Tibetan name for monastery, and the people cater for the welfare of the monks before studying their personal requirements.

Lama Yaru to Nurla (18 miles).—The path follows a narrow ravine with rushing streams between cliffs and opens into the Indus valley. Mountainous masses of rock strangely sculptured by nature and resembling queer shaped houses and castles are to be seen.

It seems a country of hobgoblins, and explains why the people are devil worshippers. Deep ravines and towering precipices mark the day's march and a mass of yellow clay, stretching for over a mile across the valley presents fantastic shapes.

Khalatsee village is passed midway. It abounds in fruit trees, and apricots were plentiful at this time of the year. Another branch of the Central Asian Missionary Society is seen here with its dispensary situated in the middle of a fruit garden. There is a rest house with a post and telegraph office at Kalatsee.

The region is full of historical interest, and there are a great number of rock carvings.

ROCK CARVING.

Where the present suspension bridge across the Indus stands, a Tibetan King built the old bridge and to this day there is an inscription on a rock prophesying a gruesome death for the person who injured the bridge in "thought, word or deed." This was a trying march and I was glad to reach Nurla rest house. Evening temperature 80 degrees.

Nurla to Saspul (15 miles).—The day's march led over sand and stone with range upon range of barren mountains. The glare was unbearable and sun glasses were a necessity. Leaving the main road, a path leads to the Alchi (Lama) monastery by a bridge across the Indus. Amongst the many monasteries I visited, this was decidedly the least cared for, and I hope I do the Lamas no injustice when I say they were, without exception, of a low type, had evil countenances, and to crown all, smelt strongly of a preparation called chung which the people brew locally. The men carry a prayer wheel and other odds and ends and wear amulets to ward off evil spirits.

Saspul to Spitok (28 miles).—The rest house at Saspul is a double-storied building, the only one of its kind on this highway. An attempt to emulate the lay-out of the Nishat Bagh has failed, but nevertheless a garden of some beauty with its stately poplar trees adorns the compound of this lofty rest house.

The road leaves the Indus and makes for the high plateau which leads down to Bazgu, a most picturesque village. A monastery

over a thousand years old crowns the summit of a hill and a dilapidated fortress remains to tell the tale of battles fought around these regions.

DESOLATE JOURNEY.

This was a very trying and desolate journey midday bringing me to the rest house of Nimu, the tem-

recompense after the heat of a long day's march. I retraced my steps and reached the rest house of Spitok in darkness. We were more than tired and whilst my coolies yelled to attract the attention of the chowkidar, I groped in the dark amongst my worldly goods to locate my flask. Temperature 94 degrees.



The road to Ladakh through the mountains.

perature registering 102 degrees. For the first time after twelve days I met an European lady and gentleman riding on their way to Srinagar through a sandy plateau. It was a great relief to pass the shady plantations near the Phynung Nullah with a torrential stream rushing through grassy meadows—

Spitok (Pitok) to Leh (5 miles).—Spitok is a large village clustering round an isolated hill on which is a picturesque monastery built 500 years ago and its Skushog or Chief Guru is for the present at Lhassa in Tibet.

Here the Leh valley is entered and with a gradual ascent through a sandy plain the town of Leh is

seen from a long distance. A little further on I entered the main gate of the city and there was Leh, my long cherished objective.

A few caravans had come in and

every type of Asiatic including Baltese, Yarkandese, Tibetans, Tartars and Punjabees, any of whom was to be seen in the bazaar which presented

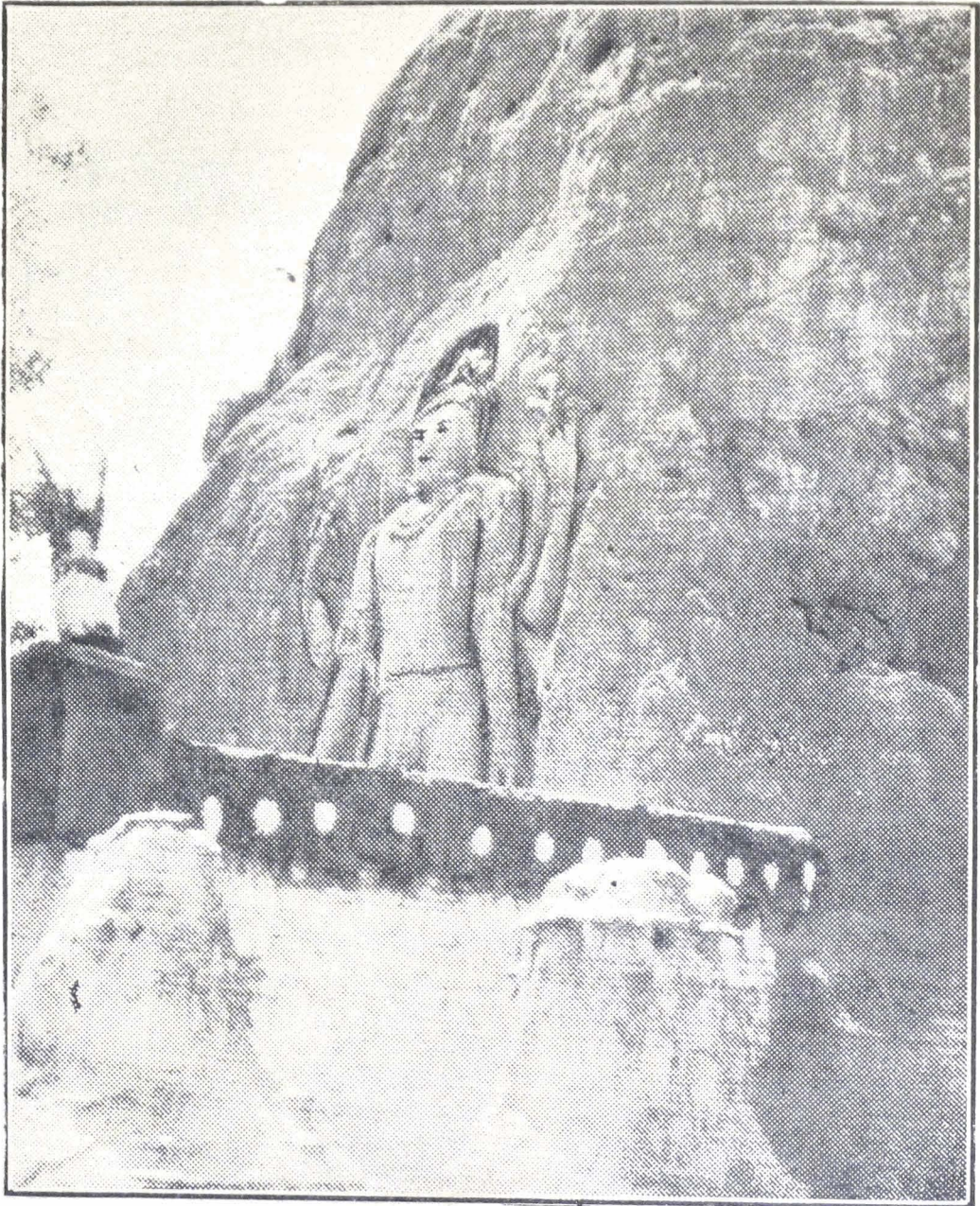


Image of the Goddess Chamba carved in the rock near Mulbakh monastery

a very striking appearance with the monastery and an old castle perched on the summit of a hill in the background. My gun stick soon attracted a record crowd whose excitement increased when I allowed a lad to fire a shot in the air.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

It was pleasantly astonishing to hear a Ladakhi youth playing the English National Anthem on his flute and Father Peter told me that for the first time in the history of Ladakh, the National Anthem was sung in Tibetan at the

Thanksgiving Service held on Sunday, July 7, to commemorate the recovery of His Majesty from his long and painful illness.

At Leh, the rest house is beautifully situated in a plantation adjoining the residence of the British Joint Commissioner who is the representative of the King.

I made it my duty to call on Captain Falconer, the present Joint Commissioner, whose hospitality I enjoyed throughout my transitory stay in the city. When I left I carried away with me many pleasant memories.

CHAPTER VI.

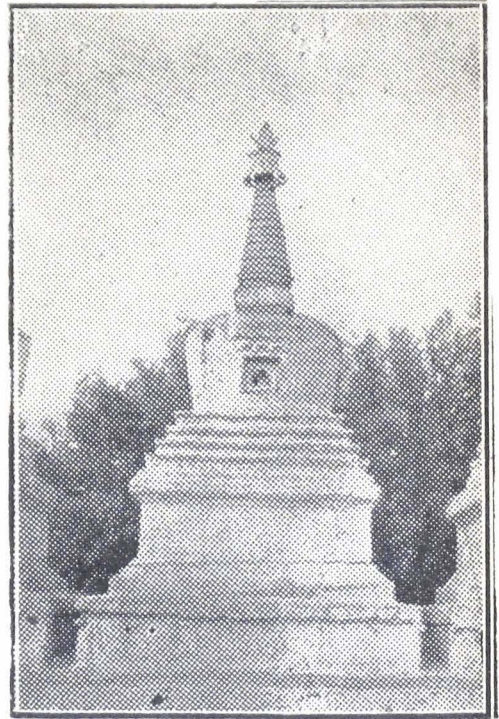
LEH TO KYELANG.

*"Earth has not anything to show more fair,
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in his majesty."*

This is part of the through route from Simla to Leh, and is open from June to October. It is passable throughout for yaks, which form the best transport. These and all supplies should be arranged for the whole journey with the help of the Tehsildars of Leh or Kyelang, according to the direction from which the journey is undertaken. The traveller is expected to arrange his own transport over this highway and official assistance is only a matter of courtesy and cannot be claimed as a right. The traveller, under the Res rules, enjoys his last benefit at Leh, where he is privileged to purchase four maunds of flour from the State granary for his onward journey to Kyelang.

There are no dāk bungalows on this route and only rest houses at Patsio and Jispa, the two stages before Kyelang. Caravanserais are provided at every stage except the five stages from Debring to Rachog-Ba, a distance of eighty miles over a region touching exceptionally high altitudes where neither habitation nor shelter exists. Even if caravanserais and rest houses are resorted to, it is still obligatory to take a light tent to ensure a shelter at these five stages. Three-fourths of this highway is in Kashmir territory with its boundary at Serchu (Lingti). Fortunately, the road

over this portion of the journey takes the form of a path over the Mori Plain for several miles. Little or no interest is taken in the upkeep of the roads beyond Gya, where bridges are conspicuous by their absence, streams



A Chorten—one of many.

and rivers have frequently to be forded, rushing water inundates the road and falling cliffs swallow up the highway, leaving the caravan and the traveller to work out their own salvation. This route is

principally used by the Punjab caravans, and apparently is neglected so as to discourage Central Asian trade to the Punjab through Kulu, which at present is routed via Srinagar.

These disabilities do not exist on a similar uninhabited sector between Serchu and Jispa in Punjab territory. There all streams are bridged, roads most efficiently maintained, side streams over roads covered, milestones installed and generally a state of high efficiency prevails. The traveller does not say good-bye to Kashmir territory without his energies being put to a final test—fording the Tsrasp river, which in places is four feet deep with a swift current. The disabilities encountered by caravans can be better imagined than described.

The trade route from Ladakh to Tibet crosses the high plateau of Rupshu by the Tagalaun La pass (17,000 ft.) and enters Kulu over the Baralacha pass (16,500 ft.). Nomads with their flocks roam in search of pasture in the uplands of Rupshu and are often met proceeding on an itinerary of uncertain duration. Marmots and wild asses (Kieng) are frequently seen on this route after passing Debring.

The climate is one of extremes. The heat in the Summer is considerable owing to the vast tracts of barren rock and sand, which reflect the heat from a seldom clouded sky. Snow in the Indus valley seldom falls to any depth, and in summer there are but a few slight showers.

Leh to Chushot (12 miles).—Sunshine and starry nights invi-

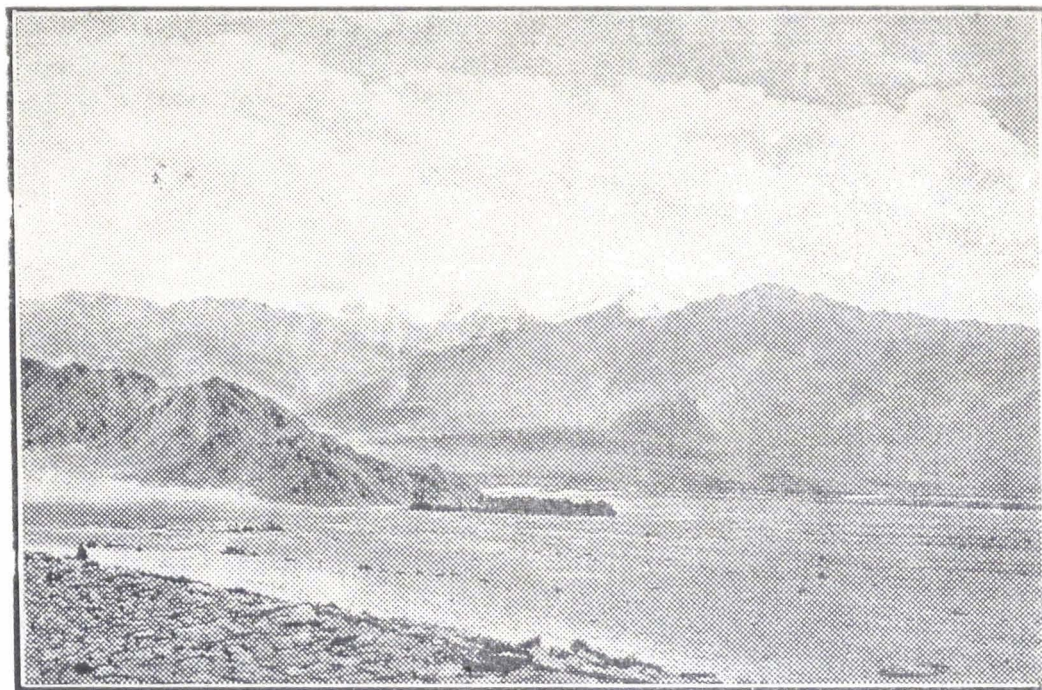
gorated my stay at Leh, with just a drizzle the night before my departure which reduced the temperature from 80 to 60 degrees. It was with regret that I passed through the gates of the fair town of Leh, whose joys and sweet recollections will remain with me for many years to come. A few miles beyond Leh the road to Chushot was treached by the Indus River to a depth of ten feet. I agreed to the prompt decision of my Ladakhi coolies to alter the route and travel via Tixie, bordering the Leh side of the Indus. The surrounding land was cultivated with barley, which showed no prospects of ripening before the dreaded cold set in. Some optimistic Ladakhis with pans were silting up the river sand in the hopes of striking gold. This spot in bygone years was associated with this precious metal. Swift streams were forded three times. One of the longest Mani walls is to be seen on this road, while Chortens salute the adventurer throughout his journey. Tixie was reached before sunset, and the eye met the beautiful spectacle of the sun's rays illuminating the snow capped peaks of the Karakoram range. My ten pound tent was put into operation for the first time on my journey. I encamped in a plantation with the monastery on the hill top haunting me through the night. The evening temperature was 68 degrees.

Tixie to Marsalong (13 miles).—A clear view of the snowy peaks is obtained throughout the day's march. Rushing streams of muddy water were met

again and again. The swift flow of the torrent resulted, a fortnight later, in the bursting of the Shyok Dam. My long-cherished hope of visiting the famous Hemis Monastery was in the balance and depended on the existence of the monasterial bridge, which about this time is yearly swept away. Fortunately the crude bridge was intact.

takes place every June and lasts for three days. The spectators are as ignorant of the interpretation of the play after its completion as they were before it started.

Some beautiful statues are in this Gompa and the decorated altar forms a striking picture. The most expensive pile carpets of Yarkand afford sitting accom-



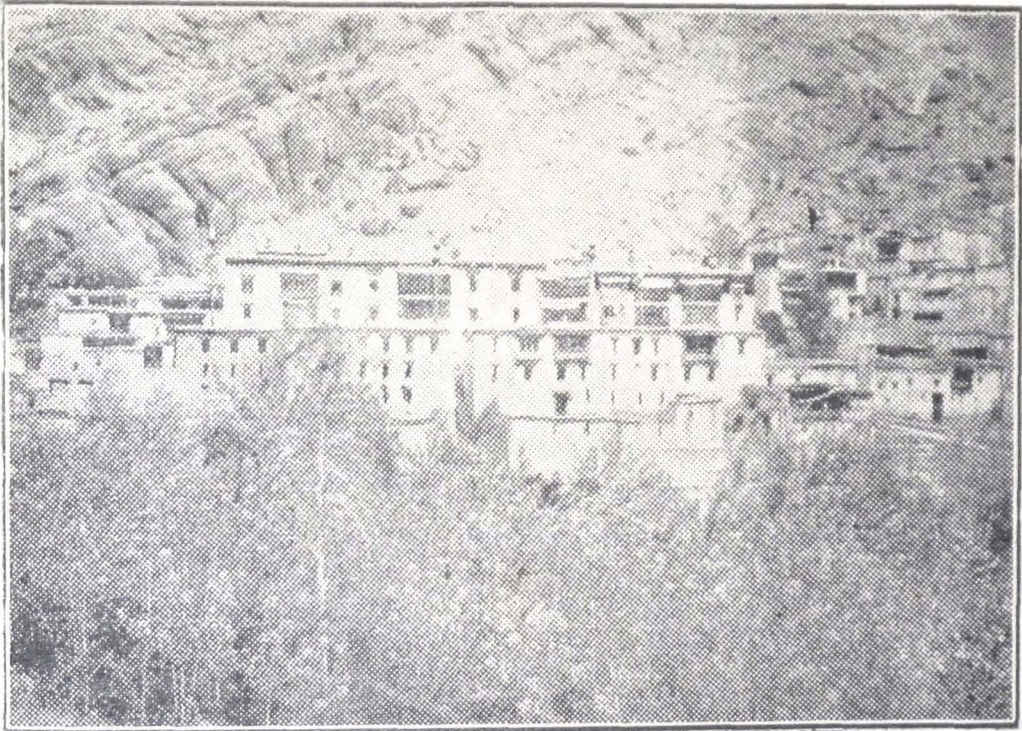
The snows, seen on leaving Leh.

My coolies passed over one at a time, and I followed with no untoward incident. Two miles beyond is the Hemis Monastery, overlooked by hanging cliffs. The road for miles is lined with Chortens and Mani walls, with prayer flags flying from slender cedar branches. This is the greatest of all the monasteries in Middle Tibet, where the mystery play

modation. A monster prayer wheel is in the courtyard for those that truly repent and the front of the monastery has three standards over 100 feet in height on which yaks' tails are fixed to secure immunity from evil spirits. Large vessels of chung (a local brewed beer) are conveyed through passages for the monks, in sufficient quantities to "spiritually" affect them. The

Skushog or Abbot is referred to as the Chief Garu of this Monastery and is the reincarnation of its founder. He lives in his palace in the midst of a plantation and many attendants wait on him. He welcomed me into his audience chamber, where the floor is covered with the best carpets that money can buy, and entertained me to dried fruits and butter tea,

turn with bare feet reverently placed his fur cap on the ground before him and prostrated himself three times. Then, picking up his cap, he advanced with head bowed to the throne of the Skushog, who muttered a few words and touched the penitent's head. Following this a red strip of cloth was handed to the man which in feverish haste he pins to his cap



The first view of the Hemis Monastery.

which is the staple drink of the Tibetans.

In this spotlessly clean chamber with glittering masses of brass plate this great dignity sits on a carpet with the portraits of Their Majesties the King and Queen suspended from the wall. During my stay a number of Ladakhis came to pay their homage and receive the Skushog's blessing. Each man in

and departs, revealing to all that he belongs to the red sect of Lamas. A massive lock, over a foot in length, secures the main door of the monastery. The Skushog has donated an operation theatre to the Moravian Mission Hospital at Leh.

I retraced my steps through the ravine and a few miles further, following a path through a planta-

tion which is the best of its kind in these parts, I confronted the Caravansarai of Marsalong, where I was destined to have a night's rest. Being averse from these cold regions, I was anxious to hurry over this tract of 100 miles of altitudes ranging between 15,000 and 18,000 feet above sea level. I had a round table conference with my coolies and we decided the following day to cover two stages instead of one, and the next day to engage a yak to pass over the Tagalang La (17,500 ft.) and thus reduce the journey by two days. With this decision we retired for the night, only to be disturbed in the early hours of the morning with a torrential shower of rain which, though of short duration, nevertheless flooded the interior of the Sarai except for one or two dry places. The clouds melted before the rising sun and, with the temperature registering 58 degrees, we embarked on the day's march of 26 miles.

Marsalong to Gya (26 miles).—

The first obstacle encountered was a torrential stream with two trunks of trees joined together to form a bridge. Imitating Blondin, the Rubicon was crossed. The road follows the muddy Indus River, which is no longer seen after passing the Caravansarai of Upshi on the way to Gya. A halt for the midday meal was made in a plantation of birch trees, where the silence was soon broken by the pitiful cries of a child. I located the sound in a locked up hovel in the mountain side. The flimsy tin lock with a twist of the wrist, easily left the door it secured and I found a child of three, who was not a bit perturbed at my presence.

Taking his hand I led him to the plantation, where he was the honoured guest of the day. An hour later the mother, with a forest on her head, turned up. She took in the situation with a smile of gratitude. Compensating her for the broken lock I extracted an assurance that she would never again lock the child inside a room with a lighted fire, and then hastened on my journey.



A breach in the Indus.

Glaciers carved the mountains into fantastic shapes and gouged out beds for lakes. The tonic mountain air and the scenery were both refreshing. Quaint villages, where customs are conserved, were occasionally seen, and an ancient monastery perched on the summit of a precipitous

rock set me thinking of the predominating influence of religion in this country. Not far from Gya the rushing torrent had swallowed up the road and joined hands with the mountain side. Fortunately for me the Wazir or Governor of Ladakh was expected to pass this way the following morning, and a

building—at Gya, which was monopolized by the Wazir, whom I called on and who replenished my stock of wheat flour for the most difficult portion of the journey which now faced me. It was a cold night showing signs of rain and the surrounding mountains with their white mantles indicat-



The author's yak and baggage on Tagalaung La.

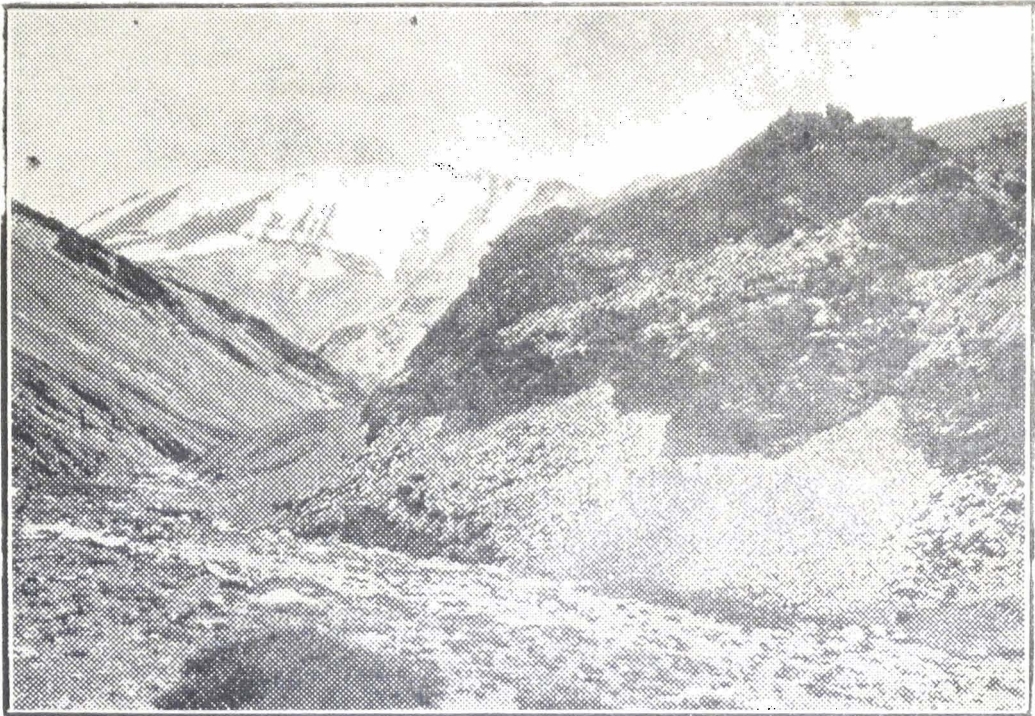
band of men and women was actively engaged throwing huge stones into the stream and repairing the road, which to a certain extent mitigated my trouble in fording the stream. The Skushog of the Hemis Monastery has his private caravansarai—a two-storeyed

ed a fresh fall of snow. The evening temperature was 52 degrees.

Gya to Debring (15 miles).—Here for the first time I saw a yak and engaged one to carry my transport over the Tagalaung pass, which otherwise would have proved almost insurmountable. These animals cannot live in regions be-

low 10,000 feet. Their bushy tails are five feet in circumference. The yak is a very sure-footed animal, and it was on the back of a yak that Sven Heden made his famous ascent of the Mustag-Ata, reaching a point 21,000 feet in altitude. Their tails are very sacred to the Buddhists, who instal one or more on the roofs of houses and monasteries to guard against evil spirits.

stretch of 150 miles denuded of all habitation. Chortens and Mani walls keep company with the traveller and mark the outskirts of the village. The Tagalaung La pass was comparatively easy in its ascent, though some difficulty was experienced in breathing. Here I met a nomad with his flock crossing the pass at an easy pace without the help of a stick and with his



Snow views from the Tagalaung La Pass.

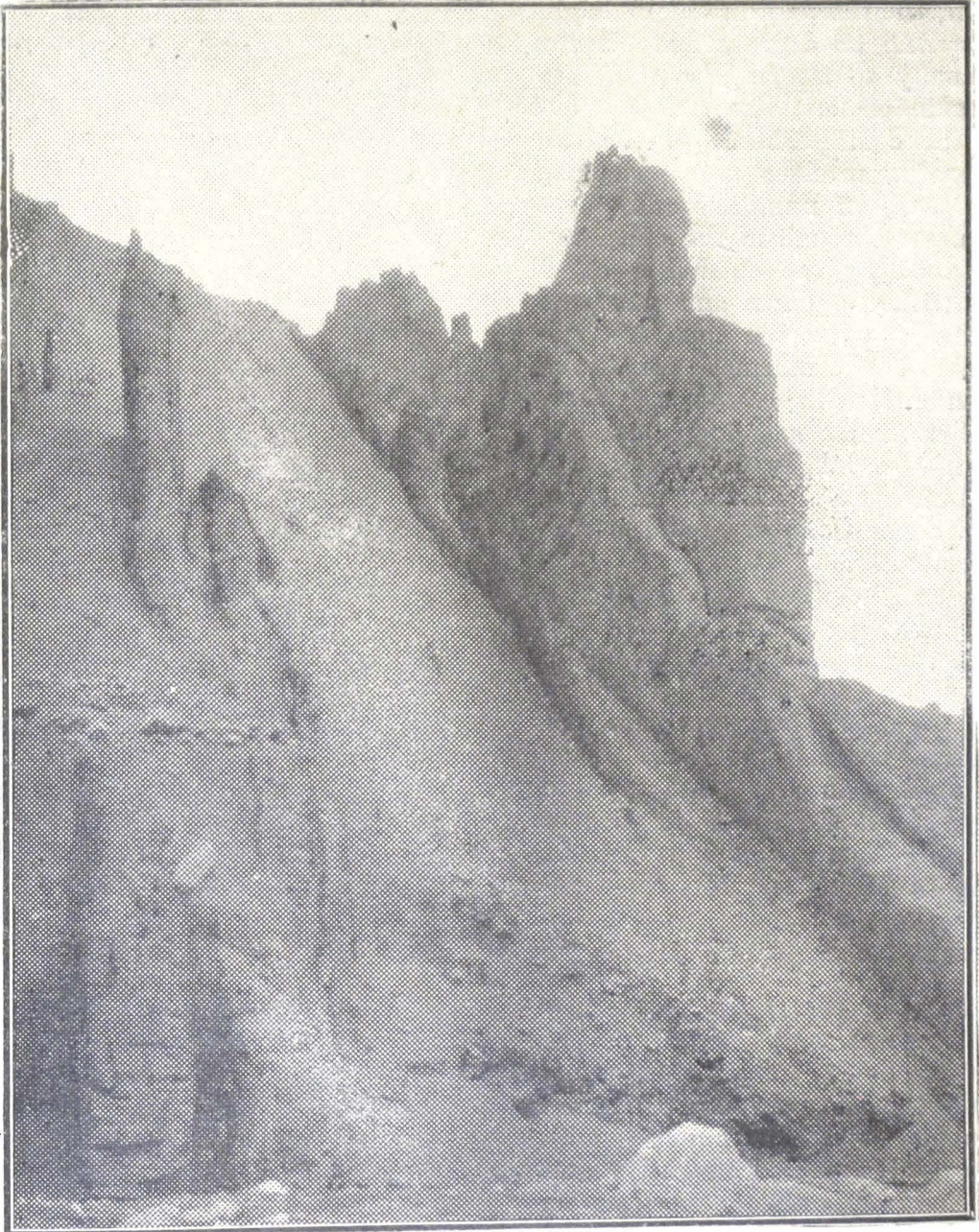
An epidemic in 1928 broke out and exterminated thousands of yaks, which was a great loss to the country both from the point of view of transport and milk supply. Herds of tame yaks are seen surrounding Gya at altitudes above 15,000 feet.

The village of Gya is the last to be seen before venturing over a

hands behind his back. I discarded my stick and emulated his style, which undoubtedly is the best for climbing steep ascents. For the rest of my journey, a distance of 600 miles, my stick and I parted friends, and I walked with more ease and less strain. A close and distinct view of the snow capped mountains is obtained from the

summit of this pass, with peaks towering six to seven thousand feet above the road's modest altitude of 18,000. By the time the summit is reached, the traveller has unconsciously completed the whole

syllabus of deep breathing exercises. The descent from the pass is very stony with rushing streams (originating from the melting snōws) leading to a spot possessed of a Chorten which identi-



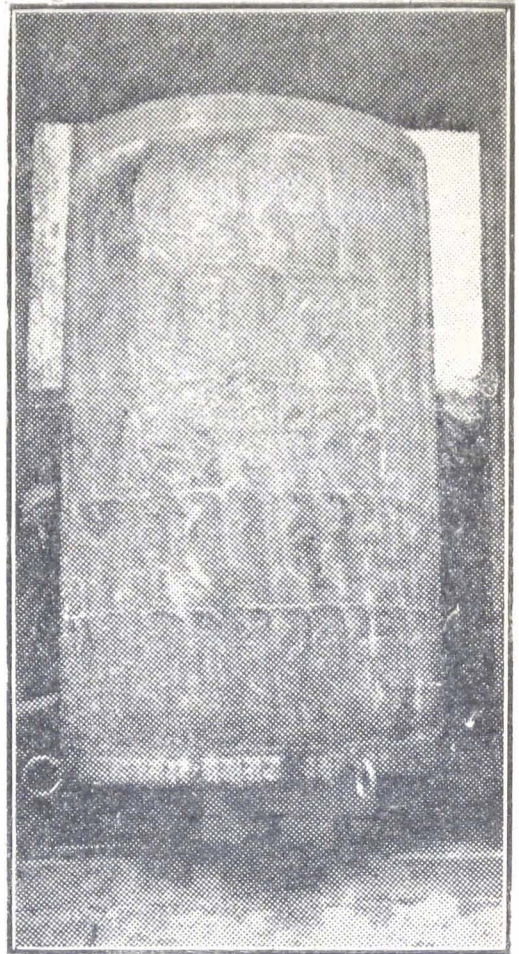
Phantastically shaped mountains.

fies itself with the name of Debring, where I encamped for the night. Evening temperature 50 degrees.

Debring to Pang (33 miles).— The night was bitterly cold and it took hours to shiver myself warm, the temperature at midnight registering 38 degrees and falling gradually to freezing point. My Ladakhi coolies, like the yak, enjoy the cold. These men had slipped themselves into sleeping bags made of numdahs and slept the night through in the open, undisturbed by the cutting cold. I rose with the dawn and was well on the way by the time the sun rose. The Marmot or Himalayan rat, which is a little smaller than a dog and bigger than a fox, is frequently seen in these parts. Their screeches readily give them away and attract attention. They become wonderfully excited when they sight a dog. The piebald wild ass in herds also present a fine spectacle, and I was fortunate in seeing a herd gallop over the plain just hundred yards from me. They are marked in red and white patches and are about the size of a mule. On the way I passed the camp of Major and Mrs. Penrose whose hospitality will remain a pleasant recollection.

The road passes over a large plain, which compensated for the previous day's climb. Debring marks the onward route to Lhasa or upper Tibet. Nomads with their flocks were frequently met on their way over the plateau in search of pasture. Their sheep carry the year's food supplies in

small bags across their backs. The nomad has a tent made from yak's hair with an opening in the centre which serves the purpose of an observation post. The primitive world is seen in these parts, where the nomads barter sheep's wool

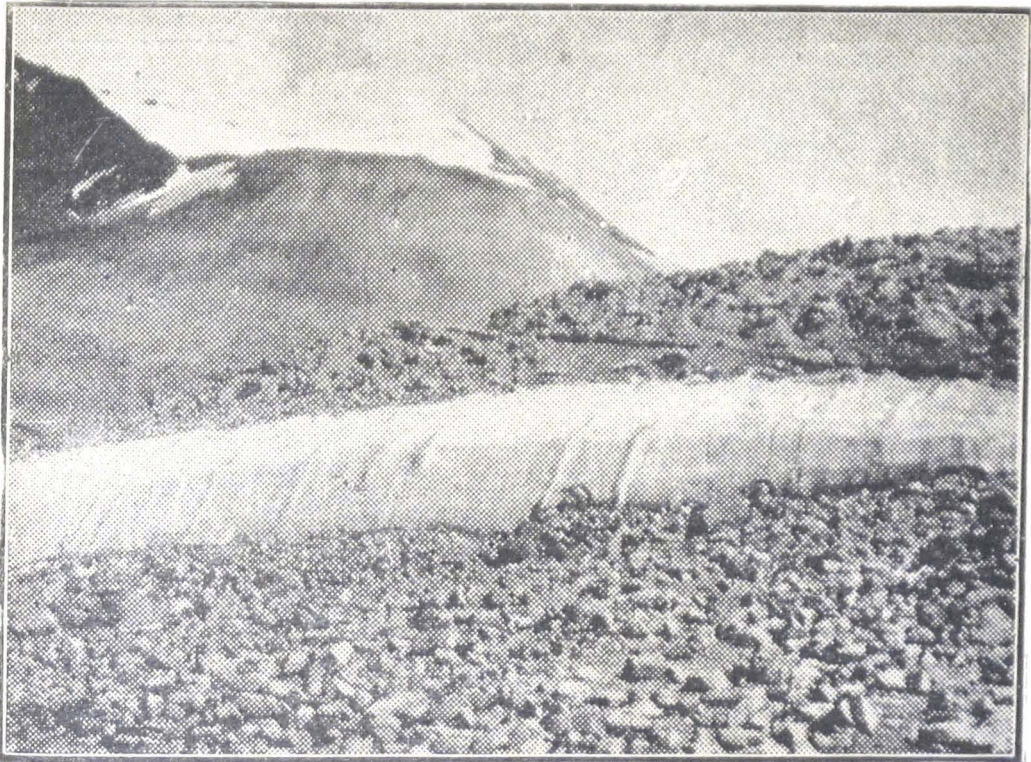


The giant prayer wheel at Hemis Monastery.

with the Lahaul traders in return for food supplies. I actually witnessed two nomads bleeding a sheep and extracting blood to mix with their sutthu (gram flour) and then tie the vein to arrest hemorr-

hage. My coolies told me this was a common occurrence with these tribes to appease their hunger, and that the sheep resumes its normal strength again after a few days. Towards the end of the day's march I encountered the Sapalchun La, which is a very easy pass and rightly speaking can scarcely be called one. I encamp-

an exhibition of himself, but not without imparting fear into me. They gallop around one at a safe distance, stare at one as though identifying one and then stampede away in a gallop to meet again further ahead. I, too, enjoyed myself. When surrounded by them, I fired a shot from my gun stick into the air. The elec-



A snow bed crossed on the Baralacha La Pass.

ed on the off side and experienced for the second time the intense cold with the temperature at midnight touching 40 degrees.

Pang to Sumdu (16 miles).—This day, August 6, marked the anniversary of my birthday,—45 and still going strong! The rising sun soon warmed the atmosphere. Here the wild ass frequently gave

trick start with which they galloped off has probably never been bettered on a race course. The wild ass may be appropriately called the Zebra of the East.

It looked as though these 33 Ladakhi Miles mainly over the Mori Plain would never end, and twilight brought me to my objective, where I encamped for the

night. Glacial action throughout this area transforms the mountain side into quaint figures of every description, and one particular spot resembles a large monastery.

Next morning the temperature was 40 degrees, at noon 76 degrees, and in the evening 60 degrees. Except for nomads and their flocks no living being was seen. The ascent over the Lachalaung La Pass

on low ground surrounded by a natural fortification, where the cold of previous nights was not experienced.

Sumdu to Rachog-ba (9 miles).—The morning temperature was 50 degrees. The road leads up a steep ascent, where in places the falling rocks and the beaten track were intermingled. I met a caravan from Hoshiarpore (Punjab) on



A nomad leading his flock in search of pasture.

(16,500 ft.) required some doing, and from its summit the descent was very rough. Like all other passes in the land of Lamasaries, the summit of the pass was crowned with prayer flags. The walk traverses many scenes of enchantment, and has enough charms for a week's varied sight seeing. The day's journey ended by encamping

their way to Leh (Ladakh). These traders amass a fortune rather than earn a livelihood in this strenuous journey over extremely cold regions. A trader with this caravan told me that on one occasion he bartered a portion of his cargo—consisting of food stuffs—with a Yarkandi Caravan at Leh, receiving in kind 600 horses, many of which

were sold at high prices in the Punjab and some were at the time actually in his caravan. The traders were very hospitable and gave me an idea of the orchards of Kulu from the delicious apples and pears with which they presented me. I camped on the banks of a broad river, with a trickling stream flowing through its lead.

the Tsrasp River has to be forded, some places waist deep and with a swift current. My coolies carried me over shoulder high, but for which I would have been in sorry plight. But the incident was not without its humour. A nomad with his flocks was moving over this apparently unknown region. These Israelities possess two things in this



Where mountain and road intermingle, and the traveller works out his own salvation.

The evening temperature was 50 degrees.

Rachog-ba to Serchu (10 miles).

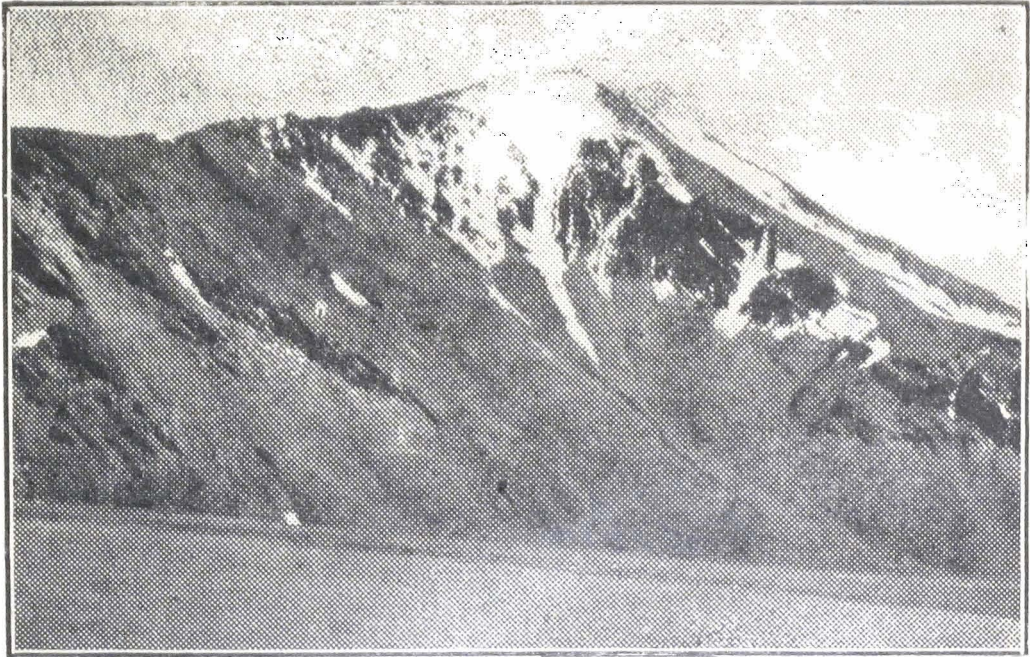
—The morning temperature was 46 degrees. The road is fairly level and blue pigeon is common. The glacial action on the mountain slopes repeats itself throughout this mountainous country. The traveller's energies are finally taxed on the boundary of Kashmir Territory, where

world—their flocks and the clothes they wear. The nomad was taking no chances, so he stripped, and then forded the river followed by his flock.

I met another Punjab caravan on their way to Ladakh camping at Serchu in the open, and I had the entire caravansarai to myself. One of the party—a youth aged 16 years—had been ailing for some

time with a high temperature and could not retain his food. The case looked hopeless, especially in a land denuded of habitation and miles away from medical reach. The best was done. A laxative was administered followed by severe doses of quinine in the hope that the fellow would come round. He had my good wishes. It was a happy event in my life to receive a card of gratitude from his father

in the upkeep of the roads and bridges compared with the sad state of affairs in the Kashmir territory. No longer has one to ford streams and do the impossible. Kinlung is reached by a bridge from which every alternate plank has been used for firewood. These planks are now being replaced by stones to avert their continual disappearance. Large quarries of black stone from blasted rocks resemble iron



A fine view is obtained from the Baralacha La Pass.

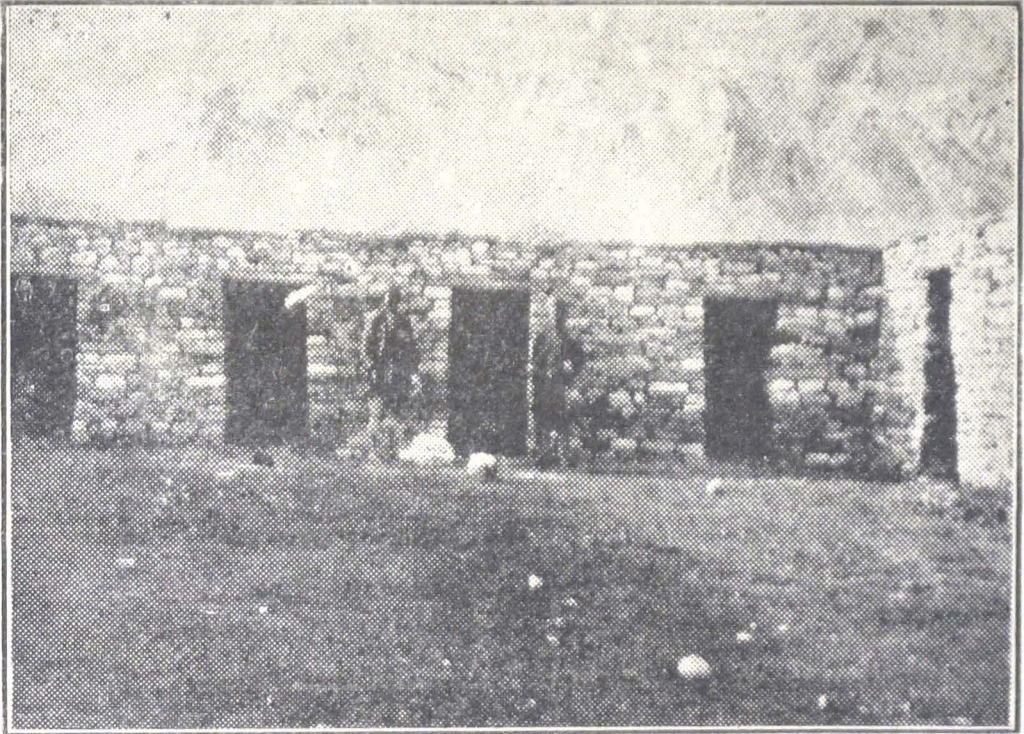
at Leh, conveying the good news that the young fellow had recovered. I was the honoured guest of the Punjabi caravan that evening and enjoyed a dinner prepared in Indian style.

Sarchu to Zing Zing-Ba (23 miles).—Morning temperature 42 degrees, evening 60 degrees. Although the country is still uninhabited there is a decided contrast

ore. This stone is used for strengthening and building the road into an easy gradient. No trouble is experienced in ascending the Baralaccha La Pass, which is long and easy. Snow lies in the mountain ravines and frequently snow beds were passed. An invigorating and refreshing breeze sprung up on the pass which made the journey very pleasant.

A few miles from Zing-Zing-Ba the Suraj-Dal lake is passed, which is an ocean of blue of varied splendour. The verdure on the mountain slopes, illuminated by the sun's rays, transformed the countryside into a rainbow. Swift muddy streams flow in narrow gorges a thousand feet below the highway, destroying snow bridges and transforming fragments of snow into

the country at dawn, but melted with the rising sun. An easy going road well maintained and side-streams bridged. The annual fair was in full swing at Patsio, where Lahauli, Kulu and Tibetan traders were bartering their goods (food stuffs) and receiving in return salt and wool from the nomads. This salt is brought from the Tibetan lakes in bags carried by the



The caravansarai at Serchu, where the author rested.

arches under which the furious rushing waters flow. There is a separate sarai with its kitchen at Zing-Zing-Ba for the use of civil officers on tour, and it afforded me shelter for the night. The evening temperature was 56 degrees.

Zing-Zing-Ba to Jispa (16 miles.—Morning temperature 50 degrees. A heavy mist shrouded

sheep. At the fair the nomads shear their sheep.

The place was dotted with queer tents, each flying a prayer flag or a yak's tail, and a string of prayer flags was flying across the river to ward off evil spirits. Trees and flowers again welcome the travellers for the first time after leaving Gya—a stretch over one hundred

miles. A small village is to be seen at Darcha, from where a stretch of uninhabited territory again continues up to Kyelang, the capital of Lahaul. Leaving Darcha there is a stiff ascent round a circular road, crossing a rushing stream by a cantilever bridge, and three miles beyond is the beautiful and well-furnished rest house of Jispa, with

mountain streams which empty themselves into the Bhagga. The road is easy going with a birch avenue stretching for miles, which makes the locality look prominent and picturesque combined with the varied coloured flowers covering the mountain-sides. The traveller is reminded that Kyelang is not far distant by the chortens



Prayer flags mark the summit of the Lachalaung La Pass.

a small library. The bungalow is surrounded by trees and overlooks the Bhagga river, which flows at a terrific speed fed by the mountain streams. A clear view of the snows is obtained from here.

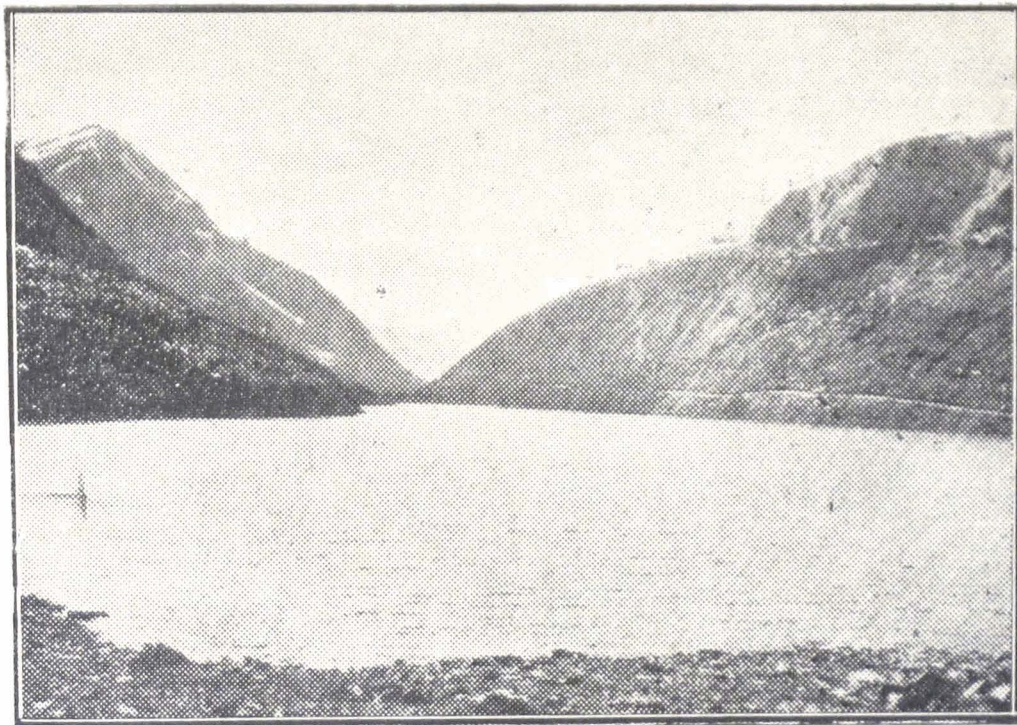
Jispa to Kyelang (14 miles).
—Morning temperature 60 degrees. The highway runs 1,000 feet higher than the river, whose torrential flow is intensified from the many

which line the approach and entrance to the town.

Kyelang is the capital of Lahaul and forms a portion of the Kangda district, with about 10,000 inhabitants and 150 villages. The Thakurs of Lahaul reside here and the Tehsildar, who belongs to this family, is the chief officer in both executive and administrative duties and realises the land revenue. He

extended his hospitality and helped to make my stay happy. The civil rest house is on a hill commanding a perfect view of the surrounding country, the snows and the monastery and is away from all bazaars and villages. A branch of the Moravian Mission renders very humane service and the girls are trained as village nurses. The headdress of the women in Lahaul has

At Kyelang I witnessed the funeral rites of the Buddhist religion, which are very quaint and have a tendency to ridicule the dead. When a person dies, the nearest made relative is privileged to break their bones to fit the corpse into a bag, which is taken to the cremation ground on the back of a relative to the strains of telescopic trumpets blown by the monks. The



Suraj Dal Lake an ocean of blue amid varicoloured mountains.

a peculiarity of its own. It is not so elaborate as that of the women of Ladakh.

The hair is parted in the middle, drawn back and rolled into a tight coil. In front, each side is adorned with an amber ornament and over the coil a silver saucer-shaped ornament is affixed. The inhabitants are Buddhist and a monastery overlooks the town.

cremation ceremony being over, the bones are brought back to the house, where they are put together to resemble a person in a sitting posture and placed in a bag, with a mask, representing the face, exhibited. In this instance, the deceased was a woman and all her dowry was placed on the mask. Next morning, the effigy was taken out in procession to the strains of

the trumpets and followed by relatives and friends, which afforded me an opportunity of seeing the people of Lahaul at their best. The effigy was carried to the confluence of the Chandra and Bhagga rivers, where it was thrown into the river, but not before the officiating Lama

of ceremonies had removed the trinkets, which became his personal property.

At Kyelang I stayed in the rest house, which has a nice library, and met two ladies of the Canadian mission touring through the valley.

CHAPTER VII.

KYELANG TO SIMLA.

*" Good-bye fair hills and shady trees,
My journey draweth to a close ;
But, ever in thy memories
My mind will gain repose."*

This is a part of the through route to Ladakh and is a good hill road throughout. Simla is 122 miles from Kulu and affords an ideal holiday for travellers who frequently walk from Simla to Kangra through the Kulu Valley. The suspension bridge at Luri marks the boundary of the Simla and Kangra districts.

Permission to occupy rest houses must be obtained from the Sub-Divisional Officer, Naggar and Kulu, in respect to civil and Public Works Department rest houses, respectively. P.W.D. bungalows are at Patsio, Jispa, Rahla, Koksar and Gondla. At Kulu itself, in addition to the dâk bungalow, there is a well furnished civil rest house known as Calvert Lodge. His Excellency the Viceroy resides in this bungalow when visiting Kulu Valley. The rest houses of Bajaura and Manali serve the convenience of dâk bungalows in that the chowkidar is a qualified khansamah and caters for travellers if desired.

The transport over this highway is principally confined to pack ponies and the Punjab Government discourages coolie transport. At every stage throughout this

journey there is a contractor provided. It is only an act of courtesy that travellers not on Government duty receive assistance in

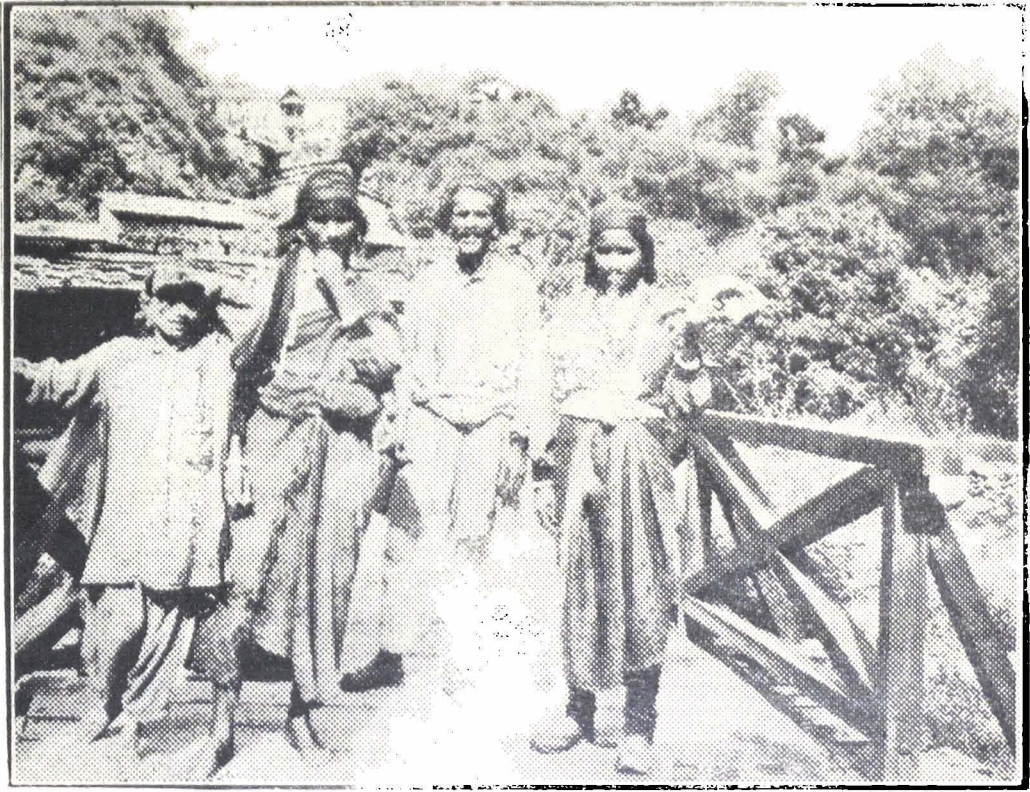


The author arrives in Kulu.

arranging their transport; but this privilege cannot be claimed as a right. The Tehsildars at Kulu and Kyelang are helpful in this direc-

tion, and through the courtesy of the Tehsildar of Kulu, I was able to secure stage coolies throughout this route. Detailed rules relating to stage transport with official rates are maintained in each stage bungalow, and a copy may be obtained from the Deputy Commissioner, Dharamsala (Kangra District). Jaginder Nagar is the

The orchards are located between Bajaura and Manali, where fruit is exported at standard rates—postal rates that are almost equal to the cost of the fruit itself. At the orchards themselves fruit is disposed of at a sacrifice, a vendor offering me as far as six Kulu pears for one copper against the ratio of five annas per pear calcu-



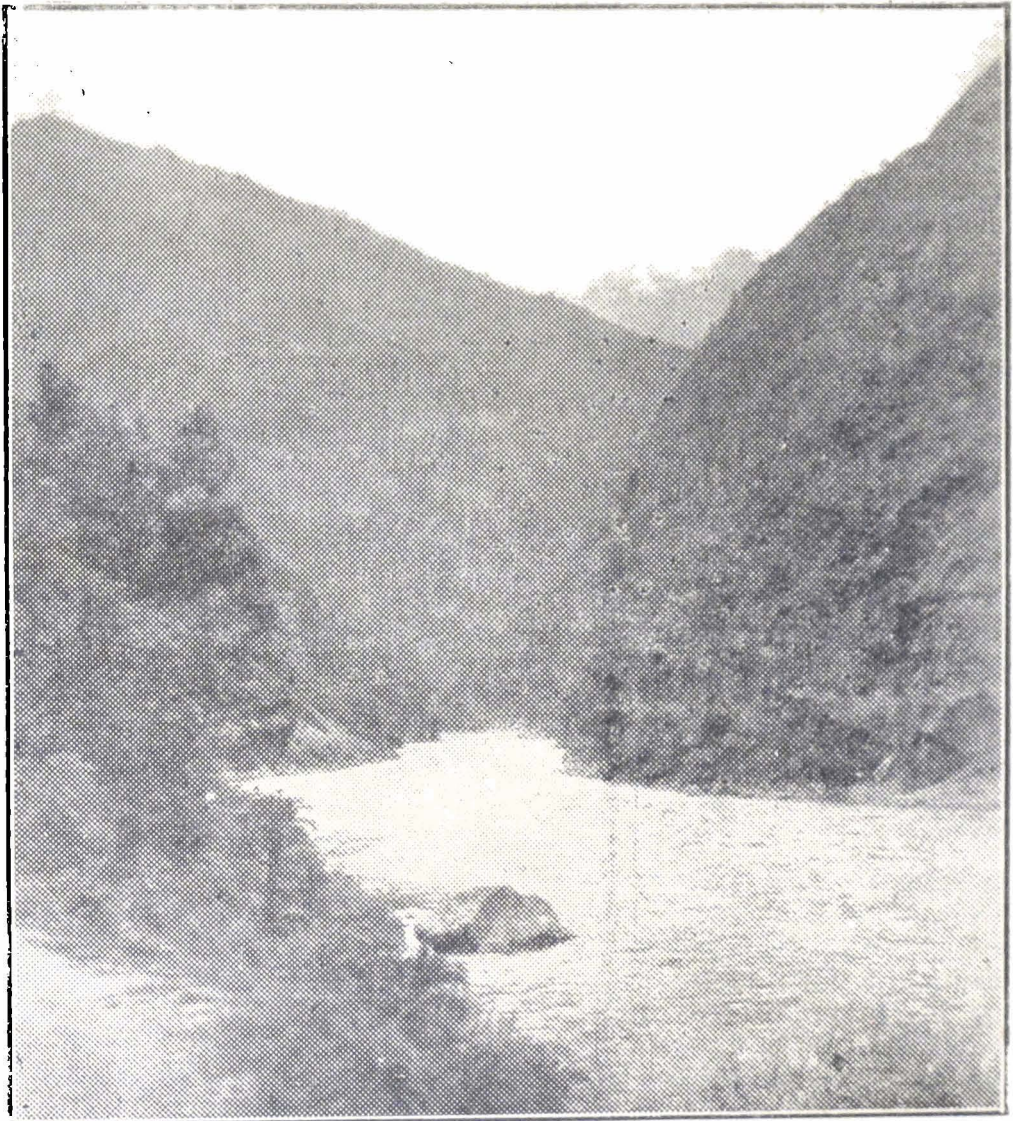
Typical inhabitants of Kulu meet one on entering.

Rail head for the Kangra Valley and a well organised motor service runs throughout the Valley to prescribed timings, touching Kulu and Manali in its itinerary. The strengthening of bridges between Kulu and Manali to cope with this motor traffic and stimulate the orchard trade is in progress, with hopes of completion within the year.

lated at the cost parcels are transported through the Imperial Post. The supply of fruit exceeds the demand, and in order to equalise it, the larger orchards pick off the blossoms from alternate trees each year, which would be averted if a bigger market could be secured. A big percentage of the fruit is consigned to the manure pits.

I was fortunate to meet Mr. Fairlie, the late Assistant Commissioner of Naggur, in the dâk bungalow at Kulu, and through his courtesy my stay in the Valley was made interesting by the opportunity he afforded me of visiting the Aramgarh and Raisan orchards, which are under the management of their proprietor,

Mrs. Forrest. The dried apples pears are hygienically prepared and both peeling and coring is simultaneously effected by modern appliances. I enjoyed the hospitality of the landlady with an additional happiness in making the acquaintance of Major and Mrs. Waugh, who were tenants of the estate. The



The Beas River, noted for its fishing, flowing through a narrow gorge

gallant Major hails from the 27th Infantry, U.S.A. He is an authentic sportsman and is of the opinion that exceptionally good trout fishing is procurable in the Beas River, which flows through the Kulu Valley.

The hydro-electric works at Jaginder Nagar in the Kangra Valley promise most fruitful results of supplying current to the Province of the Punjab, and its artificial waterfall takes second place to none.

The Kulu Valley, owing to its temperate climate, is a great health resort, and sportsmen frequent the banks of the Beas River.

Kyelang to Sissu (18 miles.—The inhabitants here build their houses on top of two parallel walls and obtain access to them by the trunk of a tree, with notches cut into it to answer the purpose of a ladder. The space between the walls below serves as protection for their cattle. Buddhists are still met, but Chortens are no longer seen after leaving Gondla. Yaks' tails still signal the roofs to ensure no evil spirits contaminating the place. Birch trees afford a shady avenue for miles. A clear view of the snows engages the attention of the traveller on this journey.

Kulu traders returning from the Patsio fair were camping with prayer flags within the vicinity of each camp. A few miles from Kyelang the rushing waters of the Bhaga and Cundra, held sacred to the Buddhists flow into the Chenab River, and the last funeral rites are performed at the confluence. Caravans of Ladakhi men and women

were met returning to Leh after the Tilak Nath pilgrimage. The scarecrows erected to protect the fields are as hideous as the Devil dancers themselves. Rushing mountain torrents beautify the slopes and add fury to the rushing rivers. Some of these streams assume the importance of rivers



Major Waugh of the U. S. Army.

with most important bridges spanning them. The people here manufacture grass slippers on a large scale, using their teeth as implements. The road is maintained very efficiently and many sites for camping grounds exist. Pilgrims from Simla and Kulu in gaudy dresses travelled in caravans

on their pilgrimage to Tilak Nath. Varied coloured flowers carpet the country side and pilgrims show their love for nature by decking themselves with them. Nearing Sissu one of the world's best sights is seen in the waterfall which percolates through the mountains over 12,000 feet above sea level. The water suddenly reveals itself through an opening

the additional safeguard of a bugle to frighten the animals by its sound.

Sissu to Koksar (9 miles).— Morning temperature 54 degrees. Once again habitations, trees and flowers bid the traveller farewell. Instead one finds wild scenes of precipitous mountains, crowned with snow-capped peaks. The vigorous mountain air commends



Some strange fashions are to be seen at times.

above a perpendicular drop of 500 feet, and its splash resembles a thick volume of smoke being emitted from a furnace in a downward direction. Butterflies at their best frequent this part of the country and add to its beauty. The mail runner makes a striking picture, trotting along at a sure pace quite unconcerned, protected only by his spear with its tinkling bells and

the spot as a health resort second to none for stimulating the mind, body and soul and more than compensating for the adventure. The velocity of the mountain breeze makes itself felt to the bewildered traveller, who edges the hillside to prevent the sudden possibility of being hurled down a precipice. Swift streams take their origin from fast melting snows and flow

at terrific speed. In places the rocky cliffs overhang the road side. The density of the rising mist and the clouds from the mountain side resemble smoke from a forest fire. Across the river the mountains glitter like a sea of mica, which is the result of glacial action on the rocks. The day's journey came to an end after passing the Chundra River over a well-constructed cantilever bridge, with the evening temperature registering 56 degrees. Many camping grounds are by the river-side where I pitched my tent and enjoyed the invigorating breeze. The moon shone brightly on the snowy cliffs, revealing a picture of beautiful splendour even surpassing that of the Taj Mahal when viewed from a distance by moonlight.

Koksar to Manali (18 miles).—Morning temperature 60 degrees. Rising at dawn and fortifying the inner man, I embarked on the day's march, starting with the ascent over the Rotang pass (11,100 ft.). Some years ago a fearful tragedy overtook a number of coolies on the summit of this pass. A gale sprung up of such intensity that everyone in the caravan lost his life. Shelter huts have since been built on the summit. Superstition dies hard. It is still believed that a tragedy awaits any traveller who crosses the Rotang pass between 9 and 10 a.m. My coolies roused me from sleep an hour before dawn to avoid any calamity. The ascent over the pass is gradual from the direction of Kyelang, whereas from the direction of Kulu a climb of 7,000 feet is encountered. Habitation and trees are still absent, but flowers and ferns beautify the hill slopes.

The rushing waterfalls, towering thousands of feet above the modest altitude of 13,000, sets the traveller mediating on the wonderful works of nature.

The descent from the summit of the pass is very steep and stony. A nearer view of the eternal snows becomes more exciting when the traveller traverses snow beds—which may give way at any time—which carpet a valley below the road for over a mile. After completing the descent over the Rotang Pass, I was confronted with scenery such as I had never witnessed throughout my journey. I was dumbfounded and imagined I was in paradise. It was Rahla—the modern Garden of Eden. Here is viewed the high, torrential waterfall originating from the Rotang Pass which forms the origin of the Beas River. The majestic trees, vendure, flowers and ferns, supplemented by the rushing foaming river, surrounded by the towering mountains and the complete absence of habitation, depicts a picture of the utmost glory and splendour.

The stage of Kohti is a few miles further, and both these mountain stages are a perfect paradise and only 9 miles away from Manali, up to which stage motor transport plies to a daily service with prescribed timings. Many well-constructed bridges straddle torrential streams, with the creeping ivy mantling the trees. Rest houses at these places and stage contractors provide the necessities of life. The long day's journey was a perfect enjoyment and, following the path which is shaded by an avenue of oak and pine, I emerged into Manali, where the first

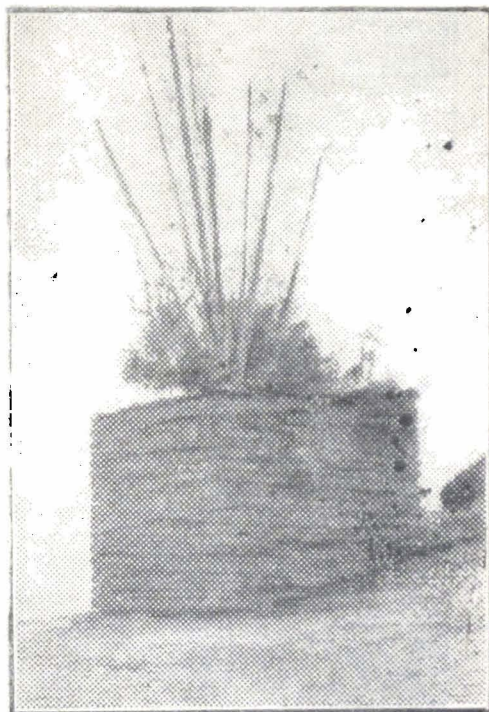
sunshine orchards of the Kulu Valley meet the eye. Apples and pears were in season, on which I feasted both wisely and well.

Manali to Katrain (11 miles).—The road runs parallel to the rushing Beas River. The mountain-side is a forest which obscures the summit. The monkey put in his first appearance from the time I started my journey from Rawalpindi, though the marmot or Himalayan rat met in higher altitudes, was equally energetic. The fields are cultivated in tiers, with the houses perched on the highest summits. At Katrain I met the Civil Surgeon of Kangra on a mission of mercy to open more dispensaries and to replace the indigenous midwife by trained village nurses, which, when the organization is generally adopted, will undoubtedly reduce the infant mortality.

Katrain to Kulu (12 miles).—Between Manali and Mile 18 hot water springs are found near the roadside. They possess healing powers according to the inhabitants. Kulu can also be reached by crossing the river and proceeding via Naggar—the civil headquarters of the Kulu Valley, where the Assistant Commissioner resides. The scenery is practically the same as on the previous day's march, but the breeze from the river is refreshing. The valley possesses many fine orchards, which are very efficiently supervised and it would be difficult to place any particular orchard at a premium to any other. The one that struck me most was the estate of Mrs. Forrest known as the Raison and Aramrack located at the 8th mile stone from Kulu. The main Bazaar of Kulu is passed and presents a

beauty of its own. The bridges are being strengthened to facilitate an uninterrupted motor service between Kulu and Manali a long-felt need which the next few months will provide.

The people of Kulu are cheerful and content, and though the women confine their headdress to a black handkerchief, their ap-



The temple at the cross roads at Narkanda.

pearance and their national dress attract special attention. The women can certainly be called beautiful, and take their place next to the Kashmiri women in this respect. There is no purdah system amongst them. There is an up-to-date hospital at Kulu as well as a caravansarai superior to all others on the route.

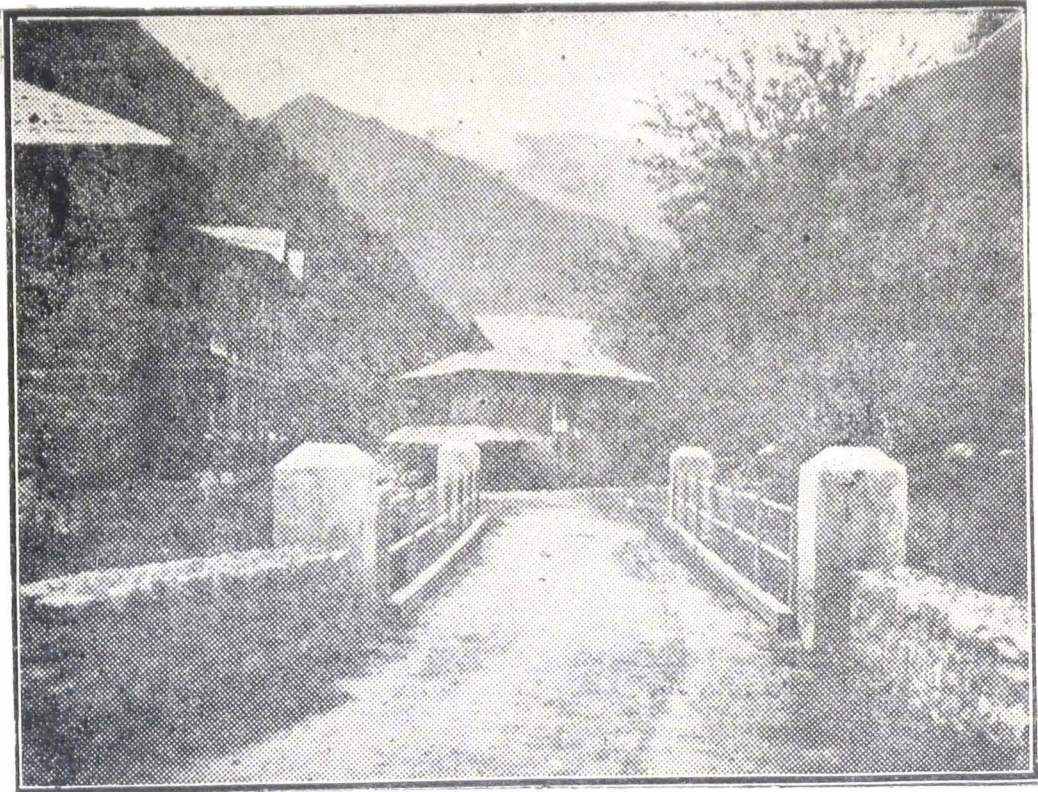
I was able to see the people of Kulu in their thousands and at their best at the annual Nulee Fair,

which took place the day after my arrival. The men dance round in circles to the strains of bagpipes and kettle drums, with the Gods of the temples brought out for exhibition, whilst the women collect in their thousands to witness this annual and important fair.

Kulu had already registered 84 inches of rain and Simla 34 inches

river follows the road and there is no exceptional beauty in scenery to be seen except the orchards of Bajaura, the late estate of Colonel Rennick.

The rest house of Bajaura is a good one and a khansama is provided who is a very obliging and useful fellow.



The Oot Bazaar on the road to Mandi State.

before my arrival. So probably the heavens had emptied themselves, affording me the unique good fortune of completing this trudge through the Himalayan mountains without falling a victim to the monsoons.

Kulu to Bajaura (9 miles).—This is part of the motor road and is very efficiently maintained. The

From Bajaura the road leads to Palampore through the Dulchi pass, which for over a week was closed to all traffic on account of very heavy landslips. The heat of the day was intense, the temperature registering 88 degrees in the open.

Bajaura to Kundan (Bunjar) (23 miles).—Shops are frequently met

on the road where intensive cigarette advertising is done. The external walls of the houses are completely decorated with illustrated posters associated with the cheap brands. The men and women are confirmed smokers, and it is a common sight to see youngsters indulging in this vile

by conspicuous notice boards near the approaches. Forests of pine with a river flowing parallel to the road is the main scenery on this route, and snow scenes are a thing of the past. A steep ascent leads to the Kundan rest house, which is by far the most efficient and cleanest rest house throughout the



In the land where the women wear the trousers.

habit also. A suspension bridge across the Beas River leads to Larji, an intermediate stage between Bajaura and Kundan. This and other bridges are declared too weak for more than one laden animal to pass over at a time, and riding over the bridge is prohibited

tour. There is a flagstaff, for the Viceroy stays here on his visits to the Kulu Valley. The bungalow commands a perfect view of the surrounding country and river, and a powder magazine conforming to all safety conditions is not far off down the hill.

Kundan to Shoja (10 miles).—Morning temperature 68 degrees. From here onwards I travelled with a caravan of pack mules laden with maunds of fruit from the fair orchards of Raisan *en route* to Simla. The local dispensary is much in requisition and the doctor shows one a collection of cataracts

age watered by silver streams. The stillness and absence of habitation for some miles nearing Shoja forms a natural haunt for wild animals. I was a bit unnerved until I came in sight of a hut, from which place a steep ascent leads to the comfortable rest house on the top of the hill. Jibbi Primary



A rock cutting nearing Simla.

and gall stones removed by successful operations performed. The chowkidar reminded me that in this forest bears are frequently seen.

The road runs through a shaded avenue in a forest abounding with ferns, flowers and dense foliage.

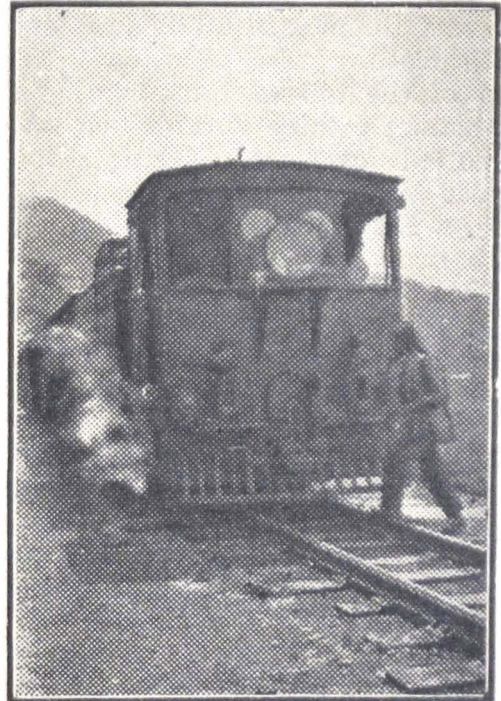
School is passed on the way. Mid-day temperature 70 degrees.

SHOJA TO ANI (15 miles).—Morning temperature 68 degrees. One's senses seem all on fire, for impressions through sound, sight and smell are of the utmost beauty, almost too poignantly beautiful to

be grasped. There is the sound of humming bees, the voice of the cuckoo and the gentle tinkle of falling water; the scent of the pines and the beauty of the outlying ranges of green mountains, with tall majestic deodars crowned by the dazzling snows. This, with an uninterrupted view from the summit of the Jalori Pass (10,720 ft.), which is crossed on the journey, transforms the place into God's garden of splendour. There are numerous springs which have masonry roofs over them. Projecting rocks from the hillside form natural shelter huts for Mail runners, with a masonry wall on either side of the rock. Snakes are frequently seen on the road, some of them upwards of five feet in length. The road has a steep descent from ten to six thousand feet, and leads to Anni, where there is a branch of the Salvation Army with orchards in their estate. Originally this was an American Mission, but with the death of Mr. Carlton half a century ago, the Salvation Army purchased the land. Christianity is encouraged by giving converts free lease of land with subsequent ejection if they revoke the Christian religion.

Anni to Luri.—Morning temperature 68 degrees. The road has a steep descent of four thousand feet following the Sutlej River. The journey was easy, but the heat intense, registering 88 degrees at midday. Threshing floors form a part of each house and a formidable suspension bridge across the Sutlej River leads to Luri Rest House, where it was unusually hot. I slept in the open and fell a victim to the mosquito.

Luri to Narkanda (12 miles).—Morning temperature 82 degrees. A most precipitous climb of 7,000 feet through picturesque scenery of flowers, ferns and fruits. The journey is strenuous and exceptionally difficult, leaving the Sutlej River thousands of feet below the road. The route passes through the Hill State of Komarsen with the Kotgarh orchards not far



An engine on the Kalka-Simla Railway.

distant. Butterflies of various species and most beautiful in appearance predominate on this road. The forests are given out on contract and the felled trees bring in a large revenue to the State. A shiny creeping insect of the leech species is seen in these forests. It rolls itself into a ball when approached. Often they are swallow-

ed by grazing cattle, with disastrous results. Narkanda is over 9,000 feet and commands a perfect view over the snow-capped peaks and surrounding country.

The roads from Kulu, Chakratta and Simla meet here at a spot marked by a mound over which coloured rags wave, and this Mai-Jee Temple is held in reverence by the Hindu and is over a century old. This is a land "where the women wear the trousers." Colonel Rennick installed a factory with massive machinery on the top of the hill at Narkanda for extracting potatoe flour, which was exported overseas during the Great War. It is no longer in use. Narkanda is a sanatorium with two hotels in addition to the Dâk Bungalow. It is forty miles from Simla and the road is fit for motor transport though the privilege of motoring on this road is granted only to the highest dignatories of the land. Rickshaws are the popular form of transport and the bazaar is well stocked and growing year by year. A railway survey has been completed with

the object of extending the Kalka Simla Railway to Narkanda, which must subsequently result in Narkanda becofing an independent hill station and probably the Summer seat of Government.

Narkanda to Theog (22 miles); **Theog to Simla** (18 miles).—The lats four stages passing Mattiana and Fagu en route brought me to my journey's end. I entered Simla, the seat of Government during the hot weather, with its gay, fashionable crowds riding on horseback or reclining in beautifully upholstered rickshaws drawn by men in uniform, feeling more fit than ever I had been and quite pleased that my feat was completed without encountering the monsoon.

The road has been a generous giver, and I willingly trusted myself to its care. It opened new paths before me, new beauties in cloud, hill and forest and gave health to my body and peace to my mind—and let me into the Great Fellowship of those who are "Lovers of the Open Road".

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