

A WALKING TOUR THROUGH THE HIMALAYAS, FROM HINDOSTAN TO TIBET. By CLEMENT M. SMITH, late H.M.S. 1st Bengal Cavalry. Read before the Alpine Club on June 12, 1867.

IN the memorable year of the Indian mutiny, I had been ordered to proceed to the valley of Kashmir, to afford aid to the European officers doing duty there, or sent there for the benefit of their health. As I reached the capital of the valley (Srinuggur) some months before the usual influx of visitors for the season, I at once determined to trip to the valley of the Wurdwan, famous for ibex (the pride of hill sportsmen), as well as other large game. My trip there, though short, was successful, and, in addition to the sport, I made my first debut in mountaineering, the pass into the Wurdwan being, I believe, 14,000 feet, and at the time I crossed (I was the first European over it that year, May 2), pretty stiff work from the winter's accumulation of snow. A few days after my return to the capital, the astounding news of the outbreak of the native army reached the little community which had assembled during my absence. I had joined a small party of officers for the purpose of discussing our meals in a sociable manner, and on my way to breakfast on May 19 could not avoid noticing gentlemen being assembled in little knots eagerly talking over some unusually absorbing news, which had reached the happy valley with the usual rapidity with which bad tidings travel.

Like magic, our Kashmir gaiety was at an end, and in forty-eight hours scarcely an officer on leave of absence from his regiment was left behind. My appointment being an official one, and there being still a number of men in the trigonometrical survey and civil employ who had to remain on duty, I continued in the valley till the autumn. In October and November, I loitered on my way back to the plains, and had some splendid stag and bear shooting some little distance from Kashmir; when the snow coming down in earnest, I beat a retreat, walking back to my regimental head-quarters, Shubkudur, thirty miles north of Peshawur; the whole distance from Kashmir to my destination being about 300 miles.

I have thus far trespassed on your time in making this little passing reference to a bygone period, in order to explain how I became initiated into hill life. I feel sure I shall not be giving expression to sentiments foreign to the nature of those who now constitute my patient audience when I state that

this trip resulted in an undying desire to return to the wild fastnesses which had held me spell-bound for months, when my freedom gave me opportunity.

I had left my regiment in deplorable health, from fever and ague, for Kashmir, and I accomplished the travelling and sport alone, as regards European society. Many a time, when on a cold hill side, 16,000 feet above the sea level, after ibex, had I to hurry down to my tent, take a huge dose of quinine, and in two or three days crawl out again, weak and weary for a while; but that indomitable love of hill sport rallied me soon again, and the past was scarce remembered in the present. So, in spite of ill health, want of fellowship and its concomitant sympathy, the daily petty annoyances amongst my native servants, miserable diet, and last, not least, fleas and all manner of creeping things, I returned completely and for ever infected with the amiable monomania of mountaineering.

Soon after my return in December 1858, I joined with my regiment Sir Sydney Cotton's force, and after a campaign in the Euzafzaie Hills, to bring some mutineer refugees into some order who had grown cheeky from sufferance, I was posted by Sir John Lawrence to the 1st Punjab Cavalry, and after some exciting life with them, I had my rein arm cut in half with a native sabre, and was sent home at the termination of the mutiny in 1859, with a stiff joint for life.

I had but little noticed before this time, having been absent in the East ten years, the rapid way in which Switzerland had become the resort of the pent-up energies of the Alpine Club; so in due course I was curious to see for myself the mountain scenery which could inspire such a furore.

I am not about to bore you with any of my experiences in your special line of country, for, as you are aware, I crow on quite a different and more exalted hill than that boasted of in Europe. Nevertheless, I may mention that I always felt in the Swiss mountains the want of an exciting inducement to go higher which was invariably present in the Himalayas. There you might hear the sonorous bellowing of the huge *barra sing* (stag) of Kashmir, which would be shortly answered in savage defiance by the lord of the opposite ravine; or the indistinct outline of the noble heads of a dozen male ibex would delight your eye as they loomed above you (cautiously crawling to their leeward side), two hours before the sun rose, and in stalking which not unfrequently you might pass a jolly old bear up a wild fruit tree, who would scan you and your gun-bearers with a curious surprised look, and then tumble down the trunk of the

tree like a thousand of bricks and disappear amongst the scrub. Or you might be startled by the loud whirr of a covey of snow-pheasant (a bird as large as a turkey), as they shot round the edge of a ravine like meteors. Such incidents as these sent a thrill of natural joy through one's whole system, and gave an impetus to the day's work which I am free to admit my blasé nature felt the lack of in wandering over the land of your exploits.

In 1864 I determined on making a sporting tour, not only through the whole peninsula of Hindostan, but also through the Himalayas, Spiti, and Tibet. For this purpose I left England in November of that year, and, having landed in Bombay early in December, I 'made tracks' for the interior, and some few days before the end of the old year was in at the death of my first tiger. Alone I wandered through Kandeish and Bhopal to Central India, where I joined a famous tiger party in April, and with them we scoured the country round covering 500 or 600 miles of ground, making a famous bag. This, you will say, is not hill-work, and you may mutter an impatient growl at the prospect of an Indian tiger yarn. Fear not, I have only thus digressed because my tiger shooting affected my subsequent hill expedition to a serious extent.

I had laid my plans so as to leave the plains early in May for the nearest convenient hill-station, there again to make my preparations for many months' travelling in an inhospitable, dreary, mountain district, where scarce a lichen would thrive; but my plans were somewhat interfered with, for on one occasion, when watching for a lion, seated some height up a forest tree, I was precipitated, tree, rifles and all, into the almost dry rocky bed of a river. Though none of my bones were broken, my whole frame was so fearfully shaken that I never turned out from between my blankets any morning for six months afterwards without being reminded of my disordered anatomy.

Nor was this all; for about a fortnight after this accident, on our breaking up our tiger party, and returning to headquarters, I was pitched out of one of her Majesty's mail-carts, the wheel having suddenly determined on resolving itself into lucifer matches, and, falling on to my left arm, smashed up my stiff elbow-joint. A month elapsed before I was able to move, when I again made a start, and with my arm in splints travelled from Central India to Simla, reaching the latter place on June 15, instead of at the beginning of May, as I had intended.

In eight days after my arrival at Simla, I had built myself a couple of small tents, one for myself and stores, and the other for my immediate personal attendants. I vainly tried to in-

duce some one of the numerous young officers there present on leave to accompany me, but the attractions of the fair ones, with the prospect of all the coming gaiety of a station, the residence of the viceroy and commander-in-chief, were greater far than any persuasions of mine could overcome; so on June 23, 1865, I started alone. My arm was still in splints; so as sport was out of the question, I determined to push along to Tibet as fast as the roads and the arrangements for relays of porters would admit of.

I covered fifty miles in the two first days, no delays occurring, and the roads being excellent. The scenery was exceedingly lovely on the way. The elevation was from 7,000 to 10,000 ft., and the vegetation consisted of forest trees such as are seen in European climates, oaks, rhododendrons, pines, wild fruit trees of various kinds, such as cherries, walnuts, apple, quince, and some semi-tropical ones. This distance was divided into four marches, at the end of each of which was a tolerably comfortable government house for the use of travellers, who, for a small sum, are at liberty to use them. A certain number of servants are in charge, who are kept by government to cook for and attend on those using the houses.

Nagkunda, the place I have adverted to as being distant fifty miles from Simla, is situated on the crest of a ridge, from whence, for the first time, you can see and hear the roaring Sutlej. It is a mighty river, and its average fall being fifty feet per mile, its current is very rapid.

Nagkunda is between 9,000 and 10,000 ft. above the sea level, and the Sutlej is about 3,000 ft. below it. The scenery here is very grand; the traveller can look back on the mountain country he has passed through and on that he is about to enter on. On the opposite side of the river Sutlej are the snowy peaks of Kulu and Kunawar.

Ladies and gentlemen visiting Simla, when somewhat wearied with the gaieties and conventionalities of existence there, restore nature by visiting Nagkunda for a few days. The climate—for the elevation there is 3,000 feet higher than Simla—is always bracing even in the heat of summer; fires in the evening, even at the end of June, being agreeable, if not necessary. The government guest-house there is capable of holding three or four sets of travellers.

The journey to this place is styled 'going into the interior;' and on my way I met more than one party of ladies and gentlemen of great Indian social rank, carried in litters, or riding, dressed in the height of fashion—kid-gloved and polished-booted.

At this point I had the option of continuing along a high road which runs by the side of the ridge on which Nagkunda is situated, or descending to the banks of the Sutlej—the two roads joining some six or seven marches further on. There was a choice of evils in either case. The latter road was fearfully hot for three marches, whilst the former was delightfully cool, but being much out of repair, government had virtually closed it, by not enjoining the head men of the villages to supply porters for those who, in spite of the warning, persisted in travelling that road. Having been pretty well grilled already, my head having very recently been exposed for months to the sun at a temperature of 140° to 160° from the time it rose till it set, I determined to stick to the upper road and run my chance.

My first march from Nagkunda to Bagee included some of the grandest as well as most charming views of mountain and forest scenery I ever remember noticing. The deodaras were here to be seen in perfection, from the healthy young sapling to the majestic fully-developed giant tree, which, looking like a tower of strength, seemed as though it could last for all time, despite the efforts of wind and weather, were it not that a little farther on lay the prostrate trunk of one lifeless and decayed, which had succumbed to the common enemy of all nature.

At the third march my troubles began. I had thought I could easily obviate the porter difficulty, by offering a pecuniary remuneration for the day's work far greater than they could have expected, but I had reckoned without my host, and made a discovery that circumstances before had withheld from me. Government having withdrawn the obligation for travellers to be able to demand porters, as I have before mentioned, the obstinate rascals would not willingly touch a load, and it was only by ominous threats I was able to push on to the next camping ground, and even then I was obliged to leave my head servant with two or three loads to follow next day.

I have observed that throughout all Asia I have visited, there is a decided repugnance on the part of the natives to perform any sort of labour for, or transact any commerce with, the dominant European; and unless the natives were coerced by rigid laws, every social connection between the two would cease. I could relate numerous instances where I and my followers might have been starved for food when surrounded by plenty, though the ready-money prices offered for various articles were far beyond those they could realize elsewhere. Of course I always took the law into my own hand in such cases, took

what I wanted and paid for it, firmness and fairness preventing any open breach of the peace.

Beyond this fourth camping ground, I was soon made aware I could not continue on the upper road, so I had to descend to Rampore and be roasted. The Rajah of Rampore has built a shed here for the use of Europeans. Rampore is the capital of the rajah's mountain dominions, and a miserable place you would think it, as well as his palace. Some shawls are here made from *pushm*, a very delicate undergrowth of wool lying immediately on the skin, and between it and the ordinary fur, or wool, of all four-footed creatures inhabiting Tibet. This *pushm* is brought from Rampore by the Tibetans to be sold. Sheep and goats are the beasts of burden, and the usual merchandise is *pushm* and borax from Tibet, the traders returning with salt, flour, tobacco, &c. At Rampore I was delayed by my baggage, which the people on the upper road would not forward, so I had to send porters from Rampore to fetch it. Whilst suffering from the effects of impatience, my solitude was relieved by the arrival of an officer returning from some distance on the hills, where he had been sketching, with a very charming collection of water-coloured drawings he had made. In addition to the pleasure of his society, I learnt something of the road farther on for about 100 miles or so.

July 1.—Shook hands with my new found friend, having promised to visit him if I passed his station, a promise I could not carry out, as three months afterwards he travelled to that bourne from which we do not return to record our adventures. I was glad once more to ascend to my next camping ground, which, in addition to being cool, commanded a magnificent view of the valley of the Sutlej, and a nearer and somewhat altered view of the Kulu and Kunawar Peaks, which I mentioned as visible from Nagkunda. At the village of Goomree, where I had halted, I was again subjected to delay on account of the original interruption on the upper road; but on the evening of July 2 my head servant came up with the last of the baggage. So far on my journey I had scarcely looked out for game of any kind, and all I casually had seen were some of the argus and mināl pheasants, the handsomest of all in the Himalayas. However, my head servant, who led my dog, had a curious little adventure with large game, which he had not quite calculated on.

Leopards are very numerous on the hills, and they do great damage; still it is singularly illustrative of their stealthy nature that they are seldom shot by the European sportsman. Now dogs are to them what oysters are to many of us,

a dainty morsel. Of this taste of theirs I was well aware, for on previous occasions I have more than once had a leopard venture into my tent to carry off my dog, who was secure under my bed. On the occasion which has given rise to this digression, my head servant was leading my dog, a powerful rough Russian watch-dog, by a chain, the time being a little before sundown, when a leopard suddenly jumped from the overhanging bank of the hill side at the dog, and seizing it by the hind leg, attempted to tear it away from its protector. There was a general scrimmage, for my servant was accompanied by three or four hill men, and not only was it with great difficulty that the leopard was driven off, but the brute followed his prey for about four miles, making several attempts to carry off the dog, running boldly amongst the men for that purpose, fortunately without success.

Nothing of any interest occurred for three further marches. The road skirted the left bank of the Sutlej, several thousand feet above it. Climate and vegetation were little altered. The monsoon rains had been expected before I left Simla, but, as I was walking away from them, I had the satisfaction to carry with me fine open clear weather. As my business was sport this unexpected delay in the monsoon was indeed lucky, for it is impossible in the hills to shelter your stores from damp. The burdens are increased in weight, the roads are heavier, and guns and ammunition are an incessant anxiety. On July 5, I reached Nāchār, a camping place, where I noticed prettily situated on a grassy terrace, surrounded by a grove of noble deodaras, a rough newly built wooden hut, which betokened symptoms of European ingenuity.

I questioned some villagers as to whom it belonged, and they said the officer was the superintendent of forests, and his name was B. I had a shrewd guess that I knew the gentleman, and so walked to the door, and, having sent in my name, and my calves having undergone careful but by no means pleasant inspection by a ferocious bull-dog, was invited in, when of course we embraced and fraternised. In 1859 we had both returned from India, and I could scarcely credit my senses, when I had taken my friend's likeness, that the carefully dressed companion of the Crystal Palace and Italian Opera was the same I saw before me, got up in a hybrid fancy costume more Tartar than English. Government does not build houses for inspectors of forests, as they are officials supposed to roam about; but as my friend ascertained that he was likely to find plenty of work where he was for some three years to come, and was of an easy and comfort-loving dispo-

sition, he pocketed the tent allowance, and built himself this den with the aid of a sledge-hammer and a big chisel.

Ever since Defoe set his mark on me for life, and ruined me for settled domestic bliss, have I been fascinated by the art of making my temporary abode (whether the cabin of a ship, a tent under a tropical sun or on snow-clad mountain, a cave or a hut) as comfortable as the varied circumstances would admit of; so I entered *con amore* into the whole detailed account of how this den had been constructed, and considering the limited tools at my friend's command, I think he deserved great credit for the result. I was persuaded to stay a couple of days here, and as a parting act of mutual friendship we cut each other's hair in this barbarous land. Of my own personal appearance after this operation I have no recollection, but I have a vivid one of my friend's. Being myself a real lover of high art, and B. being physically, if not morally, the exact living representation of old Harry VIII., as depicted by Holbein, I determined on giving the finishing touch to the marvellous likeness, and I succeeded to a hair. I enjoyed the result of my handiwork so keenly that I raised suspicions in the manly bosom of B. as to the justice I had done him, but whether he failed to see the likeness on consulting the mirror, or the limited character of that article, which only admitted of one feature being viewed at a time, prevented the whole picture being comprehended in one view, I know not; but he remained in undisturbed and pleasing ignorance of the cause of my innocent risibility.

On July 8 I again started, descending to the river Sutlej, which is here bridged by the usual structure, which is ingenious in contrivance and sufficient in strength for foot passengers, sheep, and cattle. I reached Rogi in two days. There is a splendid view from this place of the peak of Raldung, situated immediately on the opposite bank of the Sutlej, which is 21,270 ft. high, and which was covered for several thousands of feet by snow at the time I saw it.

On the 10th I reached Pungee. Thus far I had travelled on a made road. This wonderful undertaking, the Hindostan and Tibet road, was commenced by that far-seeing viceroy, Lord Dalhousie, about eleven years ago, after the annexation of the Punjab gave the British the sovereignty over the country through which the river Sutlej makes a passage from Tibet to Hindostan. The object was to facilitate trading between British India and Central Asia. Hitherto the only route by which the commerce of those countries had been carried was by crossing the territory of a third power, Kashmir,

the rulers of which country have not been famous for their liberal views. The imposts exacted by the maharajahs, seconded by those of their officials, almost rendered trade prohibitory; so that if the direct road from Tibet to Simla, and thence to the plains, could be completed, the success would be great and certain. At great cost, and by great engineering skill, the road has been completed as far as Pungee, which is 180 miles from Simla and 230 from the plains. The mutiny arrested the work, and since then the present viceroy, from economical motives I presume, had allowed the project to drop as regards the road's onward development. At Pungee I met a party, consisting of an engineer officer who was superintending some repairs of the road, his wife, children, and two friends. As it was a pleasant break in my journey, and as I was able to make here some little additions to my stock of grain for food, I halted for a couple of days, which were by no means wasted, for having overtaken a day before on my road some porters, who had come from Ghurwal, and a *shikarrie* (native sportsman), I was able to engage their services as my permanent servants. There were ten of them, and a great comfort they were to me, for in addition to the convenience of having porters attached to my camp, it saved the daily nuisance of impressing men from the villages I passed through, a matter which is always accompanied by delay, dispute, and all sorts of vexation. I had not been able to procure any porters from Simla for the trip, in consequence of the number of visitors there giving ample employment for all, with better pay than they would earn in my service. In other hill stations porters can be engaged by the month, and this plan is by far the most desirable one, as well as the most economical.

On July 13, I started on the serious part of my journey, where I might expect matters not to pass so smoothly as heretofore. In order to make up for the time I had halted, and remedy as much as possible the deplorable loss sustained in consequence of my broken arm, I determined to reach Shialker in five days, a distance usually accomplished in nine.

At 3.30 I was awake by my alarum, and, after a cup of cocoa, was packed and off in three quarters of an hour. I had not proceeded many hundred yards before I felt the loss of a civilized road, that before me occupying the stony bed of a rivulet; this was varied by coasting along the face of a precipitous cliff on the rudest of galleries of split pine, supported in a way I dared not inspect, the planks tilting occasionally in so alarming a fashion as to make one's heart vibrate. Even the luxurious part of the morning's march was of the roughest; but fortu-

nately my knickerbockers were loose, or they had surely been rent by the frequent giant steps, both up and down, I encountered. In five hours I reached Jeangara, a *dogree* of the adjacent village of Parung. A *dogree* is a hill camping-ground, to which the residents of the nearest village bring their herds of sheep and cattle to graze in the summer months. There are usually a few huts made of rude pine-logs as shelter for man and beast, for these *dogrees* being situated several thousands of feet above the villages, journeying to and fro night and morning would be loss of time and labour. It was a chilly spot, but having found a sunny nook, I soon despatched a hearty meal, which being digested partially with the aid of a cheroot, I resumed the march, the roughest part of which, the Pass of Werang, was before me. It was now that I left the Sutlej, that river bending to the north-east, till it reaches Shipki, on the Chinese frontier, when it suddenly again bends down to the south-east, whilst my course lay more northerly.

In two hours I had reached the crest of the pass, which was 13,200 feet. It was a dreary road, and the view was impeded by clouds. From the pass to Leepee is four more hours. The River Asrung is crossed by a wooden bridge immediately at the entrance of the village, and a quaint archway, or porch, is passed through by the traveller, which will at once show he is in the land of Buddhists, for the walls are profusely decorated with gods, dragons, and demons, familiar to you no doubt on your grandmother's valued cracked china. Between Pungee and Leepee the character of the scenery alters in a marked manner. Soon after I had crossed the river, on leaving my friend in his log hut at Nachar, I was out of the influence of the monsoon rains of Hindostan, the numerous ranges between that river and the plains serving to arrest the rainfalls. The country on the right bank of the Sutlej after that becomes gradually denuded of its profuse growth of pines, deodaras, and other trees, and a few scrubby dwarfed bushes only are to be seen after crossing the Werang Pass.

From Leepee to Sungnam the march commences on wooden galleries, which were the day I passed made a trifle more unsatisfactory by a Tibet merchant meeting me with a herd of half-bred yaks. I flattened my person on the occasion as close to the rock as I could, and awaited the event. The leading beast snorted on nearing me, and objected to move past such a strange uncouth individual as myself, but when urged on by the *vis a tergo* he made a rush, followed by the whole herd, and then I wished myself safe in an easy chair in my club, and

held my breath. After four and a half hours' ascent in drizzling rain we reached Kânum, thence to the Ronung Pass, 14,354 ft. There were some patches of snow on the road. Sungnam is distant from the pass about four hours' march. The river Ruskalong is crossed just before entering the village.

From Sungnam to the Hungrung Pass is a pretty stiff ascent of five hours over rivulets, snow-beds, pinnacles of hills formed of conglomerate, and the roughest of roads I think I ever marched over. My friend, poor Speke, a few days before his premature death, gave me some hints about part of my journey, and I find he mentions this pass as 'a tremendous pass,' on account not of its altitude, which is only 14,530 feet, but of the approach to it. From Hango to Leo was an easy march of five hours, and it being the sabbath, I made a sabbath-day's journey of it. We reached Leo about 10 A.M. Tents were pitched in an apricot orchard.

The situation of Leo, which is a large and flourishing village, is a very curious one. It lies in the angle formed by the junction of two rivers, the Leepâk and the Spiti. These rivers would appear to have formed the plateau on which Leo and its cultivation rests, and this extent of land is larger than is usual in hill villages.

Leo is completely shut in by the almost perpendicular mountains surrounding it, the only exits being the passages made by the two rivers mentioned, consequently the temperature is higher here than the altitude of the situation would warrant. After writing up my journal, I inspected my kit, and was horrified to find how much I had used up a pair of new strong boots in twenty days' marching. Having only three pairs, it behoved me to economise shoe-leather. The bovine species being sacred amongst the inhabitants, I could obtain no leather here thicker than that of goats, which was of little use over the ground I was travelling. I therefore ripped off the whole of the heels, and nailed them on to the worn part of the soles, by the aid of some hob-nails I had brought with me.

17th. My next march to Shialker was what the natives call three, and I hardly expected to do it in less than two; however, by forwarding news to the villages for relays of porters to be ready, and with promise of good pay, I experienced no delays, and reached Shialker before dark. The first part of the march was from the village of Leo to the bridge over the Spiti river, and it was here and at the entrances of the villages of Leera and Chango I passed specimens of the structures called *máné*. They consist of two parallel walls of large boulder stones 50 or 100 feet in length, 3 to 6

in height, the surface stones being engraved in Tibetan character by the Lamas; the matter of the writing is, I believe, the reiteration of a prayer supposed to influence by fear demons and such like cattle, and deter them from approaching the villages for harmful purposes.

After crossing the river Spiti, the road was very steep up to Leera. From Leera to Shipki is but a short march. The latter place is the British boundary, beyond which the country is under Chinese government. At one time I had intended to have followed the River Sutlej from Shipki to the plains of Tibet as far as the Niti Ghat, but I ascertained that I should, if not absolutely repelled by violence, encounter such negative resistance as to render sport, if not travel, impossible; I think, however, that the thing might be done by three resolute men. From Leera to Chango is a slight undulation. From Chango to Shialker some unpleasantly steep slopes of small slate shingle have to be passed. This was the first time I had crossed such. The traveller suddenly loses sight of the narrow track on approaching this shingle, and then will look right and left above and below in some uncertainty, and perhaps retrace his steps some distance to discover where the path has been diverted; not finding any such, he will return to the shingle, and on looking closely into it, he will notice some slight impression on its smooth surface suggestive of footsteps; the line of these will carry his eye to the continuation of the track when *terra firma* again appears. This is what I did, and then I ventured a foot on the treacherous, foundationless substance, like a very small schoolboy venturing into the water for the first time, and withdrew it at once; some of the country porters arriving, I watched them and noticed they went over it with naked feet in a springy fashion, like an Irishman over a bog. Of course I plunged into it at once, and though I felt unhappy a little at first, in hearing what I removed my foot from, each step, go tinkling down the steep slope which ended in the boiling, roaring Spiti river, nevertheless I soon became quite accustomed to it.

The Spiti river is crossed again by a very wide and elaborate wooden bridge at Shialker, where I camped. At Shialker there is a commanding hill-fort, and the place from its situation would be easily held by a small party of defendants in case of attack. My nearest route from Shialker was over the Lepcha Pass to Soomra, thence to Lari; but I was informed (and strange to relate, I afterwards found my information was true) that the rope bridge (*julah*) over the Spiti at Soomra, was destroyed, and that a new one would have to be made for me. I therefore

determined on recrossing the Shialker bridge and keeping on the left bank of the Spiti river. My journey was considerably lengthened, but still I did not feel quite certain about the time requisite for making a bridge, and was glad to keep on the safe side of such an obstacle as a mountain river. The road I preferred leads up a steep mountain over a low pass, and then traverses some specially dreary waste till it brings the traveller to the Spiti river again, at the point where it bends suddenly at right angles and flows nearly east and west. The camping ground was indeed a rough spot on the banks of a small river, Parung, which takes its origin from the glacier on the north side of the Parung Pass. Up this river lay my nearest route to the Choomereri Lake, by which I should avoid the Parung Pass; but, unfortunately, but a few miles up the river from where I was encamped was a Chinese outpost, so I was obliged to be satisfied with a long and weary circuit.

My camping ground had been described as a pleasant green spot, with a clear stream of good water running past it. The place was so uninteresting I made up my mind not to pitch my tent. The ground was rocky and rugged, covered knee-deep with sheep-dung, and as for the clear stream it was impregnated so with mud, that I verily believe an inch of earthy matter would have been deposited in a tumbler of water. However, on close inspection I discovered a large cave, and in front of it a small plot of ground encircled by a stone wall. This was cleared and cleaned, and the tent was pitched in it, the tent ropes being anchored to large stones, and I bathed in spite of the mud, and was cool if not clean. The march to Lari is easy, excepting for the frequent occurrence of the very steep and dangerous-looking slate shingle interruptions which I have before noticed. Some few people I met were extra-Chinese in dress and appearance, reminding me of the natives of Canton.

At the entrance of the villages here I noticed cairns of stones, ornamented on their summits with primitive little flags of bits of coloured cloth; the summit and angles of the cairn being covered with the heads and horns of the *burrul*, a large wild sheep common over these hills, killed in the winter when they are driven down near the villages by severe weather. Did the Romans borrow the idea of ornamenting the capitals of their pillars, &c., with rams' heads from this quaint and very ancient custom of uncivilized nations? Afterwards, when in Tibet, I noticed the heads of the giant sheep (*Ovis Ammon*), and also of his younger brother, the *snapoo* or *ourial*, on these cairns.

In two more marches I arrived at Dunkur, the chief village of Spiti, where the *Nono* or Governor of the district resides. This official was absent at the time, unfortunately, so I was delayed two days, during which time I inspected this village and its immediate vicinity. The place is 12,774 ft. above the sea level, on the left bank of the Spiti, where that river is joined by the Pin or Peeno. The Spiti river flows here in a wide shallow stream, the bed being about, at a rough guess, half a mile in breadth. Dunkur (2,000 feet or more above the river) is fantastically situated on a spur, which, running at right angles between the mountain range and the river, is so precipitous as to render the village only accessible on one side. The composition of this spur is conglomerate of boulder and earth, and much of the latter having been washed away, the summit of the hill is divided into spires. The village has grown up as best it could under the difficulties caused by these natural eccentricities of surface. The materials were huge sun-dried bricks, the roofing of poplar and dog-rose bushes, which are the only vegetable productions the country here affords for building purposes.

After receiving news of the Nono's whereabouts, I proceeded on my route to Kazee (a long march), where he was to meet me with his interpreters. The Nono is a quiet, demure-looking old gentleman, very civil, and desirous to oblige. His dress was simple. One garment, closely fitting at the throat, descended below the knee, being fastened at the waist by a girdle; it was of the colour of turmeric. Clumsy boots with felted soles, and long cloth continuations were secured at the knee. The usual little saucer-shaped apology for a cap, with a knot on its summit, served the purpose of shelter for his head. A number of uncut pieces of amber-coloured stone, cat's eye, and rough, imperfect lumps of turquoise, were strung together and formed a huge sort of necklace, which descended to the waist. An iron tobacco or opium pipe, a long slender knife, and writing apparatus, stuck in his belt, completed this interesting individual's turn out. After a considerable palaver I showed the Nono my kit, including rifles, crystal clock, and blow-out Indian-rubber bath. The clock was handed round as a great curiosity; the bath was, however, a complete mystery. As the swells in the Guards say they don't dance, so don't the Tibetans wash. They assert it would be absurd to do so, since the dirt on their skins is as good as a suit of clothes. No doubt this is the case, but the traveller suffers considerable inconvenience in various ways from this little defect, for their persons taint the air; and as sure as they travel with your camp so certain

are insects to invade your clothing in a way inscrutable, and in defiance of every precaution, and so indestructible are these pests, which attack the body as well as the head, that their larvæ are not to be destroyed by any element but fire. When I had made a few presents of cutlery to the Nono, and for his wives some trifles to win over the sex, the old gentleman granted me the supplies I wanted and an interpreter and porters.

The next halting place was Ki or Kibar, after which I was to pass seven marches, including the Parung Pass, without meeting any village, till I reached Kirghoo at the north end of the Choomereri Lake.

Two long marches brought me to the foot of the pass, elevation about 12,000 feet, where a rough slope was the only camping ground available. In no way could my bed be arranged satisfactorily, so I passed the whole night about as pleasantly and usefully as does Sisyphus his eternity. Barely had I succeeded in making a fair commencement of a night's rest, when I found myself, bedding included, sliding over the foot of my little pallet; this manœuvre I repeated at great expense of temper till early dawn, when all were busy and anxious to lose no time, for the task before us was a rasper.

I fairly saw every man in the camp off the ground before I myself started. The road was easy for some two hours, and in that time I had overhauled the foremost of the party at a spot I was sorry I had not reached the day before; and were I again to encounter that pass, I should make for this spot in two marches from Kibar, instead of to that I had camped on in one; for by so doing the march over the pass could be accomplished with but moderate fatigue. The foremost man I reached was my butler, as they call him, or head servant. I found him crying like a child and completely 'caved in.' The lunatic, spite of my orders, was dressed in the thin, flimsy costume of the plains, for what reason I could not discover. Of course this was no time for wasting breath, so I passed on. I should think at this spot the elevation might be 16,000 feet, there was running water, some scanty vegetation, and the spot for the camping ground I selected in my mind's eye was sheltered by a huge perpendicular spur of rock. After this the march was more severe; huge snow-wreaths traversed the wide ravine leading up to the pass; the scenery was dismal in the extreme, all vegetation had ceased, and snow and Titanic rocks were all that were present to view. The snow passed, the last 1,500 feet were all but perpendicular steps up rough rock. My Tartar interpreter had joined me, and together we worked it. I allowed him to lead, and timed my halts to his;

they were very frequent indeed, the higher we mounted. We reached the summit at about 11 A.M., 18,500 feet.

I had anticipated that from this great elevation I should command a splendid view of the so-called 'Plains of Tibet.' The view north from the pass is, however, shut in by mountains whose elevation is from 1,500 to 3,000 feet higher. The view towards the south was unimpeded, the day was brilliant and the atmosphere indescribably clear, and I only wish some one had been with me capable of doing justice to this truly magnificent panorama. As for me, as I have proved, I am no word painter, and besides, after a short look about me, I had to interest myself about my worldly possessions, the upward progress of my cook, and his little collection of cooking apparatus and eatables and drinkables.

Fortunately for me this interesting individual, whose 'absurd name' was Mookham, was a proved mountaineer, and as I took care the burdens containing the *cuisine* were light and the men who carried them strong, I soon had the satisfaction of a pleasant sniff of good things to come.

From my situation I could observe, by the aid of my binoculars, that the whole party of my porters had subsided about 1,500 feet below me, where I have mentioned the ground being so steep and rough. I induced some dozen Tartars who were with me to go down and help them up, and in about another hour I had the satisfaction of seeing all my worldly goods around me. My head servant was reported to have stopped where I had passed him, and with him a man who called himself head of the porters. This was a bore: I had to dispatch a Tartar with their blankets and some food and cold tea for them.

The wind on the pass was bitterly cold and furious, but nevertheless, with the aid of blankets and a good meal, I succeeded in making the halt pass pleasantly. I lacked very much a companion here as elsewhere on my tour, but I had a new (to me) number of the 'Saturday Review,' some articles in which I chuckled over; by 1 o'clock or soon after we were off again. Some four miles of snow passed, we descended down a glacier. The walking was detestable enough. The sun was powerful, and I was wet up to my middle, but having on native sandals the melted snow water ran out as it soaked in.

The camping ground, Todung, was reached by 7 P.M. The elevation of this spot is about 16,500 ft.; it is grassed and pleasantly situated. To keep up the circulation I busied myself in helping to pitch my tent and arrange its interior. A tin of

ox-tail soup and some port wine restored me to amiability. Before I turned in I found that, besides my two servants who were on the other side, one porter was missing, and another had left the road on the hill. Food was cooked over night, cold tea, stimulants, and some blankets were packed, and I ordered four of the Tartars and my hill sportsman to start off before daylight to help over the cripples. The next day was an anxious one, for I could not but anticipate some serious casualty ; however, the missing porter walked in early in the morning, and by sun-down the butler was led into camp a melancholy limp-looking mortal. The head of the hill porters would not face the pass at all, but returned home, having borrowed money from my hill sportsman to enable him to do so.

And now, having carried my readers over the Parung Pass into Tibet, I respectfully make my bow, and leave them to find their way back as best they can.

ASCENT OF THE AIGUILLE VERTE. By THOS. S. KENNEDY.

AT Easter in 1865, I was visiting the Rev. C. Hudson at Skillington, to arrange a Swiss tour, and we agreed to meet at Chamouni, to ascend the Aiguille Verte, and then to go to Zermatt, to try if we could climb the Matterhorn by its northern arête. The second part of this programme we could not carry out together from unforeseen circumstances. How we succeeded at Chamouni will now be detailed.

On the very day that I entered Chamouni, Mr. Whymper succeeded in making the first ascent of our mountain, with two German guides, but, from various circumstances, of which not the least one was the ill-temper shown by the Chamouni guides as a body to their more fortunate German brethren, a groundless doubt was cast by them upon his success. So our expedition was reduced to making the second ascent of the peak, partly to carry out an original intention, and partly to establish the truth of Mr. Whymper's success by finding a rope which he had buried at the top. I may here state that the Chamouni guides have made at least twenty attempts to scale this peak, of which some were really hard tussles with the mountain, whilst others were merely sham expeditions organized to extort money from their employers, it being well understood amongst the guides that the first difficulty should stop them. Bad weather detained us at Chamouni for several days, but we made one reconnoitring expedition to a point