

burning intensity of its rays. Strangely enough, it was also hot in the shade. But despite the discomfort of the heat, the effect of the excessive insolation, which made the skin peel off our faces in strips, we had nothing really to complain of. To have crossed the pass in a snowstorm would have been dangerous; in any case it would not only have been difficult for the yaks to have found their way through the snow, but the path they trod would soon have been snowed up again.



Fig. 312. A LADAKI.

When we started the snow was hardly a foot deep; but very soon it was twice that depth; above Singrul it was especially thick. It brought with it however one advantage, in that it filled up all the hollows and interstices between the stones and fragments of rock, and to that extent levelled the track; though when you ride a yak, as I did then, the inequalities of the surface occasion you no inconvenience, for yaks can pick their way almost anywhere with extraordinary sureness of foot. As in the Sodschi-la, the snow lay thicker also on the east side of this pass. It was in fact a meter or more deep, and had it not been for the track trampled by the yaks, it would have been quite impossible to cross the pass in one day. Meanwhile we were restricted to the path thus made through the snow by our »yak plough», and every time it became necessary to adjust a load on the back of any of the animals the entire string of horses and yaks that followed after had to stand still and wait. In this way we kept perpetually stopping, and it was not