

their burdens of grain, together with a live sheep and the bread-supply of one of our regular men, up to the top of the pass, thus relieving our own ponies. These were now sixteen in number, and their strength must be husbanded against the unknown, but surely great, demands which awaited them.

We passed the donkeys the second day out on our way up; they were struggling bravely against mighty odds. We were harassed during four trying days, from Polu to the pass: horses falling in the torrents and slipping on the narrow trail, men and beasts breathing harder as we climbed into the thin upper air; sahibs as well as servants sleeping in holes in the ground or in the open cold, because all were too tired to mend a broken tent-pole. But at last it was over, and we were camped about ten miles beyond the pass, which looks northward over all Turkestan and southward over the far-rolling, mountain-marked plateau of Tibet. We were warmed by a splendid sun; the waters of a little lake shone at our feet, the tent was cosily set, there were grass-roots from which fire could be had to boil a pot of water for brewing tea, and for the softening of a hare which Anginieur had killed at fifteen thousand feet elevation; wild ducks and geese invited us to make resounding shots in the empty waste; we were tired, but happy, and we waited for the donkeys. Each one of us in turn played Sister Anna, mounted on some bare hillock and far-gazing across the desert which closed around us. No signs of life save an occasional hare and a troop of wild dogs. These must have been a hungry