

And here is such a seat as Icy Death would sit upon for throne.

In a day and a half we were again camped in the big valley near the point where we had left it, an unusually fine grass-patch near us, abundant water at our feet, and a fair supply of yak dung, garnered there by passing decades. On the way down we had proposed to Mohammed Joo and Lasso that they should go alone down the good stream to seek help, while the rest of us remained in camp, thus avoiding transport of five men and our European necessities, tent, and heavier bedding. They eagerly assented. Indeed, it was evidently the only course possible. We had now just *one* bushel of grain. That would keep two horses going several days, and at good speed, but it would last eight horses only two days, at half rations. Lasso was calmly confident that he could return in six days. Just why he said six instead of sixteen I don't know, unless he merely wanted to comfort us, for we could live comfortably for ten days on the food remaining to us, and we hoped the idle horses might keep their life-sparks burning by consumption of the grass.

Our two messengers then fared forth to ask of the silent mountains whether we were to be granted a few more years of respiration, of see-saw 'twixt pain and pleasure. How grave it all seemed to us! How indifferent to the dumb world around us! How petty to the babbling world of men to which we once belonged! Perhaps a few broken hearts there, grief-filled for a season, then the salve of time and routine, then, for them also, the sovereign cure-all, death.