

these were the two diversions, the two clean-picked bones of discussion.

The story of how the Bible came to Camp Purgatory is this: I have told you that before making our dash up Disappointment Valley we had cast aside all save the indispensables. Now, we found ourselves about ten miles below Camp Abandon, imprisoned for a time or for eternity. My little library spoke to me through the solid earth, and I longed for it. The intricacies, the profundities, the absurdities which should be found in Kant, Spinoza, Descartes, the Koran, the Bible, Buddha's Meditations these would lead one away from self, a too intimate personage when his existence seems threatened. The little collection had been put in a leather box and named *Kitab*, this being Hindustani for book.

Mir Mullah now was sent with two ponies that could walk to recover *Kitab*, ten miles away. The old man had done nothing thoroughly, save his prayers, but there seemed little chance for error. "Go back to the abandoned camp and recover *Kitab*, also some shoes." We reckoned not, however, with the possibilities of Achbar's translations falling upon a mind vacant and now disturbed. Mir Mullah returned, after a day and a half, bringing my trunk,—*Kitab* still ten miles away. Both were of leather. On this similarity Mir Mullah stumbled. The trunk contained evening dress, summer clothes, and the Bible; and weighed twice as much as *Kitab*; the wretched pony died of it two days later. The book had been accidentally separated from its companion volumes. It was ungracious that one, even nominally a Christian, should curse a Mussulman for