

ages fed the famished souls of travellers, incoming from all the bleak mountains that guard it. Loveliness, that would charm the senses in any land, here ravishes criticism of its censure and receives from flattered imagination the crown of perfect praise. By nature's unwonted opulence sober judgment is bribed, and declares that here is every tree and shrub and flower that would delight the eye in gazing wide "from China to Peru." Set against this sudden magnificence the splendid verdure of Chapultepec, of the flaming Catskills, or the Abyssinian Nile all seemed to me but grudging penury; so false is memory, so powerful is the force of Now.

If the soul be but ripe for it, a gentle hill in Surrey may outrear the mightiest Alps. But as we exultingly galloped forward there was no introspective scalpel that might pare the beauty which filled our hearts. Absolute, relative—no matter. Life became precious because it contained this waving of green, golden, and red banners, and each of us could ride through the rich carnival as a king to his prepared heritage. We had come into the vale of Kashmir through its most beautiful gateway, and we were among the few Europeans to thus have the great canvas flung before them, for the first time, from this point of view. The general travel into Kashmir has been from west and south to Srinagar. If then Ladak be sought, the traveller goes up the Sind, as we came down. But the great lower plain will already have shown him glorious views (though a sparser beauty), and perhaps the piled-up riches of the narrow valley will not be deemed by him so