

or strength to bury him; they simply wound him in cloth, and laid him on the ground with his face toward Mecca. At the top of the pass our caravan halted, as its predecessors have done for ages. Our pious Mohammedan servants gathered around the roughly squared heap of stones which, though a hundred miles from the nearest habitation, marks the boundary between India and China, the two most populous countries of the globe. Each man took one of the round, flat Ladakhi home-cakes, broke it in two, laid half with a handful of dried apricots as an offering on the stones, and ate the other half with another handful of apricots. There was no fanaticism about it, simply reverent gratitude to Allah for bringing them safely to the top of the dreaded pass. Even the despised Buddhist and the half-tolerated Christian were invited to share in the offering, and in the short prayer which concluded with reverent stroking of the beard in memory of the Prophet.

A short distance beyond the pass, there were jolly shouts from the men as we came upon the last pair of the sixty-eight abandoned bales of the unfortunate caravan which preceded ours. They contained dates, very dry, but large and sweet. As one bag was open, each man took a handful. Rasul said to me in Turki:—

“We have crossed the pass in safety. Now Allah has given us something to make us glad. We had no tea this morning. Now he has given us dates. The ‘kismet’ [fortune] of the Sahibs is good.”

That night snow began to fall; when the last man, who was supposed to have charge of the weakest animals, appeared at camp long after dark, two ponies were missing.