

not to care a bit, and laughed it off, *pour encourager les autres*, as the thing had to be done.

“After a time, and a very nasty time it was, we reached *terra firma* in the shape of a large projecting ledge of rock, and from there began the descent of the precipice. The icy slope was a perfect joke to this. We let ourselves down very gradually from any little ledge or projecting piece of rock. On getting halfway down, I heard my Ladaki servant appealing to me from above. He had mustered up courage to cross the icy slope, and had descended the precipice for a few steps, and was now squatting on a rock salaaming profusely to me with both hands, and saying he dare not move another step, and that he would go back and take my ponies round by Ladak. So I sent him back.

“For six hours we descended the precipice, partly rock and partly icy slope, and when I reached the bottom and looked back, it seemed utterly impossible that any man could have come down such a place.

“For several hours after we trudged on in the moonlight over the snow, with crevasses every fifty yards or so. Often we fell in, but had no accident; and at last, late at night, we reached a dry spot, and I spread out my rugs behind a rock while one of my men made a small fire of some dry grass and a couple of alpenstocks broken up to cook tea by. After eating some biscuits with the tea, I rolled myself up in my sheepskin and slept as soundly as ever I did.”

This rough description needs some amplification and explanation, but I give it as it stands, because it was written only a few days after I had crossed the pass, and with the memories of it fresh on me. When we ascended the valley of the Sarpo Laggo stream towards the Mustagh Pass, we came to a point where the valley was blocked by what appeared to be enormous heaps of broken stones and fragments of rock. These heaps were between two and three hundred feet in height, and