

not resist the temptation of what I thought would be a dry passage. But halfway over Shukar Ali slipped; in struggling to save himself he kept pushing me under water, till I was nearly drowned, and when I reached the opposite side of the stream I was numbed through with cold. We halted for an hour while I got into my sleeping-bag, and my clothes were spread out in the sun to dry, and then we pushed on again down a narrow rock-bound valley. At night we slept in a cave, and next day made our last march into Askoli. Never did I think we were going to reach that spot. By midday we saw its green trees and fields in the distance; but I could only get along slowly, as the way was very rough and stony. At last, however, at four o'clock, we did reach it. We sent for the headman, and told him to bring us some food. A bed was brought me to lie on, and then, with a stewed fowl and some rice to eat, fresh life and energy came into me.

But that was a dirty little village! The trees and the fields looked fresh and green, but the houses and the inhabitants were repulsively dirty; and the latter by no means well-disposed. These mountain people are dreadfully nervous about strangers. They had thought the way into their country from the north was entirely closed, and they did not at all welcome this proof that it was not. Wali, the guide, was himself a native of this village, which he had left some thirty years before. Another of my men also belonged to it. But they said they feared these people would do some injury to them for having shown me the way, and they kept by me constantly, and left the village with me, subsequently returning to Yarkand by Leh and the Karakoram Pass, instead of directly by the Mustagh Pass, as they might have done.

Immediately after we had had something to eat, we set about preparing to send back supplies to the men and ponies on the pass. With great difficulty we induced the people to do this; and on the following day a party was started off back