

footing at all on the glacier. So we turned round and faced for Askoli once more.

I think now of that wonderful glacier region, and the amphitheatre of snowy peaks at the head of the Punmah glacier, and recall all the marvellous beauties of a scene such as can only be witnessed in a few rarely visited spots on the face of the earth, but at the time my thoughts were almost entirely directed towards India. I was wearied out by my struggle with the mountains, and longed to be free of them and at rest once more.

On the day after our return to Askoli, the men who had been sent by the Old Mustagh Pass to the party with the ponies arrived back also. They had handed over the supplies to them, and Liu-san, Drogpa, and the rest had started off to take the ponies round by the Karakoram Pass to Leh. Having satisfied myself about this, I set out by double marches for Kashmir and the Punjab. Just beyond Askoli we had to cross one of those rope bridges so common in the Himalayas. A rope bridge is made of three thick ropes of plaited birch-twigs. In crossing, you tread on one and support yourself by the other two, one on each side. This particular bridge led across a narrow rocky chasm, at the bottom of which the river from the Baltoro rushed foaming along. It was certainly a disagreeable place to have to cross, but I was astonished to find that Wali, the man who had crossed the Mustagh Pass without the slightest sign of nervousness, and certainly without any hesitation, absolutely refused at first to cross this bridge. To me it seemed such a paltry thing, after what we had so recently gone through, and with two ropes to hang on by there seemed no danger at all; but Wali shivered and shook, and could only be induced to come over when he had two men to support him. This is one of the most remarkable instances I have met with of a man, who had no fear when faced by one form of danger, being totally taken aback when faced by another.