

cross before I should find myself in Kashmir again? Fortunately, however, mountain sickness wears off as one becomes accustomed to high altitudes, and I was never troubled with it again.

The journey to Shahidula it is unnecessary to describe in detail, for it is now well known. We ascended the picturesque Nubra valley, with its orchards of apricot trees and Buddhist monuments, and then crossed the Saser Pass, seventeen thousand eight hundred feet—a pass which, on account of the glacier at its summit, is often very dangerous, but which at this season presented no difficulty whatever. The mountains about here and at the head of the Nubra are very grand and bold, and rise to peaks of twenty-three thousand and twenty-four thousand feet in height, with fine glaciers rolling down their sides; but beyond the Saser Pass we entered the most utterly desolate country that exists on the face of the globe. The Depsang Plains are more than seventeen thousand feet above sea-level, and are of gravel, as bare as a gravel-walk to a suburban villa. Away behind us the snowy peaks of Saser and Nubra appeared above the horizon like the sails of some huge ships; but before us was nothing but gravel plains and great gravel mounds, terribly desolate and depressing. Across these plains blew blinding squalls of snow, and at night, though it was now the middle of summer, there were several degrees of frost. Crossing the Depsang Plains, we ascended a shallow valley covered with the skeletons of ponies, which every traveller who passes through it instinctively names the Valley of the Shadow of Death, to the Karakoram Pass, eighteen thousand eight hundred and fifty feet. It might have been supposed that at such height the snow would have been lying thick; but there was not a speck of snow either on it or on the mountain summits by it, which are well over nineteen thousand feet in height. Karakoram (Black Gravel) is, as I noted above, the very name for this pass and range; but it is strange that these mountains, at