

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, and I could realise the satisfaction of having reached the first inhabited spot in Indian territory.

But that was a dirty little village! The trees and the fields looked fresh and green, and were a delight to us after the cold and barren mountains, but the houses and the inhabitants were repulsively dirty; and the latter by no means well-disposed. Mountain people are always nervous about strangers, and these had thought the way into their country from the north was entirely closed, and did not at all welcome this living proof that it was not. Wali, the guide, was himself a native of the village, which he had left some thirty years before. Another of my men also belonged to it. But they said they feared the people would do them some injury 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 we had had something to eat,