

or cold to try us. The grave, anxious look on the men's faces passed away; they now stepped cheerily along by my side chaffing over all the difficulties they had gone through, and, at each village we came to, taking a fill of dried apricots and grapes and walnuts, so plentiful in this fruitful valley.

The country we were now in was Baltistan, the inhabitants of which—called Baltis—are a patient, docile, good-natured race, whom one hardly respects, but whom one cannot help liking in a compassionate, pitying way. The poor Balti belongs to one of those races which has gone under in the struggle of nations. In their better days the Baltis are said to have been able to fight well; but their fighting days are past. They could not resist the Dogra invasion from Kashmir; and now they are ruled by a foreign race, and because they were such good carriers, and because the roads through their own and the adjoining countries were so bad, it fell out that they were employed more and more for carrying purposes, till the patient, long-suffering Balti coolie became a well-known feature in the valleys of this frontier.