

Another of the Baltis who had done excellent work was the slave whose release I had purchased at Yarkand. He was a wild-looking character, but the hardest-working man I have ever known. Now that he had regained his freedom, was being liberally paid, and was on his way home, he did not mind how much work he did, and all through the march from Yarkand he behaved splendidly. We passed by his native village one day as we were marching through Baltistan, and left him there. But on the following day he caught us up again, carrying an immense load of fruit and provision for a big dinner for the men. He had brought all this twelve miles, and he came and kissed my hands and feet, and said he could not allow us to go away without showing how grateful he felt. These Baltis are a warm-hearted people when once their deeper feelings can be reached, and when their hearts have not been crushed out of them by that fatal load-carrying, and I parted from my faithful followers with sincere regret.

A few marches farther on I crossed my last pass, the Zoji-la, eleven thousand four hundred feet high. It was perfectly easy, and then on