

mum. For the transport of these we therefore provided carriers in numbers proportioned to the weight. After many busy days these and sundry other matters were duly arranged, and, having said goodbye to Trench, whose assistance I shall always gratefully remember, we were paddled across the pretty Dal Lake to its western shore, where our march began.

We soon left behind us the picturesque Scind Valley and approached the Zoji La. Although the pass is only 11,500 feet high, it is by no means easy to cross, especially in spring and early summer, when destructive avalanches are not infrequent. At Baltal we entered the large rest-house which had recently been erected for travellers, and which contained ample accommodation for coolies. It was our purpose to attempt the pass during the night, for then the snow would be comparatively firm. To be ready to set out in a few hours, I lay down on a bundle of pine branches which served to keep me off the wet and muddy floor. I was eagerly alert and watchful for the light of the moon which was to show us our way. The coolies, over one hundred in number, had agreed to the nocturnal march, and as soon as the light was sufficient I called them to set out. Nothing would now induce them to move, the excuse being that it was forbidden by one of the great gods of India, "Dustour" (custom), to start before four o'clock in the morning.

About that hour they began to move, though the weather looked very bad, and there was but little moonlight. The long march, entirely through deep, soft snow, was trying, and it was not till late in the evening that we were able to refresh ourselves with tea at Matayan. There a small rest-house had been built, containing only one room, and that large enough to hold only four beds. The place was cheerless and bare, and could afford us nothing but a little firewood.