

with their hoofs on the ice in search of water, now and then with success. Near the camp there was noticed an unexpected visitor, a bald-headed coot, which had been attracted by the presence of so many animals in the desolation of the mountains. The poor bird, like our beasts, was quite exhausted and was easily caught by the men, who were ordered to put an end to its misery and save it from a lingering and painful death.

Of all the members of our caravan, Rassoula showed the most wonderful imperviousness to cold. In such weather it was important to have proper footgear; boots were undoubtedly the worst, unless so large as to admit with ease two pairs of the thickest woollen socks; but Rassoula, whether riding or walking, would wear nothing in preference to a cast-off pair of my boots, which he never fastened. This man, besides his professional attainments, had some slender accomplishments which made him useful in another way. He was from Ladak, where the language spoken is Bhoti, and he was the only man in our camp who could write a letter in Bhoti. When we were sending to Ladak for help, a letter was necessary to confirm the words of our messenger, and for the writing of this letter the services of our cook were impressed. This work, however, proved almost beyond his powers; when the orders which were to form the groundwork of the epistle were rehearsed to him, he kept muttering to himself and then proceeded to write; but it was easy to see that the words he used were partly Bhoti, partly Hindostani, and partly, doubtless, from other tongues. All efforts to adhere to one language were hopeless, and when, after much labour, the epistle was finished it was very doubtful what its meaning was, or whether it had a meaning. Rassoula could repeat to us what he had been told to say, and doubtless did so, only pretending to read the letter as it finally stood. During the whole of this