

from the rest-house at Mechuhoi ahead of the coolies, and after some hours of weary plodding through the snow I reached the top of the pass. There I almost stumbled over the body of a Sepoy who had been frozen to death. I learned afterwards that my men had noticed him the day before pushing on from Mechuhoi, and had endeavoured to recall him. The poor man, clothed in the thinnest rags, had evidently reached the spot after dark, and before attempting to descend the steep snowy slope had sat down to rest. He had removed one puttie, and had partially removed the other, and then had been overtaken by the fatal sleep. The snowfall not having been as yet sufficient to fill up the bottom of the narrow gorge, and bridge over the rushing stream, we had to cut steps for ourselves on the steep sides of the ravine—an unpleasant task in the face of the cold wind. We reached Baltal without mishap to any of my party, but one of the Baltis who had joined our coolies was frozen to death while being carried across the pass.

At Baltal I expected to spend the night with less discomfort than I had experienced at Mechuhoi. The key of the apartment reserved for Europeans visiting the rest-house had been entrusted to a postal Daroga, or overseer of mail-runners, but he had unaccountably returned it to Kashmir. I had to rest in the large room in company with coolies, servants, mail-runners, Baltis, and a couple of Kaskmiris who had been sent from Srinagar with some luxuries for me. It was the 11th of December when I reached Srinagar, so altered in appearance that my own friends failed to recognise me. Thence I travelled to Rawal Pindi in a "tonga," or stage-cart, specially adapted for steep gradients and sharp curves, and from Rawal Pindi I travelled by rail to Umballa, where my regiment was quartered.