

completely isolated owing to floods in the river. Between some of them there were routes over steep, rocky ground, but these were said to be so bad as to be impracticable for ponies. In winter the deep snow lying long on the ground often completely blocks the routes, and the bare mountain-walls on either side exclude the sunshine except for a few hours a day.

I now perceived that I should have to abandon my long-cherished purpose of revisiting Wacha to get a check on the longitude. The river was almost everywhere open in mid-stream; to find a practicable route it would be necessary to cross and re-cross very frequently, but the fords were impracticable or dangerous. Doubtless men could have been found in sufficient numbers to carry the baggage, but the condition of my treasury did not warrant the adoption of this method of transport. The utmost limit I could hope to reach was Kosarab.

At Shoti, 10,000 feet in altitude, we found shelter for a night in two deserted stone huts, so low that I could not stand upright without knocking my head against the roof, and bringing down showers of dust and soot. During the night and most of the following day, snow fell. Against the vertical mountain side, close to Shoti, there was a rough scaffolding, overspread with brushwood and large stones, so that it formed a sort of viaduct along which the donkeys were able to pass with their burdens, though, to escape projecting rocks, the ponies had to be unloaded. For a long distance above this spot the bottom of the valley was only a few yards wide, and for several hundred yards it was covered with slippery and sloping ice, so that it was necessary to hew out a series of steps and sprinkle them with earth before the caravan could proceed. The latter part of the ascent to the Kesin Pass was quite good, and, as far as we could see through the mist and the fine falling snow, there was abundance of