

CHAPTER XIX

Heavy rain—Fresh animals—Hard work—Death of Kasim—Snowstorms—Driving sheep—Loss of baggage—Bleak bivouac—Saroj Kul—Ponies strayed—False alarm—Amban's "kind" orders—Sickness—Meeting Islam with camels—Camp 110—Ram Singh still unable to work—Imperative to abandon journey—"Caching"—Return to Ladak—Meeting Europeans again—Green fields—Leh—Disposal of caravan—Pleasant march—Srinagar—Simla—Hospital—Kind visitors—Homewards.

AS it would be impossible to get all the animals past the worst parts in one day, I sent Niaz Akun with his section of the caravan, and the two shepherds Nurbu and Stanzin with the sheep a day's march in advance. Then I received the last visit of the Sia, who finally refused to carry out the agreement which I have already described. The Sia went so far as to say that it was Macartney's wish that I should remain at Polu till the road was repaired. What the repairing might mean I did not then understand, but it seemed to me that the effrontery which could attribute to Macartney the wish to detain me would stick at nothing, and, turning to go, I told the man plainly that he was a liar, a statement which did not in the least ruffle his temper, for when I left him his countenance wore the bland smile peculiar to the Celestials.

On June 13th I set out with the men and animals which had not already gone forward. The caravan,