

indents to sign and bills to pay which the obliging Commissariat Conductor kept ready for me under a group of fine Chinars by the roadside where on sunny days he transacts the business of his office. No transport can move up the road without his permission, and though the procedure he superintends is modern in its ways, yet it seemed to me as if this modest British official had simply taken the place of those "Masters of the Gates" who used in ancient Kashmir to guard all routes leading into the valley.

The road, after leaving the straggling line of wooden huts which form the Bazar of Bandipur, leads for about four miles up the open valley of the Madhumati stream. In the irrigated fields the fresh green of the young rice-shoots was just appearing, while the hamlets on either side were half hidden under the rich foliage of their Chinars and walnut-trees. It was the typical spring scenery of Kashmir to which I here bade farewell. Near the village of Matargom the road turns to the north to ascend in long zigzags the range which forms the watershed between Kashmir and the valley of the Kishanganga. From the spur up which the road winds I had a splendid view of the Volur Lake and the snow-covered mountains to the east which encircle the hoary Haramukh Peaks. At a height of about 9,000 feet a fine forest of pines covers the spur and encloses a narrow glade known as Tragbal. Here the snow had just disappeared, and I found the damp ground strewn with the first carpet of Alpine flowers.

A rude wooden rest-house begrimed with smoke and mould gave shelter for the night, doubly welcome, as a storm broke soon after it got dark. The storm brought fresh snow, and as this was sure to make the crossing of the pass above more difficult I started before daybreak on the 1st of June. A steep ascent of some two thousand feet leads to the open ridge which the road follows for several miles. Exposed as this ridge is to all the winds, I was not surprised to find it still covered