

with deep snowdrifts, below which all trace of the road disappeared. Heavy clouds hung around, and keeping off the rays of the sun let the snow remain fairly hard. Soon, however, it began to snow, and the icy wind which swept the ridge made me and my men push eagerly forward to the shelter offered by a Dak runners' hut. The storm cleared before long, but it sufficed to show how well deserved is the bad repute which the Tragbal (11,900 feet above the sea) enjoys among Kashmirian passes.

For the descent from the pass I was induced by the 'Markobans' owning the ponies to utilise the winter route which leads steeply down into a narrow snow-filled nullah. Though the ponies slid a good deal in the soft snow of the slope, we did not encounter much difficulty until we got to the bottom of the gorge. Here the snow bridges over the stream which flows from this valley towards the Kishanganga had begun to give way, and the high banks of snow on either side were in many places uncomfortably narrow. At last our progress was stopped at a point where the stream had washed away the whole of the snow vault. To take the laden animals along the slatey and precipitous side of the gorge, which was free from snow, proved impracticable. To return to the top of the gorge, and thence follow the proper road which descends in long zigzags along a side spur, would have cost hours. So the council of my 'Markobans,' hardy hillmen, half Kashmiri, half Dard, decided to try the narrow ledge of snow which remained standing on the right bank of the stream. The first animal, though held and supported by three men, slipped and rolled into the stream, and with it Sadak Akhun, who vainly attempted to stem its fall. Fortunately neither man nor pony got hurt, and as the load was also picked out of the water the attempt was resumed with additional care. Making a kind of path with stones placed at the worst points, we managed to get the animals across one by one. But it was not without considerable anxiety for