

precautions are, indeed, necessary in order to make the place inhabitable during the long winters with their heavy snowfall.

At Minimarg the route to the Burzil strikes off to the north-west, and ascending the valley some five miles higher I reached the rest-house at the foot of the pass. The snow began to cover the ground soon after Minimarg was left behind, and at the foot of the pass it was a true winter scenery which met the eye. The sky was of a dazzling blue, and so clear that I felt quite reassured as to the result of taking my laden ponies across the pass.

The only condition to be observed was an early ascent before the snow should become soft. I therefore got up at one o'clock, and an hour later my caravan was plodding up the snow-filled ravine which forms the winter route to the pass. Of the road no trace could be seen. After two hours' steady ascent we arrived at the point where the Burzil defile is met from the north-east by another pass leading down from the high plateau of the Deosai. A telegraph shelter-hut raised on a wooden scaffolding some thirty feet high serves as a guiding-post to the parties of Dak runners who are obliged to carry the Gilgit mail during the winter. The structure was even now some 10 feet deep in the snow. Fortunately the temperature was so low that the hard snow offered comparatively good going to the animals. By the time that the first rays of the sun swept across the higher ranges to the east, we had gained safely the summit of the pass, 13,500 feet above the sea. The six miles from the rest-house had taken over three hours. There was no distant view from the pass, which lies between winding spurs, but the glittering snowfields all around, covered with a spotless crust of fresh ice, were a sight not to be forgotten. The temperature was only 35° F. when I took a hurried breakfast under the shelter of the Dak hut.

The descent on the north side was long and tiring. The snow lay for some eight miles from the top of the pass, and as the morning advanced the going necessarily became heavier.