

no good for rain, which it absorbs rapidly, becoming very heavy and clumsy; but in these rainless countries it is by far the best headgear that one could wear. For the first day or two it seems to afford little protection to the eyes, but one soon gets used to it.

The next day we went on to Tolti after defeating the plots of the Rajah's munshi. This ingenious person told us that it would be a very difficult matter to procure 150 coolies; but that if we advanced him five rupees he would send out messages to the outlying villages. Eckenstein, however, instead of doing this, asked the coolies who had come with us if they would go on another stage. They jumped at the chance, and made a regular stampede for the loads, going off that afternoon so as to avoid the heat of the following



THE INDUS VALLEY.

mid-day; but as soon as the munshi saw that they were well off he produced his 150 men (whom he had had in waiting all the time) and demanded to be paid on account of them. I cannot be sure whether Eckenstein did or did not give him a small instalment of the kicking he deserved, as I was asleep in my tent during the whole of this commotion; but of course we reported his conduct to the authorities.

The road to Tolti was less mad and bad than before, but still very bad and sad. We were met by yet another king, and the usual *darbar* took place. We went on to Parkuta. The road was now pretty good, and there was quite a length of the valley opening out. On the 13th we went on to Gol. The road was now capital for horses, except in the villages and over one or two pari. At Parkuta there must be five or six linear miles of cultivated land, and we passed through many avenues of trees which afforded very welcome shade. On the 14th we finished the first stage of our journey, riding twenty-one miles into Skardu. There was a pretty good road nearly all the way and only two pari of any size to cross. I got in about noon, and we all settled down in a *dak-bangla* as we intended to rest at Skardu three or four days to get information about the possibility of crossing the Skoro La. About half an hour before nightfall a man was brought in who had had his leg cut open by a falling stone. The doctor immediately attended to it, but the darkness came on and the bulk of the operation was done by candle light. The doctor would not give an anæsthetic, and expected the boy to faint under the pain; but this did not by any means happen, though he was suffering as anyone must suffer under such circumstances. The leg was cut down to the bone from the knee to the ankle. He did not evince any signs of great pain, and only at one point did he open his lips and ask in the most casual way for some water.

The next morning we received a visit from the Rajah. This ruffian had been stripped of his power for his conspiracies, but he still enjoyed the title and a certain income. We got rid of him as soon as possible with one or two presents. Eckenstein and I then interviewed the Tehsildar who came to pay his respects, and to make arrangements for our further journey. Later a great wind sprang up and great storms of sand were to be seen in every part of the valley, some of them 3,000 feet in height. The valley was here very wide, it was rather like a great circular opening in the mountains than a valley, for the widening was not gradual but sudden, and soon closed in again.

The next day two or three of us went off to fish, but caught nothing of any size. All this time, of course, we were overwhelmed with presents of one sort or another in the eatable line: while big pots of tea prepared in two different fashions were brought to us at nearly every stage. The first kind was made of Yarkand tea, sweetened and highly spiced; it was drinkable and even pleasant. The other was a mixture of tea, salt, and butter; and was an unspeakable abomination, though Eckenstein and Knowles pretended to like it. In the afternoon three brothers of the Rajah came and worried us. The next day nothing happened at all, and was consequently pleasant. On the 18th I went off with the Austrians to climb the fortress rock, which we ascended by the east ridge. It gave interesting and varied climbing; in the afternoon Eckenstein and I visited the Tehsildar and made the final arrangements. On the 19th we resumed our journey. About noon we reached Shigar, and made a delightful bivouac under a big tree. We were received by yet another Rajah! I had the bad luck to come in first; and was talking to him and the various *lamdars* for some time before the relief party turned up. In the Shigar Valley, not far from the village, are three fine carved Buddha-rupas in bas-relief on a big rock. After lunch I went off and shot some pigeons, and when I returned found that a guest was coming to dinner in the shape of the local missionary. We had a very pleasant dinner-party, and I entertained my companions by appearing first in the character of an earnest well-wisher to missionary work, with a gentle undercurrent which was quite beyond the comprehension of our friend; and subsequently in assuming the character of a prophet, demanding his allegiance. I proved to him my authenticity from the Scriptures, which, as it happened, I knew pretty well by heart; and put him down as one of those Scribes and Pharisees whose stiff-neckedness and generally viperine character prevented them from knowing a really good thing when they saw it! This man had been living in Shigar for seven years, and had not yet got a convert. Of course the Mohammedan regarded him as a very low type of idolater, and said so. He complained a good deal of his hard life; but as he was living in a most charming valley with a wife and all complete on a salary of which he could not have earned the fourth part in any honest employment, I do not quite see what he had got to complain of. Of course he laid stress on the absence of white men, but this was worse than no argument, as the possessor of such mediocre attainments, spiritual and



PARKUTA.

intellectual, was not likely to receive anything but contempt in an educated community.

On the 20th we went on to Alchori, a short and pleasant march; I did a little pigeon shooting on the way. The Shigar Valley is broad and open, and the mountains on either side are delightful, though the bases are mostly uninteresting. The peaks in many cases have a fine pyramidal formation. The whole structure is thus rather of the type of the Wetterhorn seen from Grindelwald. One mountain, at the head of the valley, bears a striking resemblance to Mont Blanc, from Courmayeur.

(To be continued.)