

that the staff and shrine get more beautiful as time goes on. "Oh," I said, "do show it to me." At first they said "No"; but after a little conversation about our Westminster Abbey and the great men who have been laid to rest there, and of St. Paul's—which I think they liked best because the dome is round—they said; "Come; but you must give us some pice for lights and prayers." We had to stoop on entering. On each side of the cave there were wooden benches, quite black with age and polished by use from holy pilgrims sleeping on them. It was so dark that little lamps were burning here and there. Then we came to a very narrow opening which we could just pass through, and there was the staff under a most beautiful open-worked wooden case, and the shrine of another holy man close by. From there we visited the mosque, which was very clean. They asked us if we were pleased with what we had seen, and if our Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's contained anything as beautiful. One of our party laughed with astonishment, which seemed to vex them, so I said to the priest, "You see, we cannot compare things like this with those in our country, as we have no history of the kind." That put them at ease at once. They walked with us to our tents, and in the evening brought us a present of apples, pears, and sugar-candy, of which they are very fond. The next day, before starting, we wished them all good wishes, and sent a few things for the women and children.

One woman I was very interested in, and talked to her for a long time. I asked her if she would not like to be free and go outside her zenana and see the beautiful world God had made. "Oh, no," she said; "I should not know what to do—to turn to the right or the left. I have never walked outside my own grounds since I was married at twelve years of age, and now I am nearly seventy years old. I have often been to see my relations, but then I go at night in a duli with the curtains closely drawn. Once my husband did take me five days' journey to see the beautiful flowers on the Dal Lake—the lotus and water-lilies—but I was disappointed in them, as they only grew on the water-top. I thought they would have been as big and as pretty as the almond blossom, which is very fine in my garden."

The next day we stopped at such a pretty village, Pilgam. The houses were built of logs of trees placed one above another. The inside of most of those we went in were black from smoke and dirt, as they had no windows; outside the scenery is wild and grand.

The pilgrims all collect at Pilgam to wait until the moon is at its proper fulness before starting. We asked a few sickly women if they would like a little medicine; they said, "No, we are going to the great Creator to be cured." We found the road, or rather winding path, to Tanin rather rough, and scarcely practicable for our ponies, so we sent them back and marched on foot. We encamped on a broad, grassy meadow surrounded by rocks.

From Tanin to Shisha Nag a very stiff climb, about 1 in 400 incline; then for some distance it was more level, the river running far below. It was grand; not a hut to be seen anywhere, only wild Nature. When the pilgrims first saw Shisha Nag—a fine sheet of water in a kind of basin, with the water coming over the high rocks at its back—they gave one wild shout. The men rushed in and bathed; the women sat at the edge, lit little lamps, said their prayers, and bathed.

their face, arms, and feet. We tried to talk to the women, but they were too intent on their prayers to give any heed, so we passed on to get our camp pitched above them, and to sit and watch the camp below. One poor old man was quite lame; it was very beautiful to see the others help him down to the water's edge. I could not help thinking and reading of that other pool where the sick waited for the moving of the waters.

From Shisha Nag to Panjitarni, or the five rivers where the pilgrims say Adam was turned out of the Garden of Eden. Here they all bathed again and got ready for the morrow's march. It was something wonderful to see each little group sitting round the little fires which they made on the ground to cook their evening meal, and to hear them blow their horn and sing their prayers or read from their books.

Going from Panjitarni to Amarnath—the cave of god Shiva—we crossed two or three torrents. Then we ascended a steep, precipitous spur of a mountain, where we kept slipping back, and only reached the summit after much difficulty. Then there was a very deep drop, which I found more trying than I did the stiff climb. One great rock I could not get round, so one of my trusted servants got round and then helped me over. At last we reached the bottom, where there was a most dangerous smooth rock to cross; it was very slippery, owing to water coming out of a rock just above it. It was also very sloping, and on the outer side was a deep cavern; if once one gets into that one is lost for ever, they say, both in this world and the next. They believe that the sins of those who are so unfortunate were so great that, although they have come so far, yet the great God would not allow them to see Amarnath. We all crossed it safely, and got to the end of the descent. Here the pilgrims take off their garments and put on a loin cloth made from the paper tree. They go on their hands and knees, bow and pray, and then throw themselves full length on the ground, mark with their finger where their head reaches, then crawl upon their hands and knees to that and so on, all the way up to the cave, bewailing their sins the whole way. When they arrive at the cave they go to the mountain-side and rub the earth all over their bodies. One mountain looked like chalk; this they put on their faces and crawled into the cave, where the priest put a red mark on their foreheads; then they laid their offerings at the foot of a large lump of ice that was in the cave—the water which is frozen into it comes through a crack in the cave.

We asked if we might enter, and they were most polite, asking us first who we were, and what we had come for. As I was always pushed forward to be the spokeswoman, I said one was a lady doctor, and we other two were nurses for the sick; that there had been a great flood in the city of Srinagar and we could not do our work until the waters had abated, and, as we heard that many sick from all parts of the world were making a pilgrimage to Amarnath for cure, we thought that some poor sufferers might be glad of medical help on the way, because we were most interested in all that concerned our sisters in the East. We were allowed to go in, and the two blocks of ice were explained to us; one was Shiva, the other was the Elephant god Ganesh. We thanked them, and they wished us a safe return, and were sure we should ever remember our journey.

We returned another way back to our camp at

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