

terly cold weather the camels could go ten days without water, or, at a pinch, twelve. Accordingly, we cut twelve days' supply of ice, and tamarisk fagots enough to last eight days if used very sparingly. This, with thirty days' provisions, twenty days' linseed cake, and the camp equipment, made the camels' loads so heavy that it was impossible for any one to ride.

We were anxious about the camels, for they had now traveled three months on comparatively poor food with no long rests. The smallest, a truly pretty little animal, had lately developed huge and evidently painful red blisters on its soft padded feet. To prevent its becoming useless, the men cut off the upper portion of a pair of high, native boots, such as we all wore, and cleverly converted the lower parts into camel-shoes. The poor animal screamed like an angry, frightened child when the men tied its legs together, and rolled it over on its side; but it seemed decidedly grateful when, on rising, it found that its feet were no longer so painful. We were nearly overcome with laughter, for the little camel shook its ungainly feet as a cat does hers when a small boy ties papers on them; and then walked off with its hind legs a yard apart.

A hearty laugh was good for the anxious men. At Charklik I had told them that we were going to a difficult and dangerous region where no man had ever been, and they could turn back if they wished.

"No," they answered, "we have seen that with a piece of paper and a 'Mecca-pointer' [compass] you can find a road where there is none. If we die, we die. Allah is merciful."