



*Glacier at the N end of the  
Muzart valley and the  
Tamga-tash sarai.*

The ascent of the seemingly not very considerable glacier begins at the sarai. The road zigzags and the higher you get, the worse it grows. The horses' sinews and muscles have to do some stiff work, as the upward paths are so steep. Bits of level ice are rare and very short. There are gravel and rough stones everywhere. In a short time the horses were sweating from their exertions, but we went on upward without mercy. After climbing uninterruptedly for a couple of hours I was able to shoot a fine eagle that had settled on a block of ice and was on the look-out for some abandoned horse. I called to the yigit that he should climb up and fetch the eagle, a fine specimen of 2.12 m from wing to wing, but it was unnecessary for him to do so, for an individual appeared from his hiding-place behind a block of ice, who seized upon the bird in an instant. This was one of the eight labourers, who keep a look-out from the summit of their mountain and meet caravans in order to help them over the most difficult places. It was a stroke of luck that he and his companions were not sitting in the line of fire beyond the eagle, for I might have hit them without being aware of it.

The most difficult place for the horses are some famous ice steps, about twenty high and slippery steps that are cut daily at a spot where the road is very steep. On reaching the steps the loads are taken off the horses and carried up by these excellent labourers, who climb the steps more easily with a sack weighing 4 poods on their backs than we do with nothing but our furs. The horses frequently slip and fall on these slippery steps and the Qarakeshes help themselves to climb by holding on to a horse's tail. Just beyond the steps the loads are lifted on to the horses again and a little higher up a halt is made at the Muzart mazar on a small level space near the E mountain, called Davan bashi tagh here. Above the mazar on a projecting rock a clay hut has been built, in which the eight labourers live and where caravan leaders and others often seek shelter from bad weather and cold. Not