

stretched completely across the valley. I was on ahead by myself, and when I saw these mounds of *débris*, I thought we might have trouble in taking ponies over such rough obstacles; but I was altogether taken aback when, on coming up to the heaps, I found that they were masses of solid ice, merely covered over on the surface with a thin layer of this rocky *débris*, which served to conceal the surface of the ice immediately beneath. And my dismay can be imagined when, on ascending one of the highest of the mounds, I found that they were but the end of a series which extended without interruption for many miles up the valley to the snows at the foot of the pass. We were, in fact, at the extremity of an immense glacier. This was the first time I had actually been on a glacier, and I had never realized till now how huge and continuous a mass of ice it is. Here and there, breaking through the mounds of stone, I had seen cliffs of what I thought was black rock, but on coming close up to these I found them to be of solid dark green ice. I discovered caverns, too, with transparent walls of clear, clean ice, and enormous icicles hanging like fringes from the roof. It was an astonishing and wonderful sight; but I was destined to see yet more marvellous scenes than this in the icy region upon which I was now entering.

To take a caravan of ponies up a glacier like this seemed to me an utter impossibility. The guides thought so too, and I decided upon sending the ponies round by the Karakoram Pass to Leh, and going on myself over the Mustagh Pass with a couple of men. This would have been a risky proceeding, for if we did not find our way over the pass we should have scarcely enough provisions with us to last us till we could return to an inhabited place again. Supplies altogether were running short, and the longer we took in reaching the pass, the harder we should fare if we did not succeed in getting over it. But while I was deciding upon sending the ponies back,