

who had brought the petition to the British authorities, was still in Leh. From him we learnt the details of the Kanjuti raid in the previous year, and gained some information regarding the road which the raiders had followed from Hunza. This was one of the roads which I wished to explore, and, as it lay through a totally unknown country, it was necessary to acquire all possible information about it before going there. My chief anxiety was regarding transport. In a country which was a labyrinth of mountains without any roads, coolies would obviously be the best transport to employ. Men could go where a four-footed animal could not; and, if I employed coolies, I could follow a route which would be out of the question if I employed ponies or mules. But there was one fatal objection to the employment of coolies, and that was that if the men had to carry provisions for themselves for any length of time, they would not be able to carry any load besides. We should be several weeks away from any inhabited spot—in fact, we were afterwards travelling for fifty-seven days without seeing a single inhabitant—and as each man requires about two pounds of food each day, and cannot carry a greater load than sixty pounds over these rough mountains, it is obvious that if he had to travel thirty days away from the base of supplies, he would only be able to carry sufficient food for himself and nothing for anybody else, and that if he had to march any longer than thirty days he would starve. So coolies, though the best means of transport for crossing bad places, could not be employed.

The same objection, in a modified form, applied to the use of ponies. Ponies eat four pounds a day, and carry one hundred and sixty pounds. They could, therefore, go a little further than coolies; but even ponies, if the expedition were a month away from the base, would only be able to carry forty pounds of baggage each in addition to grain supplies for themselves. For anything over a month they would be useless. I then