

thought of employing donkeys. These animals are supposed to be able to pick up a living anywhere, and a handful or two of grain a day for each would probably be sufficient, but a very grave objection to using them was their small size. We should constantly be crossing rivers, and little donkeys would be swept away at once.

I was planning out a system of depôts and combined employment of ponies, donkeys, and men, when Musa, the Kirghiz, relieved my mind by suggesting camels. He said a certain number could be procured at Shahidula, and that they could be taken along a great part of the route to Hunza. This at once solved the difficulty, for camels can pick up a certain amount of grazing along the mountain-sides, so that they only need—or, at any rate, are only given—two pounds of grain a day, while they carry loads of from two hundred and fifty to three hundred pounds. Their size, too, would be of great advantage in crossing deep rivers. I had already employed camels on my way from Yarkand to the Mustagh Pass in 1887, and had seen then how well these hill camels can work over really difficult ground, so I at once sent off a messenger to Shahidula to have as many as possible collected for me. They would not be able to go the whole way, but they could work along the valley bottoms and easier passes; then we would have a few ponies to carry us over the more difficult passes, and two or three men for the worst of all.

The transport question having been decided, the next matter which had to be attended to was supplies. Though I have spoken of Shahidula as a base, it was not a base in the ordinary acceptance of the term. It lies over twelve thousand feet above the sea; nothing whatever is grown there; and there is not a single permanently inhabited house in the place. There was an old fort there, but Shahidula was really only the head-quarters of nomadic Kirghiz, and a convenient halting-place for caravans; and all supplies of grain had to