

this seemed to me an utter impossibility. The guides thought so too, and I decided upon sending the ponies round by the Karakoram Pass, 180 miles to the eastward, 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. But while I was deciding upon sending the ponies back, the caravan men were making a gallant attempt to lead them up the glacier. I rejoined them, and we all helped the ponies along as well as we could; hauling at them in front, pushing at them behind, and sometimes unloading and ourselves carrying the loads up the stone-covered mounds of ice. But it was terribly hard and trying work for the animals. They could get no proper foothold, and as they kept climbing up the sides of a mound they would scratch away the thin layer of stones on the surface, and then, coming on to the pure ice immediately