

they were hewn, so that by the time those of us who were a few paces behind Wali reached a step the ice was just covered over with water and this made it still more slippery for our soft leather boots, which had now become almost slimy on the surface. It was under these circumstances that my Ladaki servant Drogpa gave in. He was shaking all over in an exaggerated shiver, and so unsteady, I thought he would slip at any moment and perhaps carry us all with him. We were but at the beginning of our trials. We had not even begun the actual descent yet, but were merely crossing to a point from which we should make it. And to have such a man with us might have endangered the safety of the whole party; so I told him he might return to the ponies and go round with them. It rather upset me to see a born hillman so affected, but I pretended not to care a bit and laughed it off, *pour encourager les autres*, as the thing had to be done.

At last we reached the far side of the slope, and found ourselves on a projecting piece of rock protruding through the ice. Here we could rest, but only with the prospect of still