

somewhat smoothing down the rocks, and we rolled the larger stones over the declivity, down which they bounded to the bottom. We thus slightly improved the track, but to make it even tolerably free from danger within the time at our disposal was hopeless. There still remained large projecting rocks which blocked the way for animals laden with bulky packages, and when we resumed our march the greatest care and caution had to be exercised. The yaks were sent on in front laden with corn, flour, and rice, each of them assisted by several men, who led, urged, or restrained according to circumstances, while others hung on to the tail to prevent the animals from turning heels over head down the declivity. The yak dans, containing instruments, bedding, clothes, cooking utensils, and medicine chest, were carried by men who returned to help the unladen ponies and donkeys down the slope. The men managed so well that there was no serious casualty. Any mishaps that occurred were due mainly to the awkwardness of the donkeys. These animals were sent down in lots, and the last donkey of the foremost lot, losing his balance, fell and slid, sweeping off their feet many of those in front. These poor animals seemed quite to lose their wits, sliding and rolling down in the most alarming manner. Any deviation from the track would have led to certain death, and it was marvellous that not one was killed. There was very considerable annoyance and danger from stones loosened by the donkeys in their fall. One large stone had just begun its descent towards the lower portion of the caravan when it was dexterously intercepted by Abdul Karim, who, taking a few long and quick strides, stepped across its course and stopped it, but in so doing had his right hand dragged along the ground and badly bruised. It has been my fate to take a caravan over so many bad tracks, that it would be difficult to arrange them definitely in order