

during periods of quiescence at Survey headquarters. He had persistently stuck to his pony all the way from Chakdara, and, of course, now found the double work of ascending and wading a serious tax on his organs of breathing. In order not to let him fall behind too far, I had again and again to check our progress and make halts.

I knew that we should have to pass close below snow-covered slopes to the north of the Darkot Glacier (see Plate I.) before continuing our ascent on the glacier itself, and as risks from avalanches were likely, I had tried to get beyond them as early as possible. But the rising sun found us still in front of these steep slopes. Evidence of recent avalanches having swept down in places was plentiful, and though this sight had its effect on the experienced Surveyor, who also now endeavoured to hurry on, it was not till 7 A.M. that we got past the danger zone. The ascent over snow-covered moraines was slow work, but quite safe, in spite of the soft snow that made us sink in deep when getting too near to some hidden boulder.

An hour later we could take to the broad expanse of the glacier; but even without the warning of our intelligent Wakhi guides there was no mistaking the closely packed crevasses which furrowed its surface. The deep snow still covering the ice formed convenient bridges and proved hard enough to bear our weight. But roping was now a necessary precaution. So I proceeded to divide the men into four small parties, each on a separate rope. None of the Mastujis or Wakhis had ever climbed roped, though they must often have crossed ice slopes before and thoroughly knew their dangers. Yet it was a pleasure to watch how quickly these born mountaineers grasped the object of our alpinistic contrivance and the assurance it gave. All the way the rope was kept tight between the men, and I soon found that they could tie it into loops which would hold, far more quickly than I could myself.

The slope over which our ascent now led looked easy enough, almost like a plain between the high snowy walls emerging from the mist on either side. Though the sun had begun to shine with considerable force through the light clouds, the snow still kept reassuringly firm. Yet with