

never tires of this landscape, it is always beautiful. The eyes take a curious pleasure in devouring these vast distances from one's high look-out on the camel's back.

At half-past one we crossed a river-bed of two hundred and eighty meters in breadth. It contained several moist patches after the previous day's rain. On the steppe to the right a number of horses were browsing, and at the foot of the nearby hill we saw three yurts.

A flock of sheep told us that we were in the land of the nomads. A fifteen meter broad bed that had been full of rushing rain-water the day before was empty again. Only yesterday's clayey mud still glittered with moisture. The highest erosion-wall of this bed was four meters in height. The whole countryside, falling away gradually from the foot of the mountains in the north, had been flushed with rain-water the previous day. Now one saw innumerable deltas with lagoons everywhere. The conical delta formations were almost imperceptibly flat. The soil had scarcely a dry patch to show. The rainfall the day before must have been terrific.

MEETING WITH NORIN'S COLUMN

At the foot of the hill we saw two more yurts, and just before three o'clock, to the north of the route, we caught sight of NORIN's camp with its four tents. We rode up and were met by SÖDERBOM. There, too, were HEYDER, MASSENBACH and BERGMAN. NORIN was out among the hills with his surveyor's table. We exchanged notes about our work. They asked about the great camel catastrophe, and had it served to them in bits and pieces. We on our side enquired about yesterday's storm. It had been terrible, they said, especially between five and six o'clock in the afternoon, when it had lightened and thundered five times a second. They had never experienced anything like it. An endless succession of crashes and lightning jags. And the rain had come down in buckets. They had not been able to dig a ditch round the tents, for the ground was simply drowned with water. The well nearby had been filled with sand and gravel. And to cap all, the rain had been succeeded by hailstones as big as walnuts and so heavy that it was a positive danger to be out. They smashed through oil-cloth and formed foot-high embankments round the tents. Everybody stayed in the tents and crept under tarpaulins or felts. Everything was of course soaked, including the beds, which lay directly on the ground, and at night it had been like sleeping in hot fomentations. Fortunately, however, to-day brought fine, drying weather.

MENTU and I left NORIN's camp at the foot of the fantastically shaped and gaudy-coloured hills of lava. To the right, in the mouth of a valley, appeared the glittering white buildings of the little temple Shiretein-ganjur-sume — also called Shire-sume. The hills to the right continued into the distance, while the great