

lot, as we saw no prey for them during several days' march, save one wild horse.

A day and a half we remained in the lazy lap of repose. Then the sky clouded, literally and figuratively. Each meal given to men and horses meant a shortening of the possible journey across the inhospitable region which Mohammed Joo described as "Adam Yok,"—"There is no man,"—and which certainly extended a hundred miles or more in every direction. Two good men were sent back to search for the truants. They took three ponies, and on the next day returned, quite played out, but in a measure triumphant. No hide or hair of man or donkey had been seen, but they found, cast down by the trail-side, a part of our grain and our sheep, its throat having been thoughtfully cut. The missing grain may have been stolen, or, more probably, lost in the torrents. The three ponies were just able to bring the salvage. On taking stock we found about a thousand pounds of grain. If each horse were given four pounds a day we were good for fifteen days. If we found occasional grass, or if we shot some horses as their loads were consumed, we could hold out yet longer. If we had no bad luck we ought to reach Rudok in about twelve days. As to the men, we were provisioned for thirty days.

Perhaps we should have gone back, made a row, gotten more grain, and made a fresh start. But the trail behind us was a fearsome thing, worse now by reason of a snow-fall since the ascent, and we could not be sure of better treatment a second time. If we were to make a try at the plateau, it seemed best