

together, chose different tracks the result was embarrassing. A few miles above Alajoi we camped for the night on a small piece of level ground on the right bank of the Kurab River, where there was grass but no fuel. In the morning the rain was still falling, and our clothes were as wet as they had been the night before; but our tents of millerained cloth absorbed scarcely any moisture, so that we did not require to wait till they dried before packing them up. The animals could not all be loaded at once, and those which were first ready, instead of waiting patiently for the others, went off to visit their companions. The ponies galloped off, kicking and fighting with each other, while the donkeys quietly lay down and tried to roll over on their backs. These proceedings were trying to our tempers, but at length a start was made up the narrow, stony valley on a track where there was barely room to march in single file, and where trouble constantly arose. The loads of the animals would shift and require readjustment, or a pony would get into some awkward predicament, from which it could be extricated only with danger and difficulty; or the mule would run back from the donkeys for a long distance, going faster and faster the more rapidly he was pursued. I found that Niaz Akun had not got all his section of the caravan over the most difficult part of the track when I came in sight of him, but I could give him no help nor even pass the laden donkeys of my own section, for these were huddled together on the declivity leading down to the gorge on the further side of which I was to spend the night. Abdul Karim and Rabzung, zealous and hard-working men, rearranged, as they had done often before, the loads of the donkeys, and drew these animals to a spot where one could pass them without falling down the mountain-side. Though our course lay up the valley, the track here led by a very precipitous descent down to the