

us a shy glance and disappears. Here no farms or huts are to be seen; we are in the primeval forest where autumn is in the midst of its work of destruction among the maples, aspens, and elms which find a home among the spruces. Here and there a streamlet falls into a wooden trough where passing beasts of burden can drink, and a foaming white brook dashes recklessly down through the forest, making for the river and the sea. At a valley junction at Bekchiler we pass over to the left side, but soon return to the right after driving along a stretch of road damaged by trickling water. Now for the first time snow patches appear, small and melting.

The spruce wood thins out and comes to an end, and the road winds in capricious bends up the dreary slopes. The heights become flatter and more rounded, and we are at the head of the valley where lateral glens converge from all directions. We ascend leisurely to the Sigana pass (6644 feet), with a khan and two cabins which can boast of a magnificent view over the labyrinth of mountains which covers the country to the south as far as the horizon, and where we discern a snow-capped ridge more elevated than that on which we stand. With a temperature of 45° F. and a south-westerly wind it feels cool after 59.4° at Hamsi-köi.

After the horses have breathed a while we roll along at a good pace through snow-slush and mire, through fine pines below the pass, and afterwards through spruce woods. Below us, at a much greater depth, are seen four zigzag laps of the road, like shelves with small black specks—the travellers. One is astonished to see such a capital well-made road in Asiatic Turkey, though it is an important artery through Erzerum to Persia, and I had not expected to find it better than the carriage road between Constantinople and Terapia, which, however, seems to be purposely left in a bad condition because the Sultan holds most of the steamboat shares.

The fifth zigzag follows the left flank of the valley a step farther down. Here we overtook the waggon just in time to see what a Turkish escort is worth. I had ordered the man not to drive too furiously downhill, so as not to