

To the south extends a wide view over a very monotonous landscape of flat rounded crests; the nearest appears red, the farthest, which is snow-covered, dark blue. Then we drive for some distance at about the same height, up and down, over hills and slopes, and afterwards come to long but not excessively steep curves. At the very top, on either side of the summit, the road is wretched, nothing but a bed of mud, where the carriages sink in to the axles. In winter, it seems, the snow lies deep on Kop-dagh, but even in open winters the road is heavy, for the ruts more than a foot deep are frozen hard. Up here no trouble is taken to keep up the road; at the Sigana pass it was in much better order, and the scene more picturesque.

From a declivity we see the square station-house, Ak-dag-khan, down in the valley below where a caravan, like a row of small black beads, is coming with ringing bells to meet us. Between the winds run steep short cuts for pedestrians and horsemen. Below Ak-dagh, where the soldier is changed for the seventh time, the road is soft and good, and sometimes it feels as though the wheels were furnished with india-rubber tires.

The great high road takes us over an open basin through a hollow way, where we cross the brook by small bridges, through the village of Pirna-kapan, and over a small ridge. The landscape is flat and monotonous, like all tablelands, and horizontal or slightly undulating lines predominate. The vertical, so common about the deeply excavated valleys of the coastal land, are absent here. Now one sees solid stone buildings and timber work constructed simply to support roofs of earth. At all the cabins and station-houses and on their roofs are piled up huge stacks of hay stored up for winter use, a favourite resort of flocks of sparrows. The village Chöll-ogli-khanlari is a halting-place, where a bridge spans the brook; here we rest five minutes to let the horses drink out of a wooden trough at the roadside.

Over a plain, perfectly flat to the eye, the road runs like a line drawn with a ruler, and the river flows to the right at the foot of low hills. We cross a large erosion furrow