

spring and they rush through the piers of the bridge with angry roar and foaming cascades.

Just when we pulled up at the bridge the sunset was bringing out striking effects. To the east a mountain ridge glimmered in shades of pink, with a white strip of snow on the crest and black spots formed by the shadows of a couple of clouds.

But the ruddy glow vanished from the mountains as the sun sank, and then they were seen only in dim pale outlines above the dreary naked land. While the surface of the earth already lay shrouded in the shadows of approaching night, the free floating clouds were illumined by the purple light of the sun, and stood out sharply against the bright blue sky.

For a while we follow the right grass-grown bank of the river, then diverge more and more from it and drive over undulating plain. Before us glitters from afar a snowy peak belonging to the Aghri-dagh, and below its summit the silhouettes of the outriders are sharply defined. At the moment when the upper limb of the sun is sinking below the horizon, the soldiers take out their cigarettes and become quite animated and talkative, and away we go down on the last bit of road, for now there is nothing to prevent the men gathering round the dishes and bowls of the evening meal immediately on their arrival.

At the entrance to the village a Persian caravan was getting ready in the dusk for its night journey, and the camels were being watered at a river. The animals stood in long close rows and looked as fine and picturesque as usual. It was half dark when we drove into the village and pulled up before the door of the inn, where a den with floor of stamped earth, bare mud walls, and a very suspicious bed with a still more doubtful mattress was placed at my disposal. This was a sign that we had left the region within reach of European ideas of comfort behind us, and now would every day plunge deeper into the real uncontaminated Asia.

On November 21 we drive on eastward, over open country sprinkled with hoar-frost and surrounded at a distance by low mountains. The way is good and hard,