

sides still remained layers and cakes of hardened clay and road mire, which gave them an old, hoary, far-travelled appearance. I thanked my host, left him to his solitude with his Bible and the threats of the natives,¹ mounted my *kalyaska*, and drove thundering through the bazaar, accompanied by two mounted gendarmes with rifles on their shoulders; now trade was in full swing, the burned shops were built up again, and everything looked so peaceful and pleasant that it was hard to believe that the narrow streets had quite recently been the scene of bloody conflicts.

We are out again on the country road, and leave on the right the spot where old Noah rests in peace, while hundreds and thousands of years pass without a trace over his deserted grave. Ilan-dagh is the name of an isolated mound with steep flanks, and to the north-east of it runs a snowclad ridge. The river Lehram-su is divided into two arms, only one of which has a bridge, and beyond it the road becomes exceedingly dusty, the loose dry yellow powder rising in dense clouds from the horses and wheels, but we drive so fast that we escape the worst. The road is bad and uneven, its holes are filled with the loosest of rubbish, and the wheels sink into these traps as into water, the carriage rolls and jerks, the horses run at a gallop, and sometimes the fool of a driver (*yemshchik*) seems to be practising all kinds of balancing feats on his box, as we swing over the holes. I am thrown to right and left, jerked up into the air to come down again with a thud—it is quite a game of ball, invalid gymnastics, that is, gymnastics which make one sick. Fortunately the carriage is sound, well poised on its springs, and can bear a deal, at any rate more than the traveller.

The road may be pleasant after heavy rain; two shallow trenches are made along the sides in case of such down-pours. Thin copses grow here and there—everything is yellow, grey, and dusty. Very soon a thick layer of dust

¹ I afterwards received a letter from Enckel, from Kutais, whither he had retired. He informed me that some time after my departure he had been the object of a murderous attack on the part of the revolutionary terrorists. He had been severely wounded in the head and breast, and had been shot through the left lung, "but now, thank God, I am well again," he added.