

the bottom of each of them, and as steeply up again to the summit of the next. The dales dip southwards to converge into a main valley. The traffic is slight, and we meet only small caravans of camels and asses.

The breeze that is blowing seems to sweep the mist together; it thickens and collects to such a degree that, when we are at one of the black posts of the English telegraph line, its next two neighbours are quite invisible.

Outside the village Gajin a caravanserai of the time of Shah Abbas is in such good condition that it can be made use of, and round about the stately building are grouped miserable mud cabins—an illustration of the difference between the good old times and the new, between prosperity and decay. These memorials give everywhere a striking impression of the great Shah's foresight, and of the interest which he took in the commerce and the development of his kingdom.

Here we were to change our reluctant warriors for new; but as the latter did not choose to turn out, and the old ones took their departure, we continued our journey without an escort, the risk here, far from the country of the Kurds, being slight. Nizam-ul-Saltaneh's fair promise of protection for the whole distance vanished in smoke, as most other affairs do in modern Persia—a deal of show, a good beginning, and no result. So it was with the baggage, which was sent off so promisingly on my araba, and then came to a stop. So it is with the roads, which in the immediate neighbourhood of towns are splendid, well-kept alleys, but farther out are left without care and attention. A degenerate race, without orderly control, without discipline and obedience; a morality which reminds one of whitened sepulchres; a language which produced one of the world's richest literatures, but is now spoken by a people which has lost mastery over itself, and is spoken in a land which seems doomed to disappear as an independent state. Everywhere is seen neglect and decay, an indifference which knows no other rule of life than *laissez-aller*. And yet, having once visited Persia, one longs to return thither, one is glad to be back among the kind, inoffensive people.