

to such jumping about and began to feel tired. All day long I had been wandering south-eastwards and was now making north-north-west. Bit by bit I laid down the route on the map, leaving no gap.

A dale took me in the wrong direction, and I had to leave it and make my way over rugged hillocks to another which wound about in every direction. How easy it is to lose one's way in such country! An intricate labyrinth of deeply excavated erosion corridors, a maze of valleys in all directions, the smaller ones converging like rays to form the larger, and these small hollow passages usually lie only ten or twenty yards apart. It is a very dangerous place, and I hasten my steps as much as I can, thinking how easy it would be to pass one another if we followed different passages, and how hopeless it would be to find any one in this misleading labyrinth.

Perhaps a herdsman fired the shot; but no, they are not armed. Perhaps some hunter of an iliat tribe; no, it was surely one of my Cossacks. The longer the time since its echo died away the fainter the first vivid impression becomes. And now the silence rests sadly and heavily in these desolate valleys. The sun touches the horizon, and in a while the dusk will spread its obliterating veil over everything that was lately in light or shade; there is little left of the day, and darkness and night are coming on, and even in moonshine it would be impossible to find my way out of this rat-trap. Here and there tamarisks grow. Before it becomes pitch dark I must find some convenient spot, some small grotto or cleft near this herbage where I can at least make a fire which will last several hours; but I am not likely to get any supper to-night, and it is cool lying out of doors. I am angry with the seven men, of whom none has managed to keep an eye on my wandering trail, but has only thought of himself and how he could reach most quickly the next spring, where rice pudding and boiling tea would be his first consideration.

But now it grew darker, and it was the more difficult to judge of distances and the depth of the dells. Overcome with weariness I struggled up one dell and furrow