

whole train to a standstill in this detestable infernal ditch, where it is pitch dark and the streaming rain makes the slough worse every minute.

The camels are frightened and shy, and hardly dare to take a step. Many of them are already coated with mud, and are wet all over, so that the water drops and pours off them. One or other of the men is always falling into the mud. I wish to keep as much as possible out of this thick mud, so I lean on Gulam Hussein while he urges on the four camels led by Ali Murat. It is like going up a slide smeared with soap; we take a step and then pause before taking the next, and not till we have a firm footing do we advance another step. Plastic clay collects on our shoes to the weight of a couple of pounds, and it is useless to try to get rid of it; it cannot be done without a knife.

A long stoppage! Every one rushes off to the front. The last rise is so steep that the camels cannot climb up it. The men dig ruts in the clay and strew comparatively dry soil over the surface. Sticks and pieces of firewood are also used to roughen the slope, and then the camels are gently and carefully led up, while their loads are supported on both sides. If one could only sit and doze during the hour and a half all this business is going on, but one does not care to sit down in the mud! Everything that comes into contact with it is spoiled, and one has to stand the whole time.

At length we come up to level ground again. I am too tired to sit and let Gulam Hussein scrape the extra sole off my boots. Then our train moves on through the darkness and the mud which squelches under the camels' feet. My steed behaves fairly well, but slips about suspiciously. The rain has abated, and there is only a fine drizzle. The pace is terribly slow. Bang! there is a camel down again and the train halts. The men hurry up to help, and the fallen hero is hoisted up. A little farther and another falls. We sit awaiting our turn, and cannot tell what is going on in the darkness.

But at last a better time comes. At another, broader furrow, filled with salt water, one of the men calls out Rudkhaneh-i-gez. Only to hear the name brings a feeling