

I laid myself down at ten o'clock, looking forward to eight hours of much-needed sleep, but I was disappointed, for at eleven o'clock an unusually violent tempest from the west swept over the country, and would have thrown down my tent if I had not got up in time and held the tent-pole till Avul Kasim came and belayed the flapping canvas. The wind lasted only half-an-hour, but before it abated the first heavy raindrops began to patter on the tent, and were soon followed by a regular tropical deluge of rain of such violence that the tent seemed ready to collapse under the weight of the water. All that lay outside was hastily crammed into boxes, which were moved into the middle of the tent; and when I was tucked up in bed I could let it rain on in peace. But I lay and heard the close pelting rain from a cloud, accompanied by heavy scattered drops from another. And then I heard it begin to drip into the tent and saw puddles form here and there inside. Fortunately we had pitched our camp on a small rise, or we should have been surprised by one or two trickling rain torrents.

The rain continued all night long, and when Avul Kasim awakened me he informed me that it still rained, and that the sky was black with clouds. By seven o'clock the weather had improved, and we were able to commence our day's ride with dry clothes. But the camels looked as if they had just come out of a bath, and their pack-saddles were soaked through with water. The load they had to carry was, therefore, considerably heavier, and the tents were double their usual weight.

The Kevir, the edge of which is seen 2 farsakh off to the north, has assumed a darker colour than yesterday, and the guide explains that the ground must be transformed into loose soft mud. The furrow from the Teshtab hill, at the foot of which we encamped, was early in the morning overflowing, but now reddish turbid water to the volume of only 12 cubic feet runs down its channel. Patches of scum lying here and there show that quite a torrent must have come down from the slopes. Along the road, and especially in the hollowed track, pools lie now everywhere for any one who is thirsty, and the