

night, I had seen my tent lighted up by the ruddy flames of the watch fire.

At three o'clock the rain became a light drizzle, but in the evening one of the hardest northerly storms I have ever experienced broke loose, and now the rain again dashed against the tents driven by the furious blast. Everything had to be secured and firmly tied to prevent its being carried away, and nothing could be left about. I could do nothing better than lie down and read by a candle protected by a glass shade and a couple of boxes. The tent canvas was thoroughly wet on the inside, and drops filtered through its holes. A trench was dug around the tent to protect me from intruding rivulets. Large quantities of water must on such a day stream down from all sides to the Kevir. And I thought again of the plight we should have been in if we had delayed our departure a day or two from Turut. We should have been completely cut off from our return route, and even a circuitous march round the eastern margin of the Kevir would have been quite problematic, for we might be sure that the Kal-mura was much swollen.

How dull and dark it was when I went out at nine o'clock to take the usual meteorological observations! It had then rained incessantly for twelve hours, and the gale whistled like an autumn storm, moaning and piping through the bushes. The gleams from the men's large camp fire lighted up the tents, the baggage, the camels and their two watchmen, who sat cowering under their sackcloth cloaks and dozed round the blaze. They slept in the open in all weathers.

After two hours' interval, early in the morning, it began to rain again at seven o'clock, and the sky was black with clouds. But after an hour the weather cleared a little, and the sky's shroud of clouds presented the most fantastic relief in bluish-purple shades, with tufts, cushions, and bolsters, pure white heaps and dark tunnels, but the sun strove in vain to break through. We might have been travelling in a country where the sun in winter remained below the horizon, and yet we were in the land of the lion and the sun.

As usual, I walked on ahead, looking for the best