

to meet the dark rain veil which hangs down from the clouds. Yellow columns, with their bases on the earth; bluish-purple draperies, with their tops in the sky,—no one would credit this picture if it were painted in oils.

The next downpour came half an hour later and lasted twenty minutes, with alternate rain and hail, and again all the furrows were filled with turbid water. When such exceedingly violent deluges are seen over this usually dry and scorched country, the cause of the flatness of the slopes and the even fall is apparent, for the water washes, fills up, and levels all parts. As soon as the rain is over the small trenches are quickly dry again, and the smooth, wet, yellowish red clay lies like freshly painted oil colour in all the beds.

Jolting over the slowly rising steppe, we sit longing for the sun to dry our drenched clothes. At length we come to the foot of the hill which forms a connecting link between Kuh-i-Neh and Kuh-i-esten, and enter a very narrow, barren, very winding dell, a corridor between steep elevations of loose clay, scored and perforated in the most fantastic fashion, and vividly reminding me of Akato-tag, in Central Asia. The red and green clay is now soaked, soft, and slippery, but it has a framework of solid rock in vertical strata, here and there forming sharp upright points and pinnacles. The rocks are partly brownish red sandstone, partly compact white limestone. The vertical strata strike NW. to SE., and when the dale we follow cuts diagonally through the rocks it is very winding, and on our way eastwards we actually turn in every direction. Sometimes the stretches are only 6 feet long. The small, narrow, hollow way is exceedingly picturesque, and before we are aware we are up on a small pass (4285 feet), where the rounded summit is as slippery as soap after the rain. It is called Gudar-i-Khabisi, because a road to Khabis runs over it.

The view is not very instructive, and vanishes as soon as we lose ourselves again on the other side, in a corridor just like the former. A brook comes down from a side valley, the largest we have seen for a long time. In a short time we come again to level ground, and the smooth