

mist, the surface of the ground northwards seems dark and confused, but some clouds hovering about the dark land are illumined and shine like huge melting hummocks of porous bluish-white ice.

We ride over hillocks and spoon-shaped prominences, forming extensions of small, far-outstretching offshoots of the hills; we ride over innumerable erosion furrows, all dry, but skirted by richer steppe vegetation, and the time creeps slowly on. The evening is coming on, the wind has fallen, but the mosquitoes are more numerous, the air is less warm than a little while ago, and we are glad that the heat of the day is over. We pass one projecting point after another, black, brown, red, purple, or in shades of green, and sometimes the yellow is a welcome relief to the dark hues. Beyond the red hill we see before us is Muhamed Riza's well, our camping-place for the night, the chief of my mounted troop informs me, and we quicken our pace while the twilight spreads its gentle wings over this desolate and denuded country, which loses nothing when the night envelops its nakedness in gloom.

Down below in the low country a white cloud comes rolling over the ground, going in the same direction as ourselves. It actually rolls on like a lava stream, and swallows up, bit by bit, the pale yellow flat land. Again the leader of the escort puts in his word, and says that we shall have wind, and I have no doubt of it, for I know this phenomenon only too well. When the storm catches us up the darkness increases, and everything becomes hazy and indistinct as in rainy weather. Mosquitoes, flies, and gadflies disappear, the air becomes cool and refreshing, and the dromedaries, as well as ourselves, enjoy the sudden change.

Night comes upon us, and we can scarcely see the dark domes of the hills. Now we go up and down among hillocks, and beyond the large bed of the Maki-cha we come to the bungalow at Cha-Muhamed-Riza, where a fire is made in the court to give light. While we are waiting for the caravan we sit round the fire smoking and talking and making out our programme for a short excursion to-morrow to the bed of the Shela. Being now only a day's journey