

difficulties. Arrian, the historian of the expedition, merely remarks that "when Alexander arrived in Kirman, Krateros joined him, bringing the rest of the army and the elephants." Apparently, Krateros went via Quetta to Kandahar, whence his route is agreed to have been down the Helmund to Seyistan. So far the line of march would present no insuperable difficulties even to-day; though Bellew, who followed the same route, relates that where the road made a *détour* to get around an impassable portion of the river valley, some of his men nearly died of thirst on the hot gravel plain. Beyond Seyistan, Krateros's route must have led across the southern end of the desert of Dasht-i-Lut to Narmashir. As St. John says: "It would certainly puzzle a Krateros nowadays to march his elephants and heavy baggage from the Helmund to Narmashir; but there is every reason to suppose that part of Persia to have been far better populated and better watered than it is at present." The greater part of the distance of one hundred and eighty miles from the borders of Seyistan to Narmashir is the most absolute desert, either waterless, or supplied only with the most brackish wells.

Nasratabad, the one village, could scarcely furnish supplies for a hundred men, and everything for an army would have to be brought from Seyistan. Yet the route was once so important that strong fortifications, caravanserais, and other ancient ruins occur at frequent intervals, as do also kariz. Speaking of the eastern ninety miles of the route from Narmashir to Seyistan, Smith says that at both of the two possible stopping-places "water was obtainable by digging wells 5 feet deep, but it was brackish and bad; and at the latter place there is a stream so salt and bitter that