

appetites. There stands a white *pillau*, a rice pudding *à la chinoise*; while the next dish is loaded with chicken mince surrounded by a wall of rice; a third contains a pile of *kebab* or balls of finely chopped mutton, and a fourth small cubes of *shislik*, which have scarcely ceased to sputter over the embers. A separate dish is placed before me; the other gentlemen eat together with their fingers. But I am a *kafir* in their eyes, and Mohammedans do not eat from the same dish as a heathen. They do not say so, but put it that they are not worthy to touch with their fingers the same *pillau* as so distinguished a guest.

All the dishes are brought in at the same time, and one can take what one likes best. We sit on our heels with our knees on the carpets, leaning forward and resting the left elbow on the knee, while the disengaged right hand is thrust into the pile. Sitting continuously without growing tired, and without the legs becoming numbed, the guests occasionally sit upright for a time, when a servant brings out a silver-mounted *kalian* or water-pipe, and a glowing ember is laid in the iron bowl on the damp tobacco. And then they eat again and take another puff, and enjoy the good things of life with a deliberate refinement of luxury. Here are bowls of sour milk and small plates of *penir* or cheese; there is *sherab* which is conveyed to the mouth in lancet-shaped wooden spoons, and here stand whole heaps of soft thin bread (*nan*); in a word, the dinner is only too bountiful, and when the host and his brothers in the faith return to their cards, I take my leave to rest for the next day. Sujai-i-Nizam I never saw again, for he kept up his revels till day, and as long as I lay awake I heard through the walls, thin as paper, the bubbling sound of *kalian*s, the chink of silver stivers, and the accompaniment of the cithern and drum to the melancholy notes of the singer.

All was silent and peaceful in the house of feasting when I drove on next morning south-eastwards, between the villages Mollah Isuf and Kulli, surrounded by willows and fruit trees, still higher towards the crest of the small range that rises between Marand and Tabriz. We follow a broad valley among low hills now of solid rock, now of