

they swarm in old houses, where their bites make their victims ill for forty days or two months. The climate here is colder than in Mianeh and Senjan, and most snow falls in January, often lying very deep, and interfering with the traffic. In spring heavy rains occur.

Jemal-abad has also a caravanserai of Shah Abbas' time, and of the usual picturesque, practical, and dignified architecture. Our road, now running through a broad, hillocky, longitudinal valley between low ranges of mountains, is certainly quite dry, but, nevertheless, not so suitable for wheeled traffic, for it consists of a number of more or less parallel tracks at different levels, and unequally worn. We jolt, sway, and shake, and the drive often calls to mind the pitching of a yawl in a rough sea.

Afterwards the ground becomes flatter. We can, indeed, still perceive spoon-shaped mounds pointing southwards, but they become lower the farther we travel eastwards. The steppe, with its yellowish-grey shrubs, thistles, and patches of grass, shows the greyish-yellow and ruddy tints of the desert. The travellers who pass along the road in no small numbers employ asses almost exclusively, both as riding and baggage animals. We now ascend very slowly the right bank of the Senjan river, which falls into the Kizil-uzen not far from the Kaplan-kuh.

Among a few poplars and willows easy to count is Serjem, a small miserable village, where several caravanserais are situated in the only street, which forms part of the great highway. The only purpose of the village seems to be to give shelter to people journeying between Teheran and Tabriz, or perhaps on to Trebizond. Motley groups of Kerbela pilgrims are seen in the quadrangular serai courtyards; merchants and their servants, private travellers and soldiers on their way to Tabriz. But otherwise the village lies quiet and silent, and a large part of it consists of houses thoroughly ruined by rain and defective walls; in its *chapar-khaneh*, where I ought to pay a fee, there is not a living soul, and therefore we go on past one of Shah Abbas' caravanserais, mounted on a terraced elevation.

The route then runs along the flood channel of the