

be a skilful cook he undertook before long the kitchen department and the attendance also. The word *mirza* betokens one who can read and write when it stands before a name, but prince when it stands after. My Mirza, as he was called for short, was a quiet and taciturn man, who performed his duties honestly and thoroughly. He had never before undertaken a long journey, and he enjoyed immensely the free life in the desert lands.

Avul Kasim was also from Teheran, forty years old and married; he had been in Bagdad and Kerbela, in Nejef and Basra, Bushir, Shiraz, and Ispahan, in Resht and Tabriz, and had therefore travelled far in his own country. He was a tall, black-bearded man, and looked a regular bandit chief; but he had good testimonials from several Englishmen, and from the very first showed himself experienced, vigilant, and industrious. He certainly did not spare my pocket, and was very ingenious when there was a question of finding out provisions for himself and his comrades to consume in the desert, but I let that pass, thinking that it was best that they should provide for themselves.

Three men were appointed to look after the camels. Foremost among them was Meshedi Abbas, also called Kerbelai Abbas, because he had visited the tombs of Imam Riza and Hussein, which pilgrimage confers a title corresponding to the *haji* of Mecca pilgrims. He was a Tatar from Tabriz, and could not speak a word of Persian. He had travelled far and wide as a professional caravan leader, and had been twice at Trebizond, among other places. He loved camels and took the most tender care of them, and was a practical, useful, and reliable man.

Then there was Gulam Hussein, twenty-seven years old, from Western Khur, who had a wife and children in that town, and had made numerous journeys in Khorasan, to Tebbes and Yezd, to Askabad and Asterabad. He, too, was an excellent servant—always happy and agreeable, and pleased with his arduous work. Habibullah, from Mehabad near Ispahan, was thirty-five years old, and had travelled much—marched, to be exact,—for caravan men