

almost always go on foot. He behaved well, but often quarrelled with the others.

Lastly, there were the two Cossacks, Abbas Kuli Bek, *vekil-bashi*, or corporal, with authority over 60 Cossacks; born in Teheran, thirty-five years old, married; he had accompanied Nasr-ed-din Shah to Tabriz and Meshed. Under his command was Hussein Ali Bek, twenty-six years old, melancholy since his wife had been carried off by cholera; he had been only to Resht. Both Cossacks were unsurpassable in loyalty and trustworthiness, and took their share of all the harder work, packing, pitching camp, setting up tents, etc., which was properly the duty of the other men. With these they lived on the best of terms and shared with them the large tent. Only the three camel men slept, according to their custom, in the open air beside their charges, so as always to be close at hand and ready to watch over them. All my servants received a month's pay in advance, so that they might not leave their families in destitution.

We were, then, eight men in all, and eight mouths were to be fed from the camels' loads on the way to Tebbes, where we could replenish our stores. The water question was a more difficult problem. I had not decided on any particular line on the map, but it might happen that we should find ourselves in salt or sandy deserts, where sweet water was scarce, and in such cases we must be prepared to carry water with us. My first notion was to have an iron cistern made of the same kind I had used in the Takla-makan; but I afterwards decided to make use of four pairs of sheepskin bags and four pairs of large *meshk* or water sacks of calfskin, such as are used to carry water from the springs or sprinkle the streets and roads in summer.

While Mr. and Mrs. Hybennet were so kind as to make all the necessary purchases of preserved meat, jam, tea, and coffee, etc., the other supplies were procured by one of the legation's gulams, Rahim, whom Mr. Grant Duff placed at my disposal, and who, in consultation with Avul Kasim, was indefatigable in finding out all that was indispensably necessary. In one of the courts of the