

On the night of January 3 the moon shone cold and pale between dark clouds, and the men sat round their camp fire very cheerful and contented, smoking and preparing their food. They were as pleased as I to be on a journey—the taste for the active changeable life of caravan travel is innate in all Persians. Now an inventory was made of all the goods we were to buy the following day, for Veramin was the last place where we could complete our stores, and it was evident that at first the loads must be so heavy that all except myself must go on foot.

On January 4 there was movement and activity about our tents, a continual coming and going; here were seen Persians staggering under heavy sacks which were piled up before my servants' tent, there men were heard bargaining and shouting out orders, and before the sun set we had to pay down 40 tuman for all our purchases, especially for *pambedanek* or cottonseed, and *art-i-gendum* or wheaten flour.

Then I called all the men to my tent and in their presence made Mirza read the firmans I had received from Sadr-Azam and Mushir-ed-Dovleh, three of which were addressed to the governors of Tebbes, Kum and Seistan; another was an open letter to the authorities in Khorasan, and the fifth could be used anywhere in Persia. The letters to the governors in Kum and Khorasan were only precautionary documents, to be used in case we should suffer shipwreck in the desert, and be obliged to make for the main roads and inhabited places. Mirza read them in a loud voice, and the others listened attentively. The letters were simply proclamations that I must be received everywhere with all the hospitality that circumstances allowed; that all my wishes should be complied with to the smallest detail; that provisions, baggage animals, and guides should be supplied to the extent of my needs, and that, in a word, I should receive satisfaction in every respect. These highly important letters made a deep impression on the men, and they were now convinced that I was no ordinary person, and that it was their interest to serve me faithfully and conscientiously.

They did not understand clearly what the task before