

small hills like islands had vanished long ago, and even the adjacent huts were only faintly visible in the yellowish-grey mist. Clouds of dust, swept along the ground, found their way through the tent-cloth, and collected in a constantly thickening layer on everything that lay about. In a minute my spectacles became like ground glass, and I had to wipe them constantly. When dinner, a roast chicken wrapped in a piece of soft thin bread, was brought in, I had to make an end of it hastily before the course was too thoroughly peppered with dust. Just when I had finished, a civil villager came with his two boys, and surprised me with the gift of a water-melon, fresh and juicy, and the most welcome dessert that can be imagined when one's throat is dry from breathing this dusty air.

The two boys very calmly seated themselves by my *mangal*, and warmed their hands over the fire, and looked about, till Mirza, thinking that they made themselves too much at home, drove them away. The sparks flew like fireworks from the brazier when it was filled and carried into the tent; the wind howled and whistled among the old ruined walls of the caravanserai; my tent fluttered and flapped, now bulged out like a ball, now driven in by a violent gust, now crushed together by the gale, and on the windward side the folds strained against the pegs, and everything had to be secured by weights.

It grows dim and dark, and this night is blacker than usual. The conversation in the men's tent has long ceased, and in such weather they can do nothing better than go to sleep. But I sit up a little longer, and listen to the old well-known moaning and rushing sound outside, which recalls to mind so many memories of dreary solitary years in vast Asia. I felt that I was in the midst of a fresh enterprise, and that nothing in the world could induce me to turn back. The end might only be attained after long privation and endurance, as the howl of the first storm warned me. I felt in the melancholy winter night like the wandering Ahasuerus, whose fate it was to roam around the world ceaselessly and restlessly, who at home longed for the wilderness, and when there cast regretful glances towards the direction of home. A