

erosion channels, and their rugged summits without a trace of snow. Far to the south, however, a snowy crest lying beyond Kum was faintly seen.

A sound is borne through the clear, cool, calm air of morning. The bells of a caravan of asses are heard long after their bearers have vanished from sight on their way to Teheran. Their dying tones are pleasant to the ear—they might be a hymn of praise to the rising sun. Yes, the sun ascends dazzlingly clear and bright above the horizon, and perhaps our weather-prophet was right when he said that we should have calm weather if the gale ceased early. So much the better! When one can see at least the country around, riding a camel is very pleasant and comfortable. And it is a pleasure to watch the preparations for departure, and to start oneself on this fine morning. All colours are so pure and clear, all outlines so extremely sharp, the camels look more majestic than ever, their lustrous eyes glow like globes illuminated from within by electric light—it is the image of the sun reflected in their brown orbs. A light steam from its breath hangs round the nose of each camel, and white and glittering rime clings to its whiskers. I smoke a cigarette and let my eyes sweep round the boundless horizon, and rove over the small isolated hills which stand on the way to the desert like the outermost reefs and holms in a fringing belt of rocks.

We steer our course east-south-east, and therefore have Siah-kuh on our right hand, a bluish-grey outline, a screen without relief and shading. The little ridge, however, is fainter at the foot, toning off downwards in consequence of the exceedingly fine particles and the light haze which always hovers over the earth's surface, while the crest stands out more sharply and distinctly. Nearer, to the left, we have the outermost slopes of the small ranges which lie south of the road between Teheran and Semnan. But Demavend dominates all the landscape, and rears itself like a huge beacon and rampart above the desert. The crest of Elburz, which runs below the summit or shows itself behind the cone, is quite free from snow; but the mighty volcano itself is on its southern side scored,