

as it were, by dark lines in the snow. On such a day the view from the top must be magnificent and overpowering, and though $15\frac{1}{2}$ years have passed since the day I was up there, I am still vexed that July 11, 1890, was cloudy.

We have not travelled far from Kala-no before the small square patches of cultivation, with their usual irrigation ridges, come to an end and the land becomes at once barren. In some places the ground is quite bare, and is covered with a thin saline efflorescence, in others a few meagre shrubs still struggle for existence. At a little distance, on the left, is seen a flock of sheep with its three shepherds in black woollen cloaks, and farther off a man is driving two asses before him; otherwise not a living thing, not a single crow, a bird common enough in Kala-no.

Our trusty camels march regularly and steadily directly towards the sun, which dispenses its warmth and light more liberally as the hours pass by; and as the air is motionless we feel the glowing heat as in the middle of a summer day, and wish for a gentle, cooling breeze from the north. Here, already, quite a different climate prevails from that of Teheran, where the weather was always raw and clammy.

Even yesterday we were in another country, and I am astonished that the floating dust has so quickly sunk to earth,—in Eastern Turkestan it is several days before the air becomes properly clear after a hard storm.

To the south-east and east-south-east appear small knobbly inequalities on the horizon, but we cannot yet decide whether they are grazing animals, clumps of vegetation, old walls, or trees in a village; they make the line of the horizon rather jagged, but they are still a long way off, and the riddle will be solved in due time.

Now our first *katar* or section of the caravan is led by Habibullah, the other by Gulam Hussein, and Abbas walks alongside now at the rear, now in the front, to see that all the loads are in position. The last camel in each *katar* carries one of our two largest iron bells, regular church bells, which clangs with a deafening noise to the step of the animal. Avul Kasim rides the sixth camel in the first detachment; I, Mirza, and Hussein Ali Bek the first three