

He cannot have rightly understood the difference between a kran and a tuman, but at any rate the bargain was decided to our mutual satisfaction, and he promised also to procure two kharvar of hay, which amounts to four camel loads, and would satisfy our needs for eight days. I would gladly have doubled both the supply and the number of hired camels, but we had to content ourselves with what we could obtain on the spot.

I tried in vain to get a dog to guard the baggage, but had to give it up, as there were only two dogs in Kerim Khan.

Pleased with our day's work, and with the prospects for the first desert marches, we retired to our tents as the sun, glowing red, sank in the west and shed a fading purple over the wretched mud cupolas of Kerim Khan, which had a few moments ago cast long straight shadows towards the desert. The night was beautifully clear and calm, the moon shone brilliantly, and its light penetrated through my thin tent. By nine o'clock the temperature was down to  $19^{\circ}$ , and if this weather continued we should have a good journey. Avul Kasim, who was sleepy in the daytime, wakened up at night and told stories which gave his comrades' laughing muscles no rest.

I suspected that we should not get under way on Sunday, January 7, and therefore was not at all surprised when Avul Kasim and the ketkhoda awakened me at half-past six, and proposed to spend the day in making preparations for the four days' journey through the desert. Very tired as I was, I approved of the proposal, and had no objection to sleep two hours more after I had read off the meteorological instruments. The minimum had been down to  $9.1^{\circ}$ , and at seven o'clock the thermometer stood not more than  $2^{\circ}$  higher. It therefore felt cold, the air was clear and still, all outlines were sharp, and only towards the desert the surface of the ground faded away in the far distance. Demavend was gilded by the rising sun, and gleamed like a freely floating balloon of purple. The camels lay tethered with two ropes and poked their noses contentedly into their chaff—they must surely have been satisfied after eating all night long.