

## CHAPTER XIX

### A SNOWSTORM IN THE DESERT

WE had been sleeping two hours when the two dogs of the village began to bark furiously in the middle of the night, and soon after the ketkhoda returned from his mission and aroused my men. He wished to deliver at once the supply of *kah* or chaff he had succeeded in collecting in the neighbouring villages and had brought with him in network bags or sacks. We now had four kharvar of straw at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  tuman, and they made eight camel loads. And as the water-supply required two camels the old man promised to place ten of his best camels at our disposal for 18 tuman. He received at once 25 tuman in silver, for he had no faith in Persian notes, and was to be paid the other 13 tuman due to him on our arrival at Talhe. He had also obtained a large light yellow dog, which we called Nevengk, and he made a terrible row all night long, trying to tear himself loose from the boxes to which he was fastened.

On the morning of January 8 the sky was covered with dense clouds, and it felt cold and chilly after  $13.8^{\circ}$  in the night. I kept myself comfortable near the dying embers of the camp fire while the caravan was being loaded up, and this work took a longer time than usual, owing to the sacks of water and straw. The four small sheepskins had not lost a drop of their water in the night—the ground beneath them was quite dry; but only half was left in the two large *meshk*, and they lay in a bed of mud. They were, therefore, filled again from the canal, and hoisted with the closely tied opening uppermost on to