

men make themselves comfortable in their large tent, and go now and then to see their neighbours and talk a while by their fires.

After a short interval it begins to snow hard again at nine o'clock; but still the moon is seen clearly and plainly, though not bright, and it throws slight shadows on the snow, and stars of the first magnitude shine from the zenith. The *ketkhoda* says that snow sometimes accumulates to a depth of 24 to 28 inches, and that sometimes the sheep are decimated by it. Under such circumstances all traffic is stopped. To-day's snowfall is the first in the year, and has come at the usual time; for forty days more falls may be expected, but it seldom happens that it snows more than a couple of days at a time, and exceedingly seldom for a week or ten days. Snow no heavier than this cannot form mud on the clayey roads; but if a warm wind passes over the new-fallen snow and frost sets in after, a crust is made which prevents caravans from moving. Snow comes only with a south-easterly wind; if it blows from the opposite direction the sky is clear, though one would rather expect the reverse, since the south-east wind passes over dry desert regions, whereas the north-west wind comes from the damp Armenia and the Black Sea. Our informant believes that to-day's snowfall will not have extended farther south than Ardekan (near Yezd), and says that Tebbes is considered to lie in the *germsir*, or the warm country, where it scarcely ever snows. He advises us to remain where we are if it snows heavily at night and in the morning, and he frightens my men by telling them that if we are overtaken by a deep snowfall in the *biaban* we shall be done for, for in deep snow the camels cannot travel without being tired out. We shall see. Such a snowfall as to-day's I never expected in this part of the country, and it is an exciting incident which only adds to the feeling of adventure in the desert journey before us. We shall have no scarcity of water if this weather continues. If it has snowed over the salt deserts the whole land will be converted into a slough where the caravan will run a risk of being drowned.

On the day's route there are no points worth recording;