

proposed; but I avoid night marches unless they are absolutely indispensable. The time may come when we shall have to travel during the hours of darkness.

The people in Kerim Khan and the villages around come again and again to the neighbourhood of Camp 5, the nearest place where saxaul grows in large quantities. They reject twigs and green branches, and take only large stems useful as wood, tie them up like bundles of asparagus, and lay two such faggots upright on each camel; it was such a caravan we saw yesterday. They keep little for their own use, carrying most of it to Teheran, where the usual price is 5 tuman for a kharvar, or $2\frac{1}{2}$ tuman for a camel's load. The price may occasionally rise to 3 tuman or fall to 2, according to the season and the demand. Wood, then, is very dear, but the profit is small; for the men cannot depend on finding grazing in the capital or its environs, and have to buy straw, hay, and cottonseed for the camels, and there is little or no chance of hiring their animals for transport on the journey back to Kerim Khan. When our friend the ketkhoda, after his engagement with us was ended, returned to his village, he intended to load all his ten camels with wood, and, after resting a few days in Kerim Khan, go on to Teheran. The journey would be profitable to him, because he would have transport work both ways.

Towards morning, when the mist again lowered over the steppe, two wild asses strayed into the vicinity of our camp; but as soon as they got wind of us, they set off at a rapid pace south-eastwards, as their spoor showed. Their spoor was larger than that of tame asses. As I had formerly, in the Lop desert, desired to see wild camels, so I now hoped daily to get a sight of the Persian wild asses, and to obtain a specimen for the skeleton and skin. The ketkhoda said that they were to be found all over the desert, except in the Kevir, and as the whole of Eastern Persia is a desert broken only here and there by a strip of steppe, we had plenty of time to get a sight of this singular animal, which skims lightly and gracefully as a spirit over the sterile ground.