

our new friend informed me that he and four other men were in the service of Haji Agha, son of Haji Hussein of a nomad tribe, but now dwelling in Mehabad near Ispahan, and that they watched his 200 camels in this district and other hills at the outskirts of the desert. They sojourned in these northern regions only in winter, and in spring set out south-westwards, reaching their summer pastures in Luristan on the border of Mesopotamia in sixteen days. The camels are not kept for work, but only for breeding and grazing, and are sold at maturity to caravan leaders. This same Haji Agha owns also 1200 sheep, which are tended in three flocks in the neighbourhood of the Cheshme-bolasun spring. Each herdsman in Haji Agha's service is paid a wage of 18 tuman a year, besides a felt cloak and a pair of shoes of the simplest kind, and in addition receives 12 batman of flour, 2 *chareks* of butter, and a *charek* of *roghan* per month. The herdsmen have no cots or huts, but live winter and summer in the open air beside their fires. They are accustomed to the presence of wild asses, and take no notice of them. The shy and swift-footed animals are said to occur in large numbers about Kuh-i-nakshir, but have their *mahdan* or chief rendezvous near Cheshmedosan, a spring which, it seems, is situated to the north of Cheshme-Kerim.

As to my own men I had no reason to be dissatisfied with them, for they did their work irreproachably; but I already noticed that they were less adapted for dangerous enterprises, and could not compare in ability with the Turks of Eastern Turkestan, much less with Ladakis and Tibetans. Persians are pleasant, kind-hearted, and quiet, but incredibly lazy, and the work performed by my seven men could easily have been managed by two Buriat Cossacks. They ate, drank, and slept, and had a strong objection to subject themselves to the least hardship. Abbas Kuli Bek, Meshedi Abbas, and Gulam Hussein were the best of them, and we could have managed very well without the four others. Mirza has entirely taken in hand my cooking and attendance, and Avul Kasim keeps the keys of the provision chests, serves out water, and cooks for the