

more impenetrable than ever, and when Mirza, as usual, brought in the brazier and made preparations for my morning toilet, he asked whether it was reasonable to start on such a day, when we could not see where we were going, and might wander into country where there was no water. But half an hour later the scene was totally changed. When I went out to make the usual meteorological observations, the fog had disappeared, and had risen up into white clouds which covered only half the vault of heaven, while the other half was clear and blue. The sun was still veiled in clouds, but we knew at any rate whereabouts it was, and were pleased at that. The cause of this unexpected and welcome change was evidently the tolerably fresh north-west wind which had just arisen, and according to its wont had swept the fog completely away. Half an hour later the clouds also had been dispersed, and summer brightness had succeeded the gloomy light we had recently experienced, and seemed to announce the welcome approach of spring.

A thin coating of snow remained after the fall during the night, but it disappeared early in the forenoon. Our hesitation caused a delay; not till the fog thinned were the camels led to the spring to drink their fill—a precaution the more necessary now that we had lost our trustworthy guide. Fortunately Habibullah had once been at Kuh-i-nakshir, and felt certain that he could lead us thither. While the men were loading the camels I started on foot after Habibullah had shown me a small dark knoll which I must pass on the right; after that we had only to follow a track which was marked here and there by a *nishan*, or small heap.

I took long strides, soon leaving the spring and the noise of the camp behind me, and saw from a small rise that the country to the east was as uneven as here. I got warm with walking so fast in such summer weather, and the north-westerly breeze at my back felt fresh and cool. The clear pleasant weather was exhilarating, and I enjoyed being alone in the great desert land, where the silence was broken only by the sound of my own steps. Some snow still lay in sheltered shady nooks and under sharp