

search in different directions. Abbas Kuli Bek perceived that I must have gone astray, and that he must find me at any cost before darkness set in, and with Habibullah he had wandered up and down and out and in among the countless dells without finding any trace of me. They had not heard my shout, and became still more uneasy when I did not even reply to the gun-shots.

We had still a hard time before us, crossing a country worse than the wildest fancy could imagine. We had to go straight across innumerable deep troughs which gather together to a larger valley; I was more and more overcome with weariness, and stopped more frequently to eat the damp snow which lay thicker up here. Some thick dry tamarisk bushes grew in a small sheltered hollow. Habibullah has a kind of mania for fuel, and cannot pass a stick without picking it up. Now he could not resist these bundles of grand fuel, and asked if he might break them off and gather them together. Yes, most certainly. Meanwhile, I lay flat on my back, lighted a cigarette, and waited. All too soon he had his faggot ready, and we moved on again. But now our leader was weighted and no longer tramped on so quickly.

A quadrangular wall of stone stands on a flat elevation, the ruins of a *serger* or temporary cabin erected by some party of iliats who once sojourned at Kuh-i-nakshir.

“How much farther is it?”

“Oh, only half a farsakh; the camp lies up there at the foot of the hill.”

Up and down we went unceasingly, and not a flat stretch of ten yards long made it easier for us to reach the hill. In the darkness two camel riders were seen afar off; as soon as they caught sight of us they turned in our direction. It was another rescue party which had just started out, and now they were delighted to find that there was no need to search through the dark passages and corridors.

The spring is yonder under the mountain, behind the white slope, says Habibullah as he walks bent beneath the weight of his bundle of branches. The distance is still considerable, but at length we stand at the edge of a