

resolved to fill our sacks from the spring, a supply which would last nine days, and made full loads for three camels. It is reckoned 30 farsakh to Jandak and eight days' journey, and no danger could arise to the camels, as it was not very far from the route to hilly country with springs. We therefore need not resort to the springs of Cheshme-Kerim and Cheshme-dosun lying quite near to the north-east, and were independent of herdsmen, whose information is often unreliable. Habibullah was quite right when he said that the herdsmen who frequent the above springs always spend the winter in the neighbourhood, and therefore can know nothing of other districts at a great distance from them.

At any rate, he had to go to Cheshme-Kerim to try to buy two sheep, but his mission was quite unsuccessful, for there was nothing living to be found at the spring, not even shepherds; to judge by certain signs they could not be far off—he thought they were feeding their flocks on the plains at the foot of the mountain. On his way back Habibullah experienced a somewhat unpleasant adventure. At the entrance to a valley he almost fell into the jaws of a panther, pulled up at thirty paces from the animal, and rushed almost dead from fright up a pointed hill. The panther looked at him for a time and then crept up a cleft. Then Habibullah dashed down the opposite side of the hill, ran off at full speed, and arrived at the camp much shaken and breathless. I thought of my long wanderings the day before, and wondered if the panther spied at me. It might have been very awkward to lie out of doors in a country where such wild animals are the nearest neighbours. Panthers here live upon antelopes, gazelles, and other game, but do not turn up their noses at a sheep if it comes in their way.

The weather during the day was good; in the afternoon the northerly wind covered three-quarters of the sky with clouds. Hussein Ali, for the first time, gave a specimen of his skill as a hair-cutter, but this was a risk I ought never to have ventured on. He handled the scissors recklessly, and nearly clipped off the tip of my right ear, which was fastened up with sticking-plaster and bandaged.