

## CHAPTER XXIII

### ALONG THE WESTERN MARGIN OF THE KEVIR

ON January 17 I was awakened while it was yet dark; Mirza placed a candle on a box and brought in a mangal of fire and a basin of warm water, which was very necessary to rouse me up from the peaceful world of dreams and prepare me for the morning cold of the desert which lay awaiting me outside my tent. We had marched 18 miles the day before, and had as long a distance before us this day. The morning was fine; the clouds showed a varied play of colours and a charming relief, not compact, grey, and wearisome as hitherto. Cautiously and timidly two herdsmen came to our camp and gave us some information. They knew the Mulkabad heights to the N.  $2^{\circ}$  W., and it is always advisable to check the names we have already heard. They called the hill to the N.  $49^{\circ}$  W., Bend-i-arabieh, the name Gulam Hussein also knew it by. A small isolated elevation on this side of Mulkabad they called Kutak, and pointed out N.  $81^{\circ}$  W. the knoll where the spring Sefid-ab, or "white water," is situated; they pronounced the name Sefid-o. To the south they mentioned Cha-i-shems, S.  $40^{\circ}$  E. Cha-bolasun, and farther off Puse-i-dom; south-west lies Cha-shur, the "salt well," not far from the camp, and farther off in the same direction, Cha-gur, the "well of wild asses." It is 13 farsakh south-east to Cha-busurgi, or the "great well." These herdsmen were tending a hundred baggage-camels belonging to a rich man, one Jaffar Agha of Mehabad. In the spring they would recommence their work in caravans after resting through the winter.