

through a gap between the low ridges south-south-west we have a free view off to the westernmost of the three small masses of snow we have before seen on hills near and beyond Nain. A thin sheet of cloud, light as gauze, sweeps over the sky and mitigates the heat of the sun, which, however, is by no means oppressive up here among the hills.

I nod and sway backwards and forwards on my trusty bearer, and my thoughts wander off to dreamland; only half conscious of the monotonous caravan life, I watch the naked hills unroll beside me and see the map sheet before me gradually fill up with routes and the adjacent topography; but otherwise my fancy mounts up into the sky with the sound of the bells and plays with all the plans, fortunes, and adventures which I look for in the far-distant East and in another land. Conversation has again ceased as usual during the morning's monotonous march, and the Shiites sit half asleep on their camels; occasionally a pipe is lighted and blue smoke-rings curl round the lambskin caps of the dozing riders. But when breakfast time comes they wake up. Usually there is a halt of ten or fifteen minutes, but to-day we do not spare the time, for we are looking forwards with some expectancy to the town of Ashin, where we hope to be able to replenish our stores for both the two-legged and four-legged members of our caravan, and where it will be delightful to camp for once near human beings. Meshedi Abbas now sets up a package and distributes bread and water to his comrades. The lazy fellows on the camels' backs do not take the trouble to dismount, but eat their simple meal on the march, which certainly facilitates swallowing if not digestion. They seem to hold the water-jug a suspiciously long time to their mouths, and do not take it away before the bottom is turned up to the sun, but that is of no consequence—in Ashin we shall get water enough.

The whitened skeleton of a camel lies on the way, reminding us of the transitoriness of all things. Not a sign of life, not a bird, only a hare started up from the steppe at the commencement of our day's march. But everywhere are seen tracks of camels and sheep, which have been