

pass, where Chong-yangal is a name derived from brush-wood. And yet the saxaul bushes are little higher than our tents and camels.

The first thing to be done, especially when, as now, we have to take advantage of the last light of the departing day, is to record one or two landscape pictures on photographic plates, draw a panorama of the neighbourhood, and insert in it all the names the guide knows, adding the compass bearings. Now, for example, we have Abbasabad at a distance of 8 farsakh to the east-south-east, and beyond stands the outline of Kuh-i-Abbasabad. To the east is Kuh-i-ab-i-germ, with the road from Anarek to Tebbes, that singular oasis which has been visited by few Europeans, and lies beyond all rhyme and reason in the heart of the desert, and which we already endow with all the heavenly beauty that can be imagined on earth. To the south-east Kuh-i-cheft rises up with its wells, and to the south-west Kuh-i-mahella. To the north-west expands an immense tract of sandy desert with its wells, Cha-berghu, Bash-koshi, Cha-shur, and Chuchegun. Kuh-nigu and Bo-nigu are seen north-north-east, and to the east-north-east Kuh-i-chupunun, the outline of which will serve in the morning as a landmark to guide our course.

Our camp, No. 16 (2661 feet), is really very comfortable, and there is as much fuel as we want. In a very short time a great heap is collected, and my men need not go far to find dry stems with roots not going far down to reach water. The wood pile would last a week or more, and now for once we enjoy the cheerful, bright light of a blazing pyre. Avul Kasim, Mirza, and the Cossacks keep their tent open and let a fire burn before it; the interior is therefore lighted up as never before, and the group around the common supper is truly picturesque. They laugh and talk and find life worth living, they light their water-pipes and roll cigarettes in newspaper, and drink tea again and eat bread and roghan with never-failing appetite. The firelight falls on the light clumps of saxaul, and throws on them ruddy reflexions; the camels catch gleams of light and look like slowly moving apparitions, formless and strange against the dark background. The hill, which lately presented its