

tones, and yet it was the end of our day's march—*Inshallah!* In the nearly horizontal rays of early morn the forms of the sand-dunes could be perceived in all the elegance of their relief, their finely modelled convexity and boldly sweeping crests, their spurs and declivities. Sharp shadows filled up the intervals between the dunes, and over the sandy surface of the desert with its regularly arranged structure forming a monument and a memorial of winds that had sunk to rest, Kuh-i-nigu rose as a background in the north.

Though we were surrounded by nothing but desert and driftsand and the scanty remains of former mountain ranges, which still struggled obstinately against the disintegrating forces of the atmosphere, the scene was pleasant and inspiriting, and the bright calm winter weather was just what I had expected in the interior of Persia. We set out at the usual time, and in the usual order of march, and had now in our company two camel herdsmen, who carried with them their belongings packed on one of their animals. From the promontory of the Nigu hill to the north-north-east it was, it seemed, only 4 farsakh to Jandak, but looking at the huge mountains of sand that were piled up in that direction, we were glad to avoid wearing out the camels and follow the hard convenient path that ran to Chupunun, though it was some farsakh longer. Of our thirteen camels two were quite worn out; even with very light loads they dragged their legs behind them and let those before them, to whose pack-saddles their halters were tied, tow them along. The other eleven, on the other hand, were in excellent condition, and looked as though they could endure many hardships.

In the strong, almost blinding light of morning our ships of the desert stride along on their way eastwards, sure and stately as ever. The leader, one of the largest and strongest stallions, has a countenance which expresses the deepest contempt for mankind. No one need lead him by the rope; Habibullah has thrown it over his neck and walks behind him. Accordingly, he has no one in front of him, but he follows the path as closely as a tramcar the rails, without looking about him, and without troubling