

himself in the least about what is going on behind him. Occasionally he turns his head slowly and solemnly as on a vertical pivot to the side, and gazes with a look of supreme indifference in his large brown eyes at the dreary land which stretches around him in every direction, and which in all its boundlessness seems a trifle for his calm, confident stride. He has not an atom of pride in marching at the head of the train, but takes it as the most natural thing in the world to go first and lead the caravan quietly and silently towards Chupunun. He hears by the regular beat of the bells that the others are following, but when there is a stoppage, owing to a load beginning to slip off, and the bells cease to ring, then the leader also halts, turns his head slowly, leaves the path, and goes to feed on the nearest shrubs. And when the cause of delay is rectified, Habibullah has only to guide the leader a few steps with the rope till the bells ring again their usual march, and then he takes care of himself, and the smooth sound of the pads gliding over sand and pebbles is again heard softly amid the clang of bells.

At the camp lay a mud-flat with its yellow crust turned up in many-sided flakes, formed by rain-water from Kuh-icheft. A little farther on our way we come across another much larger, smooth as a frozen lake, and affording as good footing as any asphalted street. Then follow a whole succession of such flats, which show that we are actually in a depression which, but for them, would escape our notice. But certainly the ground rises from here southwards to the foot of the Cheft hill and northwards to the foot of the Nigu hill. When it rains in the former, the drainage water sweeps down mud and deposits it in the depression, which therefore gradually rises in the course of time. A large pool of 20 square feet still remains in a mud furrow, covered with a very thin sheet of ice after a night temperature of  $21.7^{\circ}$ , and it seems singular that it can survive the mild temperature of the day. All the men lie down on their stomachs of course—it is impossible to pass by fresh sweet water with ice in it; the little that is left is swallowed by two of the camels and Nevengk. Two more such ponds are seen, marking depressions and showing that,