

slow tinkle of bells—it was the Yezd caravan which came, and would continue its journey on through the desert. Kerbelai Madali, who had come with us thus far, and had done us excellent service by his thorough knowledge of the geography of the country, besides being cheerful and jovial, now received his recompense, and was to return to Anarek next morning. In the evening the sky was quite clear and the air was cold, below freezing-point—a good sign, for we must have fine weather in the desert, the men said. The moon was waxing, and would soon illumine brightly one of the most dismal regions in the world, and this was an advantage to travellers by night. I might be robbed and plundered after parting from my own men, but why should that happen? I initiated all my men into my plans, and appointed Abbas Kuli Bek chief during my absence, and told them that those who did not obey him would be discharged. I was greatly astonished when Mirza put in, “Then Abbas Kuli Bek becomes our *chargé d'affaires*,” but it turned out that he had caught up the word at one of the legations in Teheran, and that was the only French he knew.

On January 28 also it was clear after a minimum of  $22.1^{\circ}$ , and promised well for our journey. We noticed the signs of the sky more diligently than ever, for now everything depended on the weather. The day was spent in preparations and discussions; and as usual I questioned some knowing men on the condition of the place and the geography and roads of the country.

The highest administrative official of Jandak bears the title of *keluntar*, and is immediately under the orders of the *naib-i-hakim* or governor's secretary in Khur, who in his turn is subordinate to the *hakim*, or governor, of Semnan. Though the whole desert interposes a natural boundary between them, Jandak is subject to Semnan. The town has about 250 houses and 800 to 1000 inhabitants. Its absolute height is 3274 feet.

Melons and water-melons are cultivated, grapes, pomegranates, apples, pears, and apricots, figs, and mulberries, red and white beet, onions, green vegetables, wheat, barley and millet, and cotton. Sheep-breeding and the