

feet, and quietly trust myself to her guidance. We march straight towards the pole-star.

At six o'clock it begins to dawn faintly over the low hillocks to the east. Every minute their outlines become sharper. The mass of the caravan in front of me breaks up by degrees into detail, and the solid clump resolves itself into a number of definite shapes. Then colour comes into the scene, appearing in faint tints. The stars pale and rapidly disappear. The path comes into sight as two parallel tracks in absolutely sterile desert; dark patches here and there indicate moisture, which is sinking into the ground. The tip of the sun's upper limb glitters with electric brilliancy over the eastern hills; light and life is poured over the dreary scene; the shadows of the camels, at first a mere suggestion, grow darker, and the bells seem to ring more clearly when the metal is gilded by the sun and the clappers can be seen swinging and beating.

After an hour and twenty-five minutes Ali Murat, who is leading my camel, turns round and says that we have travelled a farsakh—we have 29 left! At this point we leave a very insignificant rise in the ground to our right, called Bend-i-bala-Hassan, or "Hassan's upper embankment." Caravans coming from the north are delighted when they reach this place, and even when they see it from a distance far out on the desert. Then all dangers are behind them.

Reddish-yellow and gorgeous the sun rises over the hills to the east, and all the colours become intense; against the grey and white bales on the brown velvety yellow camels the red, which contains henna, is a striking contrast. The caravan, against a background of grey with alternating light and dark shades, stands out boldly, the only life and movement within sight.

To the north light clouds rise like gauze or mist over the hills beyond Husseinan, which are now hardly perceptible, and would not be noticed if we did not know that they are there. The ground is not yet quite level. We have passed two erosion furrows, the very farthest tentacles of the drainage from the south. No rain-water comes down farther unless after tremendous floods. We