

o'clock I halt a while to take the usual meteorological observations; it is 37.8° , and the sky is almost clear. We have come down to 2247 feet above sea-level, and are at the lowest part of the Kevir's exceeding flat depression. There are names for various points on the desert route, and if they are useful for nothing else they at any rate serve to divide the critical stretch into sections. One knows when one has covered a third of the way, the half, or two-thirds. When Dolashi is passed one looks forward to Kona-omar, then to Kona-Osman and Dube-i-lerdeki, easily recognizable by the changed colour of the ground which passes from yellow to black and white.

But now I had enough of walking for a time and sat up on my camel, trying to shelter myself from the freezing north-easterly wind with the felt rug which served as a saddle-cloth. For five whole hours I kept to my airy position and could easily make my observations in the brilliant moonshine. I was certainly sleepy, but the wind kept me awake, and one cigarette after another vanished in smoke. At first the men caused me some diversion. Every katar of seven camels was led by a man. The last camel of each katar carried a bell. As long as this keeps ringing the leader knows that all his seven camels are following, but if it ceases to ring some rope has come loose, and the following troop slackens its pace and comes to a standstill.

The night advances, and the men are tired and overpowered by sleepiness. Without stopping the train one of them climbs up on the first camel in his katar. He makes the animal bend down his neck so that he can put his foot on it, and when the camel raises his head again he helps the man up on to his back, where he lays himself on his stomach on the top of the loads and falls asleep at once. The others follow his example, one after another, and soon the whole lot are up on the camels. Then it occurs to Ali Murat and Gulam Hussein that it is useless for them to walk, and they clamber up each on one of our camels, and they, too, take a nap, as is quite evident from the strange swinging of their bodies.

Now all are sleeping, except Agha Muhamed, who