

Mesre men load the camels again and let the caravan proceed to Peyestan.

However, as we had nothing to do with this squabble, we asked the people of Mesre to give us houseroom. They supposed we belonged to the Yezd caravan, and were inclined to continue the quarrel, but after they, with some hesitation, recognized that I was a *ferengi*, or European, they became quite civil. Their wretched huts, however, were such that one could not be induced to sleep in them except in a case of great emergency, and therefore we decided to go on to the village Sadfe, whither it is reckoned half a farsakh compared with a whole farsakh to Peyestan.

So we moved on again after this nocturnal intermezzo, and directed our course west-north-west over gently undulating steppe. It took us an hour to reach the village, where we arrived at nearly five o'clock on the morning of February 5. It was very difficult to rouse up some of the people, who were by no means prepared for a visit from a European at this hour. But it was managed at last. A man showed us the way with an oil lamp to a *balakhaneh*, up a flight of steps, and here we found a small room without a window, where Gulam Hussein swept out the worst of the dust and dirt of ages. The four young girls of the house made up a welcome and much-needed fire and talked quite freely with me, while Gulam made ready my supper. Ali Murat remained in the yard to attend to his camels, which had so well earned a day's rest.

At six o'clock the supper was ready, and it was certainly not too soon after a fast of sixteen hours. It consisted as usual of a roasted chicken, eggs, bread, and tea, and when it had been duly discussed, I did not give myself time to light a pipe, but threw myself down incontinently on my rugs and cushions and slept the sleep of the just. We had risen again to 3071 feet.

We had then succeeded in crossing satisfactorily the Kevir along the line Jandak-Sadfe, a difficult and troublesome journey, and now at its last stage I was convinced that the descriptions by the natives of the risks to be encountered were not exaggerated. The distance between Hauz-i-Haji-Ramazan and Sadfe is 85 miles, a short journey