

to his comrades than ever, and when he was this evening taken to task by Abbas Kuli Bek for hitting a camel unnecessarily, he came and complained to me, saying that he did not need to take lessons in the treatment of camels from a paltry Cossack, and as he could not put up with it he begged for his discharge, which was the more willingly granted as the other men wished to be rid of him. They thought, however, that it was all pretence, and therefore were astonished when Habibullah appeared next morning in marching order, with all his belongings tied up in a bundle on his back, his cage slung by a strap across his breast, and his staff in his hand. He declared positively that he could not endure a day longer in the company of such a scoundrel as Abbas Kuli Bek and the other riff-raff, and that he meant to go home to his village near Ispahan. His business was transacted in a moment; he received two months' pay, though he had already been paid for one month in Teheran, and he was allowed to keep his cloak, though the other men thought that it ought to be passed on to any one who should take his place. And so he bade me "*Khodahafiz, sa'ab,*" and set off back along our track without looking at his comrades.

Between the hills on the right and the high sand on our left we travel on farther north-eastwards, and the road winds among small sharp ridges and summits, through valleys and over flat passes, and the distance from the high sand in the north gradually increases. But the clear outlines of the sand-hills are seen through the northern valleys, and the dunes seem to be higher than ever. Kuh-i-Halvan appears in faint red hues to the north-east; we had seen this hill for the first time from Turut, and afterwards from Khur. Now the wind blows strongly from the north-west and sweeps up the fine dust and sand, and the air becomes thick. The ravens that follow us croak anxiously, and it seems as though a storm were rising up. But the wind pushes on behind and helps the camels uphill.

When we leave behind us a sharply outlined summit and pass a small portal between two spurs, we see all at