

The front of the rabat faces south; on the open level yard before it lie a number of camels ruminating beside the heaps of bales; in the open niches the caravan men sit smoking and enjoying the sunshine so rare in these days. Behind each niche is a square room, where not a ray of sun can penetrate, and where coolness prevails in summer. On the roof are seen two *badgir* or ventilators, which cause a circulation of air.

The *seraiban* or host, the overseer of the caravanserai, supplies travellers with straw, cottonseed, bread, and dates; but he exacts high prices, for everything is brought from Tebbes, where it is a dear season. The serai is, then, permanently inhabited, and the host does a good business. He reckoned that on an average five hundred caravans passed the place in the year, and the number was certainly not exaggerated; four caravans were now resting here besides our own. Two great routes cross at Rabat-gur. One is our road, from Khur to Tebbes and on to Turshiz; the other is the great royal road between Yezd and Meshed, of which we had already passed two of the western short cuts. The great pilgrimage and trade route to Meshed does not then touch Tebbes, and the oasis is deprived of the revenue a lively caravan traffic always brings with it. From Meshed the caravans transport wheat, barley, currants (*kishmish*), figs, crystallized sugar, loaf sugar, Russian cloth, etc.; from Yezd in the opposite direction, Indian tea, spices, henna, lemons, English cloth, cotton, indigo, sugar, etc.

The road between Yezd and Meshed is divided into 28 *mensil* or stages, and to these must be added several days of rest, so that the whole journey takes about thirty-five days. Every camel costs 5 tuman for fodder, but yields its owner 11 tuman in hire, so that there is a profit of 6 tuman per camel for the whole journey. Caravans travel only at night and encamp early in the morning, when the camels are turned loose on the steppe to shift for themselves. Just before sunset they are driven in to get their only meal in the day of straw and *pambedaneh* or cottonseed. One of the caravans now resting contained thirty-six camels, of which a few carried straw and