

“Sa’ab, remember that I must return the same way without a freight, that I must carry with me straw and cottonseed for my animals, and that their strength will be impaired by the journey. I shall also serve you as guide, and I know the country thoroughly.”

I had nothing to reply to such forcible arguments, and accepted his offer.

At eleven o’clock the same night a terrific northerly storm burst, and groaned and cracked in the garden, and maps, letters, and sheets left out began a wild dance in the tent before they were hastily stuffed into their boxes. The wind was as usual accompanied by rain which increased during the night, and on the morning of the 7th had left puddles of water about and within the tent. The khiaban was turned into mud, and all the experts said that the road through the kevir in the direction of Bahabad would be absolutely impassable—it was the same bad luck we had experienced when we wished to cross the great Kevir. They thought that the Khorasan caravan, which had left Kurit two days before on its way to Bahabad, must have had a bad time.

On March 7, our last day in Tebbes, the air was sultry and heavy, and passing showers fell from time to time from the dense clouds. At one o’clock the temperature was 64.6° , but we felt that another atmospheric change was coming on. And indeed it came with surprising suddenness at half-past four, in the form of a first-class storm from the south-south-east. In our garden, however, the violence of the wind was considerably checked by the walls and the palms, their tufts of leaves thrown like besoms to the north-north-west. The southern sky glowed in changing tints of orange, and the air was filled with the finest dust. Now and then a few heavy raindrops fell. As the opening was turned to windward my tent caught the first gust; it bulged out like a balloon and was on the point of flying away. Mirza and Avul Kasim shut me in as well as they could and closed all the chinks; I lighted a candle, and could not employ myself with anything but reading. A deafening noise raged outside as of great waters; it was like being shut up in