

CHAPTER XLIII

THE DESERT OF ALEXANDER AND NADIR'S THRONE

FOR the future there is to be a change in our marching regulations, for we are to set out earlier than before, that we may not suffer so long in the heat of the afternoon, and therefore I am called at four o'clock on March 15. The minimum temperature in the night was down to 32.7° , and at five o'clock the thermometer rose only to 36.5° , so that it felt quite cold, and the brazier and warm washing water were needed, and I put on more clothes than usual.

Our guide wanted to go back a good way, but I wished to try a track leaving Kuh-i-Ghasemi on the left, and led the way myself to the south-south-east up and down over hillocks with uncomfortably loose and unstable ground. A small pool stood unexpectedly in a furrow, where the dogs quenched their thirst, but the water proved far worse than that we carried with us. Farther down numerous tamarisks grew in a broad, grassy furrow (3517 feet).

On the right stand the high steep flanks of Kuh-i-chagoki, and to the left the flat slopes of Kuh-i-Ghasemi. We go along a broad isoclinal valley between them, and it is certainly an illusion that the hills on the left seem so much lower. The country is frightfully monotonous. We march for hours along the insensibly sloping furrow, which affords an excellent path, and for hours pass over a plain plentifully overgrown with shrubs.

After six hours of constant travelling we stop for fifteen minutes to eat breakfast and drink water. The bowls are brought out, roghan and bread are distributed, and my camel comes after me to beg for a piece. We have four