

easily and quickly as the spring weather in this poor expiring country.

He wakes me at five o'clock, and I am glad to come away from the cloud of gnats which have tortured me during the night. The minimum temperature has been as low as 49.1° , and the clear sky and calm air foretell a warm day. We are, moreover, on the way to the south, and every day takes us a step nearer to the summer, which converts these lands into a burning furnace. Before half-past six the sun watches us commence our last day's march in Persian territory.

Thanks to the clear atmosphere, we can see the southern hills much better than yesterday. They are visible in all their details in shades of brown and red. It is quite a low range, with a summit in the south-south-west overtopping the rest. This is called Kuh-i-Malek Siah or Malek Siah-Kuh, the black king's hill, and at this boundary column three kingdoms meet,—Persia, Afghanistan, and Baluchistan. This hill, then, plays here in the south-east the same part that Ararat does in the north-west, where Persia touches Russia and Turkey.

Far to the north-west is faintly seen the row of hills which bound the Seistan basin in this direction, and among them the Pelenk-kuh or Pelengan-kuh, the "panther hill." Only to the south-east does the country seem to be as flat as a pancake.

Now at length the country rises towards the south-west. The vegetation thins out again, the gravel increases, we come to this red disintegrated hill and enter winding dells between low gentle mounds. Hormak is a small hamlet of two huts, where not even a cat is to be seen; but a sweet spring bubbles up, and we are glad to rest a while and refresh ourselves at its rivulet. Here, too, grow melons, the large watery fruit which is such a boon and blessing in a desert land. In the solid rock is a reddish-brown sandstone tufa, with volcanic ash and a dark compact felspathic basalt.

Two more narrow dells and small thresholds and we are at the *gumreh-khaneh*, or customs station, which bears the name of Kuh-i-Malek Siah (3140 feet). When we