

would render it difficult, if not altogether impossible, to continue field work far into the spring. There was an additional, practical reason prompting an early start northward. News received from Chāhbār showed that a large military escort was coming from Rāmishk, the temporary head-quarters of the General Commanding, Balūchistān, to join me; and time might be saved by moving ahead to meet it. For the journey to Bampūr I proposed to follow the route passing the valleys of Qasrqand and Geh containing the principal settlements to be found in the hills which border the basin on the south.

The first march lay across a bare plain of clay, where only a few wretched huts of herdsmen were to be seen and some patches of abandoned cultivation. It brought us to Bandagāh, where a rain pool of muddy water allowed us to halt at the foot of the outermost hill range. Next day the utterly barren range was crossed, first into a belt of low and much-decayed sandstone hills and beyond this into an area where precarious cultivation is maintained in years of some rainfall by scattered small hamlets of mat-huts. The remains reported near Turkāni, where we halted, proved to consist of a few insignificant stone-heaps marking decayed rubble-built dwellings. There were also some low cairns or *dambs*, hard to distinguish from the heaps of decomposed rock which cover a small hill visited as a *ziārat*, about 3 miles to the north of the hamlet.

Since the camel transport brought from Tīz had absconded during the following night, it was a special relief when next day there arrived the large escort of eighty Persian Nizāmīs or regulars, all mounted on camels (Fig. 50). Their commander was 'Sultān' Āghā Ḥusain Anṣārī, a pleasant and energetic officer from Tabrīz, whose readiness to facilitate our work and cheerfully to face any hardships incidental to rough travel I soon learned fully to appreciate. With him there came Sirdār Ḥusain Khān of Geh (Fig. 52), whom the Persian Government, since the overthrow of the régime of Dōst Muḥammad Khān, the late semi-independent chief of Bampūr, had installed as the head of the Balūch tribes of Makrān. The Sirdār remained with us all the way to Jīruft, well beyond the area nominally in his charge, and in spite of his youth and other impediments made himself very useful in various practical ways. I soon had occasion to realize how great our difficulties about 'supply and transport', to say nothing about local guidance and labour, would have been in this but recently pacified region without the effective protection and help kindly provided by General Muḥammad Khān Nakshiwān under the orders of the Persian Government. I may record here at once also how glad I was to note the attention paid to the discipline and well-being of the men, all from Sīstān, constituting the escort, as well as the care which had been taken to provide them with a sufficiency of transport and food.

A day's rest had to be given to the escort, which since leaving Rāmishk had