

feature by far of this kind of travel in Persia is the description of horses supplied, overworked, underfed, and invariably with sore backs, and which can never be induced to move unless the rider holds one of the huge Persian lashes in his hand. I was now travelling with the mail, the disadvantages of which soon became apparent. If I had been alone I could have started and stopped whenever I wished, but now I had to wait the good pleasure of the *chapar*-rider or postman. After a carpet had been spread and we had done a vast amount of tea-drinking and had smoked the *kalian* (the hubble-bubble or narghileh of Persia), that functionary gave orders for the fresh horses to be saddled and packed, but it was long after dark before we started. Generally a Persian will not smoke the same *kalian* as a Christian, but at these post-stations they are not so particular, and will even drink out of the same cup, though I have seen a valuable *kalian* ceremoniously and ostentatiously smashed to pieces with sticks, out of which a Christian had ventured to take a puff.

The next stage took us five hours, at a most uncomfortable jog-trot, and we reached Mairand at one o'clock at night thoroughly tired out. During the latter part it rained, and the darkness was of the most intense and inky blackness. The horse carrying my baggage was driven on ahead, riderless, some animals being instinctively good road-finders; it was closely followed by the post-boy, who kept on singing or talking so that those behind might be able