

had attached to them a great copper bell. Such a meeting in the early morning in the great desert plains of Persia is most impressive, with the distant clanging of the bells becoming louder as they approach, and the long unending rows of great beasts stealing past with outstretched necks on their long journey to the shores of the Black Sea. Some of the drivers were asleep on mules in motion, in the most wonderful attitudes, because nothing was discernible to indicate a human being on the animal's back except a shapeless heap, from each side of which a leg projected downwards.

I had written out a vocabulary of useful words, but beyond this was quite ignorant of the language, which fact I found was really an advantage. At each station I required fresh horses and a post-boy, or *chagird*, to take them back again. This person frequently fancied all the armed men we passed to be robbers, and if any suspicious-looking individual accosted me, what could I do but make signs that I was deaf or unable to understand, and what could a robber do with such an unpracticable victim? And so I travelled perfectly unmolested, though alone. But there was another advantage in not being able to speak Persian, for on reaching a posting-station I could enter the stable and point to the two best-looking horses it contained. The best are not willingly brought forth, and never before the poorest animals have first been offered. But the persuasions of the *chapar bashi* fell upon deaf ears. The stream