

two and a half days at the court of the Wali of Pusht-i-Kuh. This chief had maintained his neutrality, but enemy forces were likely to be encountered at any moment, as the country traversed was infested by hostile tribesmen. Their guide was untrustworthy. When he had aroused their suspicions by frequent attempts to mislead them, he had to point the way with a rope round his neck. On one occasion the party entered a village half an hour after a superior force of mounted tribesmen, officered by Germans, had left it.

The march was a fine test of our Ally's resource, mobility, and endurance. They crossed passes over 8,000 feet high. The track was rough and mountainous and difficult even for mules; two horses were lost over precipices. The Cossacks travel light. For transport they had less than one pack animal for ten men; these carried ammunition, cooking-pots, and a small tent for officers. Beyond a few simple necessities the men had no other kit than what they stood up in.<sup>1</sup>

When they had consumed their three days' rations they lived on the country. For ambulance they had one assistant-surgeon provided with medical wallets. But they were a hard lot, and none of them fell sick. Their last march which brought them in to Ali Gharbi was one of thirty miles. Five of their horses died of thirst and exhaustion on the parched desert between the foothills and the Tigris. It was dark when they reached camp; yet after the dinner which was given in their honour they were singing and dancing all night, and they did not turn in till after one in the morning. The arrival of the

<sup>1</sup> The Cossack sleeps where he can, without tents. He carries a rifle, sabre, water-bottle, haversack, 60 rounds of ammunition; his greatcoat, waterproof sheet, and horse blanket are rolled up behind the saddle. His horse's food is carried in a pair of wallets that will take 15 lb. of grain. The remainder of his outfit, 240 rounds of ammunition, one day's bread, shirt, drawers, curry-comb, and brush, go into two saddle-bags attached behind the stirrup leathers. He rides with a straight leg on a narrow saddle much lighter than ours. Altogether the Cossack's mount gets off much more lightly than the British troop horse, which often has to carry 18 stone.