

a fairly large pool in its first bajir, which is small, by a narrow and very low strip of sand. The water in the pool was quite salt, utterly undrinkable; but in spite of that, it was covered with a sheet of ice. Thick, luxuriant kamisch grew all round it, but nothing else, not even tamarisks. As we might assume, that this was the last spot where we should find grazing for our camels, we decided to halt there.

On 21st December the direction in which we travelled was dictated entirely by the situation of the bajirs. These resembled in points of detail the desert lakes I have recently described, except that their major axes, which we followed, leaned more decidedly towards the south-west. Had they maintained the same direction throughout, we should have been led a long way to the west of Tattran and should have emerged in the desert of Nija; but our main object was to make use as long as we possibly could of these depressions, these gigantic troughs drawn between and amongst the accumulations of the sand. There was a crisp breeze from the south-west, and the sky was clouded; when the wind lies in that quarter it sweeps through the bajirs from end to end unchecked.

At its south-west extremity the pool beside which we had encamped was parted from the first real bajir by a very low threshold or isthmus of level sand. At the north-east end of this there were several small shallow pools of salt water, surrounded by incrustations of salt. Wherever such pools are present in a bajir, they always occur at the end nearest the river; it is of course from the river that their water comes. South-east of this bajir lay another containing a small patch of kamisch. Bajir No. 2 was smaller than No. 1, and as No. 3 was smaller still, I began to fear we should soon have to take to the high sand. Great therefore was our surprise to find that bajir No. 4 was bigger than the first three put together. All these were separated from one another by isthmuses of sand, more or less high; the isthmus, or threshold, as I prefer to call it, between No. 3 and No. 4 was 1,270 m. broad, and bajir No. 4 was 6.1 km. in length. Thus a relatively small part of the day's journey lay actually across the sand, and the greater part ran through the bajirs, which in appearance at least were practically level ground. On this the second day we crossed four thresholds of sand, and traversed four bajirs. The dunes of which the thresholds were built up lay very conveniently for us, for the highest point was in the south-west, whence we went down by a steep descent into the next bajir. This conformation can only have been produced by winds from the north-east, the north-north-east, or the north. The south-westerly wind which met us during the day was not strong enough to alter the dunes to any appreciable extent. North-west of the head of the second bajir there are said to be two depressions, and beyond them the *bughas* or *bolta* of the Sejt-köl, that is, the narrow sound between the two basins of the lake. The first bajir of this lake lies almost due west from the threshold between bajirs No. 3 and No. 4. The level floor of the bajirs is often heavier to travel over, if that be possible, than the sand itself, for they are very often covered with fine yielding dust, into which the camels sometimes sank 4 decimeters, while it also whirled up in clouds in the wake of the caravan. The ground is seldom hard and firm to the tread, and even when it is so, it is only for short stretches. Another observation we made, was, that the ground grew softer towards the middle of the bajirs; hence we thought it best to travel along