

II., 1910, Chap. XL., and discusses our traveller's route between Kuh-benan and Tabbas, pp. 71 *seq.* :

"As even Sykes, who travelled during several years through Persia in all directions, cannot decide with full certainty whether Marco Polo travelled by the western route through Tebbes or the eastern through Naibend, it is easy to see how difficult it is to choose between the two roads. I cannot cite the reasons Sir Henry Yule brings forward in favour of the western route—it would take us too far. I will, instead, set forth the grounds of my own conviction that Marco Polo used the direct caravan road between Kuh-benan and Tebbes.

"The circumstance that the main road runs through Naibend is no proof, for we find that Marco Polo, not only in Persia but also in Central Asia, exhibited a sovereign contempt for all routes that might be called convenient and secure.

"The distance between Kerman and Kuh-benan in a direct line amounts to 103 miles. Marco Polo travelled over this stretch in seven days, or barely 15 miles a day. From Kuh-benan to Tebbes the distance is 150 miles, or fully 18 miles a day for eight days. From Kuh-benan *via* Naibend to Tun, the distance is, on the other hand, 205 miles, or more than 25 miles a day. In either case we can perceive from the forced marches that after leaving Kuh-benan he came out into a country where the distances between the wells became much greater.

"If he travelled by the eastern route he must have made much longer day's journeys than on the western. On the eastern route the distances between the wells were greater. Major Sykes has himself travelled this way, and from his detailed description we get the impression that it presented particular difficulties. With a horse it is no great feat to ride 25 miles a day for eight days, but it cannot be done with camels. That I rode 42½ miles a day between Hauz-i-Haji-Ramazan and Sadfe was because of the danger from rain in the Kevir, and to continue such a forced march for more than two days is scarcely conceivable. Undoubtedly Marco Polo used camels on his long journeys in Eastern Persia, and even if he had been able to cover 205 miles in eight days, he would not be obliged to do so, for on the main road through Naibend and Duhuk to Tun there are abundant opportunities of procuring water. Had he travelled through Naibend, he would in any case have had no need to hurry on so fast. He would probably keep to the same pace as on the way from Kerman to Kuh-benan, and this length he accomplished in seven days. Why should he have made the