

the day. At first the snow remained lying only round the shrubs, but afterwards the white mantle spread more and more, and at last only stones and plants rose above it like black spots. And gradually as time passed the mantle of snow became thicker, and now we could very well have done without water. My friend Houtum-Schindler, who predicted snow in January, was therefore right, and this snowfall was as heavy as any at home in Sweden. I sat as though snowed up on my camel, and the unexpected covering assisted in keeping in the warmth; but as I had constantly to use my hands, the map sheet became moist and flabby, and the pockets of my ulster were filled with wet snow.

Our course now follows the foot of the hills on the right, where the lowest slopes are just perceptible through the mist, and we cross two shallow erosion furrows descending from them. After rounding the small projection we saw from Kerim Khan, we enter quite an archipelago of scattered isolated mounds. A small mound crops up on the left, followed by another not larger than an upturned boat, while a third forms a regular ridge 15 to 18 feet high. The vegetation is very scanty. The snow lies so deep that the camels no longer leave a dark trail behind them; the track looks white amid the whiteness, but the footprints are dark and wet. More hillocks are dimly seen to the right, and sometimes we catch a glimpse of other mounds behind; but practically the view is all veiled by the falling snow, and the details cannot be laid down on a map. Most of the erosion furrows are extremely short and are directed northwards.

The caravan becomes whiter, the camels are powdered over, and their loads are covered with a layer of snow close and thick as cotton, and now and again a lump falls off. The snow does not lie long on the dry ground, evaporating above and melting underneath, but when the snowfall reaches its height at three o'clock, the ground soon becomes a continuous sheet of white owing to the under layer already formed. Now the illumination is very dim and diffused, and we are in the midst of a winter of a northern type rather than of one of Persia's light yellow deserts.