

from the hill by the north-westerly breeze, or they are actually steam-clouds from the spring, the water of which is much warmer than the air. No, indeed; they are neither the one nor the other, but are simply the vanguard of a train of light clouds which are advancing southwards.

North and north-east fresh ramifications of Kuh-i-Tallhe appear; one such, not directly connected with the red main group, bears a tabular stratum, which, however, dips a little as usual towards S. 30° E.

Still I seem to hear the ring of bells, but down here in the open country not a glimpse of the caravan can be seen. It may be a stored-up echo which still lingers on my tympanum, and that is not improbable, for usually the ringing sound is always in my ears. I rest a while at a tiny patch of snow in a fissure, and refresh myself with its coolness. But something is wrong, and I cannot go on longer in this way. The hours have passed, and the caravan ought to have overtaken me; at any rate, the sound of the bells should have been borne to me on the north-west wind, and at least a glimpse of the dark backs of the camels should have shown itself over the hillocks.

Of course I ought to turn back, but I have a rooted objection to retrace my footsteps, and I go on as before, along the camel track. Sometimes I stand still and fancy I hear the sound I have expected so long, but it is only the wind whistling against the weathered edges of the ridges or against my cap peak, or next time the ring of my footstep on a stone slab. Again I hear the tinkling sound of a caravan on the march, but I cannot tell whence it comes; but I halt once more, and the waste lies in dead silence—not a sound is to be heard, not a fly buzzes, and wherever the wild asses of the desert may be resting, they have fled to-day from the neighbourhood of Kuh-i-nakshir.

In my path rises a mound 50 feet high—a barren slab of limestone with the usual dip to the south-east; and on its top a cairn has stood at one time, built up of sherds and splinters which lie scattered around. At its foot also runs a path; I have indeed strayed a while from the trail