

of the camels, but I can see the point where I left it, and I have a free view over the wilderness for far around. In every direction crop up these red, purple, brown, yellow, and grey limestone hillocks helplessly sinking to annihilation, exposed as they are without the least protection to the resistless forces of denudation. Within my range of vision they fall flatly and slowly to the south-east and steeply to the north-west, nay, often suddenly or vertically, the limestone stratum being abruptly broken off at the ridge of each hill and passing at a sharp angle into the screes at the foot. It would be absolutely impossible to climb up from the north-west on to the mound on which I stand.

The wind is soft and mild, with a temperature of 44.6° ; the sun is out, and gives me a notion of what this land must be like in summer. The naked ridge of Kuh-i-Tallhe rises to the north-west, and I can only pass the time by drawing a panorama of it. From east to south-east extends the mysterious horizon of the boundless desert sea, and some shallow erosion furrows make for its western margin, through which, from time to time, temporary streams pour down to perish in the interior of the Kevir. Its border must be sharply drawn, and must run yonder on the other side as a flat ridge eastwards.

The great desert draws me on with its strange fascination. I want to hasten thither and listen to its deep silence hovering like a cloud over its level surface. But I cannot go thither quite alone, and either I or the caravan has gone astray. We have lost each other, that is plain. I set out four hours ago, and I have followed the track and the cairns all the way. Possibly the men have lost my trail at some place where I tramped over a pebbly bed, but they should not have gone farther until they had found it again. But the easy and careless Persians are not like Mongolians, Buriats, and Tibetans, who persevere like bloodhounds till they find what they seek. Have my men not left the little spring, overcome by dread of the desert after I disappeared behind the hills on my mysterious mission, which they cannot understand? or have they lingered to collect fuel for the evening fires? But very likely the fault is mine. This path is not the right