

detritus becomes finer, the shrubs more scattered, and the slightly marked edges of the furrows are more rounded and degraded. Everywhere is seen spoor of wild asses, and sometimes we pass places where they have lain down to rest. How often we stand at a spot where a *gur* or wild ass has quite recently passed, and wish that the strange animal itself were there in its tracks! We direct our course to a distant promontory of a chain of hills to the south, but are cut off from it by a small western offshoot of the Kevir. Could we hold on our course, it would be well, but the ground in the arm of the Kevir will not bear. We pitch Camp 9 not far from its edge in perfect desert. The height here is 2343 feet, so that we have descended 1348 feet during the day's march.

From here we have a fine view of the hill of Kuh-i-nakshir, and to the north are seen other smaller heights; while to the north-north-east we know that the foothills of Elburz lie, but we cannot see them; to the south runs the small ridge we have had all day in front of us. Between all these upheavals of the earth's crust stretches the depression which in the course of time has been filled up and levelled by alluvial mud, and whither the salt of all the surrounding watercourses collects to form in favourable spots a crust or layer ever increasing in thickness. This western part of the Kevir is very sharply limited, and now our task is to follow its edge as closely as possible, and insert it in a map.

The sky was covered with heavy clouds, and the night was pitch dark before the moon rose. There was no wind, the smoke rose straight up from the camp fires, but it was quiet and silent in the camp earlier than usual, for all were tired after the day's march, which they had accomplished entirely on foot. Nevertheless, the bubbling of a water-pipe was heard, even at midnight, when some smoker awoke and could not resist taking a puff.

On the night preceding January 16 the minimum temperature was  $38.8^{\circ}$ , and in the morning all the sky was covered with low floating clouds. Low though the hills around us were, their crests were hidden in this veil of mist. But otherwise the weather was fine when we