

broke up early for another day's experiences; it neither rained nor blew, and at one o'clock the temperature was 47.3° , and no wraps were necessary, even on the camel's back.

Not far from the camp we came to the edge of the Kevir, the first zone of which consists of a grey dry crust, fragile and brittle, resting on a soft foundation, and as even the spoor of wild asses ceased here, indicating that the ground was unstable farther out, we thought it wiser to keep to the *leb-i-kevir*, or the margin of the salt desert, as the Persians call the shore-strip or transitional belt between the hard solid pebbly ground and the yielding salt desert. On this outer Kevir zone a few dwindling plants still grew, but the next belt, at a distance of a couple of hundred yards, was quite barren. We had, then, to keep along the desert margin, in order to remain on solid ground; but we would try as soon as possible to cross this western offshoot of the Kevir, which now forced us to completely alter our course. We had already attempted to pass over a small creek, but had not gone far on the dark crust before the first camel sank up to his knees and was brought to a standstill. Warned of danger, we at once turned back in our steps, where at least we knew that the ground would bear, and where the footprints were only 4 inches deep. Had the first camel taken a few steps more he would probably have sunk still deeper, and had he still tried to struggle on, he might have been lost. His imprint yawned like a black hole, and the bitter salt water immediately collected in it like pap or a mud-bath.

Where the surface of the Kevir is dark the ground water is evidently highest; the yellow flats and strips are small swells quite indiscernible to the eye except by their colour, and are perhaps only 4 inches higher than the black parts, but this slight difference of level is sufficient to allow their surface to dry more quickly. The dark belts are therefore depressions, a conclusion in accordance with the fact that they lie at a distance from the "shore," even though offshoots and bays of these dark expanses extend quite up to the edge of the Kevir.

We then tried to keep to the flat hillocks, not more