

the exception, and it was evident that an overcast sky and precipitation were characteristic of the early months of the year. As we began our march at eight o'clock a short but fine and thick shower fell, and of the southern hills only the lower parts were visible. The four herdsmen came to visit us, and each received a drink of water; one of them was to show us the way to the nearest spring while the others drove their camels to Cheshme-bolasun.

We steer south-eastwards, directing our course to a point below the most eastern peak of the southern hills, and as we are therefore leaving the margin of the Kevir, the lowest depression in the whole country, and making for the foot of its southern bounding hills, the ground rises, though slowly, throughout the day. The wind increases in strength and pushes behind. We leave on the left hand the relatively fertile steppe belt, its yellow colour showing down below. For a while the ground is quite sterile and intersected by innumerable trenches with pebbles, but afterwards shrubs appear again, though meagre and few in number; the ground is hard, and detritus increases in quantity as we approach the hills obliquely.

A steep hill, which we saw as long ago as yesterday, now comes into sight among the clouds to the S. 50° E., and is said to be Kuh-i-busurgi. The nearer we approach the southern hills the more the ground is cut up into trenches, though they are seldom 3 feet deep; the details of the hills appear more and more distinctly, their lights and shades, fissures and declivities. Down below, on the left, the Kevir expands its boundless surface with changing shades and dirty white fields of salt; the impression is more vivid than ever that we are riding along the shore of a large lake with its level surface lying between the hillocks of the beach and fragmentary hills. And yet it is only a slough of gigantic dimensions we see before us. The boundary between the cones of detritus and the dark Kevir is exceedingly sharply defined; up here we seem to see the outermost slight fall of the cone, of one or two degrees, pass into the level surface of the depression. Yet we can notice here and there two transitional zones, the first where the detritus cones merge into the level, comparatively richly covered steppe,