

of it to fill one skin and then there is a bowlful left, but this water tastes sweet and pleasant compared with the curious fluid we have had to put up with lately.

The mound was composed of a light red quartz porphyrite, lying in flakes and shells, which afterwards was with us all the way. The hills seen to the south-east our guide calls Kuh-i-cherro, Kuh-i-anarek, and Kuh-i-ashin. Ali-Khani is a small dark ramification on the left hand, named after a Baluchi chief who once lived as a robber in this wilderness.

After having procured sweet water for a night we have no reason to follow the foot of the hill among pebbles and countless small blocks and holes, so we go down the slope to where the ground is level, the furrows quite shallow, and the shrubs luxuriant; the pebbles, too, are small and do not hurt the camels' foot-pads with their sharp edges. Our herdsman was a little nervous at leaving the proximity of the hills with their springs, but the water-supply in the sheepskin pacified him.

The hills to the right become lower and we approach Kuh-i-busurgi. In the mouth of a valley half a farsakh off there is said to be a sweet spring called Ris-ab-i-Maryam, so named after a woman. There is no path; the route skirts the hill where it is near to the springs; we march where it seems to us best and most even. Two gazelles gaze at us with curiosity, and would lose their lives if we had good marksmen with us; the two Cossacks blaze away as usual, and then Nevengk comes and spoils the sport by chasing the flying animals.

It soon proves that the ground below, at the foot of the hills, is not so excellent as it seemed at a distance, and the farther we go the more troublesome it becomes. First we cross a furrow 200 yards broad and 10 yards deep, with steep erosion terraces very difficult for our baggage camels to surmount, and soon after another furrow of the same kind. Near it is a well called Cha-mirza, which, like most of the other names we heard in this district, is marked on the Russian map, which I study daily. Between these drainage channels the country is intersected by a number of smaller