

it is hard to say, but possibly it is a consequence of a deviation of the sand by the neighbouring hill.

The temperature is  $53.6^{\circ}$  at one o'clock, and with the sun in our faces it feels blazing hot, while the air is perfectly still. It is a pity that the camels have had to carry their thick winter coats all the way from Teheran, and even now cannot get rid of them. But there is still no dependence on the weather, and the nights are quite cold. When the spring weather becomes really warm, the camels' wool will soon fall off. The Persians say that the weather will be cold for three months more, but they must consider it cold only when compared with the great heat of summer, which turns the desert into a blazing furnace.

We are again out on the steppe, where tamarisks are few, and quite low dunes form a more or less continuous expanse on both sides of the track. The ground falls a little southwards, and we direct our course towards the east-north-east, along the eastern extension of the Nigu hill, with its ruddy lines. We halt a while at a place where fuel is fine and abundant to collect two huge heaps—we may be sure that there is a scarcity of this article at Chupunun. We have circumnavigated a southern tip of the great margin; and all the way from Alem we have had abundant opportunities of following closely the southern boundary of the sandy desert, which I have inserted in my map. Of its northern extension we have hitherto obtained only approximate data, but we hope shortly to see the locality where the sandy desert passes into the Kevir.

Here and there we pass over some small dunes or mud-flats, and leave on the right two low hills, and then the village Chupunun comes in sight, at the eastern extremity of a flat arena of clayey soil. Chupunun is of the same type as Kerim Khan and Alem. All the houses but two are built together in a row with a succession of mud cupolas. The inmates come out and gaze at us with the greatest astonishment as we pass on to the east of the village. But their respect is soon aroused when Kerbelai Madali tells them that we have stayed at Alem and that we were not at all stingy, but paid the people well for all the provisions they could spare us. So they soon come