

valleys," of which the Nigu hill forms a part. Behind the range Kuh-i-seruman in the north-east is a well called Cha-che-brun. And, lastly, to the north is seen at a considerable distance Kuh-i-Jandak, with Jandak on its farther side.

The road we are now on is the great route from Anarek to Shahrud and Semnan, and runs right across the Kevir. It cannot claim to be more than a path, but it is more worn and sunk deeper in the ground than the one we have followed hitherto. To the west or west-north-west it is said to be only 2 farsakh to the margin of the great salt desert, and half of the interval is filled with driftsand, the other half being a flat, sandy transitional zone. The lower road to Jandak, which we heard of at Alem, runs to the north of the hills along the edge of the Kevir.

After crossing the plain we come in among the spurs of Pusa-i-verbend, of the same fossiliferous limestone as at Chupunun, and pass an erosion furrow which is unusually deep and boldly excavated, bearing distinct traces of abundant rain-floods which find their way to the Kevir by this channel. Where it leaves the mountains there are said to be several *seng-ab*, literally "stone-water," that is, small natural reservoirs in the bed where ponds of water remain a long time protected by boulders. We have soon passed this *gudar* or defile among the hills, and turn more to the left, till the direction of our march becomes north-north-west, and then we keep straight on. We have, then, at length passed round the southern extremity of the great offshoot of the Kevir, which at two days' journey from Kuh-i-nakshir forced us to the south-east.

Again a belt of plain lies before us and stretches up to the foot of Kuh-i-seruman. On the left we have an expanse of driftsand with huge, perfectly sterile dunes, so that we have not yet lost contact with this extensive and sharply bounded sandy desert which forms such an extremely characteristic feature of the geography of the country, and is not marked on maps. The name Rig-i-jin, which we had heard many times before, was applied by the inhabitants of Chupunun to the sandy belt, and