

sunshine and evaporation by a vault. Its walls of burnt brick are plastered to prevent the collected water from filtering through. A small canal runs into the rotunda from a mud flat, 4800 square yards in area, and surrounded by a low embankment. Into this little mud-covered depression run several of the erosion furrows which rise in the southern hills. They are excavated by rain-water, but only after heavy continuous rain do the remains of the floods, which have not evaporated or been sucked into the ground, reach the depression, where a large part of the mud carried with them is deposited in a fresh layer, while the water flows on along the small channel into the round cistern. It usually requires a good fall of rain to fill it up to the brim, for its depth is 6 feet and its capacity about 2100 cubic feet. Owing to the roof and the impermeable walls the water remains a long time and keeps comparatively cool even in summer, for it lies below the surface of the ground. This reservoir also was now quite dry. No water can flow down so far before the surface of the ground is soaked; it sinks into the dry soil. But a puddle was formed in the mud after the recent rain, at which Nevengk could quench his thirst. Even a well 36 feet deep did not contain a drop of water now; at its bottom the temperature was 59.7° , while it was 39.2° in the air outside.

To pass the weary hours I take a walk northwards with Ali Murat. In this direction our camping-ground is surrounded by a bastion of hillocks, whence we can see the ground falling towards the margin of the salt desert. The soil has here a large admixture of sand and gypsum, and is not at all slippery even after rain. But soon we come to a belt where, in the old camel track, tramped down and sodden with rain, I can thrust my stick 2 feet down, and when I draw it out again there is a squelching sound in the water-filled hole. There is no danger in going from Hauz-i-Haji-Ramazan as far as a point called Ser-i-do-farsakh, or the "beginning of the two farsakh," for here begins the Kevir proper, and the difficult dangerous slough. But long before this we pass creeks and branches of true kevir, dark brown and level, but lumpy as if burst up into small bosses and bubbles. Where the sloping