

lifeless solemnity of the desert surrounds us on all sides, and to the south the white sheet of salt has a delusive resemblance to a frozen lake, where the camel skeletons are conspicuous as black specks owing to the dust and dirt which gathers on and about them. Though the distance is considerable, they appear disproportionately large. A small way-mark, a pyramid of salt blocks, also grows to extraordinary dimensions. The northern hills are wiped out, probably owing chiefly to light effects caused by the change in the altitude of the sun and also by the moist vapour rising from the sodden ground.

As soon as the men have emptied the straw sacks in front of the camels and have satisfied their own hunger, they sleep on their cloaks or on the bales to keep out of the wet. The hours pass all too quickly, and it begins to grow dusk before I have finished my work, and when at last I am ready to lie down the fellows wake up and begin to make ready to start. I therefore get no rest, for our camels have to be loaded, and in the declining day Agha Muhamed calls out his *bismillah* and starts off to the peal of the bells straight towards the pole-star.

The men had prepared me for 2 farsakh of very difficult ground, and therefore I travelled on foot. The moon was high, and when night came on I was able to read the compass by its light and write down my notes. Walking was difficult and slippery, and the shadows from the moon in the holes confused one. They seem like black yawning pits. You do not know how deep they are, and before you know anything about it you are down. Lumps of wet plastic clay cling to the boot-soles, which makes walking still more difficult and heavy. Before us the long caravan appears as a row of dark spots. Sometimes a scream is heard when a camel has fallen and has to be helped on to its legs again. Then I find time to note down my remarks and perhaps to reach the head of the caravan and thus gain ground, but I am soon the last in the train, and follow the camels' track, where the clay tramped down by their feet is less slippery.

After $1\frac{1}{2}$ farsakh we pass a point called Barindas-i-buluch, where dark patches alternate with grey. At nine