

southern parts; the hard, slag-like crust which cracks to pieces under the feet and sinks into the soft mud, is absent here, and instead the ground consists of fine yellow close clay, even on the surface, and evidently less impregnated with salt than farther south. Only occasionally a very thin efflorescence of white salt is seen on its surface. The report that sweet water reaches so far into the interior of the Kevir seems also to indicate that the beds it passes through are so closely cemented with clay that no crystallization of salt can take place.

Still the northern hills appear only as a faint outline, and below them are seen the reddish-yellow hillocks—a region which the Persians call Kotel or pass, because the road passes up and down through much-diversified country. Below, or more correctly along its very front, runs the sharply marked boundary of the Kevir, and a transitional region containing sand and pebbles seems to be absent, as also farther west, according to the statements of the men. This northern limit of the Kevir runs, it seems, fairly straight westwards up to the distant tract where it runs out in a curve to the south-west and south, to wind round the peninsula which bears and is caused by Kuh-i-nakshir. And there we had nearly a month ago seen the boundary of the Kevir. I do all I can to collect data of the course of this boundary in the districts where I have no opportunity of determining its position myself. I hope by this means, and by making use of the observations of other travellers, to collect enough material to enable me to compile a map of the Kevir, the contours of this former half-fossilized lake.

The whole sky is overcast, except far away in the west, where the sun is sinking under a dark roof of clouds amid a bright orange light which steeps the dismal desert in a bath of flaming gold. What singular effects of light! I am amazed at the scene, so unlike anything else, so fantastic, so beyond belief. Painted on a huge canvas, one would not believe it true to nature. The horizon grows dark all around us, to the north-east and east bluish-grey clouds pile themselves up, and the dome of the zenith is heavy and dull as in a November sky of