

of relief. It means "Tamarisk River." Here, then, we come to the first outposts of vegetation towards the desert sea.

The furrow is directed towards the south-east, and on its left bank we are at last on firm ground, the outermost edge of the detritus fans with sand and pebbles, where there is no need to fear falls. It is nearly two o'clock in the morning when the Kevir comes to an end, and we land on its shore with a feeling of satisfaction as if we were saved from a sea of mud.

We make for north-north-west, over gently undulating ground, and the men are soon asleep again on their camels. I propose to encamp here on sandy ground, but the men say that they will go on to *abad*, or inhabited country, before they halt. It is near, they say, but I wonder how many beats each clapper in the caravan strikes before it stops. And then we do stop, and stop dead. There is talking, quarrelling, and scolding in front, and I repeatedly hear the amiable words *peder seck* and *peder sukhte* (thy father is a dog, thy father is burnt). One can hear that a fierce dispute is going on, and that the excited men are striking one another as hard as they can. Gulam and Ali are sleeping like pigs, but when I have roused them up and sent them to the front to see what is the matter, they bring me word that we are at the village of Mesre-i-demdahaneh, and that the inhabitants will not let the caravan go on to Peyestan. They want us to stay here through the night. All caravans must do so which come from the Kevir, they say. Those which come from Shahrud stay at Peyestan, but Mesre-i-demdahaneh must also have a little profit from the caravan traffic. The two villages compete for this advantage, and are therefore mutually hostile.

The men from Yezd will not give way, and the men of Mesre forcibly prevent them from going farther, and so the quarrel is kept up. When the former perceive that they cannot continue on their way they hurriedly unload the camels, throwing the loads on the road anyhow, and abandon the whole caravan to go off themselves on foot to Peyestan. Their intention is to stir up the people in the last-mentioned village, and with their help to make the