

that has filled, and is still filling, up the great cavity and carrying on its work of degradation.

Immediately beyond Pil-i-seng, or the "stone elephant," the eye is caught by the appearance of green fields in a large furrow, where a kanat carries briny but crystal-clear water. The place is called Kellau, but there are no men or cabins there. Some peasants come hither daily from Peyestan to see after the tillage, and several such outlying fields are to be found round the villages.

We reached through a winding hollow way Peyestan, of which we had heard so much, and found it a grey, dismal, but picturesque village. It is said to contain 100 houses, and owns 8 camels and 500 sheep. A crowd of people were out on the small open market-place to gaze at us, and among them were some young women, very dirty but good-looking; when they are not much more than twenty years old they look old and worn-out. Here, also, our travelling companions from Yezd were resting, who guided us so cleverly through the Kevir, and they came up and greeted us civilly and wished us a good journey. They were going on in the night to Turut and Shahrud.

Beyond Peyestan the pebbly ground falls very slowly, at most three degrees, down towards the sharp edge of the Kevir, and to the right branches off a road to Kuh-i-kohuan, where there are water and tilled fields. To the left is Sham-shirti, an adjacent commanding eminence. Our pace is good, and the small isolated hills are soon behind us. One of these lying more to the east is named Bend-i-masian. Below this hill, at the base of the scree, a shallow fresh-water lake is sometimes formed by a flood of rain-water, which, it is said, sometimes remains for quite twenty days. Now only light yellow mud is left, looking almost white in the light.

We mount up perceptibly north-eastwards in the direction of a projecting hill Kala-avurkhune, and the higher we rise the more extensive is the view over the Kevir. There is a faint glimpse of Kuh-i-Jandak far in the south, whence we have come. In many places dark blue rain fringes hang down from the clouds over the desert—are they about to cut off our retreat and prevent