

onions, and green vegetables, melons and water-melons, grapes, pomegranates, mulberries, almonds, apricots, etc., besides cotton. It is a great advantage to Turut, as also to Jandak, Husseinan, Peyestan, and Khur, that it is a port on the coast of the desert sea. Hither come numerous caravans from Bandar Abbas, Bahramabad, Kerman, and Yezd, bringing tea, cotton, spices, etc., while the caravans from Khur carry dates, tobacco, etc. On the return journey they are chiefly laden with grain, sugar, raisins, cloth, etc. It is estimated that about four hundred caravans pass yearly in each direction, and Turut, which really is only a station on the great caravan route between Khur and Shahrud, derives a not inconsiderable revenue from the traffic. On this route the more lively traffic sets in at the beginning of May and continues through the summer, because during the warm season there is a certainty of escaping rain. The road from Turut to Khur is considered to be more dangerous in winter than that from Jandak to Peyestan; if it rains equally over both routes, the western takes four days to dry, while the eastern remains wet and slippery for quite ten days—a statement which seems to indicate that the desert there lies lower and deeper, but which does not agree with observations of altitude. For, according to these, the eastern road is a few feet higher than the western.

In winter also several caravans pass through. Six days before a Yezd caravan had landed, which had been caught by the rain in the middle of the Kevir. It had left all its baggage in the desert in order to try and get its camels safely to Turut, and after a week's exertions the men had managed to bring themselves and their camels out of the difficulty. After a few days' rest, during which the camels had eaten their fill of straw and cottonseed, they had returned in good weather to fetch their baggage.

In Turut, as in Jandak and Peyestan, I was assured that there were no other routes through the Kevir but those I travelled along. Only on these two routes is the desert navigable, and if one diverges from them to the east or west one comes into belts of desert where the ground is perpetually wet, and one sinks in the mud.