

Such ground we had ourselves met with in the neighbourhood of Kuh-i-nakshir. Particularly on the eastern route, from Turut to Khur, it is said that one should never diverge ever so little to the east or west if one would not risk sinking.

While we were staying over February 7 in Turut there was fine dense rain several times, and we were told that the desert would certainly be *gel* or slippery again. We had therefore to spend another day in waiting and arm ourselves with patience, and so much the more that there was always a chance of more rain, which might delay our return to the main caravan indefinitely. And every day we were more anxious to go. With our men we had every possible comfort, but as long as we were separated we lived hardly.

We were therefore prepared to be cut off from our caravan and be obliged to make a flanking movement, for if the Kevir became so soddened by more rain as to make the journey impossible, we could do nothing but follow the eastern margin of the salt desert to Tebbes. There is such a way, but it takes twelve long or fifteen short days' marches. I wished, however, to avoid it, for Lieutenant Vaughan travelled by it in the years 1888 and 1890, making a very valuable contribution to our knowledge of the Kevir's easterly extension.

During the delay caused by the rain I could not spend the time better than in collecting data about the surrounding country and drawing types of the people. The inhabitants of Turut proved to be of quite a different temperament from those of the villages on the south of the Kevir. It cannot be because Turut is a port, for in that case the people of Jandak, Peyestan, and Khur would all be of the same pattern, but in Turut they were wilder, bolder, and more inquisitive. There was no difficulty in getting them to sit as models when I gave them two kran apiece, but I had not finished more than a couple of portraits before the courtyard was crammed with unruly ragamuffins, who pushed in all directions and disturbed the sitter. When I had finished the fourth head they were so closely crowded round me that there was great danger of migrating vermin,