

polygonal flakes, with ridges of salt three-quarters of an inch high between them.

We had just arrived at this first narrow salt belt with stable and unyielding ground, which can be crossed in fifteen minutes, when the rain came, chased by a south-westerly storm, splashing and pelting on the bare ground, rattling on the salt flakes, drenching everything on us and beneath us. It began at nine o'clock and lasted four hours, and at ten o'clock it poured down as it never had before. It gave us a thorough cooling after the heat of the morning, but the worst was that the last bit of desert would be very doubtful, and that we ran a chance of coming to grief.

We might, however, be thankful that the rain did not come sooner, for both we and the camels were too tired to quicken our pace, and marched leisurely over the next salt crust, a farsakh broad, which spanned the mud like a bridge and helped us on for a bit of the way. There was abundance of water on its surface; it increased during the rain.

Here we rested for an hour. I wished to test the thickness of the salt, but it proved too arduous a task, and too trying with the rain pelting down. Besides, the salt was hard and tough as potstone. When we had dugged a hole 14 inches deep, it suddenly filled with water up to 6 inches from the top, and this water had a temperature of  $55.8^{\circ}$ , with an air temperature of  $55.4^{\circ}$ . Under this uppermost layer lies another which we could not examine. Certainly it is at least as thick as the other. At any rate the sheet of salt thins out northwards and southwards, and is as sharp as a knife-edge. No doubt it is connected with the salt belt we crossed on the way from Jandak, but how far it extends eastwards is unknown. It evidently marks the line of the desert's deepest depression.<sup>1</sup>

The strip of salt is bounded on the south by a very steep, loose, and treacherous terrace 10 feet high. Then follows a zone of flat undulations, lying as usual WSW. to ENE., sometimes interrupted by smaller salt flats. Bend-i-pir-i-khattla is a bank 5 feet high, also caused probably by

<sup>1</sup> I shall have an opportunity in another work of communicating the analysis of specimens of salt and clay brought home from the Kevir.