

The winding path descends the valley from the pass, at the bottom of which a *hauz* is set up, full of sweet but turbid water after the last rain. Two scarcely noticeable stone walls force the water to follow the channel in the valley which runs into the reservoir. The rocks in the country are very compact and of a light grey colour, and on more exposed flats and saddles are often brightly polished.

Leaving the little village Kelat-i-naghi on our right we go down to the flatter ground, where the cairn Chil-i-Muhamed-jun marks the distance of 2 farsakh from Aruzun.

At eleven o'clock the rain begins, and an hour later it pours down and lashes the ground with a pattering sound. All the hills vanish and only on the left are dimly visible through the mist. The wind blows hard from east-north-east, the *bad-i-Khorasan*, as the easterly wind is called in this district also; in all of north-western Persia it seems to be the rainy wind. It whistles and whines and moans and gives a dark and mournful autumnal character to the country. Small rivulets and brooks begin to trickle down all the furrows, and in an hour we are so soaked that in some places the water has penetrated right through our clothes.

We pass a last rather narrow portal, and then are out on the level steppe, and to the south-east can dimly perceive a hill called Kuh-i-kuddelau, reached, it is said, by the Kevir on the northern side. Immediately to the west of our road runs a range falling steeply towards the east, called Kuh-i-siah-tagh, or the "hill of black saxaul." Down on the steppe the saxauls grow in very close clumps, and right through the largest belt runs a dry river-bed, called Rud-khaneh-i-ghas. Here a small caravan of two men and eight camels is resting, which is carrying sacks of dung to Abbasabad. The men sit crouching under their cloaks, and let the camels graze, but they come to the camping ground of the day an hour after us. A covey of partridges runs away among the bushes as we pass by.

At the western foot of Kuh-i-kuddelau the ground is coloured light yellow by the clay deposited by rain torrents. To the south-east stand three isolated elevations, which are said to be situated in a bay of the Kevir, and beyond lie