

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### AN OASIS ON THE COAST OF THE KEVIR

DREARY, cold, and yellow as the desert, Abbasabad, with its four cottages adorned with cupolas, subsists on a thousand date palms, of which six hundred bear fruit. Of other crops only wheat, barley, and cotton are grown, and the inhabitants own sixty camels and fifty sheep. The irrigation water, which is conducted hither by a kanat of the usual kind, is salt and undrinkable; but fresh water is fetched from a rivulet of spring water in the neighbourhood. Immediately to the south of the hamlet is a broad and shallow bed called Rudkhaneh-i-gohugun, which carries water only after rain, but then often in considerable volume. It debouches into the adjacent Kevir after collecting water from several valleys to the west. After midnight, and early in the morning after a rainy day the bed is said to be so full that it cannot be crossed. The people were glad of the rain, for now all the cisterns would be filled and the pastures would sprout up. Rain may be expected up to April, but after that the sky becomes persistently clear. There is seldom rain for two or three days together, and sometimes the precipitation is very insignificant. Snow seldom falls, and the summer is very warm, while the winter is the season of wind storms.

From Abbasabad roads run to Khur-i-gez, Aruzun, Jandak, Ferrukhi, and Khur. There is said to be a direct road through the Kevir to Halvan, but no one could give any details about it.

When we crept into bed at ten o'clock the rain still