

flowing into the Kevir. That such is the case is proved by its relief and other characteristics. Its northern edge resembles a glacier or lava stream, a moving viscous mass lying high above its underlying bed, and falling steeply towards it. The southern border, on the other hand, is on a level with the firm ground or a little lower. It seems, therefore, as if a creeping motion took place in the mass northwards, and so much the more that it is mixed on the southern margin with sand derived from the coastal region. On the whole, the viscous flowing mass moves north-east, naturally very slowly, and in fits and starts; that is to say, after it has been sufficiently soaked by rain and the streams and brooks which empty themselves into it after precipitation. At some distance to the west of our route the arm expands, and is three or four times as broad as where we crossed it. This expansion possibly serves as a recipient or reservoir, from which the smaller branches of moving mud take their rise; the reservoir plays the same part as a firn basin with respect to a glacier. If the Kevir be regarded as a large lake of mud, the arm we now crossed is simply a mud river debouching into it.

Presently the slough comes to an end, and coarse sand extends before us. During all the short day's ride from Abbasabad the Khur oasis is visible, and in clear weather it can be seen from a yet greater distance. The dark palms appear in close groves, surrounded by low grey mud walls, against which sand-hills are piled up on the outer side. The village is sharply limited within its walls and outermost mud houses, to the base of which the desert reaches. Not till we skirt the western corner do we see the camp of our men and are caught sight of by them. My tent is set up in a hurry and is ready when we come up. After the usual salutation ceremonies Abbas Kuli Bek delivers his report. They had stayed four days at Jandak and had come to Khur in four days, where they arrived eight days ago. All were well, and the camels had become fat and sleek during their long rest. The first thing I did was to take a good bath to get rid of all the Kevir salt which stuck to my skin.