

is a shimmer of white salt, as if ice-floes were swimming on the surface of this fantastic lake. The more I see of the Kevir at its various outskirts and in the interior and of the country around it and of the weather, the clearer becomes the conception I had formed at the first sight of it regarding its origin. Not least had the heavy rainfall in the night made a very powerful impression in this connection. According to the Persians' statements, rain was unusually plentiful this year, and such a downpour as that of last night was of seldom occurrence under any circumstances. The real rainy season occurs in the latter half of winter. At other times the sky is generally clear, and the summer is burning hot. It is evident that under such conditions, and in the absence of protective vegetation, denudation must proceed with great and destructive energy. It is the part of the rain to wash down, during the winter months to the Kevir all the material pulverized during the summer; and during the lapse of thousands of years the depression has been filled up with solid matter. And all the streams enter the Kevir and contribute to maintain the moisture in this subterranean lake.

We march eastwards, and before us the view is unlimited, but on the right the level horizon is intercepted by a projection belonging to the chain at the foot of which we are travelling, and which is called Shiker-ab, after a well that is situated there. We cross innumerable shallow trenches, but otherwise the ground becomes more even and flat towards the east.

At Hauzi-i-patil, where we encamped (2713 feet), we had not far to go to reach the edge of the Kevir, and the question was whether we should venture to cross the great bay of salt desert which here projects out southwards. If we went straight across this bay we should save much time, but if its ground were too spongy we had no choice but to go round.

At the camp were two cisterns, which were now full to the brim of yellow rain-water. They had, declared our guide, been filled by the rain which overtook us on the way to Abbasabad, but the rain of the previous night had contributed nothing to the cisterns' store, as could be seen by the channels leading to them. It seemed, then, as if the