

The bay lies between like a great fiord, and a hasty glance over it is sufficient to convince us that it is absolutely impassable. As usual, various belts of different colours are distinguishable. The yellow are half dry, the white are covered with a sheet of salt, while the dark brown, almost black, are sodden and would not bear the weight of a camel; but worst of all are the blue areas, which simply indicate shallow rain-water still remaining on the surface; they lie at a distance of 2 to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the firm shore.

A singular and unusual as well as a slow and wearisome country awaits us during the rest of our day's march. We go towards the south-east. On the left stretches the Kevir, to the right a belt of more or less compact blown sand. The limit between the two is so sharp that it can usually be determined within a span. And this boundary does not run in a straight or slightly curved line, but is, on the contrary, as jagged as a saw, while an unbroken succession of dune spurs open out before us separated from one another by equally sharp kevir creeks. The sandspits are fairly flat and spoon-shaped, and their extremities pointing north or north-north-east are rounded off. The dunes are often held together by saxaul and shrubs, and their windward and leeward sides cannot be distinguished. Sometimes there are steps on their flanks, and in the Kevir creeks are seen concentric zones of different shades, probably lines of unequal desiccation. The rounded sand-dunes contrast sharply with the level dark brown Kevir.

It is evident that such a formation of the ground must be very difficult for travelling. If we try to cross a deeply indented Kevir creek, the first camel sinks in the mud and draws back hastily, and we have to go round. The line of march, therefore, becomes an undulating line in a horizontal plane. And if we cross the sandspits it becomes an undulating line in a vertical plane. Actually it is a combination of the two. There is in general no road or path, partly because here travellers march where they like and partly because the tracks are swept away by the wind.

The hills in the south-west, Kuh-i-khonche-datkin, Kuh-i-surkh, and Kuh-i-irech, merge more and more together, and now look like a single continuous elevation with a little