

stands at a greater depth, and as rain is there exceedingly rare one can go with impunity anywhere over the level *bayir* ground.

I by no means regretted the long *détour* round the southern edge of the great Kevir bay, for by this means we learned all the details of the coast-line; every sandspit was inserted on my map, and for a long time to come any traveller who takes the trouble to follow the same shore, will be able, by a comparison with my map, to draw correct conclusions and determine in which direction and to what amount the sand-belt is extending.

Farther south the Kevir creeks penetrate less deeply between the sandspits, and before these lie small exposed sheets of water. At length we leave the sandy coast at a still greater distance, and make straight for a promontory in the south-east. But suddenly an unexpected change presents itself, for before us lies an extensive sheet of water. The caravan leader takes off his boots and convinces himself that the ground beneath the water will easily bear—it consists of close sand; and then the camels splash cheerfully into water a foot deep. Regular waves lap round the ships of the desert, and the caravan presents a strange and picturesque spectacle as it marches right across the shallow lake.

That the usual way really passed through the water was shown plainly when we met in its midst a caravan of twenty-five camels, which was returning from Turshiz to Khur and Germe with a load of wheat. One of the men in this caravan told us, as he passed, that he and his comrades had been attacked at the last camping-ground, that is, the previous evening, by four armed robbers, who were carrying stolen goods on a camel. Whether these disturbers of the peace held the men of the caravan in respect because they had a gun to defend themselves with, or whether they were influenced by philanthropic feelings, at any rate, they confined their plundering to the caravan's reserve of powder and ball and demanded nothing else. This story made a deep impression on my men, and all the evening they talked of nothing but tales of robbers.

The point we were steering for turned out to be too far