

Our course makes straight for the highest part of Kuh-i-shuturi, which now lies in shade and assumes the aspect of a steely-grey wall, but as the sun mounts higher its colour becomes warmer and its structure comes into view again. At eleven o'clock the sun feels burning hot, and light breezes from the east-south-east are refreshing. Due east a faint strip is seen—the palms at the village Chahrdeh, the end of our day's march.

Hauz-i-seh-farsakh is a covered cistern with water from the last rain, but after that the furrows become shallow and less marked; they run south-eastwards. Dreary and lifeless is the country; the pebbles become fewer, and the shrubs grow singly, often raised on small hillocks of earth. Three men are driving four asses laden with clover towards Rabat-gur. The fall ceases, and we are now down on the bottom of the depression; at a sand-dune the absolute height was found to be only 2169 feet, so that we were 980 feet lower than at Rabat-gur. Bokend-i-gau is a grotto in a terrace by the road, and here starts a large flat furrow into the white ground in the south to which all the furrows now run. We have, then, kevir ground on our right, and *biaban* or ordinary desert on our left, these two forms which are so diverse, life of any kind being completely absent from the Kevir, while tamarisks, saxaul, shrubs, and water are to be found in *biaban*.

Hauz-i-yek-farsakh, that is the hauz at a farsakh from Chahrdeh, stands dry in this vast waste, and is so remote from all hills that it is probably very seldom filled with water. The distance to the small kevir on our right seems to be only half a farsakh; its white surface quivering in the dazzling light looks like water, and a row of black spots above it are said to be tamarisks on the shore. It seems that there is also a salt swamp called Darya-Suleimani. Kuh-i-shuturi is fainter than yesterday, but we are lower down, and we have to look through denser and less pure air than up at Rabat-gur.

The hours glide by, and we draw near to our goal, and Chahrdeh's dark row of palms becomes more distinct. The ground is now quite level and absolutely barren, and consists of yellow clay. We leave on the