

the eight days of desert is not at all at variance with the experiences of travellers through the great Kevir in more recent times.¹

Major Sykes says: "This section of the Lut has not hitherto been rediscovered, but I know that it is desert throughout, and it is practically certain that Marco ended these unpleasant experiences at Tabas, 150 miles from Kubanán."²

After another journey and a visit to Tebbes Sykes altered his views, believing that Marco Polo travelled from Kuh-benan through Naibend to Tun. "This new information, I would urge," he says, "makes it almost certain that Ser Marco travelled to Tun, as Tabas falls to the west of the main route."³ In the description of his fifth journey in Persia Sykes again suggests that Marco Polo travelled through Naibend, and on the sketch map accompanying his interesting article the route of the Venetian traveller is accordingly drawn through this oasis.⁴

The same opinion was expressed as long ago as 1882 by Colonel C. E. Stewart, who also visited Naibend during his great journey in Eastern Persia. He says regarding it: "I was much interested in hearing of Kuh Banan, as it is one of the places mentioned by Marco Polo as on his route. Kuh Banan is described as a group of villages about 26 miles from the town of Rawar, in the Kárman district. I cannot help thinking the road travelled by Marco Polo from Kárman to Kain is the one by Naiband. Marco Polo speaks of Tun-o-Cain, which, Colonel Yule has pointed out, undoubtedly means Tun and Kain. At present Tun does not belong to the Kain district, but to the Tabbas district, and is always spoken of as Tun-o-Tabbas; and if it belonged, as I believe it formerly did, to the Kain district, it would be spoken of as Tun-o-Kain, exactly as Marco Polo does. Through Naiband is the shortest and best road to either Tun or Kain."⁵

¹ *Proceed. of the Roy. Geogr. Soc.* vol. xii. (1890), p. 586.

² *Ten Thousand Miles in Persia*, p. 273.

³ *Geogr. Journal*, vol. xxvi. p. 465.

⁴ *Ibid.* vol. xxviii. p. 562.

⁵ *Proceed. of the Roy. Geogr. Soc.* vol. viii. (1886), p. 144.