

To the south and south-east the wreath of hills closes in still more, and runs together into a single, jagged outline, which, however, is at some places quite low. The even terrace of hillocks on the left retires. S. 33° W. is seen a lake mirror, but due south-west only white strips of kevir.

The dry trenches we cross become more numerous, all pointing south-west to the kevir. Most of the plants grow on their bottoms. They indicate a considerable drainage from the hills in the rainy season, and explain the formation of a permanent lake. The abundant steppe vegetation interferes with the progress of the camels, for they graze as they march. One furrow running south-south-east affords us a very convenient road for a while; it opens into a bay of the kevir pointing east. Luxuriant tamarisks grow here in great abundance, and the belt stretches a good bit to the west, where the bushes are conspicuous as dark specks against the light ground of the kevir. In one furrow the well Cha-sadak yields salt water.

The huge long basin we have followed all the way from Rabat-gur now narrows south-eastwards, and the skirting hills become more distinct in the course of the day, especially the western. Along the foot of the southern part of the latter a belt of driftsand extends.

The labyrinth of white flat mounds, cones, and ridges through which the road runs now comes to an end, and we emerge on to even kevir ground, white with salt on the surface and slippery in parts, so that the foot-pads of the camels slide and leave a long impression. Here and there grow reeds, *bishe*, in abundance, and the track has the appearance of a frozen swamp with yellow reeds sticking up out of the ice. Soon this very wet depression ceases, and a flat, spoon-shaped elevation, 6 to 16 feet high, and forming the outermost edge of the detritus slope towards the salt desert, takes its place.

The white surface of the kevir stretches out on the right, and seems to pass westwards into sandy desert, but the farther we advance the narrower the salt desert becomes, until at length only white strips are seen between the tamarisks. We have gradually descended from Tebbes, and find ourselves at an elevation of only 2018 feet.