

At sunset we came to an expansion of the valley (2930 feet), where we pitched our tents, tethered the camels in circles round the straw, took out the fowls and gave them food and water, and enjoyed the cool after the heat of the day. At nine o'clock the temperature was only 55.4° , the air was quite still and absolutely clear, and when I had made my observations, ticketed the rock specimens, and written my notes, I went to bed after a working day of sixteen hours.

The thermometer fell to 36.7° in the night, and in the morning of March 12 the air was fresh and cool, and almost all day there was some breeze from the south-west. Of the heavy masses of clouds which lately swept over Iran and brought us so many cooling showers, there was not a wisp as large as a man's hand left, and the crests stood out clear and distinct against the unbroken sky.

I walked on as usual in advance, and soon came upon a comparatively deep pool, the last remnant of a sheet of water from the last rain. The water was cold after the night and quite sweet. If our guide had known that water still stood here, he would have led us to it the night before, and saved us from the bad water we carried in our calf-skins. Now the camels drank as much as they liked, and the supply would have been sufficient for double the number. It is at such natural hauz or cisterns the wild asses and gazelles drink, but when the last drop has evaporated they have to put up with the salt-springs in the hills. A little farther down stood a sweet-water pool in the middle of the bed, and in the shadow of a close coppice of tamarisks which live and thrive in these reservoirs which water their roots for so long.

The brown, hard sandstone occurring here was rich in fossil shells, and the specimens I collected are considered sufficient to determine the age of the rocks.

The farther we descend through the dismal dale the lower the hills on either side become, and resolve themselves into low fragmentary ridges. South and south-west the country is open up to the foot of the next low ridge. I stray off too far westward, but the ring of the caravan bells recalls me to the right course, and we meet again at the