

the small cone for which we are making. The small cone turns out to be a short ridge which we have seen end on, and we travel hour after hour eastwards without seeing any sign of the promised water. The country is quite sterile, and the low ridges of sandstone and clay-slates run on on either side.

It grows dusk, and still we move on eastwards. It becomes dark, and yet the men show no signs of coming to a halt. The hunter Hassan and Hussein Ali Bek hurry on in front, evidently in search of the desired water. The transition from flat clay-ground to driftsand is only perceptible by the gait of the camels and their noiseless steps, and their loads can be heard brushing against saxaul. In the intense darkness we cannot see our hands before our eyes, and the bad-i-Khorasan has brought with it masses of cloud.

After thirteen hours' march we encamped at length at seven o'clock beside two saxaul bushes (3200 feet) without water, for the scouts had been unsuccessful in their search. The locality was called Dagemashi. The supper was a makeshift, and the camp became quiet earlier than usual.

When I went out of the tent in the light of the rising sun, I was struck by the landscape into the lap of which we had come in the complete darkness of the previous evening. Nothing then was recognizable, and I almost wondered how we came hither amid a labyrinth of low dunes, some bound together by full-grown saxaul, others free and composed of yellow driftsand in finely rounded forms, and with the fine markings produced by wind. The sandy area was bounded by low crests on either side, and we found ourselves in a longitudinal valley half a mile wide. The Naibend mountain looked more beautiful than ever, and behind this goal of ours stood a smaller elevation called Chekab.

The most noteworthy discovery at this place was made by a camel, which came tramping over a dune and was found to be wet round the nose. By following his trail we came to a pool only two minutes off towards the south, so large that all the population of Persia could have drunk their fill at it. It was 200 yards long by 20 broad,