

and seemed to have an average depth of 3 feet. The grey, turbid water was quite sweet, and a stream had flowed from the west through a dry cracked bed into the small hollow begirt on all sides by dune sand and saxauls. They were reflected prettily in the calm surface, at the side of which a covered sheepfold had been constructed of saxaul branches. While the camels drank in slow, sucking draughts, every *meshk* and sheepskin was filled till they lay shiny and puffed out like the carcasses of freshly slaughtered pigs. Flies, spiders, moths, gnats, beetles, and scorpions had begun to move about, and the trail of the last was seen in the sand like very fine pricks. It was really sad to leave this delightful spot and the little fresh-water lake, close to which we had been obliged to put up with the salt water we had brought.

Tired with the march of the previous day, I rode all the way, as on March 16 we continued towards ENE., listening, for another day, to the clang of the bells on the endlessly long road through Eastern Persia. A little farther we passed another pool, much larger but shallower, for here and there rooted plants stood up above the surface. Here also begins a length of dune parallel to our track, steep to the south-south-east, 65 to 80 feet high, and quite barren. It cannot move, but is a fixture, and certainly has to thank the prevailing wind and the configuration of the ground for its formation. The hills around are little higher than the sand.

Such is the nature of the ground for some distance until the longitudinal valley widens out, and east and south-east a sandy area extends, called Rig-i-Iskenderi, where the dunes are said to be so high that it is necessary to go round them as far as possible. Here the height is only 2907 feet. Another similar belt in the north-east bears the name of Do-rah-seh-rig or the "three sandfields of the two roads." We have, then, sand in all directions, and before us to the east rises an isolated group of hills named Takht-i-Nadiri. The names of Alexander and Nadir Shah are thus united in brotherly concord, though nearly 2000 years separated the two world-conquerors.

We follow a pathless course with no trace of man and