

bunches looking on the map like the branches of a tree. They level down this flat detritus slope, and when it rains volumes of water pour down them to the small isolated kevir basin in the north. The camels fare badly, for their foot-pads are torn by the sharp-edged pebbles of hard reddish-brown or black clinking porphyrite.

At last we come to a cairn, erected by men's hands, and then follow a row of such landmarks. But they do not mark a road, having been erected only by camel herdsman who could not otherwise find their way to the pastures in bad weather. The air is heavy and sultry, and it is warm walking. The northern hills are quite invisible, the Tebbes hollow and its skirting hills are done with, and new tracts await us in this dismal and forsaken Iran. The belt of kevir shines like a bright white streak, an ice-covered lake in this scorched country, where neither animals nor plants seem to find a refuge. We seem to see the heat around hovering and quivering in the thick sultry air. The dogs fly from one little shade to another, scratching sand cooled in the night from below the steeply eroded banks.

I go on foot to spare my riding camel, but at last I have enough of it, stop in a ravine and wait, for I am a good half-hour in advance. The caravan must go cautiously across the deep ravines, and this wastes time. Mirza seems disgusted with the long walk, and the others chaff him, but when I am on foot no one else rides. It is pleasant to sit again on the camel's back, and the more so because it begins to blow from the south-east. Soon the wind has risen to half a gale, the distant hills are wiped out and the nearer quickly fade away. Cloaks and lighter articles lying loose on the loads are caught by the wind and have to be secured. The wind is right in our faces, and the camel's gait is more than usually unsteady. Owing to the violent wind we do not notice the heat, 74.5° , the highest we have hitherto experienced.

Nadir's Throne, which we have left behind us, again appears foreshortened, and looks like a very small dim hill in the haze, and before us runs a row of hillocks among which we presently find the high road to Naibend, marked