

high, carry the path farther to east-north-east. The ground does not support a blade of grass. Another broader furrow is white with salt, and a streamlet is bitter and salt. The camels try the water, but lift up their heads again at once, spluttering, puffing, and blowing with their fleshy lips. The whole region is a salt sewer, a desolate, dismal, dead country. At Tagh-i-Ali-Riza-Khan the camels could indemnify themselves, for here stood a large pool of sweet rain-water. Only a detailed map can give a perfectly clear notion of the country. Here there is no order, no great predominating distinct feature in the configuration and orography. Everything has fallen to pieces; all the hills are weathered away and only fragments and ruins are left—indications and memorials of a former lofty fold in the earth's crust. No vegetation interferes with denudation and weathering; the hills fall asunder into pebbles, the pebbles are pulverized into dust, the dust is washed away by the torrents, filling up depressions and forming sheets of level kevir. Only on the left have we now a more continuous crest of porphyrite,—red-coloured, ragged, and in ruins. It is called Kamar-i-Ali-Riza-Khan. Above it the sky is of a singular yellow, an orange hue, like the reflection of a prairie fire, and a violent gust from the west whirls up the fine dust and soil in vortices and comets' tails, which chase one another over the dry, miserable ground.

At one o'clock the temperature was 76.3° , the highest reading hitherto observed. And yet it felt much less oppressive than lower temperatures in calm air. The wind refreshed us.

And still the camels stride with long, deliberate, and dignified step along the nearly straight track. Their gait is majestic and imposing, and they plant their pads steadily and firmly on the ground. It is only their patience that can overcome the long silent roads of the desert. They seldom turn their heads. They look straight before them, and their fine bright eyes are calm and philosophical. But what do they think about—these heavy toiling giants? Their range of vision does not extend as far as the edge of the horizon. They are only looking forward to the evening camp, straw, and cottonseed.