

the grey tones of the detritus fan, and here and there spreads a flat white surface of salt, or a flat of yellow mud.

The camp was set up in a large drainage channel running south-east, and called Shand-i-shamtuk (2900 feet). As at the last camp, water could be obtained anywhere by digging in the sandy bed. The place is well known to caravans, and one had arrived before us from Ser-i-cha, on its way to Naibend, with a load of barley. Ser-i-cha is a village under the Birjan administration, and the hakim or governor of Birjan had forbidden his subjects to sell grain to their neighbours, in order that the price should not rise in his own district. The caravan, which was now encamping at Shand-i-shamtuk, therefore, was led by smugglers, who made use of desert roads, avoiding the great highway between Birjan and Naibend, which we had now left at some distance to the north.

This day was *norus*, or New Year's Day, and my Shiite servants, that is, the whole party, waited on me in a solemn procession to receive small gifts of silver coin, and wish me a heathenish *eid mobarek*, or a Happy New Year.

March 22. It is so late in the year and yet the minimum temperature was 31.6° , and it is 46.8° at seven o'clock. We clothe ourselves warmly again, for it is not summer here. The men call the cool north wind now blowing *bad-i-bahar* or "spring wind." Perhaps it is characteristic of the season, and is the forerunner of greater warmth.

To the right we leave a gap or portal, whither all the streams in the country converge to pass down to the Lut. Saxauls and shrubs form a steppe here and there, but elsewhere the ground is strewn with pebbles, and is sterile, and splinters of quartzite and flint bear evident traces of deflation. Nemek-sar, or the salt pan, is the name of an irregular kevir flat among the hills. In this country *nemek-sar* has the same meaning as kevir, or salt desert, farther north.

Then we are stopped by a real stream, the Rudkhaneh-i-jangal-i-nakho (2946 feet), with a bed 100 yards broad, containing 50 cubic feet of red, turbid, and bitter running water. On its right bank stands a small long hill, and