

But the rush of water is seldom heard in these innumerable beds, which converge to the lowest part of the hollow. It rained, indeed, fine and close, at 8 o'clock on March 23, but the dry ground showed scarcely any signs of moisture.

It is singular that the summer still fails to put in an appearance. The temperature does not rise above 55° , and it is rather cool and chilly in the south-easterly wind now blowing. The world of ragged weathered hills which surrounded us yesterday has now been swallowed up in a greyish diffused murkiness, and the sky is hidden in heavy threatening clouds.

After an hour's journey over level ground, here and there abundantly clothed with steppe vegetation, the mist and rain grow lighter, and the view is clear along the road, which soon loses itself in a labyrinth of small irritating and tiring hills, a confusion of small ridges, mounds, and dells where it goes constantly up and down. For some time we walk up a furrow 40 yards broad, between red and grey mounds of porphyrite, where also a reddish-brown sandy volcanic tuff occurs. At the foot of the hillocks crystals of salt often lie like fresh fallen snow. We have never been so high as we are now since we left Teheran, and this circumstance, combined with unfavourable weather, explains the unexpectedly low temperature, barely $55\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ at one o'clock.

At the small saddle Bend-i-ser-i-gudar (4590 feet) is a pool of sweet water, where the camels slake their thirst and we replenish the supply in our sheepskins. And then we march on again over the same rough and troublesome country as before, amidst clay slates and porphyrite, all weathered and disintegrated, and over erosion furrows which are now sometimes wet at the bottom from lately running streams. Sometimes the ground bears vegetation, and sometimes it is bare; the tracks of camels and sheep are numerous, but still this country is fearfully desolate and forsaken. In the afternoon it begins to rain again, and the air is so fresh that we prefer to go on foot. How different from the germsir or warm land of Tebbes and Naibend! But then we are on a relatively lofty rise between two depressions.