

Shah-kuh springs up in front of us. To judge by these names one might suppose that the Persians in this country are very loyal.

At eight o'clock it seems as though the day were going to be oppressively hot, but after two hours the sun is hidden by light clouds, and a refreshing southern breeze springs up—it is like drinking a glass of cold water on a summer's day. Yellow swirls chase one another in the wind on the right of our road, and we can count seven such pillars of dust at one time. They come like yellow phantoms from the desert, and sweep solemnly over the ground. One of them made its way straight over my camel. It came in a spiral like a whirlwind, a cyclone, but I heard its swish in the distance, and could put myself in a state of defence. It raised my rug and buried me in soil and dust, and moved on swiftly, though at a distance it appeared to move very slowly. When it came to the foot of the red hills to the left it fell to pieces and vanished.

For a time we march up a flat, gently rising furrow. Its bed is wet and white with salt, and in places tamarisks grow in abundance. Higher up a little rivulet of salt water trickles down, forming several large pools of water in the bed. Close on the right we leave the lonely, poverty-stricken hamlet Hired, with its dome-covered huts and its kanat, where we can both see and hear the rippling water below through the shafts 6 feet deep. We have a pass before us, 5184 feet, the highest on the whole journey, but the ascent is easy, and from the top the usual change of scene is observed. We command the landscape to the south-east for a distance of perhaps two days' journey. In three places shepherds and shepherdesses are seen with small flocks. All the day we are amid close, light-grey diabase porphyrite.

We camped not far from the picturesquely sculptured red hill, Kuh-i-deh-no, at the water tank Hauz-i-hatam (5085 feet), where several nomads were staying. Two old women, hideous apes, came to beg, and had their likenesses taken. A shepherd was watching two hundred sheep belonging to various owners in the neighbouring villages. He said that the people are poor in this district, the soil is