

sink in, while others again are wet as if water had risen up from below. Persians declare that wicked spirits and demons dwell in the desert, and play all kinds of malicious tricks on human beings.

South of the great bay, between Khur and Cha-meji, is Hauz-i-Shah Abbas, a water-cistern; beyond it, "the desert becomes worse than ever; heretofore it has consisted of solid earth, but here we reach sand-dunes, and the road eads up one and down another, the one so like the other that it is difficult to keep on the right track. . . . The horses sank at every step to their fetlocks, and sometimes to their knees in the loose sand. . . . At last, after six miles of sand, we got to a low ridge of hills."

This is the sand-belt, the northern edge of which I followed on the road to Cha-meji, and of the breadth of which we can grasp some notion, thanks to Stewart's figures.

Stewart visited Tebbes, and says that he was the first Englishman who had been there after M'Gregor. Thence his route runs north-east to Turbet-i-haidari, at some distance from the eastern margin of the Kevir. He communicates some information about the roads through the great desert which he has wrongly interpreted. "From Dasjirdun (Dest-gerdun), which is, I hear, a thriving place, there are roads directly across the desert to both Shahrud and Damghan. This is the desert road from Tabbas to Teheran, and almost all the tobacco which is exported to Teheran is sent on camels by it." When we learn that there is water at every stage, and that one halting-place is called Tahrud, it is not hard to perceive that this road is the one afterwards tried by Vaughan, which runs through Turut. He heard also that the road does not cross the Kevir, but skirts much of it. But by the road from Khur to Semnan or Damghan there is a great deal of kevir.

On Stewart's map of Khorasan, excellent for its time, Kuh-gugird is made double as long as it ought to be, and runs across the desert east-south-east instead of east-north-east to the neighbourhood of Husseinan. More suspicious is the direct road laid down from Chahrdeh, straight through the Kevir and through Turut to Semnan, and the more so that the names of halting-places are inserted on the