

the map. Such a way has never existed any more than a direct way from Dest-gerdun to Turut.

Edward Stack, B.C.S., travelled through Persia in 1881. He did not touch on the great Kevir, but he gives observations of smaller kevir basins in other parts of the country. He makes the following reflections on a kevir depression about midway between Lar and Kerman, some of which are very true to nature:¹ "Perhaps it may be well to explain what a Persian *kavîr* is. It is the result of the bareness of Persian mountains and the saline virtues of a Persian plain. The mountains, being destitute of trees, brushwood, or grass, have for centuries been wearing away under sun, wind, and rain; the crumbled rocks extend in long smooth slopes down to the plain, while a long smooth slope rises again to the hills on the opposite side. Such a slope will often be 20 miles broad. The rain and snow of winter, descending from the hills in streams small and great, lose themselves in these porous slopes, and emerge again at the lowest level of the plain, but in a far different shape. The water has become full of salt, and oozes up to the surface in patches of glittering white. Thus a *kavîr* must always follow the drainage line of the plain in which it happens to lie, and if the plain be a large one, the *kavîr* may be seen like a white strip stretching away in the direction in which the plain falls, till plain and *kavîr* are lost in the sky. For the rest, the quantity of water in a *kavîr* varies at different times and in different places, so that you may have either a mere saline efflorescence on good firm clay, or a salt quagmire in which the laden beast will founder if it strays off the track. . . . The general aspect of a *kavîr* is utter bareness, unbroken by stone or weed. The smallest object, they say, shows in vastly magnified proportions; if there happens to be a clod on the surface, it looks like a hill."

On his way from Kerman to Yezd, Stack passed through Kuh-benan, Marco Polo's Cobinan, to Bafk. It may be mentioned, by the way, that his map shows a direct road from Kuh-benan to Baghabad (Bahabad). On setting out from Bafk north-westwards he says:² "We took two days'

¹ Stack's *Six Months in Persia*, vol. i. p. 175.

² P. 245.