

provisions and marched for Khan-i-Panj, over 2 miles of drifting sand, where the road is marked out by pillars, then over hard clay, and thence into the kavir. This kavir comes down the whole way from Zarand (Serend). . . . We found it 6 miles broad, a perfectly level tract of salt-encrusted clay. . . . In the middle is a salt stream, . . . we crossed it by a ford paved with stones. . . . Beyond the kavir the plain grows hard and stony, and slopes upwards to Khan-i-Panj."

Abbott had travelled along exactly the same route in 1849, but in the opposite direction. He gives the same description: "Leaving Khaneh-Punj we soon afterwards entered upon an entirely sterile tract, which presently resolved itself into salt kevvir; and at the 7th mile from Khaneh-Punj crossed the nearly dry bed of an intensely salt streamlet which flows through this plain. On approaching Bafk we traversed a sandy tract. . . ." <sup>1</sup> Abbott found the bed almost dry in the middle of December; Stack found water in it at the end of April. January, February, and March are the proper rainy season.

One of Stack's servants had once crossed the great Kevir northwards from Jandak, and he relates his experiences in the following words: "At Jandak they purchased camels and procured a guide, who led them 1 farsakh to an abambar,<sup>2</sup> where they watered their cattle, filled their skins, and entered the kavîr. The guide slipped away at the earliest opportunity, and went home. Their march had begun in the afternoon; next morning the sun rose out of the kavîr, they marched all day and saw the sun set in the kavîr, and it was not till noon of the third day that they arrived in Husainân. The breadth of the kavîr thus crossed is said to be one-and-twenty farsakhs; it is described as genuine kavîr, puffy, full of holes, and dangerous to be trodden, save in the beaten track. . . . In this journey across the kavîr, my informant said the whole party nearly perished of thirst, and his horse dropped dead under him. One of his master's sons died in Damghan from the effects of fright and suffering.

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Roy. Geogr. Soc.* vol. xxv. (1855), p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Evidently Hauz-i-Haji-Ramazan.