

When Stewart came to the bed of Shand Ali Riza, where sweet water can be easily obtained by digging, the caravan was in such an exhausted state that "few, if any, of our party could have hoped to escape if we had not been guided to this water." Between Charahs and Yazdun, Stewart also crossed the great desert which lies to the east of Kain, on the borders of Afghanistan, and where I believe that Marco Polo travelled on the way from Tunocain to Sapurgan. In its lowest hollow there is a nemek-sar, or salt lake, named Dak-i-Khurshab.¹

In the year 1887 Lieutenant R. E. Galindo crossed the western part of the great Kevir between Khur and Damgan. I have, indeed, been unable to find any account or map of his journey, but Lord Curzon, in his monumental work on Persia, gives the following extract from Galindo's report: "Perfectly level ground, at first principally black mud, with isolated patches of white salt and slimy pools of green water. Gradually the salt increases till it becomes a hard, almost unbroken, white crust, still with the green pools standing on it, and looking something like the little pools left by the sea in the hollows of a rocky coast at low water. It is no exaggeration to say that the whole of this track (about 26 miles) is marked out by carcasses of camels."²

In other places were found few salt crystals or none at all, but "it appeared as if very liquid black mud had been suddenly arrested and hardened while in a state of violent ebullition or effervescence. The ground is thickly pitted and honeycombed with round holes, from 8 to 12 inches in diameter, and generally about the same depth, though some go down 2 or 3 feet. Between these are rounded nodules or ridges of mud, some of which are solid, but some are merely bubbles or blisters of earth, with a thin crust covering a treacherous hole. On the path a horse has to move with slow circumspection, stepping from knob to knob, or he would soon be lamed. Off the beaten track, of course, it is simply impassable."

This description is very apt, and is true for certain

¹ *Proceedings of the Roy. Geogr. Soc.* vol. viii. (1886), pp. 142 *et seq.*

² *Persia*, vol. ii. p. 249.