

first spring of the village of Seif." With the exception of a farsakh of kevir the road runs over hillocks and sand. Lastly there are 4 farsakh to Khabis.

Of the whole distance of 51 farsakh, only 5 then are through kevir, and, as it is precisely kevir ground which is formidable to caravans in case of rain, this road between Neh and Khabis is not among the worst through the deserts of Persia. The only difficulty of any account is the transport of water.

This road is 170 miles long, and as the Persians reckon it 51 farsakh, a farsakh here is $3\frac{1}{3}$ miles. The road on the English map is, as stated, 180 miles long, but it wanders off to the north to Gudar-i-barut, which lies at a distance of 6 farsakh from Gujar. This détour is compulsory after heavy rain, which turns the ground about Bagh-i-assad into mud where the camels sink in, and the same is true when the Shur-rud is flooded with water; at Gudar-i-barut it can always be crossed, for its bottom there consists of pebbles and sand which can bear the weight of camels.

The direct road to Khabis runs, then, straight through the Nemek-sar, which on maps is represented as a swamp or a lake. Regarding this, I obtained the following information in Neh. Where the road crosses kevir the salt desert is only a few farsakh broad, but it extends for an enormous distance in a long narrow strip south-eastwards, following closely the whole south-western margin of the Lut basin. Lakes have never been heard of. From Bagh-i-assad the Shur-rud can be seen running on as far as the sight can reach without the slightest trace of a lake. Probably we have here to do with a phenomenon of the same kind as in the salt strips running east and west in the great Kevir. The Nemek-sar is in the dry season a perfectly dry and hard salt crust which is only in the rainy season flooded with water, depending on the volume of the discharge. The Shur-rud, the only stream passed on the way may, it is said, attain a breadth of a hundred paces and a depth of 3 feet, but the volume of water varies considerably in different years.

The caravan traffic takes place only in the cold season,