

After noon the heat was modified by a rapid southerly wind which stirred up the dust and hid the hills; and even the valley mouth at Bendan, which had just before appeared as a slight dip in the hills, vanished behind us. The small clouds grew larger. They did not come sailing from any particular direction, but increased where they were, growing out of nothing. But afterwards they passed away again, and the sky became clear once more.

We march quickly down over the waste. We have thirteen camels, for I now let my men ride, and, besides, we have two animals in reserve. My new riding-camel is surefooted, but I miss my old friend. A trusty fellow who leads our train tells me that our old camels seemed perplexed and astonished at first; but that when they had been led before sunrise to good pasturage, a farsakh above Bendan, they were quite content, and "by this time they are stuffed full," he adds.

The road is the largest and most trodden we have seen since Veramin. Here many men and caravans have travelled along it in the course of time. Now also we meet two parties of wayfarers, preparing to pass the night at a covered tank which is full after the last rain. We have rather a prejudice against these wells, now that the plague is in the country, and all travellers from Seistan halt at them.

Now and then comes a warm breeze, which raises the temperature to  $85.1^{\circ}$ , and it feels desperately hot, but I know very well that I could bear  $20^{\circ}$  more. The country becomes still more level, and only the light and easy gait of the camels shows that we are going down. Half-way we have descended to 2322 feet, and at the evening camp to 2156 feet. We cross a line of flat banks and terraces, which cannot be anything else than old shore lines of the Hamun. They are intersected occasionally by dry beds, which at times carry rain-water down to the great flat depression. The highest of these beaches lies about 490 feet above the present surface of the Hamun. Where we halt on the steppe the grazing for camels is scanty, but on the other hand the air and ground swarm with all kinds of insects, with and without stings. I have to keep my tent closed