

just as in the Lop desert. Sometimes we might be passing through one of the characteristic Persian villages, all mud cupolas and walls, but there are no palms or screaming children here. We soon notice that these clay elevations stand in a line running N. 25° W. to S. 25° E. They are, then, formed by deflation. The wind, which comes from NNW., ploughs up the ground, the harder parts remaining in the midst of the channels. As we are going south-west we have to cross them all. It is, however, much easier here than in the Lop desert, for the elevations are often interrupted. We also notice in two escarpments that the clay is horizontally bedded. This is a relic of the deposition of alluvium by the Hamun in former times. Often the bedding is concealed, and the blocks of clay have been deformed by rain, grooved vertically by the rain-water's small furrows and channels. At the bottom of the hollows the ground is often level and hard as asphalt, for here the rain has deposited the washed-down silt. It is a horrible country, a confusion of misleading paths, and it is hard to understand how the leader finds his way. No doubt he has his old well-known marks.

On the largest mass of clay, some 65 feet high, stands the column marked with the number 27, and when soon after we have emerged from the worst entanglement on to a small level space with a little vegetation, we pitch our camp, No. 70, at a height of 1706 feet. It was warm and close in the narrow corridors after the wind fell, and house-flies, biting flies, mosquitos, moths, and spiders came out again.

Early next morning two of our riders scampered on in front on their jambas or running dromedaries to see if there were water in a tank on the road. If not, we should be obliged to turn westwards, as we had now only one skin of water left. What a contrast: here this dry desert and not far off the Hilmend's inexhaustible wealth of water! It is just the same in the Lop, where one is in the midst of the driest desert only a day's journey from lakes and rivers. Here, however, it is better than in the Lop desert, where a drop of water can nowhere be found.

We go on and pass mark No. 26. Near it the blocks