

becomes free of sand, and the saxauls come to an end, but the tamarisks grow the more freely on cones raised by their own roots. Of sand only here and there a yellow crest is seen above the darker line of vegetation. Farther on the tamarisks attain to a height of 16 feet, are dark and spreading, and the more conspicuous from the yellow ground on which they grow.

The weather is good; it certainly feels warm with a temperature of  $79.9^{\circ}$  at one o'clock, but there is a breeze from the north-west, and I sit with both legs over to starboard and thus have the sun on my back. We long for night, water, and cool air. The hours pass so slowly when the landscape is monotonous and the day is hot, and we travel nine or ten hours a day. Light as soap-bubbles, and with wings glittering like small rainbows in the sun, the ephemeral insects float noiselessly against the light breeze.

We pass on the left three gumbaz or monuments of clay called Gabristan-i-Shela, and the bed of the Shela river is very near on the south. Shortly after we come to the road between Nasretabad and Kuh-i-Malek Siah, nothing but an insignificant track, for it is washed out annually by the rain on the immense alluvial flat that now stretches before us, where vegetation is almost absent.

A little later we are at the old bed of the Shela (1640 feet), which runs out of the southern extremity of the Hamun and proceeds in a south-westerly direction to the great salt swamp, God-i-Zirre, in south-western Afghanistan. We follow its left bank for a while. The bed is here 200 to 230 feet broad, and its bottom lies 20 to 23 feet below the level of the country. The upper part of the strand terrace is perpendicular and the lower part is steep. Water stands nearly everywhere in the deepest part of the channel, in white salt pools or in crescent-shaped, bluish-green sheets at the bends. Where we cross the bed there is a promontory, with a small channel cut through the middle. Here the bottom is treacherous, and to make it passable a footpath of tamarisk branches and twigs has been laid down. On either side of the point almost the whole bed is filled with large sheets of stagnant