

wake the men in good time for an early start kept me from sleep after 2 A.M. The packing and loading was done in darkness. After going for a couple of miles over heavy dunes we were just approaching a broad Dawan some sixty feet high when the frequency of living tamarisks attracted my attention. One bush was growing almost on the surface of a bare patch of clayey soil, without the usual cone, and close to it was a hollow to a depth of ten feet below the ground level.

More with a wish to divert the gloomy thoughts of the Shahyar men than from any real hope I set them to work here. After clearing away some two feet of drift sand, blue clay was struck which felt heavy, with the faintest suggestion of damp. The sand below this layer, of about one foot, felt cool and another stratum of clay beneath it distinctly clammy. So nine Ketmans worked away for all their wielders were worth. With the last two days' scanty water rations we all felt thirsty. At a depth of five feet the sand grew distinctly damp. How eagerly the clods thrown out from the bottom were weighed by us who watched the work! At last the strokes of Muhammad, the best of the Shahyar men, who was digging away at the bottom, gave a clicking sound suggestive of increased moisture, and at ten feet depth the damp sand changed into mud. Two feet more, and water began slowly to gather under the man's feet. It was deliciously fresh, but gathered quite slowly.

I had sent all the camels except one ahead under Lal Singh's steering. The ponies were kept back by the well. They seemed to realize for what purpose, and eagerly pricked their ears at every click of the Ketmans in the mud. At last we could let them have their first sorely needed drink, a kettleful of muddy water for each animal. Then the filling of four skins or 'Mussucks' began, intended to replenish our store of water. It was terribly slow work, as the sides of the well at the bottom where the sand had been drained of its moisture, kept falling in and necessitated fresh clearing again and again. But how elated we all felt by the sight of this precious water!

This relief from immediate anxiety was doubly welcome, since the distant view which opened from the Dawan just