

crowd, hesitated to sit as a model, she was pushed forwards by her bustling kinsfolk to the mealsack which lay opposite mine. We were still near Teheran, where all the women wear veils, but here none thinks of hiding her face. I seemed to have returned to primitive humanity, and would gladly have stayed a day longer among these simple, unsophisticated Persian peasants.

So the day passed, and I went back to the camp where the men were engaged in tightening up and binding the water sacks. Elburz towered above the earth more magnificent than ever, for the cold night had thoroughly purified the air. The whole range stood out in all its details; the shadows in the fissures between the spurs and in the higher troughs of the valleys were dark blue with sharp contours, while the snowfields, where they were caught by the sun, glowed with the purest pale ruby tints, and a faint reflexion from the sunset still adorned the mighty crest long after the whole plain around us lay in shadow, and was fanned by the scarcely perceptible cool breeze which heralds in the night. And Demavend's peak is the last point within sight which bids farewell to the flying sun.

The ridge of the Twelve Imams to the south now presents a dark and boldly drawn profile, and Siah-kuh is more conspicuous than yesterday. Merre and Herrat are the names of the two small isolated elevations in the west, and Kuh-i-nemek, or salt peak, the small height already seen from Veramin, appears west-south-west, while Kuh-i-gech is the nearest elevation to the north. But beyond the last reefs south-east and east-south-east lies the desert, endless and ominous, waiting for us; and when I ask our host what he calls the great desert, he answers only *biaban*, a word which means *bi-ab*, without water, and therefore desert in general.