

able to accumulate in it. In this hollow tamarisks form in some places regular thickets; these tough, hardy bushes contrive to send down their roots where there is the best prospect of water, and so here is the well Cha-Alem which we have heard spoken of.

We pass two stone huts, but see no human beings. But that they are not far off becomes evident when we, a little farther on, ride past a hut of mud and stone with an arched door and surrounded by fields where green vegetables and wheat are grown. A few minutes more and our leader halts at the village of Alem, a single group of buildings like a caravanserai, where some camels lie ruminating in an enclosed court. Some men and boys come out of their hiding-places, evidently astonished at the unusual sight before them.

We hastily set up our camp, immediately to the north of the village, eager to obtain shelter in the tents from the still falling snow, which gradually passed into rain. It did not seem long before we had the pleasure of warming our hands before a large fire where we shook the snow off and dried our clothes. The villagers supplied us with as much fuel as we could use, and brought sweet water to our kitchen—the two water sacks from Cha-sefid had been emptied by the time we met the herdsmen from Anarek. They had not much straw to offer, but we were glad to buy what there was. Six eggs and a fowl were all the other provisions to be obtained in this little desert village, where the crop has to be drawn out of the earth by the help of any water that can be obtained from the ground by artificial means.

We stayed a day at Alem. We could not procure more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ kharvar of chopped straw, but that was all that was wanted to take us safely to Jandak. As the inhabitants themselves fetch the straw they require all the way from Ardekan it was very dear, and they asked 1 kran per batman or 15 tuman for the lot. The day was also spent in baking wheaten bread for four days' journey, while I roamed about the country to get my bearings as correctly as possible, photographed, and drew a panorama of the whole neighbourhood.