

traverse to Turut when the road divides, the left branch being the great caravan road from Peyestan to Shahrud. Near Turut we pass a bit of salt desert, which does not seem to be connected with the great Kevir. It is already dusk when we make our entry into Turut, through narrow lanes between low walls, and are greeted by fifty noisy gapers. It took a good hour to find out a tolerable hut.

Turut is said to contain 200 to 250 houses, and at the most 1000 inhabitants. The place obtains its water from a river with its source 4 farsakh off to the north, and its name is simply Rudkhaneh-pai-kale, or the "river at the foot of the fort." Now it contained only a tiny trickle, which formed in the hollows of the bed almost stagnant ponds of yellowish-brown dirty water. After rain, and especially early in spring, the volume of water is large, but even then does not reach the Kevir, for it is drawn off on the way into several cisterns. In summer it fails altogether. On the other hand, the kanat of Turut always carries water, even if there is no rain.

The river is deeply cut into deposits of löss, which rise on both sides into vertical walls 40 to 50 feet high and are here and there, especially at sharp bends, undermined by the running water and hollowed into caves. In some places these have been further excavated and enlarged to form storehouses for straw and firewood. The vertical wells of the kanat are sunk right through the löss bed, and its stream emerges from the base of the löss terrace, where it forms a tiny waterfall. The water is clear but not quite sweet. The mouths of the vertical shafts at the top of the bed of löss have been widened out by rain, and on the sides innumerable small rain furrows run downwards. When the ground is smooth and wet, as was the case now, it is dangerous to go near these funnels. A man may slip down into a yawning well and find himself in a very unhappy plight at the bottom.

A large part of the very picturesque village lies at the foot of the löss terrace, on the front of which, facing south, stands an *imamsadeh*, or holy tomb, in a fine situation, with a guristan where sat two women meditating at the graves of their departed kinsmen. There is no bazaar, but there