

palms, but I have longed to rest in their enclosure and listen to the rustling in their crowns. To the north-east the snowfields of Kuh-i-shuturi shine through the dark green polished palm leaves, and far away on the right extremity is seen the spur of Kuh-i-jemal, while the western skirting hills of the basin are quite invisible in the present light and at such a great distance.

Above the gate on the front of the garden is a *balakhaneh*, and from its windows and doors one can command the whole horizon. Here we are at the upper end of the long street which runs like a yellow narrowing riband between the dark groves, and exactly along it now glows the setting sun.

The canals of the garden converge into two channels, each of which waters a side of the oasis; side branches are given off from both to the fields and gardens, and the system is so arranged that various areas are irrigated in turn. Now the whole supply of one canal was conducted to the highest field, which in a short time was under water; then the water is led into the next field, and so on, down to the lowest margin of Tebbes.

Some men in black lambskin caps, dark roomy coats, wide trousers and slippers, enter the garden in festal procession, each bearing a vessel, and place before my tent two loaves of sugar, a bowl of honey, bowls and jugs of sweet and sour milk, dates, roghan, and bread—this is the Governor's *dastarkhan* or gift of welcome. The evening wind is cool after the warm day, and the brazier is acceptable. The singing-birds which twittered in the palms are silent and seek their nests. The jackals start a melancholy serenade, and one has only to commence his long-drawn-out dismal laugh to start a thousand others, and so the soft, plaintive song of the desert vibrates through the night. The canals murmur pleasantly, overpowering the voices from the men's tent. The sky is perfectly clear, and the stars shine with great brilliance. The palms stand out in dark outline, spreading their dark fingers like emblems of peace over our tents, and their hard parchment-like leaves rustle and rattle as the desert wind whistles through them.