

green shade over the lanes in summer. At the sides stand grey walls and houses, with roofs usually crowned with mud cupolas. Above the walls rise stately palm trees, and their elegant regular forms look all the grander beside the disorderly confusion of branches in the knotty crooked trees. The picturesqueness of this Eastern urban scene is by no means marred by the living figures and some of my largest camels. They are quite in keeping with the picture, and indeed one can hardly imagine palms and oases without camels and dromedaries.

I have already mentioned an old white-bearded ecclesiastic who always showed himself in the Governor's company. We also made the acquaintance of another Seid, who did not announce to the world his descent from the prophet Mohamed by the usual green turban, but wore, instead, a green scarf round his waist. He insisted that this application of the holy green colour had quite the same validity as if worn on the head, but I suspect that his connection with the prophet was doubtful. All the same this gentleman, a tall man with a black kullah, a kind of frock coat, and a full beard, was extremely friendly and polite, and one day invited me to an entertainment. There was *sekenjebin*, a sour drink of grape juice which had stood fermenting for forty days and been then sweetened with sugar; *sherab*, a very innocent wine, which tastes more like sugared water; *chai* or ordinary tea, which is drunk in small glasses with a great deal of sugar, but without cream or lemon; *shirini* or sweets, spices in white sugar, and other kinds of Persian confectionery; and lastly *penir-i-khorma* or date cheese, which was the prime dish of the feast, and is made from the topmost pith of the palms out of which the long leaves grow. The juicy, white, tasty vegetable substance is considered a great delicacy in the land of palms, for to obtain the date cheese the whole palm tree must be sacrificed; it dies after the amputation, and therefore the operation is performed only on condemned trees, that is, such as stand in the way of building or are so closely packed as to spoil one another.

After the entertainment I had the honour of drawing