

palms are to be found which are two hundred years old. They are said to grow and grow, but never to rise above a certain height in consequence of the storms which occur from time to time, and the cold that prevails in winter above the warmer layer of air on the surface of the ground. The tallest palms I saw in Tebbes were 50 feet high or a little more, but they are usually much shorter, 23 to 26 feet. Here we are at the northern limit of the date palm. No palm is to be found north of the great Kevir, unless it be a single, well-protected specimen.

The Persians say that palms are like human beings; they languish and die from a gun-shot, they are drowned if they are flooded with water, and they are frozen to death by cold. The male palm has several wives, like the Mohammedans; the female is noble, delicate, and dainty, and must be tended with the greatest care; she is like a domestic animal which renders the most inestimable service to man. All Tebbes lives solely on the produce of palms, and there is no part of the palm but what is useful in some way. Dumb brutes can move from place to place, but the palm is fixed to one spot. She grows up from the root, and must some day decay and die in the same place. An old Persian said that the palm differed from other trees in having life and soul, and being able to think, mourn, and rejoice. If she is treated with kindness she feels gratitude, and lets dates ripen in large rich clusters under her crown of leaves, but if she is neglected, she becomes surly and omits to bear fruit.

The Seid, the one with the green sash, informed me that the townspeople liked to kill a palm or two during the Moharrem festival, and regale their guests with *penir-i-khorma* or palm cheese, which is considered the greatest delicacy the place affords. But only such palms are sacrificed as no longer bear fruit or which stand in the way. Otherwise it would be killing the goose which lays the golden eggs. But when there is good reason for the slaughter it is preferably postponed to the Moharrem festival, when date cheese plays the same part as Christmas pudding or the fatted calf with us.