

himabad-i-pain, or Upper and Lower Abraham's Town, and to the left Valiabad. In front of us rise the palms of Fahanunch, separated from us by a belt of hard sterile ground.

We march through the narrow lanes of the village, and encamp in a field by a small thicket of palms. Even the most squalid villages assume a handsome and comfortable aspect owing to the palms, and the greyest and most dismal lane looks picturesque when palms wave their crowns above it. In this tract, however, palms are of less importance than wheat, barley, and millet. Cotton also is grown.

Fahanunch has 140 houses, Kurit 250; below the former are also two more villages, Muessinabad and Saghabad. The Bahabad road from Kurit, already mentioned, passes also through Fahanunch, and the villagers asserted that the belt of kevir on this road would even now not be too dangerous to cross. A caravan-owner intended to set out in two days. He said that wild asses were very numerous in the Bahabad desert.

"If you can procure me a perfect and faultless specimen of a stallion, I will give the hunter 10 tuman," I suggested.

"Ten tuman!" exclaimed a man, while the other bystanders stared dumfounded at one another; "for 10 tuman you can have five wild asses if you like."

"I do not want more than one."

"They are very numerous on the way to Bahabad. They are certainly harder to find after rain, when they can get water anywhere; but there is a hunter in one of the neighbouring villages who is well acquainted with their habits, and who never goes on the chase without bringing back four or five skins."

This crack marksman was sent for and commissioned to go on in front during the night and meet me on the road with his wild ass. I believe he did his best, but he could not obtain a wild ass. He had killed two hundred wild asses, and he received 2 tuman for a skin. Though unsuccessful in his proper task, he was still of service to us, for he knew all about the country.