

purple clouds on the west side of the mountain, and with a temperature of 55.8° the morning air was pleasant after the sultry evening.

We go south between ragged hills and across pebbly furrows, and at Cheshme-gezu the camels get fresh water to drink, and this is to be found also in small pools on the road. Fortunately we fall in with a hunter who is well acquainted with the country, and can give satisfactory answers to all my questions. The road leads over the screes, spurs, and offshoots of the Naibend group, and at every saddle or turn in the road our curiosity increases. What will this Naibend be like? Even Persians have much to say of its picturesque beauty. But we are still entangled in this desolate mountain. The ridge on our left is so low that the eye can roam unhindered over its crest and away over endless hazy wastes, where shades and outlines give us a hint of hills and ridges within the domain of the Lut desert. A pure white strip to the east is an indication of the existence of a kevir. We mount extremely slowly over a confusion of sharp escarpments, over deeply excavated ravines and shallow flood-beds, all directed eastwards though we cannot perceive what becomes of them. The hills on the left decrease in height, and the view becomes more extensive over the great lonely desert. The Naibend hill stands clear on the right, and we see the elevation much foreshortened. In this direction, it seems, several small solitary villages lie hidden in the valleys. Even quite close to the road we pass two small palm groves, which make so pleasant an impression in this yellow, red, and black wilderness.

In the hills on the left, on the other hand, there are no villages; for these, says the hunter, are Lut hills, meaning that they are dried up and barren like the desert. He informs me also that there are no wild asses in the Lut, but that one of their resorts is three days' journey off in the Bahabad desert, and it is now vain for me to offer a reward of 10 tuman for one of these mysterious animals which skim like ghosts over the wilderness.

At length we come out of the worst entanglement, and descend a huge trench towards the south-east. The