

boundless Lut desert lies before our eyes in all its sublime level uniformity, and at 15 farsakh to the south is just perceptible a hill called Kuh-i-murghab, whither all the drainage channels, now dry, run together. We follow this main valley for a long distance downwards, turn to the right, double innumerable spurs and points, and yet again more points in an endless succession, and on the right comes into sight the confused relief of dark hills which are an offshoot from Kuh-i-Naibend. The rocks, of which specimens have been collected during the day, are grey quartzitic sandstone, dark grey slates and greyish-white limestone breccia. The highest point we have reached on the detritus slope was 3900 feet; the lowest in front of the Naibend valley 3327 feet.

Now our direction becomes westerly, and is determined by a small dale, where a small reservoir collects the water of a rivulet. All is dismal and cold. Will this labyrinth of disintegrated hills never come to an end? Ah! wait! Yonder dark green shimmers among the red, there palms peep out in groves and clumps, there at their base lie fresh juicy cornfields. We come nearer, the scene becomes more distinct, and yet it seems rather an apparition, a vision, a mirage, and Tebbes seems poor in our recollections compared with Naibend, where the hand of man in cooperation with Nature has produced an earthly paradise in the midst of this hopelessly desiccated and God-forsaken country. We cross a few more spurs and valleys before we arrive in a large valley, where we pitch our tents in the court of a caravanserai. The height here is 3527 feet.

It is difficult to describe this singular blending of palms, terraced fields, houses perched like swallows' nests on the tops of mounds and ridges, and these openings to valleys and trenches winding about like a tangled skein. As soon as we have encamped I make an excursion up a winding dale between pebble ridges, in the sides of which natural caves serve as stables, and in a moment find myself at the foot of a steep ridge crowned by the fort of Naibend among tall houses and walls hanging like birds' nests over the edges as though glued to the rock, rising up out of it and forming a part of it. The whole scene reminds one of