

unless they are obliged. And then comes winter, now dark with rain-clouds, now clear and fresh. Then Kuh-i-Naibend, which is now foreshortened and therefore looks like a cone, is sometimes covered with bright white snow in a single night ; and when the air clears, the reddish-yellow village and the evergreen palms stand out vividly against the glittering field of fresh-fallen snow, tropical palms against an Arctic background,—nothing can be more charming than such a contrast.

In Naibend the men also are handsome, peaceable, and cheerful, as they ought to be in such a terrestrial paradise. On the whole, they have the appearance of the majority of Persians, and their healthy, purely Aryan countenance and their quiet kindness are the reasons why one is fond of them. Men and youths have a parting in the middle of the forehead and over the crown, and the black hair hangs down at the sides in straight close locks, over the ears and often to the shoulders in a simple, tasteful, and ornamental style. The iris is dark, almost black, the eyes are straight, and the eyebrows are well drawn and not too bushy. The nose is sharply and cleanly cut, the mouth is finely and agreeably formed, the jaw is powerful and the whole face oval and regular. Men are frequently seen with a good carriage and head held up high and gracefully between the shoulders, walking with an easy swinging step, as though they touched the ground as lightly as gazelles. I had an inexhaustible supply of models for my lead pencil, and had to pass over with regret many a finely formed head. But I sat by the hour and drew as many as I had time for. Meanwhile, the others stood round and looked on with silent interest, not noisy and troublesome as elsewhere. As for myself, I was only a bird of passage, which rested a day in this little pearl of oases at the margin of the desert. The youths, whose features I keep in my sketch-books, will grow old and grey, and will not carry their heads as high as now. Each in his turn will be laid in the small gloomy burial-ground in the midst of the village.

Only two of the Naibend people were suspicious of the portrait-drawing. Seated on the large case of my