

the rains. One of the snowy peaks of Kuh-i-Naibend again crops up behind us, and we realize that this mountain will long stand as a landmark on the western horizon, reminding us of the picturesque village which rears its bare walls above the rustling palms.

The road is good and easy, a scarcely perceptible path in the pebbles and clay. It is the great main road to Birjan, and yet all day we meet only two men driving an ass. And hour after hour our bells ring out the same melody which we first heard in Teheran, and has accompanied us day after day for hundreds of miles. Three miles distant to the south-east a small isolated hill rises from the level desert—a reef in the sea,—and farther off gleam white expanses of kevir.

From Hauz-i-kalifá, a rectangular walled basin full of water, our direction becomes due east, and we gradually descend the slopes of the Kuh-i-Naibend group to a drainage channel pointing southwards. The height here is only 2546 feet, and therefore we have descended 980 feet from Naibend. On the other side we again go slowly up. The landscape is fearfully monotonous, silent, and lifeless. The rock which predominates throughout the day is porphyrite of various kinds. The smiling and friendly Naibend disappeared behind us at the first bend in the road.

Sometimes the country is quite barren, sometimes overgrown with miserable shrubs, among which a herdsman is feeding his sheep. The great drainage channel is 130 to 150 feet broad where the road crosses, and 3 feet deep. It can be seen meandering down towards Kuh-i-murghab, which is barely visible through the hazy air. The stream passes to the west of the mountain, proceeding southwards to the Nemek-sar, the great salt swamp in the western part of the Lut. In this huge trench, which bears such distinct marks of temporary floods, only a tiny rivulet of salt water is now flowing, which is said to come down from the Kevir-i-ab-i-germ. The furrow itself is called Rud-i-Hanar after a village of this name, and farther on it passes the Kevir-i-Hanar, which shows its white surface in the south.

Scattered weathered ridges and knolls, 70 to 100 feet