

one there are a thousand in its place, but revenge is sweet. I forget both the heat and the plague in the presence of these small, infamous pests, which buzz in my ear, small black specks with disproportionately large wings, and it seems as if nothing could be worse than the unbearable irritation caused by these innumerable minute stings. To-day it is like a baptism of fire, an inoculation with poison; later we shall become less sensitive.

The country opens out again, and we keep on eastwards over steppe slightly strewn with gravel. Several small villages appear, and the whole district bears the name of Deheneh-i-Bendan. On the right hand is an offshoot from the hills, and when we double a promontory we see, in the very mouth of a valley, the village of Bendan, with its charmingly quiet and dreamy palms. Nothing can be prettier than this sight. It is so long since we have seen palms, and hence we take a double delight in their dark, fresh verdure. Under the shadow of the palms our train advances in the usual order, and the bells ring solemnly and heavily. But this time we did not wander with impunity under the palms, and when we halted beyond the small fort and the silent graveyard, and Meshedi Abbas made my old riding camel kneel down, I did not know that this was the last time that the faithful animal would ever carry me over deserts and hills.

We encamped on the bank of the Bendan river, where the slightly brackish water rippled so pleasantly before our tents. The height was 2572 feet, and therefore we had descended more than 1000 feet during the day. It was no wonder that the heat was more sensible. Near by, a large building had been erected for travellers from Seistan, who had to stay there five days under observation. Beside us was the reception-tent of the Hindu doctor, Abbas Ali Khan, where all travellers coming from the east were examined. He received us kindly, invited me to dinner, and told me that the plague had raged terribly in Nasretabad, twenty deaths occurring daily, but that now the epidemic seemed to be passing off. Those who died were chiefly poor people, who also suffered from want. There were no suspicious cases in the Bendan barrack, but the