

were then more reserved, the men having come home with the cattle and dogs, and I could not obtain permission to photograph any of the younger women. They passed the evening at the doors of their huts facing the setting sun. This day it had been stingy with the heat it usually pours liberally over this watery country, a contrast to the dry wilderness we had so lately crossed. The natives sat and rested, smoking and busying themselves with their fishing-gear and household utensils, talking, and visiting one another; and they were indescribably simple and ignorant, this poor people whose sole resources are cattle, fish, and water-fowl.

And then we saw the mails, in a skin bag, carried over to Nasretabad. They must be forwarded, unless the weather puts quite insurmountable obstacles in the way. The waves were still high—even in the lee of the shore the canoe had not gone far before the billows dashed over the frail vessel. The mails must be well packed up to reach their destination in tolerable condition. The canoe, however, disappeared across the water, the wind pushing on behind. Two other canoes, which came to the shore heavily laden with fish, had great difficulty in getting through the breakers. A woman went out into the lake to meet them, and was laden with the catch like a camel.

My men were already impatient at the delay caused by the wind and weather. They were longing for home; they were eager to get away from the plague-stricken country, and to reach Imam Riza's tomb in Meshed. They would thank the saint for their deliverance, yes, they would for once enter under the gilded cupolas—Inshallah!

In the evening there was a strong wind again, but the sky was clear, and at nine o'clock the thermometer marked 47.5°. The moon rises surrounded by a bright halo, beneath which the lake glitters like a silver streak,—a shining and immovable boundary between heaven and earth. Only the wild geese pass over it, as just now, in a flock of perhaps 200, following with piercing screams the water as it rises towards the east-south-east. We, too, go to rest, hoping to glide next day over the open sheet of water.