

Here also are a couple of gardens and palms. One feels depressed after a walk through this unfortunate, devastated town. To reach it you go westwards from the great gate of the Consulate, and pass a kind of square between the two towns. To the left are first some plague-smitten huts, and to the right the English bank within its own wall; beyond the whole southern side of the town wall of Nasretabad with round towers at the corners and in the sides. Farther off to the left is a long, low building, in much the same style as the Consulate, containing the shops of English subjects, and still farther off the warehouse of Russian subjects.

We enter by the south gate of Nasretabad, where some emaciated and pitiable beggars hold out their hands. Here begins the principal street which runs right through the town from gate to gate, and in which the bazaar shops are situated. The street is narrow, dusty, and dirty, a horrid ditch full of sweepings and offal, and the only people we meet are dingy soldiers and beggars who can hardly keep their rags on their bodies. The town is so small that it takes only a few minutes to cross. In the north-west corner is the *ark* or Governor's residence. Everything seems in decay, wearisome and miserable. I would not spend a single photographic plate on it. Even the residence was empty and desolate, for the Governor had left it, taking with him his whole staff of servants and ferrashes.

And yet this den at that time deserved a large measure of the world's attention. In political affairs Seistan is of great interest, owing to the secret rivalry or contest for influence between England and Russia. The country lies half-way between India and Teheran, and between Transcaspia and the Persian Gulf. Strained relations may at any time reach an acute stage, and the struggle for Iran may begin at Seistan.

More fearful, however, was the danger that the bubonic plague might extend from Seistan. After the report that Turbet-i-Haidari was infected, all seemed to be favourable for the spread of the pestilence westwards. If it reached Meshed with its 150,000 pilgrims in the year the disaster was certain. Then by the numerous routes