

Between the 15th and 17th of February, on our journey of some 50 miles westwards from Geh to Bint, we passed no inhabited place. Halts were made near small streams at the two intermediate stages of Mulla-kalag and Chāh-i-'Alī. There were also patches of scrub and tamarisk jungle to be found on the peneplains which descend from the Lāshār range in the north and across which the tracks passed. Far off at the foot of the as yet unsurveyed Lāshār hills, rising apparently to 6,000 feet and more, groves of date-palms could be sighted, marking the presence of springs or small streams.

Bint, situated in a small fertile plain on the right bank of the river bearing its name, is a large village and, like Geh, the meeting-point of several routes leading to the coast as well as to parts of the Bampūr basin. Down to recent times its large fort was held by quasi-independent chiefs. But Bint had apparently suffered much from the disturbed conditions preceding the re-establishment of Persian authority, and the advent of our large escort had sufficed to cause the bulk of its population to abscond. I could learn nothing about old remains in its vicinity.

A march of 26 miles led northwards up the gradually narrowing valley to a winding gorge in which the headwaters of the Bint river have cut their way through the Lāshār range, and brought us on February 18th to Fanūch. The few hamlets passed on the first quarter of the march were found deserted for the same reason as at Bint. At Shātāp a side valley joins in from the north-east and at its mouth affords space for some scrubby grazing. Beyond this the track passes along the bottom of a narrow ravine flanked by steep faces of crumbling rock, largely limestone. The path keeps crossing and recrossing the stream until, at a point about 3 miles from Fanūch, both track and stream disappear under a confused mass of huge limestone blocks, thrown down from the slopes above as if by an earthquake. It took much trouble and time before all our camels were safely brought across this great natural barricade, which a small number of determined men might turn into an impassable *darband*. For another mile the gorge continued very difficult, encumbered as it is with rocks that have fallen from the towering Kōh-i-Fanūch (5,746 feet), until we emerged in view of the date groves of the oasis.

The cluster of small villages constituting Fanūch, and counting altogether probably less than 200 households, occupies the lower portion of a peneplain extending along the left bank of the Aiminī (or Haiminī) stream to the point where it is joined by the Rāmpk Kaur from the north-west. The soil of this plateau, some 2 miles in length, is very fertile and easily irrigated from the Aimini stream by canals constructed mainly underground. That this favourably situated ground was occupied from an early period became evident from the