

left changed from a glory of pale colour to a black wall, scarred with great purple shadows and hollows, and silhouetted against a saffron sky.

At the time of the lighting of the lamps we came to Zinjan, where the police, after much talk, allowed us to sleep at an inn called 'Grand Hotel Town Hall'. We preferred its courtyard to its bedrooms, and, as always, pitched our beds beneath the stars. A policeman with fixed bayonet stood sentry over us all night.

Zinjan is a small city, famous for the desperate stand which 300 Babi heretics made here in 1850 against thousands of royal troops. They held out for nine months, and their women cut off their long hair and bound it round the crazy guns to hold them together.

From Zinjan our road to Teheran ran through a perfectly flat stony plain bounded by low hills. The air was so crystal clear that objects many miles away stood out much larger than life. A donkey looked like an elephant, and the peasants working in the fields were like trees walking. Long before we reached it we could see the light flashing on a great sea-green dome. This was the mosque of Sultaniyeh, the tomb of the Mongol prince Uljaitu Khodabande, who kept court here until his death in 1316. His great mausoleum remains, even in ruins, one of the world's important buildings....

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