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# PERSIA & THE PERSIANS





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Indian Civil Service  
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PERSIA



AND

THE PERSIANS

BY

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ILLUSTRATED

LONDON

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1887

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TO  
MY WIFE,

WHOSE ASSISTANCE AND COMPANIONSHIP ADDED TO THE ATTRACTIONS AND  
DIVIDED THE DIFFICULTIES

OF

Establishing the Legation in Persia.





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PERSIA AND THE PERSIANS.









Yours sincerely  
S. W. Brainerd

## P R E F A C E.

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IN the winter of 1882-1883 the author was appointed by President Arthur to the Legation in Persia, just created by Act of Congress. In 1885, with the accession of the Democratic party to power, he returned to private life, in accordance with the practice of the diplomatic service of the United States. The experiences connected with the establishment and conduct of the Legation at Teherân suggested the present volume.

Notwithstanding that the preface is usually the portion of a book that is least read, the writer ventures to call attention here to two or three points in connection with this volume. Certain portions of it have already appeared in "Harper's Monthly," the "Century Magazine," and the "Manhattan Magazine," and are republished now by the courtesy of the publishers of those periodicals. But these parts have not only been greatly modified, they also represent only a small proportion of the entire work, of which fully five sixths now appear in print for the first time.

A feature to which the author has given special attention has been the pronunciation of Oriental words. The question of accent in Asiatic languages has never been sufficiently understood and appreciated, even by scholars and experts in



comparative linguistics. Our pronouncing gazetteers, prepared expressly to teach the pronunciation of foreign words, are found to be ludicrously defective and misleading when they undertake to instruct in the pronunciation and accentuation of Oriental names. Continental Europeans generally seize the distinctive features of Oriental pronunciation; but the author remembers scarce any Englishmen or Americans, however thoroughly versed in the construction of Turkish or Persian, whose pronunciation could be accepted as either natural or correct, excepting such as were born abroad.

In those languages the tendency is to throw the accent forward towards or on the final syllable, with strong emphasis, while in the English language the accent is thrown back as far as possible,—that principle being also followed with all foreign words when incorporated into English usage; as for example, Par'is for *Parée*; Soc'rates for *Socrâtes*; Mar'garet for *Marguerite*. How different the Persian tongue would sound if accented in the English way is shown if we alter the accent in certain English words. Notice the difference between cathed'ral and *cathedrāl*; ar'chitecture and *architēcture*; Wash'ington and *Washingtōne*. An American pronounces the Persian words *imâm* and *zadê*, ĩmam and zā'de; *Alêe*, A'li; *doûlêh*, dow'lah; *Erân*, I'ran.

In the present work Persian names and words have been printed with an accent, usually a circumflex, over the syllable which is actually accented by the Persians themselves, who of course are the ones who know best how their own language should be pronounced. The letter *i* when found in Turkish and Persian words should invariably be pronounced like *e*.

The long  $\bar{i}$  sound does not exist in those languages except approximately, as in the diphthong *ai*. Ali should be pronounced *Alee*. In several instances the author has substituted *e* for *i* in well-known words, while in others he has preferred to leave the *i* rather than appear singular or cause misunderstanding, — as in the case of the geographical word Enzeli, properly pronounced *Enzelee*; or the name of the famous poet Saadi, pronounced *Sa'udee*.

The use of *i* in the spelling of Oriental words where *e*, for those employing the English language, would more correctly represent the actual pronunciation, is an anomaly that can be accounted for only on the ground that the Latins preceded the Anglo-Saxons in the East, and with them *i* is always *e*. But in retaining the Latin orthography we forget that *i* in the Continental languages never has the long  $\bar{i}$  sound peculiar to the English tongue.

The letter *a* when found in Oriental words has the sound of *a* in *father*, but never the broad  $\bar{u}$  sound of English. Very rarely it has the sound of *a* in *nascent*; as for example, Nasr-ul-Mulk, pronounced like *a* in *father*, and Nasr-ul-Mulk, with the *a* as in *nascent*. In Persian the difference is represented by a difference in the spelling; but in English it would be difficult to represent it.

The author was led to observe these discrepancies when living in the Levant in early life, and subsequent observation and reflection have confirmed him in his conclusions regarding Oriental orthography, pronunciation, and accentuation. In closing his remarks on this subject, it may be well to add that the letter *h*, when found in Oriental words in this volume, is not

a silent letter, but should be pronounced as a soft guttural,—strongly in the middle of a word, and suggestively when it is a terminal. The *h* in Mahdee is strong, and soft in the terminal *h* of Shah. A curious fact connected with the Persian language is also found in the frequent interchangeableness of *a* and *u*; Mazanderân is likewise pronounced *Mazanderoon*; Ispahân, *Ispahoon*; nanâd, *numood*; Nasr-ed-Deen, *Nusr-ed-Deen*. Formerly the use of the latter sound seems to have been more common; but at present the *a* sound is considered more elegant, and is gradually superseding the other, although the use of the latter cannot be considered incorrect. The ear should be practised before the eye in learning a foreign tongue, exactly as a child acquires its native language.

In two or three instances certain facts mentioned in these pages which had a double application have been repeated twice in successive chapters, when such repetition tended to emphasize the subject in question or was essential to a clear statement.

A few words may be added in explanation of the freedom of opinion in which the author has occasionally indulged. During the period of his official service he had no opinions on public questions which he felt at liberty to formulate in either words or acts. Three departments of government should be entirely independent of party,—the military, the judiciary, and the diplomatic. The position of a diplomatist should be that of absolute impartiality towards all foreign nations and governments in time of outward peace, and strictly colorless with respect to politics at home. He represents and protects the interests of his entire country abroad; and to do so properly,

must deport himself towards all foreigners in such a way as not to prejudice the interests under his charge. His motto should be, "Patriotism; firmness tempered by tact; and watchfulness and zeal guided by reticence, secrecy, and reserve." The last three terms may seem tautological, yet each represents a different shade of meaning, and all are of the first importance in successful diplomacy.

While near the Court of Persia it was the earnest endeavor of the author to follow these precepts. But now that he is no longer in official service, he is free to give some expression to opinions based on practical experience. He has therefore exercised that liberty at times, when to do so would not be inexpedient for the public interests, nor conflict with the secrecy of official transactions, nor the honor which imposes reticence regarding confidential conversations.

S. G. W. B.



# CONTENTS.

---

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. FROM THE EUXINE TO THE THRESHOLD OF PERSIA . . . . .	1
II. FROM ENZELI TO TEHERÂN . . . . .	24
III. PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF PERSIA . . . . .	43
IV. THE CITY OF TEHERÂN . . . . .	56
V. COUNTRY SEATS IN THE SHIMRÂN . . . . .	110
VI. THE DIFFERENT RACES OF PERSIA . . . . .	128
VII. CONDITIONS OF SERVICE IN PERSIA . . . . .	149
VIII. NASR-ED-DEEN SHAH AND THE ROYAL FAMILY . . . . .	174
IX. SKETCH OF SEVERAL OF THE LEADING OFFICERS OF THE PERSIAN GOVERNMENT . . . . .	220
X. MOUNTAINEERING IN PERSIA . . . . .	237
XI. A GLANCE AT THE ARTS OF PERSIA . . . . .	271
XII. RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL SECTS OF PERSIA . . . . .	338
XIII. THE SHEÂHS AND THE TAZIËH; OR PASSION-PLAY OF PERSIA . . . . .	365
XIV. RESOURCES, PRODUCTS, AND TRADE OF PERSIA . . . . .	407
XV. THE SHÂHR AND THE URF; OR THE LAWS OF PERSIA . . . . .	438
XVI. NOOKS AND CORNERS OF PERSIA . . . . .	457
XVII. THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN PERSIA . . . . .	470





## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

---

	PAGE
RELIC OF PERSIAN ARCHITECTURE AT BAKÛ . . . . .	17
A PAVILION OF THE SHAH AT ENZELÎ . . . . .	25
RESIDENCE OF THE VALEE AT RESCHT . . . . .	33
VILLAGE BETWEEN KOODOOM AND CASBEEN . . . . .	40
TEHERÂN AND THE RANGE OF THE SHIMRÂN . . . . .	50
MAUSOLEUM AT RHEÏ . . . . .	58
PILGRIMS AT THE TOMB OF SHAH ABDÛL AZEEM . . . . .	61
SOUTHERN GATE OF THE ARK . . . . .	67
WEIGHING MERCHANDISE IN A CARAVANSARY AT TEHERÂN . . . . .	75
AUDIENCE CHAMBER OF HIS MAJESTY NASR-ED-DEEN SHAH . . . . .	79
EXAMPLES OF PERSIAN WORK IN BRASS . . . . .	83
AN ITINERANT BARBER . . . . .	85
GATEWAY AND AVENUE LEADING TO THE PALACE . . . . .	91
A CONFECTIONERY; ON THE LEFT IS A BAKER VENDING BREAD . . . . .	95
A WELL-KNOWN HOLY MENDICANT OF TEHERÂN . . . . .	97
PERSIAN WOMAN IN STREET COSTUME, THE VEIL DRAWN ASIDE . . . . .	106
KASR-I-KHAJÂR . . . . .	108
A PORTICO AT BAGH FERDÔZE . . . . .	113
ARAJÊB, LOOKING NORTH . . . . .	119
KAMARANIÊH, COUNTRY SEAT OF THE NAÏB SULTANÊH . . . . .	121



	PAGE
GUEBRE CEMETERY AT TEHERÂN . . . . .	131
A PERSIAN NOMAD WOMAN . . . . .	136
ZIL-I-SULTÂN . . . . .	140
STROLLING MUSICIANS, WITH DANCING MONKEYS . . . . .	150
PAVILION AT THE ARK, CALLED THE SHAMS-EL-IMMARÊT . . . . .	157
INDOOR COSTUME OF PERSIAN WOMEN . . . . .	171
NASR-ED-DEEN SHAH . . . . .	177
PAVILION WHERE THE SHAH GIVES AN AUDIENCE AT NO ROOZ . . . . .	183
MUSAFFÂR-ED-DEEN MIRZÂ, CROWN PRINCE OF PERSIA . . . . .	189
ANDEROON OF THE ROYAL PALACE, TEHERÂN . . . . .	203
MARBLE THRONE OF THE SHAH OF PERSIA . . . . .	223
A VILLAGE SANTON . . . . .	239
OLD BRIDGE AT GELANDEVÊK . . . . .	247
THE TACHTRAVÂN IN THE AFTCHA PASS . . . . .	253
MOUNT DEMAVÊND FROM THE CAMP IN THE LAR VALLEY . . . . .	258
A YOUNG MOLLÂH . . . . .	262
PEOPLE OF AFTCHA . . . . .	265
OLD PLANE-TREE AT GELANDEVÊK . . . . .	270
OLD NASCH WRITING. (REDUCED ONE-HALF.) . . . . .	277
OLD KASHEE WARE . . . . .	284
REFLET TILE, OVER 450 YEARS OLD . . . . .	287
EXAMPLE OF WRITING BY A'MIR. (REDUCED ONE-HALF.) . . . . .	290
OLD CUFIC WRITING. (REDUCED TWO-THIRDS.) . . . . .	294
OLD MURAL PAINTING OF TILES FROM PALACE OF SHAH ABBASS . . . . .	301
OLD KALIÂN OF CHISELLED BRASS . . . . .	311
BRONZE CAST OF OLD PERSIAN TILE, REPRESENTING RUSTÊM AND THE DEEVES . . . . .	318

OLD PERSIAN MIRROR-CASE — EXTERIOR . . . . .	327
COVER OF PERSIAN MIRROR-CASE — INTERIOR . . . . .	328
OLD SILVER PITCHER, WITH ENAMEL IN THREE COLORS. (ONE HALF HEIGHT OF ORIGINAL.) . . . . .	333
EXAMPLE OF OLD PERSIAN KERAMIC MOSAIC . . . . .	337
A PERSIAN VILLAGE MOSQUE . . . . .	347
A GUEBRE . . . . .	357
SMALL HOUSE OF PRAYER AND MINARET . . . . .	363
THE TAKIËH, OR ROYAL THEATRE . . . . .	373
MIRZA GHOLÂM HOSSEÏN AS ABBASS . . . . .	391
A PERSIAN BLACKSMITH . . . . .	431
A PERSIAN WATER-CARRIER . . . . .	460

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INDEX . . . . .	497
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PERSIA AND THE PERSIANS.



# PERSIA AND THE PERSIANS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### FROM THE EUXINE TO THE THRESHOLD OF PERSIA.

IT was a fair morning in May when our steamer glided towards the haven of Trebizond. On the right were the high thinly settled hills of Asia Minor, deeply cloven by purple gorges draped with perennial verdure. Up the steep slopes rolling clouds arose, sun-smitten, revealing the venerable Byzantine church of Santa Sophia standing alone on a cliff, and the red roofs and gray walls of an ancient town peeping through dense masses of foliage. Xenophon and the Ten Thousand finished their retreat at Trebizond. It was the capital of a division of the lower Empire. For ages it was the port for the caravans moving to Persia and the vast, mysterious regions of Central Asia. But what traveller now thinks of visiting Trebizond, or the southeastern shores of the Black Sea?

The Euxine has labored under the misfortune of having few good harbors on the southern side; this has resulted to the advantage of Russia, which owns the whole of the northern and eastern shore, as also the best ports. It is not so long ago since Trebizond was an emporium for the Circassian slave-trade. An old-time reminiscence may be observed in the curious lighters which sweep up over the rollers towards

the steamer. They are identical in form with the Greek galleys of ancient times, and are undoubtedly a direct perpetuation of ancient naval architecture, of which only one other instance probably exists at the present day: I refer to the fishing galleys of Lisbon. Over the stern of these boats of Trebizond swings the long oar-like rudder, moved by a standing helmsman. The city itself is composed of winding lanes, which are excessively narrow but not uncleanly, for the steep slope and the frequent rains are favorable to a result uncommon in Eastern cities. The houses are not visible until one passes the gate of the high wall surrounding the grounds.

Each dwelling stands in a garden of mulberry, pomegranate, and linden trees, interwoven with luxuriant vines. The gates are so low that one must stoop to enter, — a precaution adopted in stormier times, when a man's house was often also his fortress.

The commander of the garrison, a Turk of the old régime, touched by a love of Nature more innate in the Oriental than in his more civilized brother of the West, had planted a small flower-garden on the brow of the cliff, where a battery frowned grimly over the sea. He was about to start for a ride into the country when we were announced. With characteristic courtesy the old gentleman dismounted, and invited us to partake of the customary refreshments in his garden. The morning was serene, and a more delightful spot could hardly be imagined on which to take a thimbleful of Turkish coffee and a pipe of Stamboulee. Below, a group of idle coasters, curiously carved and painted, floated languidly on the glassy swell of the port, each repeated in the crystal mirror on which it was poised. Beyond, the broad expanse of the placid Euxine spread towards the north, and behind us beetled the bold precipices of Mal Tépe.

With the approach of evening a new revelation of splendor was granted. Bursting suddenly forth from the clouds when

dipping below the verge of the sea, the red sun bathed the city with indescribable glory, that seemed to penetrate into the most hidden recesses of the town; while from the vapory region of the northeast the evening splendor brought forth the vast pinnaled ranges of the Caucasus, whose eternal snows, hued with rose, were ineffably sublime, extending around half the area of the horizon. When the sun disappeared, the mountains of Circassia also retired and were seen no more. There Prometheus was chained, and there during all succeeding ages the human soul has struggled and suffered. But the radiance of another life is needed to reveal the tragic grandeur of this ever-repeated and relentless torment on the crags of destiny, and give a solution and an end to the pangs of existence.

The following day at dawn, cleaving the foam across the quivering gleam of the morning star, our steamer glided into the port of Batoum, eighty miles east of Trebizond. This was the best harbor the Osmanlee held on the southern coast; therefore the Russian coveted and took it. The wheel of fortune turns for all; but the misery is that many linger after the wheel has turned the last time in their favor. Seven years ago the Turks held the place. Now the Turks are seen no more at Batoum. Its Moslem inhabitants have emigrated to Nicomedia, where their government has given them lands; but many died on the hard journey. In the sweeping execration awarded to the Turk by Christendom, it seems to have been forgotten that Turks have rights and feelings no less than other races. Also, that in the exercise of sway it is an incontrovertible fact that they have been no more cruel than were the races they subjugated in their turn. The Turkish side of the story has never been told. It is wilfully ignored that if the right of the Turk to the territory he holds is no better, it is also no worse, than the right of any other power in Europe, — the territorial right of the sword, the right of the mightier, which has always ruled.



Is there any appreciable amount of territory in Europe held by any other tenure? Only some nations have held theirs longer than Turkey, and have been nominal Christians! I am not an unreasoning philo-Turk, but I earnestly believe in justice to all. It is well also to remember that every question has two sides.

There is a grand pathos in the bearing of the Saracen and the Turk when retiring from territory which they have held for ages. This lofty phase of Oriental character has been well suggested by our historians, when describing the conquest of Spain from the Moors. The same tragedy is being enacted in Turkey to-day. Unlike other people, when conquered, the Turks scorn to remain under the rule of the victor; they retire like reflux waves. Thus it was after the liberation of Greece; thus after the capture of Roumania by the Russians; and thus it has been at Batoum. The Turks, who were there for four hundred years, are gone. So it was when, after an age of terrible warfare and cruelty, Russia subdued the Caucasus: the Circassians disdained to remain. A whole nation emigrated, in the face of obstacles which cost them nearly half a million of lives.

Were it not for the malaria that lurks by its lovely river, Batoum would be a spot greatly to be sought for its extraordinary beauty. The Russians are rapidly erecting modern buildings near the quays, but the old town is a mere huddle of dilapidated one-story houses and shops, whose aspect is relieved by here and there a crumbling minaret or the two-story mansion of a Turkish magnate of yore, lifting its mossy roof of red tiles and its painted upper-story above a wild wood of greenery; the chattering stork has usurped the place of the muezzin, the sound of whose musical summons no more floats over the bay. But what language can portray the beauty and grandeur of the mountains which enclose this ancient town? Clad with primeval verdure, they spring abruptly from the sea, and through

tremendous canyons show you the higher ranges inland, terminating in spearlike peaks crowned with eternal snow. Two rivers descend from these snows, well stored with fish; the angler who seeks the mountain depths can easily find capital sport with the rod, and return with a fine mess of brook trout. But with all their seeming tranquillity, there is a spiteful spirit lurking in the gorges of Batoum. For be the day ever so calm, it is liable to be darkened in a few moments by a violent gust from the mountains. Immediately the sea becomes black and threshed with foam. The high-prowed, lateen-rigged coasters, creeping idly around the point where the new lighthouse stands, are suddenly electrified into a spasm of activity. The great yards are lowered, and under close reefs the saucy little craft careen into the harbor and make a lee out of the squall. About the time one makes up his mind that a long storm has set in, the sun bursts forth, the clouds disappear, and a rainbow arches the glittering glaciers of the serried peaks of Circassia.

A railway has recently been completed from Batoum to Tiflis. Freight trains were running when I was first there, but as the road was not officially opened, I was unable to avail myself of the advantages it so temptingly held forth. Near Batoum the railway runs through a long tunnel. By an absurd error in calculation the tunnel was made insufficiently high for the passage of the cars, and it was actually necessary to lower the base before it could be used. Until the capture of Batoum the Russians held only one available point of debarkation for goods and passengers bound to the Transcaucasus,—that is, Poti, at the mouth of the River Phasis. Large sums were expended to fit it for the purpose, and when all had been done, what a wretched substitute for a port it proved to be! In summer it is accessible to small craft, and then only with a smooth sea and a leading wind, and in winter it is altogether unapproachable.

Our steamer lost an anchor at Batoum, and much time was wasted in seeking to recover it. After several days of waiting, not unpleasantly passed under the very agreeable auspices of Admiral Gravier and a number of Russian notables, who extended to us the hospitalities of the place, we concluded to take a small daily packet to Poti, about four hours distant.<sup>1</sup> It had been blowing violently from the westward and a high swell was still running, but we knew that if it should prove too high to cross the bar the boat would avoid the risk and return. Curious were the costumes of the various passengers lying on deck, all Circassians and Russians. Among them the sheepskin cap predominated, although of various picturesque forms. Following the winding channel, we at last passed within the jetty, whose entrance is so unprotected from a westerly sea that even ships inside roll at their anchors. After a tedious period of hauling and snapping of hawsers, the steamer was finally moored stern on to the breakwater, and the passengers were requested to "walk the plank." A dangerously attenuated board, pitched at a dizzy angle and oscillating to a hazardous degree, was the only means offered for debarking. A light rod held by two men served as an imaginary balustrade. The sight on shore was of itself enough to daunt the most daring. A noisy throng of porters, hackmen, customs officers, idlers, and dogs were fighting among themselves for precedence, in order to devour us bag and baggage the instant we stepped on land. The coachmen were especially noteworthy for a fearful and wonderful circular cushion, or puffed ring of closely gathered pleats, attached to the nether part of their long riding-coats. The effect was as though an inflated india-rubber life-preserver had slipped from the armpits to the hips. The exact use of this appendage

<sup>1</sup> In the face of the spirit of the treaty of Berlin, Russia is now fortifying Batoum under the pretext of building hospitals, and is secretly accumulating a vast store of munitions of war behind the city, preparatory to her next campaign against the peace of the world.

is not altogether apparent. A letter kindly furnished us by the Russian Legation at Constantinople happily paved the way for our luggage, which thus escaped the cormorant-like gaze and disorganizing grasp of your greedy customs officer.

A long walk over the half-finished jetty brought us to the carriage-stand. There were the droskys planted in a salt morass, a dozen feet below us, without a stairway to lead to them. For lads, the feat of reaching the vehicles was exciting; but for ladies the experiment was less attractive. A wood-cart was finally brought alongside the jetty, and after much nervous laughter on the part the ladies, curiously watched by a multitude of unkempt and unsanctified Circassian youths, a passage from pier to carriage was successfully effected. Then followed a wild dash through a wooded land. The ride was wild, because the wiry, long-maned Russian ponies, flying before the lash, tumbled ahead at a rattling pace. On either side were dense thickets of blackberry bushes; strawberries, like wee crimson sparks, flecked the grass. Above this undergrowth towered the gloom of dense forests musical with thrushes and here and there opening to mirror themselves in a sedgy pool embossed with lilies. Then at a sharp turn of the road we came to an iron bridge, and were whirled over the full-fed flood of the eddying Phasis, up which the Argo glided almost too long ago for the imagination to take cognizance thereof, and then we entered Potî. The first impression was not inviting. A long, wide, treeless street lined on either side by low open market-booths, unpainted and indescribably filthy, — such was the chief thoroughfare of Potî. But there is a park at the farther end, and happily the hotel faced this green open. Potî is said to be so excessively unhealthy that a traveller can scarcely pass a night there without becoming infected with malaria. On observing the filth of the noisome streets and this untidy park, intersected by stagnant drains, it is easy to



understand how such a reputation was established. We had taken ample doses of quinine before arriving, and were careful to close our windows after sunset, and thus escaped unharmed. It is said that five thousand men lost their lives while constructing the short part of the railway across the plain near Potî.

For the rest, Potî is not without its attractions. On the river side the park is entered by a handsome antique gate, which is apparently a relic of the Persian occupation, as partially indicated by the figured work of glazed tiles with which it is faced. Passing through this gate from the massive foliage of the park to the open by the river, I almost imagined myself to be standing by some river of France. A tawny, sluggish stream, lined with poplars, to which a number of small craft were moored, and beyond, a pale-gray line of receding hills fading into the sky, produced an effect like a bit in Normandy, such as Daubigny might enjoy. But the long-skirted bargemen, crowned with shaggy, lamb's-wool caps, showed that we were on the threshold of the changeless East; and the graceful Georgian women strolling by in lovely groups to enjoy the evening air reminded one of Medea and her maids. Tall, stately, and graceful, the raven tresses streaming below their waists, and a melancholy pride flashing out of dark, dreamful eyes, — stars under drooping brows, — these were verily queens in disguise. But when I remembered that we were in Georgia, famed for fair women, I ceased to wonder. Jason, the Achaian, was evidently guided by a good genius when he bade his mariners bend to their oars, and pulling hard over the river bar, to sweep grandly up the Phasis and moor by banks ever since famous in myth and history.

At the hotel we found the golden fleece for which the country is famous, but altogether modified to suit the times and the pockets of modern tourists. If there is a country in the

world where the art of fleecing travellers is pursued on a more colossal scale, I have not heard of it. When we called for the bill at Potî, we found that the landlord had entirely forgotten that his terms the previous evening were stated in francs; he therefore charged us in rubles, which more than doubled his already exorbitant bill. The rooms were not so bad as one might expect considering the environment, but the corridor was unspeakably untidy and malodorous, and the table was altogether unattractive.

Escaping from the clutches of the grim ogre who presided over this den, we succeeded in making a start for the railway station. Here again two civilizations collided. A well-ordered station, a clean and comfortable train, seemed to suggest examples of the highest material progress: but it was incongruous to find one's self followed into the waiting-room by a hungry horde of filthy Circassians clamoring for backsheesh, and to see the luggage hurled on the scale by gigantic porters, who looked more like the doughty warriors of Schamyl than train-attendants, while through the motley throng men in Russian military uniform elbowed their irresistible paths, — for they were masters here over a race far nobler in aspect than their own. Yet more singular was it to watch the ticket-seller calculating every item with the wire and balls used by children when learning the multiplication-table. It took nearly an hour to have the luggage weighed and the tickets bought by this process.

To round off this extraordinary scene, as the train was about to move off, three sons of Anak entered our car and demanded further backsheesh.

“What would you have?” said a Russian gentleman, with a shrug. “We have so much territory to civilize, and it takes so long, for Russia is poor.”

Quite true, said I to myself. But I could not avoid wondering why, such being the case, Russia craves to continue adding

to an already unwieldy mass of vast, unamalgamated, and heterogeneous elements.

It is only fair to add that the railway from Potî to Tiflis is a marvel of engineering skill. It follows the gorge of the Phasis among the mountains for about one hundred and sixty miles, constantly ascending by a grade so steep that in six hours the road rises 3,027 feet, and the short train requires two engines to draw it. Everywhere the scenery was most captivating, especially in the neighborhood of Kutahis. Noble cliffs, terminating in basaltic ramparts, often enclosed the roaring waters of the rushing stream; or steep slopes, cultivated from the water to an extraordinary height, seemed to hang over the road; or idyllic valleys opened to catch the sunlight, giving space for a hamlet of wattled huts. In several gorges ancient castles were deserted perched on the apex of seemingly inaccessible peaks, now deserted and alone. One of these venerable fortresses was of vast extent; the clouds surged around it like surf of the sea, and above soared the eagle, the sole tenant of that lofty height. These ruins bore the fancy back to those picturesque ages of romance and song, which, if they served no other purpose, were at least of use if they bequeathed sentiment and poetry to ages more prosaic.

At frequent intervals the train stopped at towns of some size, and at stations well-ordered and provided with excellent buffets. Besides the warm meals in readiness for travellers whose appetite was sharpened by the mountain air, each dining-room was furnished with the sideboard peculiar to Russia, provided with the *zakooska* of caviare, *vodky*, and other characteristic appetizers, which it does not take long for the foreigner to learn to appreciate.

It was very interesting at this stage of the journey to observe the various race-types we met. Most prominent, of course, was the Georgian, or southern Circassian. It was

chiefly from this stock that recruits were obtained for the harem of the voluptuaries of the seraglio,—a traffic now extinct. The physical beauty of this race has not been exaggerated. Unlike some races, both sexes share in equal proportion the wealth of attraction dowered upon them by a bountiful Nature. I have seen no people to compare with the Circassians for such a high average of beauty, excepting the Normans of the Channel Islands. The fine shape of the men is enhanced by their admirable semi-military costume,—a garb so graceful and picturesque that it has been adopted by Russia, Turkey, and Persia for corps of the royal guards. The head is crowned with a red leather cap encircled by lamb-skin, of which the wool is worn with the curl either short or long, black, gray, or white, to suit the taste of the wearer. The caftan, or coat, fits tightly at the waist, but the flowing skirts descend nearly to the ankles, and the sleeves and the waist are loosely clasped by buttons and corded loops of gold thread and silk, while the same material decorates the coat with figured patterns. Across the breast on each side is a row of silver-topped cartridge-cases; a brace of jewelled pistols is but half concealed by the silken girdle which swathes the narrow waist: one small white hand rests on the hilt of a silver-mounted sabre, while the other hand lashes a riding-whip against the polished boots which encase the shapely feet and legs. On board of our train was a Georgian prince who wore this costume: he stood over six feet high. From under cavernous iron-gray eyebrows flashed the eyes of a mountain eagle, and the gray sheepskin shako was harmonized to his person by a heavy iron-gray moustache of exactly the same tint. At every station he left the car and walked up and down the platform, as if to show himself to the people. I hardly blamed him for such self-consciousness; for a more magnificent example of masculine beauty it would be difficult to find.



With so many objects to interest and instruct us, the time never passed tediously on our hands, although the train moved at but moderate speed, and the delays at the numerous stations under any other circumstances would have been vexatiously long. There were no passengers besides ourselves in the car on the first day, excepting the Georgian prince. The employees were very civil, and the appointments of the car were excellent. It was a compromise between an American saloon car and a European car of the first class. There was unobstructed passage through the car to the train; it was thoughtfully provided with those conveniences the absence of which often neutralizes half the comfort of railway travelling on the Continent; it was also divided into a number of apartments, all communicating with each other: several families could thus enjoy at the same time privacy or freedom as they chose. It is a pleasure to be able to call the attention of the American tourist to this admirable Transcaucasian railway. It presents but two important objections, — there are no beds for night travel, and thieves so abound that nothing must be left in the cars unguarded.

At sunset the train began to descend to the plateau, on which the capital of Georgia is situated. After nightfall the heavens shone with a wonderful display of lightning that flashed without intermission from every part of the sky. In the wild gleam the ragged cliffs shone forth like mountains in Erebus. The scene suggested that described in Milton's immortal second canto of "Paradise Lost." Above the rattle of the train the roar of heaven's artillery boomed over these vast plains, and rolled among the distant gorges in endless reverberation. Weary and hungry, we finally arrived at Tiflis toward midnight. The incredible rognery of every official we encountered at the station — from the cunning duplicity and ruthless rapacity of the arch-rogue himself who conducted the buffet, to the eager palms of the lowest porter — shall not prevent me from stating

that the station is one of the handsomest and best appointed railway establishments in the world, and the buffet admirable in all respects except in the character of the proprietor, who laid a deep scheme actually to rob us of our entire luggage, — a plot happily frustrated by the prudence to which we had been educated from the moment of our arrival in the Caucasus. Fortunately for the credit of the Russian name, this unfathomable knave was not of Muscovite origin.

Greatly did I long to tarry a few days at Tiflis, — a city well known in oriental history, and still possessed of considerable importance.<sup>1</sup> But circumstances beyond my control urged me to continue on to the Caspian without delay. And therefore at 1 A. M. we re-entered our car and proceeded on our journey to Bakû.

Fortunate was it for us that the railway between Tiflis and Bakû had been opened about ten days before our arrival at Tiflis. Otherwise, instead of riding comfortably from that city to Bakû by rail in twenty-four hours, we should have been obliged to go over the route in springless troitkas, over a rough, treeless road, traversing barren plains and mountains infested by brigands, and weeks would have been required to accomplish the distance. At Tiflis we exchanged our Circassian prince of stately mien for a Russian count, who was general of engineers. Long familiar with this region, his affability and information did much to dissipate the monotony of the ride over desolate plains between Tiflis and Bakû. And yet why should I speak thus of the vast steppes over which the road led us on this most interesting day? Never yet have I seen any phase of Nature which was

<sup>1</sup> On our return from Persia we were able to pass two agreeable days at Tiflis; it is picturesquely situated on both sides of the rushing Kur, and has the remains of an interesting old castle on the heights. But it is rapidly being transformed into a modern city. At Tiflis the traveller finds excellent Kaheti wine, for which the Caucasus is famed. It is rather surprising that this wine has not entered into commerce; it might be made to add materially to the impoverished finances of Russia.

not full of suggestion to the fancy, or which did not please the eye with new varieties of form and color, and elevate the mind by adding to its appreciation of the glory and wonders of creation. Nor did the vast wastes which lead to the Caspian prove to be an exception. The mountains that skirted them on the north were bare to the last degree ; but how soft the roseate tints which clothed those heights of desolation ; how tender the snow of the farther ranges, so lofty and distant that they seemed like clouds floating in the calm of a summer's day ! How rich, too, were the hues of the rank grass or the dry sedge which waved like the modulated movement of the surface of the sea in the sighing breeze that swayed from the distant Caspian ! How interesting the dark, velvety clumps of low verdure seen here and there like islands ; or the mirage that appeared like a vast lake in which the Caucasian ranges bathed their feet ! Ever and anon, likewise, vast herds of cattle were seen browsing in the sea of grass, attended by savage herdsmen clothed in long-haired sheepskin cloaks, sporting double-edged yataghans, and spinning yarn as they stalked over the plain. And when the sun set below a desert that stretched, level as the ocean, for two hundred miles behind us, I never before realized to such a degree the grandeur of Nature or the splendor of the fiery orb, which so many millions of old worshipped as a god.

These steppes are inhabited by nomads only. In summer the ordinary population is increased by wandering hordes from Persia, to the number of forty thousand. When this country was captured by Russia, the right was allowed these nomads to pasture their herds in the Transcaucasus without sacrificing their allegiance to Persia. The solitude of the region invites to brigandage, and no European dreams of moving anywhere between Tiflis and the Caspian without being armed to the teeth. Terrible tales are told of the cruelty of the bandits of these plains. There is a monument on the steppe that was erected to

the memory of a heroic youth who gave warning of an intended attack of the brigands. Frustrated in the attempt, but learning of his deed, the brigands seized the boy, and after torturing him in the most horrible manner buried him alive by the roadside, leaving only his head exposed. Thus he lingered several hours, until death came to his relief.

It must be evident that great difficulties attended the construction of this part of the railway. No towns are to be seen. The only European settlements are the few houses attached to each station, occupied chiefly by the officials of the railway. The nearest approximation to a town in that region is Shemahâr, midway up the mountains, and many miles from the railway. Water for the trains has been obtained by artesian wells. Of course there is no local traffic, and the road must depend, for a long time yet, upon through freight and passage. Although this is likely to increase, owing to the growing importance of Bakû, yet for the present at least the rates for passengers and luggage are necessarily high and probably higher than upon any other railway in existence.

At nightfall the road slowly ascended the naked ridge which bounds the eastern limit of the desert. At midnight we began to descend towards the Caspian, and at once the waters of that inland sea, which I had so long yearned to behold, were revealed to us, white in the light of the moon, and a fleet of ships was seen riding in the tranquil bay. White, too, were the dry sand-hills of Bakû, and the low houses clustered on a sandy plain. As we stepped out of the train our nostrils were saluted by a peculiar odor which gave a density to the air, and was ever present so long as we remained at Bakû. It was the exhalation from the petroleum that saturates the soil of all this region.

If Bakû is not the most beautiful city I have seen, it is certainly one of the most remarkable. We drove several miles from the station over a white solitude into a silent town. The



stone houses were flooded with moonlight, but the streets were without sound save the occasional yelping of dogs. Driving to the Hotel d'Europe, we found it impossible to obtain admission. There were vacant rooms, we were told, but it was late, and it would never do to disturb the landlord, — and they might have added, the crew of lazy servants. But one train arrives at Bakû every twenty-four hours, and yet this is the way travellers are received at the best hotel in the city ! Thus shelterless, strangers in a strange town, we drove away to the Hotel d'Italie. There, after some effort, we succeeded in obtaining rooms. Before we retired, our good friend the general of engineers, who was also lodged there, came to our rooms to wish us a pleasant slumber, with a hearty shake of the hand and bluff genial laugh that welcomed us to Bakû. Geniality and courtesy are not small factors in smoothing the rough way of life ; but while they cost nothing, they are yet grudged by many. Our hotel, as revealed to us by the morning light, was a curiously planned structure. Imagine a corridor some three hundred feet long ; on one side were the sleeping-rooms, and on the other the large yard of the inn stable. Through the whole length of this hall a row of small tables was ranged for meals, a window between each table. Everything was conducted on the most slovenly and irregular system, and on every bill charges were made for articles which had never been ordered, yet for which it was insisted that we should pay. The natural result followed, that we were forced on the second day to engage apartments at the Hotel d'Europe, the one which had closed its doors against us on our first arrival. Notwithstanding this inhospitality, travellers to Bakû will find this hotel, if not a palace, at least the best east of Tiflis, — which is not saying very much for it after all. It is provided with a hose, which may prove of exceptional use, as we found it to be when a mob of clamorous Persian porters crowded through the door and swarmed up stairs after the luggage, on hearing a

rumor that we were about to embark. The only way they could be got rid of was to bring out the hose and give them a soaking. The irresistible stream finally dispersed them, amid an uproar of curses and yells.

It is difficult to know where to begin in describing Bakû. Perhaps it is better to speak of it first as a Persian city. For ages the Transcaucasus belonged to Persia. Bakû was at that time an important frontier fortress, having the best harbor on the Caspian, — a matter of less consequence to Persia than to Russia. This town still exists. It occupies the side of a hill, and is surrounded by a fosse, walls, and towers built after the style peculiar to Persia and India. The top of the battlements is circular instead of angular, and they are pierced with loopholes for arrows. The gates are also machicolated. On the seaside, near the water, is an enormous round tower one hundred feet high, called *Kalé y Duktâr*,



RELIC OF PERSIAN ARCHITECTURE AT BAKÛ.

or Maiden's Tower. Toward the sea the tower assumes the form of a solid wedge of masonry, which may have been intended

both to deflect balls thrown from ships and as a buttress to resist the downward pressure of the hill-side. This tower is used at present for a lighthouse. The old town is almost exclusively occupied by Persians who retain their peculiar architecture, their bazaars, and their baths. The houses are generally built in the form of a hollow court. Even the coat-of-arms of Persia is still seen over the entrance to the baths. It represents a rampant lion, over whose shoulders bursts the sun, with a human face in the centre. The Russians partly owe their success in retaining their Asiatic possessions to wisely declining to interfere with the customs or pursuits of the subjugated. It will be observed that, unlike the Turks, the Persians seem content to remain instead of emigrating when their territory comes under Christian rule. If possible, Bakû is even more a Persian city to-day than formerly, for every other person one meets wears the sheepskin cap of Persia, and displays the keen black eyes, swarthy complexion, and handsome features of Irân.

Around the old city built by the Persians a new city has grown up; and the total population is now upward of forty thousand. Fifteen years ago Bakû was, in point of fact, a Persian-walled town, although under Russian rule. To-day it is also a large and rapidly growing European city, with a highly important commerce. What has done this? The answer is, *petroleum*! From the time of Herodotus it has been known that the shores of the Caspian abounded in naphtha, bitumen, and inflammable oil. But it does not seem to have occurred to any one to make this oil available for commerce, until after its possibilities had been tested by the development of the coal-oil trade of the United States. There is always a first time. The time for Bakû arrived with the governor who was sent there fifteen years ago. To him occurred the idea that in her vast supply of petroleum Russia possessed a mine of wealth, destined to rival the gold



fields of California. The chief difficulty from the outset was, not in obtaining the oil, but in refining it to the degree where it could rival the petroleum in America. It contains more naphtha than the American oil, and considerable effort has been expended in devising means to free the oil from this ingredient. Although as yet not as pure as our petroleum, that of Bakû is at least sufficiently clear to make it evident that unless our traders take the greatest precautions, Russia is on the point of winning a large part of our markets for this now very important article of commerce. In 1883 the export of petroleum from Bakû reached the sum of fifteen millions of dollars. A large fleet of square-rigged vessels is engaged in transporting the commerce of Bakû, which is also a station for several lines of steamers. These boats have been built in sections in England and Sweden, and floated down the Volga. But recently fine vessels of one thousand tons have been built at Kazan. They carry large sail-power, as the prevailing winds of the Caspian are too valuable an aid to locomotion to be dispensed with. But the peculiarity of these rakish little steamers is the engine, invented by a Russian. Petroleum, instead of wood or coal, is the motive-power. A small steam-engine is required to start the engine; but that once done, the petroleum is forced through fine apertures, in the form of an impalpable spray, into the furnace, and produces enormous heat.

The abundance of the petroleum is indicated by the fact that at the extensive petroleum wells, several miles north of Baku, the work is conducted at night by the aid of the flames perpetually bursting out of the earth. At least three thousand years ago these inflammable springs were widely known. Even more remarkable, perhaps, because more often brought to one's attention, is the evidence of the petroleum apparent even in the most frequented thoroughfares of Bakû. The dust is laid by the oil oozing through the surface. In many places it lies in



pools, like stagnant water, and the poorer people scoop it up and use it for cressets in the shops.

For the rest, the city is cleanly and well built, and would be an agreeable place of residence but for the fine dust blown from the surrounding hills in the terrible wind-storms which gave the name to the place. *Bakû* means "the place of winds." During our stay there it blew for two days from the north, like the mistral of the south of France. The city and the sea appeared hazy with smoke. Men walked the streets with mouths, ears, and nostrils muffled.

Naturally an air of thrift and prosperity must be diffused about a place which has grown so rapidly. A fine esplanade extends the whole length of the city along the sea-front. The lower or ground story of all the buildings on this long street is occupied by shops. Nearly half of these shops are either tea-houses or money-changers' offices. They are all open to the street. As one passes, he sees bright-eyed Persians on low divâns, sitting on their heels, Persian fashion, counting and weighing coin, or sipping tea and smoking the *kaliân*. Thus, at every turn, one jostles a group of Persians; but when he is about to conclude that the city belongs to them, a barouche whirls by with a bevy of handsome Russian ladies, or a Cossack orderly lashes the idlers who interfere with his onward stride. One of the oddest sights of *Bakû* is presented by the Persian women, veiled so that even their eyes are invisible, and squatting on the steps of the pier washing linen in the sea. Suddenly the great bell of the Cathedral booms over the city, and you are reminded, lest you forget the fact, that you are in a nominally Christian, and not a Moslem, town.

The saying goes, that not a blade of grass, much less a tree, can grow at *Bakû*. But the perseverance of the Government has availed to draw sunbeams out of cucumbers. A beautiful public garden at the southern end of the city, well laid out with

winding walks and shaded with shrubbery and lofty plants, has at last disproved this saying. It is, however, true that no soil could be more uncongenial to vegetation than that of Bakû.

It was my fortune to be in Bakû the day of the coronation of Alexander III. The streets and houses were gay with streamers and banners. From dawn till daylight the Cathedral bell boomed its sonorous *Te Deum* over the rejoicing city. Far out beyond the doors of the church stood a dense and devout throng, bareheaded under a burning sun, listening to the chanting of the anthems of thanksgiving. At night the city was one blaze of light, for cressets containing balls saturated with petroleum flashed from street to street. From the sea the effect was magical and magnificent. It was impossible not to feel a sympathetic glow kindle the heart, as one saw the enthusiasm and joy of a great people losing themselves on a sublime national festival like this, however one might hesitate to approve the policy of their Government. The stranger wandering through the streets in this peculiar city by this inland sea, so far away from the civilization of the West, forgot for awhile the terrors of nihilism and that autocracy which, with a semblance of progress, is ever aiming to gratify the lust of a pitiless and insatiable ambition at the expense of the repose of Europe and Asia.

One of the most singular mental effects I noticed on myself was that produced whenever I walked to the quay and saw the large fleet rocking in the port. Shelley's "Alastor" had from early youth haunted my memory, and given me the impression that the Caspian was a weird sea of dreams, with shores tenanted by the ghosts of vanished empires; with a coast which was a reedy morass trodden only by the bittern and the crane; with waters gray in the haze of a perpetual twilight; a vast, mysterious solitude. Such in part it is on the eastern shore; but at Bakû the Caspian conveys no such idea. Square-rigged ships ride at anchor by scores; the port is busy with wherries and sail-

boats darting hither and thither; and heavily-sparred steamers of five hundred to one thousand tons are constantly entering and leaving the docks. The peculiarity which chiefly distinguishes these ships from those of other seas is the rig. Two-topsail schooners with rakish masts abounded, looking thoroughly piratical and like vessels common elsewhere thirty-five years ago, but no longer in use except on the Caspian. Brigantines with a small topsail on the mainmast, sloops with a square topsail, and other obsolete rigs were to be seen on this sea, which has fashions of its own, has no relations with any other sea, is neither fresh nor salt, and which also enjoys the freak of lying nearly one hundred feet below the level of the ocean.

We left Bakû at midnight, at the height of a terrific norther. But by keeping close under the lee of the shore we smoothened the water until our arrival at Lankorân, where a lee could be made in case the wind shifted or increased. The vessel was the small iron steamer "Armenin." She had no state-rooms, and we were forced to sleep on the sofas. When the wind moderated, the meals were served on deck under an awning. The crew and cook were Persians. The captain was a burly, slant-eyed Alaskan. He could speak broken English, and claimed American citizenship on the score of his birth in Alaska, although the son of a Russian governor and an Aleutian woman. He was easy-natured and polite, and dispensed the honors at his table with a generous hand. The following day we touched at Lankorân, an old Persian town, now under Russian sway. It is a pretty place, embowered in dense foliage, on an alluvial plain at the foot of a chain of mountains which are outposts of the grander mountains of northern Persia. In the afternoon we came to Astarâ, on the frontier. It resembles Lankorân. *Lankorân* means in Persian "the place of anchorage." The reader will observe that it offers one of the many resemblances which exist between the Sanscrit and the English tongue.

The following morning we anchored off the port of Enzelî,<sup>1</sup> a Persian town. This is the usual place for making a landing on Persian soil. But as it lies at the extreme southern end of the Caspian, and can be reached only by crossing a dangerous bar on which the whole range of the northerly winds have play, it frequently happens that no landing can be effected, and the steamer is obliged to proceed to Asterabâd on the southwest coast, which greatly adds to the length and difficulties of the journey to Teherân. A heavy and increasing swell was rolling our steamer's side almost under when we arrived at Enzelî. But happily we were saved the hazard of crossing the bar in clumsy boats manned by lubberly boatmen. The steam-yacht of the Shah, courteously placed at our disposal, carried us comfortably over the rollers of the bar to the summer pavilion of his Majesty, at Enzelî.

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced *Enzelee*.



## CHAPTER II.

### FROM ENZELÎ TO TEHERÂN.

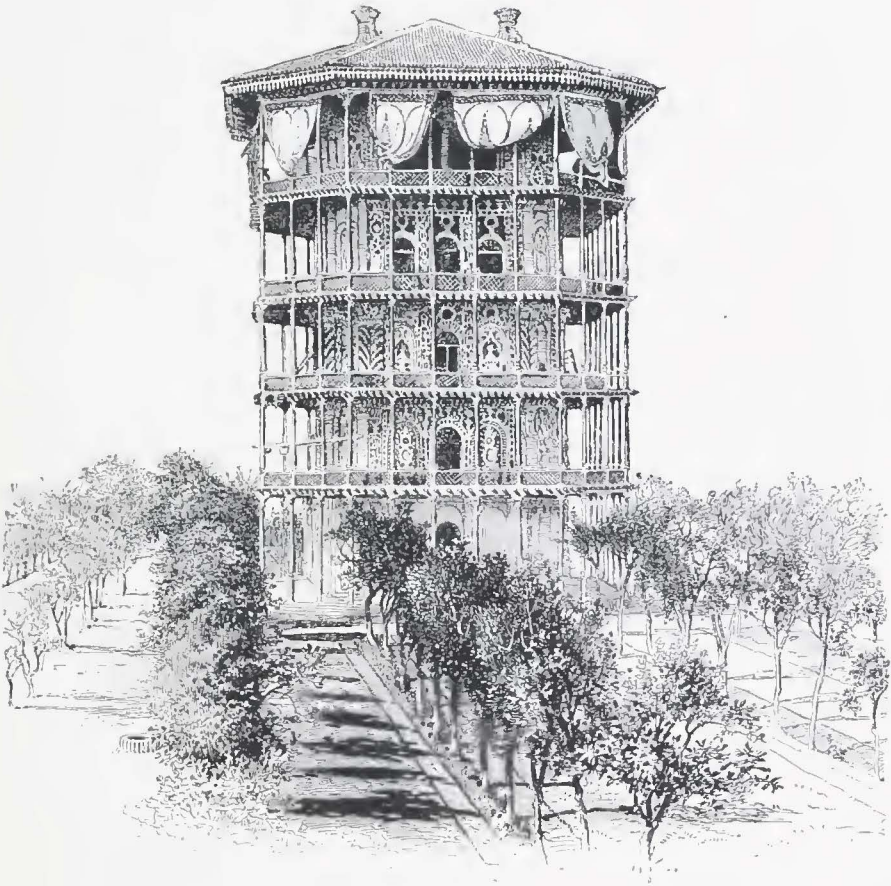
WE were received on landing in Persia by the Mehmandâr,<sup>1</sup> General Mehmêt Taghy Khân, together with a crowd of dignitaries and a file of soldiers, who welcomed us with the roll of drums. After an elaborate breakfast we were taken to another pavilion, constructed in several stories, resembling in shape the porcelain tower of Nankeen. The interior was decorated with small mirrors, glazed tiles, and stained glass. The upper room was lined with glass in geometric designs. The view thence was very interesting. We looked down on the umbrageous little town, the white sands, the bar, and the Caspian fading into the north, and over the Lake of Enzelî to the lofty cliffs of Dulfêk. From Enzelî we crossed the lagoon called the Murdâb, in the Shah's steamer, and anchored at the mouth of a stream up which we were towed in boats. The boatmen from time to time invoked Mahomet and Alee to their aid.

We reached Peree Bazaar, at the head of this primitive navigation, at four of the afternoon. This is a hamlet forming the port of Rescht, at a bend of the tawny stream. On the left was a pottery, where rude workmen turned clay of the bank into rude but not inelegant vessels. On the right were clustered a few boats and dugouts, and a group of forlorn mules and donkeys; the drivers were idly smoking under the cheuârs. In the centre of the picture a number of noble Arab steeds, superbly

<sup>1</sup> *Mehmandâr* is the title given to the functionary deputed by the Shah to meet foreign envoys on their arrival at the frontier of Persia.

caparisoned, were grouped before the Kouâk, or Government building.

We were ushered up a flight of dark stairs into an open hall, where we were received by the Valee (or governor) of the Prov-



A PAVILION OF THE SHAH AT ENZELÍ.

ince of Ghilân. With him were a number of Persian notables, and the table was already spread with confectionery. After the customary refreshments, we were informed that everything was prepared for our ride to Rescht. The ladies proceeded first in a carriage. A few minutes later I descended with these digni-

taries and my private secretary (Mr. Coit) to the court below, and mounted. The ride led for six miles through a beautiful country, rich verdure spreading on every hand, including extensive rice-fields for which the region is famous. Half way to Rescht we were met by six governors of towns with their attendants, awaiting us on horseback by the side of the road. After offering their salutations, they wheeled into our train, and we continued thus to the outskirts of Rescht, where a crowd of notables of the place, headed by the mayor, were watching for our arrival. After words of welcome, they preceded the train through the winding streets and bazaars, which were crowded with bystanders. At the farther end of the city we came to the extensive residence of the Valee. On dismounting, we were hailed by the blare of music; and the citizens who had escorted me took this opportunity to ask leave to retire, but the notables accompanied us into the reception-room. Several rows of dishes heaped with confectionery were spread across the floor, indicating, according to Persian custom, that the guest was expected to have a pleasant taste in the mouth when he received a welcome. Refreshments having been served, the notables in turn requested leave to retire, which in this case at least was granted with entire willingness, as by this time I was somewhat fatigued. An elaborate dinner, semi-Persian, semi-European, was served at nine, preceded by *hors d'œuvres* laid out on a table, with brandy and arrack.

The day following our arrival, I was waited on by the Hakêm (or chief judge) of the district; and after him called the agent of the Foreign Office, who is stationed at Rescht. He was a young man of short stature, of amiable address and insinuating voice. Reasonably familiar with French, he presented an interesting example of a class of minds oftener met with in the East than in the West,—a man of affairs, who is at the same time an intense lover of the attractions of Nature. It was evident from

the constant allusions and descriptions in his conversation that my visitor was of a poetic turn of mind, and an ardent admirer of the beauty of flowers, the song of birds, and the chatter of running brooks.

It is proper to emphasize here the fact, that we were entertained at Rescht in a manner almost unique for hospitality. The Melmandâr had arisen before daybreak to meet us at Enzelî, and we were now quartered in the residence of the Valée of Ghilân, one of the first magnates of the kingdom, who enjoys one of the few hereditary offices of Persia. The building comprehended three courts, or gardens, and was of course divided into the main dwelling, where we were, and the Anderoon, or apartments of the women. The part we were in included a large reception-room on the first floor, with divâns in an alcove, and a three-fold window between them overlooking a garden. The heavy sashes were filled with numerous small panes and bits of stained glass. The character of the exterior, decorated with carved wood, brick mouldings and stucco, in a style peculiar to the northern provinces of Persia, is well suggested by the engraving on page 33. The floor of the reception-room was overlaid with beautiful rugs. The ceiling was composed of cross-beams carved and tinted, and the square spaces or deep panels between were blue picked-out with stars in gold. Between two doors closed with portières hung a life-size portrait of Nasr-ed-Deen Shah, by the artist Nassoud, a young Persian recently deceased.

The dining-room overlooked the garden between the two houses: the table was profusely decorated with flowers at every meal. I found that European chairs are used here somewhat, and that the old Persian fashion of eating with fingers is gradually giving way among the upper classes to the use of knives and forks. The cuisine was highly elaborate. Among the dishes, evidently for our benefit, were several borrowed from



the French cuisine. But at every meal we also had the invariable dish of rice. Here pillâf is called *pillô* and *chillô*. The rice is that of Ghilân. The grain is small, and has a pungent odor I have never noticed in any other variety of rice. Like the Turks, the Persians know the art of cooking rice dry, and yet thoroughly; but they have many ways of serving it, often with raisins or meats. It is also browned on the top. It is customary to serve a cold pillô cut in blocks, and immediately after a hot dish of rice. Wines of Casbeen and Shirâz, together with an occasional bottle of English porter, were also provided at these meals. Various dishes of nuts, pistachios, dried fruits, confectionery, and pickles were spread on the table, and between the courses our host not unfrequently selected choice bits and laid them on the plates of his guests,—a pleasant native custom showing kindly sentiment. A large number of attendants stood at one end of the room, and much ceremony was shown with the entrance and serving of each dish. Altogether the two daily meals, together with the previous hour of chatting over the *hors d'œuvres* and smoking in the reception-room, consumed more than five hours of the day.

The broad walk of the garden leading up to the reception-room was attractively illuminated every evening with cressets fixed in the ground. Our sleeping apartments occupied nearly the whole of the second floor, his Excellency the Governor having entirely abandoned this building to us during our stay here. We ascended to the second floor by a massive winding staircase of stone. At the foot of the stairway stood a sentinel. Our rooms were whitewashed and simply furnished, the mattresses being laid on the floor; entire absence of tables and chairs was evident at a glance. And yet it would be a mistake to assume for this reason that the Persians are void of a sense of elegance and comfort, as one fresh from an American home of wealth might conclude. On the contrary, if the poet

Thomson had been there he might well have ascribed these apartments to the Castle of Indolence, which his Muse has described in such luscious and voluptuous measures.

I do not here insist that the workmanship there displayed was in all respects finished after Western notions, for the tools of the Persians are rude ; but I noticed everywhere a genius sensitive to artistic effects, a keen and poetic appreciation of beauty, and a consummate adaptation of climatic needs to the materials at hand. And I must frankly say that I gained more genuine artistic satisfaction out of this provincial residence at Rescht than from the most sumptuous structures I have ever seen in the United States. Everywhere I saw beauty combined with a feeling of repose ; in a word, adaptation, simplicity, and thorough artistic effect. On the floors the richest carpets Persia can boast allured the eye, and upon these the mattresses were laid. Everywhere the foot moved silently on velvet, woven into the most exquisite and irregularly regular designs, — which suggested that a personal element entered into their warp and woof instead of the mechanical action of unfeeling iron and steam. The windows descended to the floor, and were closed like those described in the reception-room. Reclining in oriental ease on the cushioned carpets, one can easily dispense with chairs, as he quaffs the aromatic tumbâk of Shirâz in a silver kaliân, and gazes languidly on the mighty ranges of Elburz towering grandly above the forests of Ghilân and the red roofs of Rescht. The massive walls furnished numerous square niches called *tauchtches*, which served both as tables and closets ; and the arch which led to a recessed-window was honeycombed with a cluster of depressions, semi-angular or octagonal, which form a characteristic feature of Saracenic architecture. Around the side of our apartments was a broad veranda overlooking the gardens, and a highly picturesque Imâm Zadé, or tomb of a saint, canopied by the massive foliage of a venerable chenâr.

Every evening we were entertained by the magnificent voices of a man and a boy, who sang the call to prayers,—one from the roof of the bath; the other from the veranda adjoining our rooms. They seemed to vie in responding, each appearing to surpass the other with the full-throated metallic ring of their cadences. The air seemed dead after the echo of their song had died away on the twilight calm.

An invitation was extended to the ladies of the Legation to visit the ladies of the Governor's Harem. According to custom, word was sent beforehand to announce the hour of the visit. The hostess, or chief wife, and her attendants, with the other wives and concubines, were found in the Anderoon, dressed in their most elegant and costly jewels, and in apparel of a nature to fill one with amazement. The character of this costume is indicated by the cut on a subsequent page, representing the summer dress of Persian ladies. While extremely ignorant and naturally full of curiosity, the ladies of the Governor's household comported themselves with much dignity and graceful courtesy.

On the same afternoon the Mehmandâr invited me to a little promenade on horseback, accompanied by the invariable scarlet-clad mace-bearers on foot, and attendants on horse-back. Taking a road through the side streets of Rescht, we ambled at a gentle pace to a summer house of his Majesty a few miles out, where we were treated to the kaliân and tea, the materials having been brought by one of the attendants in a sack suspended to the saddle, according to Persian custom. The Mehmandâr then suggested a stroll about the rice-fields. This Province is noted for the culture of rice and silk. The square spaces of silk-like green rice glistening above the water in its spring growth were beautiful, enclosed as they were by barriers of turf and clumps of picturesque foliage; at this season the danger of malarial poisoning is comparatively slight. Women seemed to be chiefly

engaged in the cultivation of the plant. They wore no veils, and when they saw us simply turned their backs.

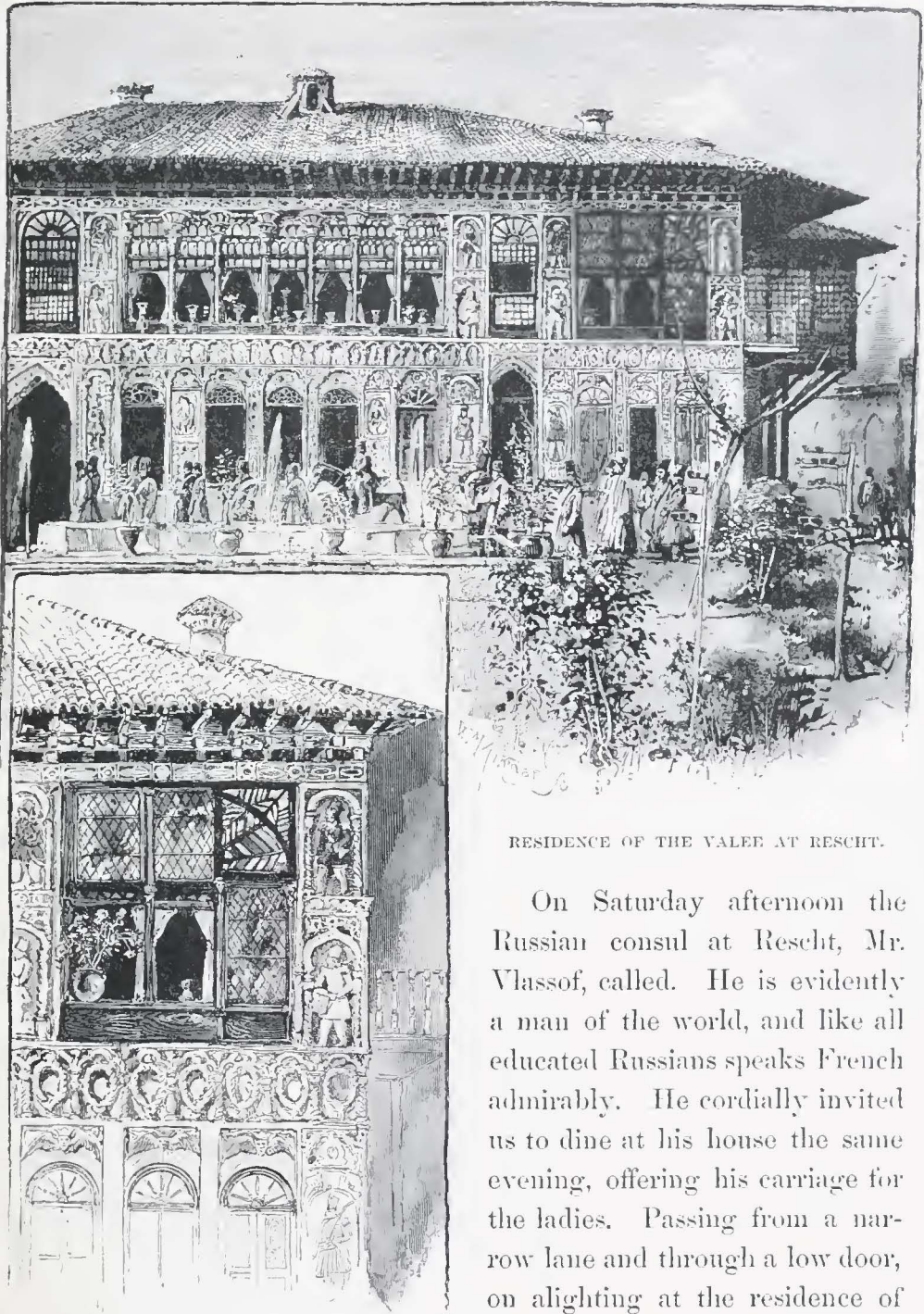
It was a circumstance worth noting that the farmers had fearlessly built their mud hovels on mounds entirely surrounded by rice-fields. These houses and the adjoining storehouses were roofed with a tent-like covering of thatch; and the habit of keeping the doors tightly closed after dark, while excluding fresh air, doubtless excludes also the pestilential air exhaled by the rice-fields after sunset. In one of these primitive barns we saw a large mass of caterpillars feeding on mulberry leaves, and weaving around themselves a coffin of silk. They were spread over a light frame-work, and the rustling of so many creeping things was very singular. I noticed in the fields a peculiar species of cattle, which until now I supposed confined altogether to India. They are uniformly black and sleek, but their chief peculiarity is a hump of flesh directly over the shoulders.

On the following afternoon I returned the call of the agent of the Foreign Office, accompanied by the Melmandâr. This functionary showed his æsthetic instincts by the location selected for his house, which faced a beautiful meadow flanked by spreading chenârs. On the farther side were picturesque granges nestled amid the most luxuriant vegetation, and this enchanting picture of rural peace and prosperity was enclosed by the purple ranges of Elburz. The low sun dappled the green with long creeping shadows and bars of golden splendor. The entrance was surrounded with attendants waiting to usher us to the reception-room. It was with some regret that I passed from this sunny scene into a dark court, and picked an uncertain way up a dark and irregular stairway. But this really served as a sort of artistic foil to enhance the pleasure of entering a charming little room opening on a balcony that overlooked the prospect described above. We were soon in a pleasant discussion over the Persian poets, accompanied by the invariable refreshments.



As the hour was delightful, a walk into the fields was proposed, and we started out accompanied by a troop of mounted attendants. It was a most beautiful evening, and the scenery would compare favorably with the loveliest landscapes in Europe. The pastoral quietude was enhanced by the flocks returning home. The Mehmandâr was in excellent spirits, and requesting us to sit down in a circle on the turf ordered the kaliân to be brought; then the men were directed to ride the horses at full speed across the meadows. These Persians can all keep on a horse so long as they have a Persian saddle under them. After a fine display of the mettle of these Arab steeds, we strolled to the bank of a muddy stream running between high clay banks. A number of peasants were bathing in a deep pool. The Mehmandâr threw them small coin, which led to some boisterous sport. This tempted him to a display of the power of masters over servants, such as would be surprising anywhere except in the East. He ordered the mace-bearers to leap into the water. Several of them without the slightest hesitation plunged in with their clothes on. Another, who was a poor swimmer, hesitated, and at the bidding of the Mehmandâr the attendants threw him in. To one who believes in the dignity of man, whatever be his station, the sport was not agreeable.

Twilight having now set in, we mounted and turned homewards. As we approached the city, several of the attendants suddenly darted ahead at a word from the Mehmandâr and were soon out of sight. The reason was explained when we entered the winding streets of the city, where the attendants reappeared with immense lanterns formed of figured cloth stretched on elaborately carved head and foot pieces composed of brass. The effect of the cavalcade was now highly picturesque, winding amid the shaded lanes preceded by large lanterns.



RESIDENCE OF THE VALEE AT RESCHT.

On Saturday afternoon the Russian consul at Rescht, Mr. Vlassof, called. He is evidently a man of the world, and like all educated Russians speaks French admirably. He cordially invited us to dine at his house the same evening, offering his carriage for the ladies. Passing from a narrow lane and through a low door, on alighting at the residence of

M. Vlassof, we suddenly found ourselves in a spacious court filled with trees and shrubbery, from whose branches numerous gayly-painted lanterns distributed a variegated light over a pool and fountain of flashing water. The elements of the scene were perhaps simple enough, but the effect was none the less interesting and fairy-like. We found a mansion elegantly furnished in European style, charmingly suggesting the East, with tigers' skins and oriental draperies and arms, and were courteously received by Madame Vlassof, an English lady, who gracefully did the honors. Dinner was preceded, Russian style, by the *zakooska* of caviare, brandy, and other appetizers spread on a small side-table.

In the midst of dinner a messenger from the Valee was announced. He said that a telegram had been received from the Shah urging my speedy arrival at the capital. I made immediate arrangements for us all to start on the following day. At the first station the ladies were to be left to come on slowly by caravan, while I was to go more expeditiously by chappâ or post travelling. It was no small enterprise to engage the needed men and animals, the cook, the *tachtravân*,<sup>1</sup> etc., for both parties, and start in less than twenty-four hours. But we succeeded. At four P.M. the square before the Valee's house was full of men and horses, together with several sumpter mules of characteristic viciousness. Now it would be a horse that kicked up its heels; then a mule would give a snort, and strike out towards all points of the compass. Then the *tachtravân* or the *kajevêh*<sup>2</sup> was not rightly adjusted. Finally, however, we got under weigh. Persian etiquette required me to lead, on the noble sorrel Arab I had ridden since my arrival, preceded by ten mace-bearers on foot, and followed by twenty officials of Rescht on horseback. The *Mehmandâr* rode on my left. Behind us came the *tachtravân*

<sup>1</sup> A covered litter carried by mules, used by ladies and invalids.

<sup>2</sup> The *kajevêh* is a covered seat swung on each side of a mule.



with the ladies, attended by my secretary; then the kajevêh with the maid, whose weight was balanced by luggage; and finally the sumpter mules and a crowd of mounted attendants.

Having reached the outer limits of Rescht and the post-house where horses were in readiness for the Mehmandâr and myself, the gentlemen of Rescht politely wished us a godspeed, and requested permission to return to the city. This was granted in the politest terms I could command, thanking them in the name of my Government for the kind reception accorded to the American legation while tarrying in the limits of their beautiful and flourishing city. After their departure I dismounted with some regret from my Arab steed, the Melmandâr Taghi Khan also dismounting, and we each bestrode a spare, rather sorry-looking, small-sized, but tough post-horse, and started off at a hard gallop, accompanied by Mr. Whipple, one of our excellent American citizens resident in Persia, who was returning to Tabreez. Our retinue now consisted simply of the body-servant of the Mehmandâr and the post-boy, who carried our moderate *impedimenta* in saddle-bags. The post-boy led the way, whip in hand. I soon observed that these post-boys ride their horses as if an integral part of the animal. No part of them appears to move separately except the right hand, which evermore goes ceaselessly up and down like a pump-handle, gently tapping the belly of the horse with the end of the lash. The effect is very singular. I found that my horse required the same regular stimulant to keep him at the pace for which he was intended by the fate that doomed him to go through this life at a steady canter on a post-road, until his weary limbs should give out, and he be left by the roadside to feed the vultures which soar in the blue heavens watching for his last pangs. This was the first time I had ridden on horseback any distance for years, and I soon began to realize that I had some hard work and a call for endurance before I should see the gates of Teherân.

But there was no alternative, unless I wished to reach the capital after the departure of his Majesty, — in which case I should have to remain, according to Persian diplomatic etiquette, without the city gates until his return, which would not be until October.

The hour was delightful, and the scenery everywhere charming. We often encountered rice-fields at first; but as these grew scarcer, the forests began to grow more frequent. Towards nightfall we arrived at Doschembé Bazaar, which is a quadrangular caravanserai containing stopping-places for travellers, and numerous shops. Each Tuesday a market is held there; hence the name. The rooms over the gate were at our disposal, and were provided with tables and two or three iron bedsteads. It was very pleasant after a hard ride of several hours to sit on the little balcony in the twilight, gazing on a quiet landscape over which gray night was slowly creeping, while the western sky was yet tinged with the golden radiance of a lovely sunset. The neighboring thickets were musical with the nightingale's song, and under a grand old plane-tree by the gate a venerable Persian was kneeling at his evening orison.

As we sat there smoking the pipe of peace and quietly chatting, a horseman dashed up to the gate bringing a telegram for me from his Majesty the Shah. It was to the effect that, desirous of showing his good-will towards the United States on the arrival of the first minister from that country to Persia, he had decided to receive me on entering the capital with all the honors awarded to the highest rank of envoys. I requested the Mehmandâr to reply that I respectfully acknowledged the generous sentiments of his Majesty, and cordially accepted the reception he had offered. Soon after sending my reply the tinkle of bells was heard in the distance, drawing nearer and nearer. Soon the caravan of our party began to appear, and by the time dinner was ready the ladies and the luggage arrived. We slept, some

on beds, some on the floor, others on the balcony. Before day-break all were stirring, and the fragrance of coffee floated on the still cool air as a streak of gray broke over the tree-tops in the east.

It was with some misgivings that I now cut loose from my family, leaving them to come on slowly and but ill provided for a rough journey over the lonely mountains of a strange land. But duty urged me on, and in six hours I had placed forty-eight miles between them and my party. Although the long gallop was somewhat fatiguing, I could not avoid constant emotions of pleasure as we passed through one of the loveliest landscapes on the globe. Dense primeval forests were around us: here and there a glade was formed by the falling of great trees, whose giant trunks lay prone on the turf covered with moss and vines, like the columns of some forgotten temple of old. Numerous brooks murmured through the forest, which was musical with the songs of many birds. What surprised me was the abundance of the pomegranate trees, whose scarlet blossoms gleamed like sparks of fire in the green glooms of the forest. No chromatic harmony of Nature gives me more pleasure than that of the scarlet and green of the coronated blossom and the glossy leaf of this lovely tree. It is remarkable for its rare combination of peculiar tints; while the scarlet is of an unusual tint verging on orange, the green exactly matches it, also verging on yellow.

At the village of Imâm Zadé we came out on a plain crossed by a stream, and I could find no language to express my enthusiasm at the magnificent prospect revealed when we emerged from the forest. On one side of the road, where we stopped at a wayside booth for a cup of tea with a raw egg beaten into it and served to us in the saddle, there was a lofty wooded height, on whose sides nestled a village. The conical thatched roofs peeped above the shrubbery in picturesque confusion.

On a sharp elevation adjoining was the tomb of a saint (hence the name) and an open lodging for pilgrims and travellers. Opposite this village was a tremendous rose-gray mountain, nearly ten thousand feet high, crested with a wreath of light clouds, and terminating in an abrupt precipice that dropped to the plain some four thousand feet. The Yosemite boasts no cliff grander than that. This noble mountain is called Dulfêk, and forms an outlying spur of the Elburz. From Imâm Zadé we left the plain, and gradually entered the mountain region which separates the moist and verdant Ghilân from the dry and arid plains south of the Elburz. Many a romantic glen we threaded, and many a babbling stream we forded. Beautiful was the gradual change from the superabundant wealth of vegetation on the north side of the mountains to the sublime aridity and desolation of the south side as we passed from one to the other, and entered the wide winding valley of the Sefeed Rood River. I call it a valley, but it is in reality a vast bed, partly gravelly sand, partly alluvial silt, covered in parts with green patches of rice-fields, which in the rainy season, or with the melting of the snows, is liable to be entirely covered with a tawny flood. As it is, in summer the river is about one hundred to one hundred and fifty yards wide, very deep and rapid. But for the latter quality it might well be navigable at least for boats of ten to fifteen tons. Poor Persia! even her rivers fail to be of service to her,—they are so wild and furious. But perhaps there may be in this an advantage. The long integrity of Persia as a nation may be partly owing to the extreme difficulty of access to the heart of the country. At times the road overhung the river several hundred feet. Opposite to us the grand, desolate mountains rose into the unfathomable blue.

Towards noon Koodoom came in sight, miles away on a long reach of good road. Giving our horses the rein and the whip, we galloped straight for it, as if fresh and unwearied.

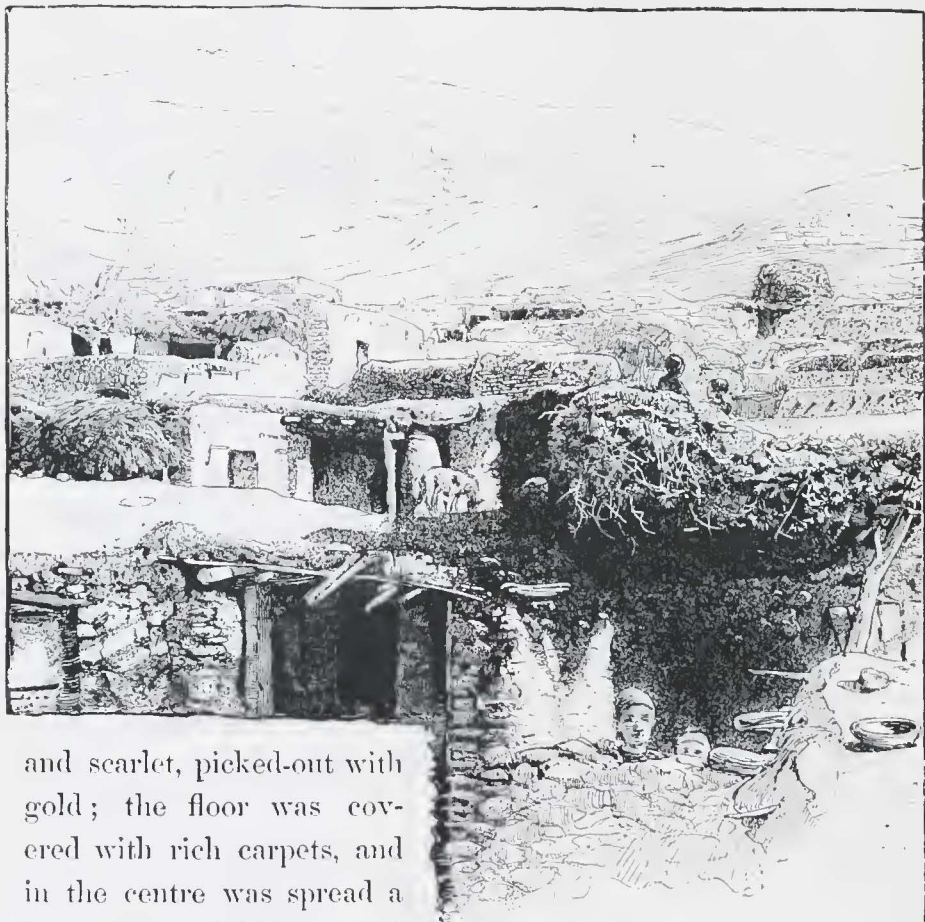


After a steaming cup of tea from the ever-ready samovar, I threw myself on a mat on the floor. The cool mountain-breeze soon fanned me to sleep. When I awoke, the Mehmandâr was kneeling at his prayer, and the tinkle of the bells of the flocks straggling to the folds told me it was near the close of day. A bath, another cup of tea, and a fragrant kaliân brought a reviving sense of appetite. On walking out on the roof, it was impossible not to be impressed by the grandeur of the spaces and heights around me and the sense of solitude, which yet was not oppressive. The quietude was soothing and restful: Nature seemed to have exerted herself to produce a pleasing effect with bare mountains and a single rushing river. The station was situated on a lofty slope, which enabled one to command the fluvial valley and overlook the southern heights of the mighty Dulfêk. I must say, however, that solitude enclosed by mountains which seem to have no outlet is to me far more oppressive than the solitude of a vast plain or of the sea. For the limitations of space are too visible; little is left to the imagination, and the mind is cramped by a sense of imprisonment. I am pleased with mountain scenery. I love it profoundly, if it forms one side of a landscape. But I never could be contented to dwell long in a place entirely surrounded by mountains: my soul would be stifled.

Sitting on a namâd or rug of felt, we partook with zest of a succulent dinner of ragouts and pillaff. Gossip and cigarettes followed. The Mehmandâr had been many years in Europe, and spoke French fluently. Whatever be the private character of an Oriental and a Persian, they all seem to be gentlemen in their manners, and to be masters of the art of conversation, passing easily from "grave to gay, from lively to severe."

From Koodoom we proceeded at dawn of the following day, from station to station, scaling the lofty pass of Kharzân, nearly seven thousand feet above the sea, until we came to Agâ Babâ.

Here we were met by the Kalantâr (or mayor) of Casbeen, who escorted us to a reception-room over the gate of the village. The rafters of the ceiling were carved, and painted blue



VILLAGE BETWEEN KOODOOM AND CASBEEN.

and scarlet, picked-out with gold; the floor was covered with rich carpets, and in the centre was spread a long array of dishes piled with confectionery, which

the Kalantâr presented to me with some graceful words of welcome. We found carriages of the Shah awaiting us at Agâ Babâ, and rapidly rode thence to Casbeen, which lay before us on the plain an oasis of verdure, whose orchards were quivering with mirage. A peasant ran across the fields with a young gazelle as a present, receiving of course an equivalent in silver.



Before we reached the city a group of mounted gentlemen were seen approaching; on being informed that they were coming to escort me into the city, I sent my thanks, but requested the privilege of entering quietly, as the dust and rough garb of travel made an official reception inexpedient. I was surprised and charmed to find at Casbeen a really elegant hotel, with rooms furnished in European style and an excellent cuisine. It is maintained by the Government, and represents an intention which is as yet far from being complete, to improve the travelling facilities of the country. It was delightful to sit on the spacious portico in the cool breeze and gaze over the typical oriental prospects unfolded from that spot.

The city of Casbeen offers a name familiar to all readers of Milton, who will remember the lines, in "Paradise Lost," —

" or Baetrian Sophi from the horns  
Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond  
The realm of Aladule, in his retreat  
To Tauris or Casbeen."

It is a thriving place of forty thousand inhabitants, and is noted for its wines, fruits, and pistachio nuts. The streets are lined with trees and watercourses, and some of the most interesting Saracenic buildings of northern Persia yet remain within its walls. One of the oldest is situated near the hotel; it is indeed so ancient that traditions have grown up with regard to it, some of which might call forth a sceptical sneer from the antiquary. The courteous Kalantâr of Casbeen gravely informed me that the age of this building is confirmed by the fact that when it was completed Christ himself came from Jerusalem to consecrate it, and that after the Mahometan conquest it was transformed into a mosque. As the building is undoubtedly of Mahometan architecture, and probably not over a thousand years old, this tradition seems to have very little basis to stand

on. But it is possible that it may have been constructed on the site of an early Christian church.

From Casbeen we proceeded in carriages over a fine road, eighty miles in length, that bridges the distance between that city and the capital. On arriving at Teherân I was received at a pavilion of the Shah near the gate of the city, by an imposing array of the civil and military dignitaries of the Court, together with the royal guards and a regiment of cavalry, and escorted to the quarters I was to occupy at Teherân.

## CHAPTER III.

### PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF PERSIA.

THE cultivated imagination kindles at the mention of Persia. The names of Cyrus and Darius and Xerxes are household words. Every schoolboy has pored over the narrative of the invasion of Greece by the mighty hosts of Persia; but it is difficult for one who has not been actually in Persia to realize that the nation founded and ruled by these sovereigns centuries before Christ is still a living power, with a continuous vitality that may preserve her national integrity for ages to come. She had already developed a distinct civilization and an extraordinary genius for political organization before the star of Rome had begun to cast its rays above the horizon of history. The immortal colonnades of Persepolis were reared before those of the Parthenon, and are still the greatest rival of the architectural triumphs of Greek civilization. Although shorn of some of her vast territories, which with various fluctuations have at times extended from the Ganges to the Nile, and from the Don to the Indian Ocean, Persia is yet by no means an insignificant power, with her well-defined limits more than twice the area of France; while the intellectual vigor of her people, after the lapse of twenty-five hundred years, shows few signs of degeneracy.

It is true that for several generations Persia has occupied comparatively a small portion of the world's attention, and has exercised still less of influence in its political councils, — thus giving to many the impression that she is verging on extinction. This is due in part to the prevailing religion, Mahometanism,

which at the outset gave a fresh impulse to the nations that adopted it, while eventually tending to antagonize them with the spirit of progress initiated by the invention of the art of printing. Another reason for the obscurity into which Persia has fallen is the inaccessibility of the country, which, although not remote, is only approached over lofty and extensive mountain ranges that enclose the frontier like a wall. This obstacle was of comparatively slight importance in former ages, when the whole world travelled toilsomely on horseback; but the invention of railways and the difficulty of laying them to any profit in Persia, owing to the mountains and the thinness of the population, has operated to place her in an eddy at one side of the current of modern progress.

But at last the turn of Persia has come. No longer can she remain isolated and unknown, or continue regardless and independent of what is going on elsewhere. In spite of herself, in spite of opposing circumstances, Persia is now looming up into new importance, and is becoming the theatre of events destined to grow in magnitude and weight.

Notwithstanding all that has been written about Persia, the ignorance that still exists about her is yet so general that there is absolutely no correct map of the entire country,<sup>1</sup> and until lately it was asserted, even in scientific circles, that no fossils were to be found in her geology. The fact is, that numerous evidences of extinct animal life are now traced in the strata of the Persian mountains. A curious example of popular ignorance on the subject was afforded me by an English geologist, who, alluding to a scientific lecture on Persia recently heard by him, asked me if there were any coal formations in that country. A very fine quality of bituminous coal actually abounds there; at Teherân it is used for fuel and steam machinery. In the southwestern part

<sup>1</sup> The best maps of northern Persia have been made by officers of the Russian army, undoubtedly with a view to preparing the way to conquest.

of Persia, near her best ports, the coal mines are apparently inexhaustible, and might easily be made a very important branch of exportation. Lead and iron mines are also found near the coal seams. This is an important fact for the consideration of foreign capitalists, for if ever railways are to be made profitable in Persia, it must be probably by constructing the rails and rolling stock on the spot.

The modern discovery of the existence of coal in Persia is of comparatively recent date. In ancient times coal was known to exist in the country, but in some unaccountable way the mines seem to have been lost, and all knowledge of the mineral wealth of Persia appears to have been forgotten. But a specific name applied to mineral coal remained in the language; and this fact suggested to Jenghir Khan, late Persian Minister of Sciences and Arts, that there must be some reason for the existence of such a word in the language. He therefore began a series of investigations, but without result. During one of his journeys through the mountainous jungles of Mazanderân however, he observed that some gypsies were using mineral coal in their camp; but they steadily refused to inform him where they had found it, yielding neither to threats nor bribes. He set spies to watch them, and after considerable difficulty obtained the desired information. Since then a seemingly inexhaustible supply of coal has been found in many parts of the country.

The present area of Persia is practically divisible into four great parts, distinguished by variety of climate and formation. The west and northwest, comprising the provinces of Azerbaïjân, Kurdistân, and Kermanshâh, with minor subdivisions, have a broken surface, rolling and mountainous, and partaking of the general character of the adjoining portions of Asia Minor. The most marked difference is noticeable between the provinces lying north of the great Elburz ranges and adjacent to the



Caspian Sea, and those of central Persia, which are separated from the Caspian provinces by that range. There could hardly be a greater contrast of climate than that presented between these two great districts. On the northern side the mountains concentrate the humidity from the Caspian; fog and clouds are frequent; the moisture is deposited in heavy and frequent rains, and numerous streams leap down the precipices of the rocky Elburz and meander across the alluvial plains that border the sea. This abundance of humidity produces a wonderful vegetation, perennial in loveliness, and almost tropical in its variety and luxuriance. The roads wind through a noble underwood of primeval forests of extraordinary density and beauty, whose venerable trees are clothed with the velvet of emerald mosses, or embraced by the tendrils of clambering lianas. Often the green gloom of the woods is brightened by the vivid scarlet blossoms of the wild pomegranate, gleaming like glints of fire; and the glades echo with the music of dashing streams. Near the sea the wilderness gives place to cultivated orchards, or to spacious lawns and vistas of barley-fields, old granges, and thatched huts of the peasantry nestling under superb masses of pendulous foliage, by the edge of steaming rice-fields.

But the stranger, however fascinated he may be with the charms of one of the loveliest regions on the globe, is warned to be on his guard, to carry with him rifle and quinine, and not to tarry there except in the early springtime. For in those forests lurk the panther and the tiger, the frequent and persistent mosquito, and the venomous serpent; while the deadly miasma floats like a spirit of evil over those rice-fields, and few there be who are not wasted or slain by the all-pervading fever. But as one begins to reach the upper shelves of the mountains he becomes aware that he is entering upon scenery so different, that, although the transition is made in a few hours, he seems to have arrived in a region far distant from the one that he has



left seemingly in another hemisphere. The forests are no longer seen; and when he reaches the ridge he looks on parched plains extending south with scarcely an interruption for six hundred miles. The atmosphere is likewise altogether changed. On the northern side the damp heat causes the perspiration to start as if from a steam-bath, while on the south side of the Elburz the air is dry, devoid even of dew the greater part of the year; and although the mercury ranges at a higher point the heat is less relaxing than in the Caspian provinces. The average annual rain-fall of central and southern Persia is about seven inches. The climate of central Persia may be indeed termed salubrious; for many months in the year the heat is continuous, and in summer excessive, ranging in that season at  $105^{\circ}$  to  $110^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit at midday, tending to lassitude and nervous prostration. But the dryness of the atmosphere is opposed to malaria and endemic diseases, as well as to acute forms of zymotic maladies and epidemics; small-pox and scarlet fever may be said to be there at all seasons, but they assume a mild character and are rarely fatal. In the south the greater continuance of the excessive heat tends to nervous exhaustion. But observation shows that the climate of central Persia is favorable to foreigners who avoid exposure to the midday sun, live temperately, are careful what water they drink, and not much of that, and are especially prudent on their first arrival in the country.

The dryness of central Persia is due, among other causes, to the scarcity of vegetation and the great elevation of this portion of the kingdom. One is surprised to find the descent on the southern side of the Elburz generally more gradual and far less profound than on the northern side. This is owing to the fact that central Persia is a vast table-land elevated from four thousand to six thousand feet above the sea. East, south, and west these mighty plains roll away like a great sea, quivering with mirage, and dotted at long intervals by islands of verdure or

reddish-gray ridges which rise above the plain like rocky headlands, until the vanishing sea-like horizon melts into the cloudless sky where the eagle and the vulture soar alone.

Almost the whole of this vast plateau is dependent upon irrigation for the scanty vegetation which has been collected in a comparatively small portion of its extent ; and the irrigation is dependent upon the snows which cover the lofty ranges that appear at convenient intervals above the plateau. The importance of these ranges may be seen by the altitude they reach, which enables them to retain the snow on their summits sometimes the entire year. The range of the Elburz, which is evidently a continuation of the Hindu Koosh mountains, is in parts over thirteen thousand feet high, while its central peak, Mount Demavend, is not less than twenty-one thousand feet in height. The range of the Zarda Kooh, near Ispahân, rises to upwards of sixteen thousand feet. Numerous other ranges in other parts of the plateau serve to condense and preserve the moisture, and to distribute it by irrigation over a country probably the most arid of any that is occupied by a civilized nation.

But the soil of this plateau is often capable of producing rapid and abundant crops under irrigation, especially in the valleys at the foot of the mountains ; and there are fertile districts of considerable extent, such as the region in the southwest bordering on the Karoon River. But enormous tracts of this country are mere deserts, often covered only with sand, gravel, and salt, unprofitable for cultivation, almost entirely destitute of water, and in parts to be traversed with circumspection on account of dry quicksands, like the one in which Bahrâm V. lost his life when hunting the wild ass.

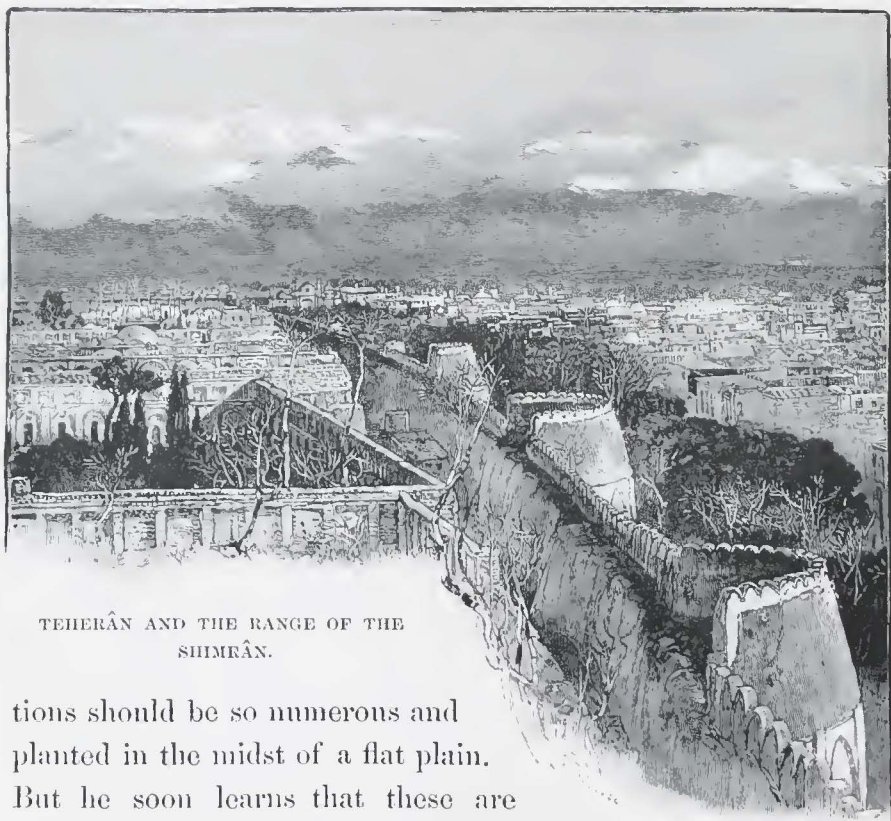
But it would be a mistake to infer that central Persia is wholly unattractive. Quite the contrary is the case ; for in fact I know of no country which within the same space contains

a greater variety of contrasts of scenery. The weary traveller turns with intense pleasure from the road over the arid wastes to the green oasis, with its streams and dense foliage nestling in a gorge. It is again with a sense of repose, a silent and solemn satisfaction, that he looks over the vast endless spaces; the soul expands with the sense of space, and seems already in this life to gain an intuition of the infinite spaces in which it shall find scope for a fuller expression of its power in another existence. It is because of these intense contrasts that to the thoughtful and poetic mind the landscapes of central Persia become, after residence there, exceedingly fascinating and quietly stimulating to the imagination.

A peculiar feature of the great table-land of Persia is seen in the wind-storms, which are especially prevalent in the early spring, and are liable to occur at all seasons. They are most formidable in Kermân, the southern-most province, where it is said an army was once overwhelmed by a sudden storm of dust. One which the writer witnessed came up with the appearance of an impending thunder-storm, conveying every impression that there was to be a general convulsion of the elements. It approached rapidly, and when within two or three miles the distant landscape became obscured as if by a cloud-burst of rain, rushing furiously over the plains, while we drove before it for shelter. But when the storm struck us it was accompanied by neither rain nor lightning, but only wind and a terrific cloud of driving dust, careering forward in dense whirlwinds, completely shutting out every object at the distance of a hundred yards: the wind was of a violence to tear off large branches. Happily these dry storms of Persia are generally of the briefest duration, and are not often as dangerous as those of the Sahara. One may travel from one end of Persia to the other without meeting one, — as mariners may circle the globe and encounter no breeze strong enough to carry away a studding-sail boom.



There are two objects in a Persian landscape which cannot fail to attract the traveller's eye, and to arouse his curiosity. The villages on the plains are surrounded by square lofty walls, with battlements and corner towers. At first one fancies every village to be a fortress, and is surprised that such fortifica-



TEHERÂN AND THE RANGE OF THE  
SHÎMRÂN.

tions should be so numerous and planted in the midst of a flat plain. But he soon learns that these are villages; and at evening he will see the flocks and herds wending hither, and crowding in a confused bleating mass into the great gate. Further inspection reveals an irregular huddle of huts within the enclosure, constructed of sun-dried mud, and with domical roofs. In mid-summer these villages are hot as an oven, and but for the density of the mud walls would be insupportable. In such a climate a house should be either entirely open on all sides to

invite every breeze, or it should be solidly built with scarce any openings, in order to exclude the heat. The fortifications which surround the Persian villages, while of course utterly useless against the attack of modern artillery, were formerly advantageous in affording a certain protection against the incursions of predatory bands of Turkomans, who used to steal across the country with the silence and speed of North American Indians, and carry the people and flocks into slavery. Thus the rude protection the walls afforded to the villages was absolutely necessary in a country so sparsely inhabited. The Turkomans however very rarely invade the heart of Persia to-day, and the importance of protecting the villages has practically ceased. Yet the custom will probably continue until some new convulsion of progress initiates another system.

The other feature of the scenery of the central plateau of Persia alluded to above, is found in the artificial mounds which extend at regular intervals through the country for hundreds of miles. These mounds are from eighty to a hundred feet high, and are shaped like the tumuli on the plains of Troy. But that they are not tombs is evident from their position, ranged as they are at intervals of about two miles. That they must be artificial is proved by this regularity of position, while their antiquity must necessarily be very great, because the mound-building period was in pre-historic times. The Persians themselves can give no facts regarding the origin of these mounds, except the general tradition that they were thrown up in the time of Shah Jemsheed. This is a common phrase used in Persia concerning objects of great age, and simply means that they antedate any precise historical knowledge. The Persians also say that these mounds were built in order to telegraph with bale-fires in time of invasions by an enemy. This is very plausible; and the tradition may be accepted as correct, since the average Persian is too ignorant of comparative history to



borrow the idea from other nations, while a study of the early history of many peoples shows that such means of communicating tidings was at one time not uncommon.

The geology of Persia is still incompletely defined; so far as known the northern mountains, which trend east and west, are largely carboniferous and Devonian. The district called Taberistân, representing the region of which Mount Demavend is the centre, seems to be of comparatively recent creation, speaking scientifically; historically, of course, its formation antedates all authentic records. In the south the mountain ranges trend with remarkable regularity from southeast to northwest, separated by regular valleys like wave-hollows, and intersected by tremendous defiles. The road between Shirâz and Bushire traverses these ranges, and the difficulties encountered prove a serious bar to a large commerce over that route.

The chief rivers of central and southern Persia are the Helmund, the Zendarood, and the Karoon. The last is navigable for barges as far as Shuster, the ancient Susa. Mohammerâh, at its mouth, furnishes the only good harbor in Persia, accessible and safe at all times for ships of the largest size. Northern intrigues have thus far hindered the construction of a long-projected and much needed road that would open the Karoon to the foreign commerce of Persia. In the north are the Araz River, the Harhâz, and the Sefeed Rood.

There is reason to believe that the vast desert of Khorassân was at one time the bed of an inland sea, which dried up in the way the Caspian is now slowly evaporating. There is a small salt lake at Oroomieh, and another of some size near the frontier of Afghanistân; several smaller ones also exist in Persia, especially one near Firoozkooli, which is at a great height above the sea. But these rare sheets of water only serve to emphasize the general aridity of the country.

A marked characteristic of Persia is the silence that prevails

there. The tendency of the age is unquestionably towards the increase of sound, and especially of sounds harsh and discordant, trying to the nerves and bewildering to the brain. What silence everywhere existed in old times we know from the stillness that yet pervades oriental lands. The farther east we go, the more profound is the repose. As one travels over the vast plains or lonely mountain passes of Persia, such is the profound stillness that he is often startled at the sound of his own voice.

A Persian city has no clangor of bells; at stated times the musical cry of the muezzin floats over the calm air, or the monotonous drone of camel bells falls lightly on the ear, or the occasional voice of the street vender is heard crying his wares. There is no tumultuous roar such as proceeds from a European and especially an American city, to absorb these occasional and not disagreeable sounds: but when they are heard they break upon a silence that has existed since the creation. After sunset not even these sounds are heard in Persia, but only the sob of a passing gust shaking the tree-tops, or the hoot of the owl in a neighboring ruin.

But as one turns his face again towards the west he becomes increasingly aware that a new element is growing on his attention, making fresh demands on his nervous system, until sometimes he feels that he must be made over again with a new set of nerves, or his brain will yield to the strain it is forced to bear. It is no longer "the car rattling o'er the stony street" alone that makes of Christendom a vast bedlam of sound. The very quietude of the summer landscape is broken by the jarring whistle of the locomotive and the frantic dash of the railway train; the most reposeful villages are garrulous with the whirr of looms in factories whose motive-power is steam. The streets of our cities, from midnight till midnight, are discordant with the whirl of trains, the rush of hacks, the deafening din of lumbering drays, the squeak of barrel-organs, the jangle of the rag-gatherer's bells,

the clang of church bells, the shriek of steam-whistles from millions of mills, ferry-boats, trains, and fire-engines, the rumble of tram-cars, the blast of itinerant brass-bands, the booming of salutes in political campaigns, and the explosion of blasting rocks. The battles of this century are fought with batteries that rival the sounds made by the artillery of heaven. In ancient times battles were almost noiseless. When the soldiers of Hannibal were hacking seventy thousand Romans to death at Cannæ, a peasant a mile off might have reaped his barley without suspecting aught of the terrible drama that was being enacted so near. Now a battle is heard twenty or thirty miles.

Even the music of modern civilization grows louder and louder. The human voice is trained to hold the attention of scores of thousands; the stringed instrument is no longer enough, nor the monotone of ancient music. The organ is judged not only by its quality but likewise by its size and volume of lungs, and with overwhelming bursts of sound Wagner proclaims the music of the future. If Wendell Phillips were to come back from the grave and repeat his plausible lecture on the lost arts, he could not cite among all the devices of the ancients any such inventions for making sound as exist at the present day, unless we except that nondescript imitation of the confusion of pandemonium, — the yell of the Chinese gong. This is indeed an age of sound, and we are likely to have more noise before we have less. The tendency of civilization is all in this direction. Innumerable inventions are constantly adding to the volume of sound, indicating a desperate attempt on the part of our little planet to make a noise in the universe. But no one has yet devised any invention for reducing this stupendous uproar and giving a little rest to the tired nerves of the nineteenth century. It is curious that the Book of Revelation seems to indicate a continuance and growth of sound, and almost suggests that the only sense which may survive to the disembodied spirit will be that of hearing.

We are told by the Evangelist of the "sound of many waters;" and a chorus of the redeemed is one of the chiefest themes indicated in the apocalyptic visions of Saint John. This is very well for those who reach those blessed regions; but for us who continue to remain here a while longer, a surcease of sound would seem to be a prime advantage. By going to Persia, however, one may reduce this nuisance of the age to a minimum. There Time seems to wear velvet on his feet as he silently speeds us on the chase after rainbows in this vale of tears. Is not this an important compensation for the absence of many of the advantages which are wanting in that ancient land?

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CITY OF TEHERÂN.

TEHERÂN, the present capital of Persia, owes its importance to the fact that it was made the seat of government by Shah Agâ Mohamed Khan, the founder of the reigning dynasty of the Khajârs, a hundred years ago. Teherân is an old city; it was called by Pietro della Valle the city of plane-trees, and its well-ordered bazaars had a wide repute even in his time. But until it became the capital it could not in any sense be considered a rival of Ispahân, Shirâz, or any other of the important ancient cities of Persia. The monarchs of the Khajâr dynasty have, all things considered, been men of ability and enterprise, and their capital from being a town but little known has become one of the most flourishing and active cities of the East, with a growing population of nearly two hundred thousand souls. Although possessing few such noble examples of old-time architecture as still exist at Ispahân, it offers many attractions, and the suburbs present most of the features peculiar to oriental scenery.

The capital is situated on the great central plateau of Persia, thirty-eight hundred feet above the sea. Probably no drier atmosphere than that of Teherân exists except in Sahara. But after the stranger becomes acclimatized he finds this is favorable to pulmonary, nervous, and rheumatic complaints. The spring and the autumn are extremely delightful; in summer the heat in the city ranges from 95° to 110° in the shade, but it is endurable because of its dryness, provided caution is



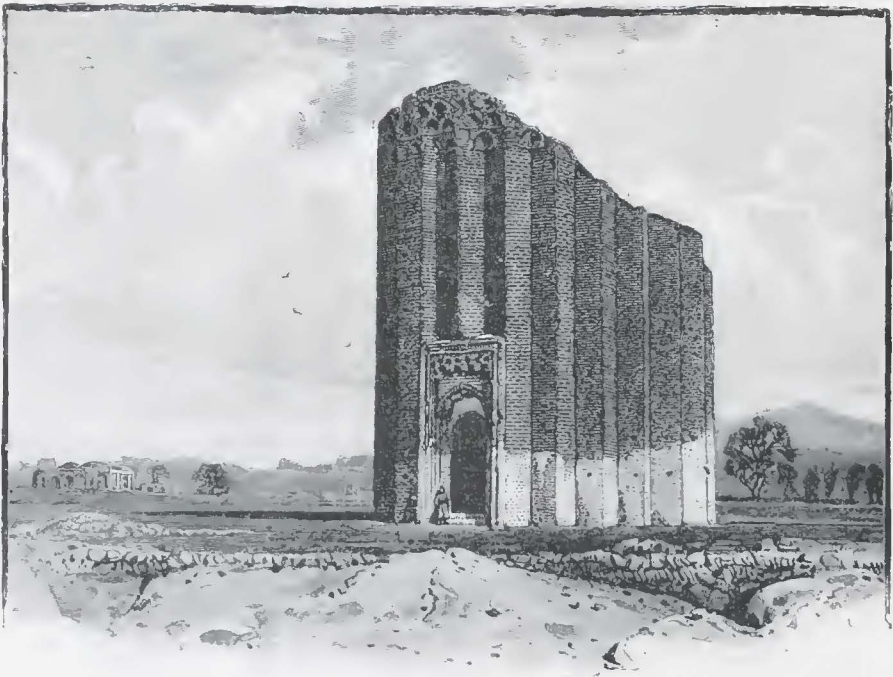
exercised against direct exposure to the rays of the sun. The Europeans, and many of the Persians including the court, pass the summer among the numerous and attractive villages nine or ten miles from the city, fifteen hundred feet higher, on the talus of the Shimmrân. During the day a brisk breeze from the southwest generally blows like a trade-wind; and at night a cool wind from the mountains lowers the temperature an average of 10° Fahrenheit. In the Shimmrân the temperature ranges in summer from 72° to 90°, although rarely reaching the latter figure.

The Shimmrân, or Shim Irân, is a part of the great Elburz chain which extends from the Caucasus to Merv. Shimmrân means the "Light of Persia." Gradually ascending from the walls of Teherân, the range at the distance of only ten miles springs with sudden precipitateness to the enormous height of thirteen thousand feet above the sea. During the entire summer snow is seen on the higher peaks, while in winter they are clothed with a dense mantle of ermine to the plains. Nothing more magnificent in mountain scenery could be imagined. From every part of the city the glittering ridge of the Shimmrân is to be seen above the housetops, — a commanding shape, forming a sublime background for the avenues leading north and south.

Northeast from Teherân, about forty miles distant, is another feature of the landscape which once seen can never be forgotten. I certainly shall always remember the moment when on my way from Casbeen, and yet twenty miles from Teherân, we turned a sharp corner in the road, and the mighty Peak of Demavënd burst on my view for the first time. The height of Demavënd has been variously estimated by barometrical pressure. The most recent and reliable calculations agree in placing it at nineteen thousand six hundred to twenty-one thousand feet above the sea. The form of the cone is nearly pyramidal. Rising as it does ten thousand feet above the mountains in its

vicinity, it is invested with a spirit of regal isolation that appalls the soul.

The mountains make a curve to the southwest of Teherân, terminating in a bare rocky ridge, around whose base is the site of the ancient city of Rhages, reputed to have numbered a population of one million in the time of Darius. In later ages that



MAUSOLEUM AT RHEÏ.

city was called Rheï, or Rhé, by which name it is still known to the Persians. Rhages is mentioned several times in the Book of Tobit. It is, however, singular that so little is said about this great city by writers of antiquity; it has not even separate mention in most classical dictionaries. And yet Rheï was the capital of the Arsacide or Parthian dynasty, and later of the celebrated Alp Arslân in the twelfth century. The city

was captured and destroyed in the subsequent century by Hulagu the Mogul.<sup>1</sup> The remains of Rheï are still found at intervals of considerable space, including vestiges of the fortifications, and a remarkable tower-shaped tomb of brick, with surface broken into numerous angles. It is probably the tomb of Khaleel Sultân, a grandson and successor of Timour Leuk, celebrated for his romantic love for the fascinating Shad-ul-Mulk. After many vicissitudes the lovers were reunited. Banished from the throne, he died in exile. After his death she pierced her heart with a poignard, and the same tomb received them at Rheï. The lower part of this ruin has been restored by Nasr-ed-Deen Shah. Peasants from time to time discover old coins and bits of gold ornaments and iridescent tiles when turning up the soil of Rheï in the springtime. But no systematic exploration has yet been undertaken of the ruins of the fallen city.<sup>2</sup>

On a ledge overlooking the site of Rheï is the Parsee cemetery of Teherân, — a white spot on the purple side of the bare

<sup>1</sup> Naizmudin, a Mahometan author, who was a native of Rheï, and escaped with his life at the great destruction of that city by the Moguls, says: "Could there well be worse slaughter than there was in Rheï where I, wretched that I am, was born and bred, and where the whole population of five hundred thousand souls was either butchered or carried into slavery?" We who live in the present more favored age and more favored lands find it difficult to realize the awful crimes of history, — crimes so astounding that we pass them over with scarce a thought, for the imagination fails to grasp their horrible details.

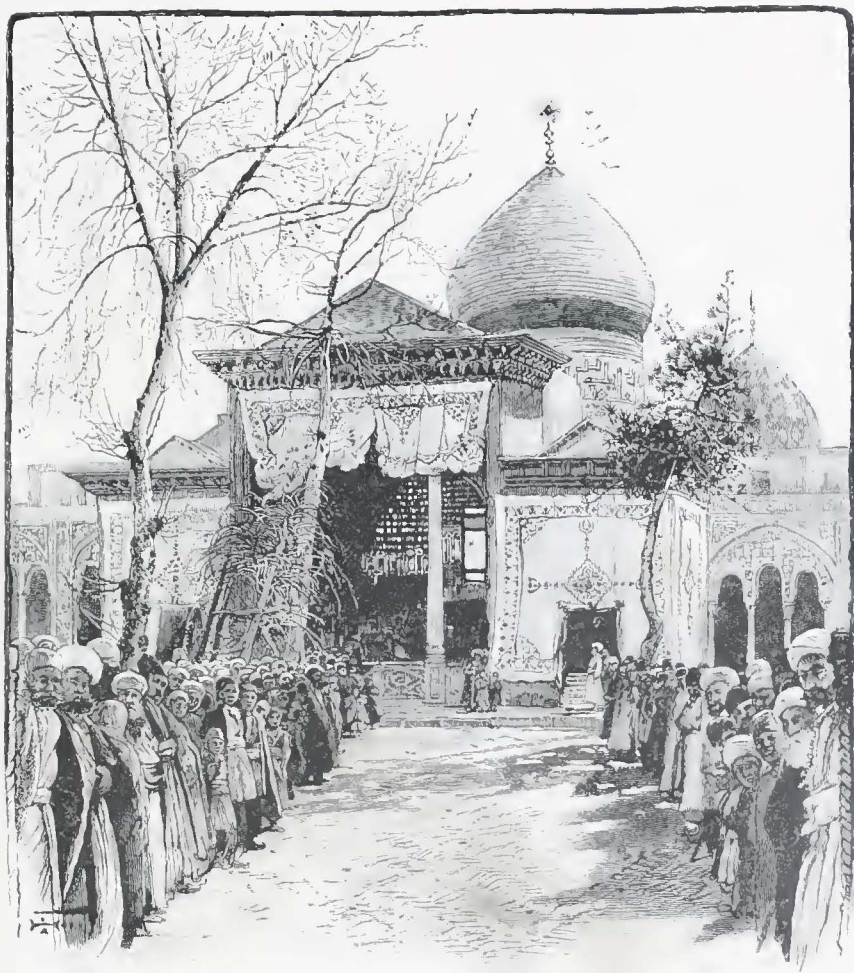
<sup>2</sup> It must be admitted that Rawlinson inclines to the theory that Rhages and Rheï are two distinct places, assuming that Rhages occupied the site of the city whose ruins are near the village of Shahr-i-Veramîn in the district of Veramîn, about thirty miles south-east of Teherân. The basis of his argument seems to be the statement of Arrian as to the distance of Rhages from the defile called the Pylæ Caspiæ. But here Rawlinson and others who accept his conclusions must concede that their argument possibly presents a *petitio principii*, for the exact position of the Pylæ Caspiæ is yet far from being a settled question. On the other hand, there is nothing in the style and character of the antiquities still remaining on the plains of Veramîn to suggest that they long antedate the mausoleum or brick tower of Rheï. The widespread ruins of Rheï certainly indicate the former existence of a city far larger than we are led to infer stood at Veramîn. It is also an important point, that the general traditions of the Persians themselves are in favor of Rheï as the older city.

mountain, conspicuous for many miles. It is a circular enclosure of mud and stone whitewashed, and open to the sky. The dead are laid in shallow graves and left exposed to the elements. The destination of the departed soul is supposed to be indicated by the eye first devoured by the ravens: the right eye means heaven; the left, hell. This is a simple system of eschatology, although its results cannot always be satisfactory to the friends of the departed.

Six miles from Teherân, on the outskirts of the site of Rheï, stands the celebrated shrine of Shah Abdûl Azeem, — a famous saint of the Sheahs. The Turks are Sunnees, and call themselves the Orthodox; but the Persians, or Sheahs, accept Alee and Husseïn, who were slain by the Sunnees, as the true representatives of the line of Caliphs. Hence an irreconcilable feud between the two sects. The Persians have their own sacred resorts and shrines, of which Meshed enjoys great celebrity, for it contains the magnificent tomb of Imâm Rhezâh, one of the Twelve Holy Imâms who are descended from Alee and Fathimêh. But there is no resort in Persia more famed than that of Shah Abdûl Azeem, which is so conveniently situated near the capital that it is visited by over three hundred thousand pilgrims annually from Teherân alone. Every Friday (the Mussuhuan Sabbath) the faithful resort to this shrine. The dome that hangs over the tomb of the saint is gilded, and is seen from all parts of the plain flashing like a star.

Here, then, surrounded by such scenes of natural, historic, and ethnic interest lies the capital of Persia. It is a bustling, thriving place, rapidly spreading in all directions, and destined soon to outgrow the limits now prescribed by the extensive earthworks and fosse laid out after the modern system of fortification by the late General Büler, who superintended the siege operations when Herât was captured during the reign of Mohamed Shah. Numerous avenues lead out of the city





PILGRIMS AT THE TOMB OF SHAH ABDÛL AZEEM.





to the roads of Casbeen, Hamadân, Shîmrân, Yusufâbâd, Doshântepê, Mesched, and Ispahân. Where each of these roads enters the city a magnificent gateway has been erected, relieving the monotony of the long level line of earthworks. While these gates have the same general plan, each has a character of its own. The Gate of Shîmrân is typical. It is in the form of a deep, lofty arch, with a square sky line. On either side are deep niches with smaller ones above. The effect of what might perhaps seem a heavy design is lightened by graceful pinnacles rising from the roof. The entire fabric is encrusted by an outer layer of orange-yellow, black, and azure surfaced-bricks, highly glazed, and arranged in elegant geometric designs. Over the central arch is a colossal mosaic painting in many colors, representing Rustêm, the Achilles of Persian legend, engaged in a fierce conflict with his enemies.

But of the many gates of Teherân the handsomest and certainly the most imposing is the large gate offering entrance on the north to the Ark, or Citadel. It faces the great square of the Department of War, which is in itself a handsome and imposing enclosure. In the centre is an octagonal marble tank one hundred and fifty feet long, always kept full to the brim. At each corner of the basin an enormous old-fashioned cannon is mounted on a platform. The four sides of the square are occupied by barracks and Government offices, in two uniform stories relieved with arches, and including on the east side a handsome portico supported by graceful pillars and faced with glazed tiles. This square is entered through six stately gates, which are closed at night. Over the great gate described above fly the colors of Persia,—the Lion and the Sun, yellow on a green ground. At sunrise and at sunset a band of musicians collects on the lofty gallery over the gate with horns, cymbals, and kettle-drums, and salute the hour with a nondescript music such as Beethoven and Mozart never dreamed of. It is curious that

notwithstanding the highly cultivated artistic sense of the Persians, they have no better notion of harmony in music. This does not appear to be for lack of a true taste for music, for their stringed instruments are capable of fine expression, and are touched with much feeling by their performers, and the military bands instructed by Europeans, I am informed, very soon seize the *motif* of European pieces. At the diplomatic dinners given by the Prince Naïb Sultanêh on the eve of the birthday of the Shah during the writer's residence at Teherân, the national airs of the United States were played with spirit and effect. Another magnificent gate of Teherân is the one of which an illustration is given (page 67). It closes the Citadel on the south, but is always open between sunrise and sunset.

The architectural decorations already described in this chapter are far from being confined to the public buildings of Teherân; for at every turn one discovers evidences of the love of beauty inherent in the national character. The archways of the rudest shops are decorated with glazed tiles or bricks, or with the peculiar honeycomb work so notable at the Alhambra. This is done in stucco, often colored and gilded, sometimes in a rude but always a thoroughly artistic style. The entrances to the houses are generally ornamented in this manner, and are formed by the recession of the street-wall in a semi-circle furnished with seats and niches, and roofed by an arch. Above is a *balahané*, or porter's lodge, provided with curtains and perhaps stained-glass windows. Strange to say the door itself is a low, square, modest aperture, simply relieved by knockers of figured iron or brass. Through this unimposing entrance one passes into a darksome narrow passage, which but little suggests the spacious and attractive court to which it leads. The court is paved, but laid out in the centre with trees and shrubbery around a tank stocked with gold-fish. If the house belongs to a man of position the first court is surrounded by the servants' rooms, offices,

and stables. This, however, does not prevent the walls from being abundantly decorated with *gatch*, or stucco work. From thence we proceed to the chief court, or Beroon, which is rendered attractive by a wild luxuriance of foliage and flowers. Here is the main dwelling, as entirely secluded as if in the heart of a wilderness instead of in a large city. Sometimes this building is of two stories; in general, however, it is only one story in height. The first glance at the windows reveals the fact that the Persian architects are masters of the secret of successful decorative architecture; they appreciate the importance of massing the effect instead of scattering it by meaningless details. It does not matter how luxuriant the decoration may be, provided it is as far as possible constructive, relieved by simple art lines and comparatively blank spaces. Thus only can repose, so essential in art, be obtained. The Greeks understood this. Study the Parthenon, as the finest example extant of this principle; study also the façade of the Cathedral of Chartres, as an example in Gothic architecture, — and compare these with the new Houses of Parliament in London.

However Persian art may at the present day be inferior in grandeur to that of the Achaemenidae, the Sassanidae, and the Sufavees, the same love of beauty, the same fine artistic sense continue to inspire even the most ordinary workman. What implements they used in ancient times we know not; but to-day the average Persian artisan has neither rule, compass, nor spirit-level. He is commonly ignorant of the fact that the diameter is the third of the circumference; his gimlets and augers are prods turned by a bow-string; he has no hatchet, but only an adze, and no carpenter's bench. If he desires to plane a board he puts it on the ground; and if he would saw a block of wood he squats on the ground and holds it between his toes, drawing the saw towards him. Wood is scarce, and with such tools hard to work. If pillars are to be constructed, the trunks of poplars are raised,

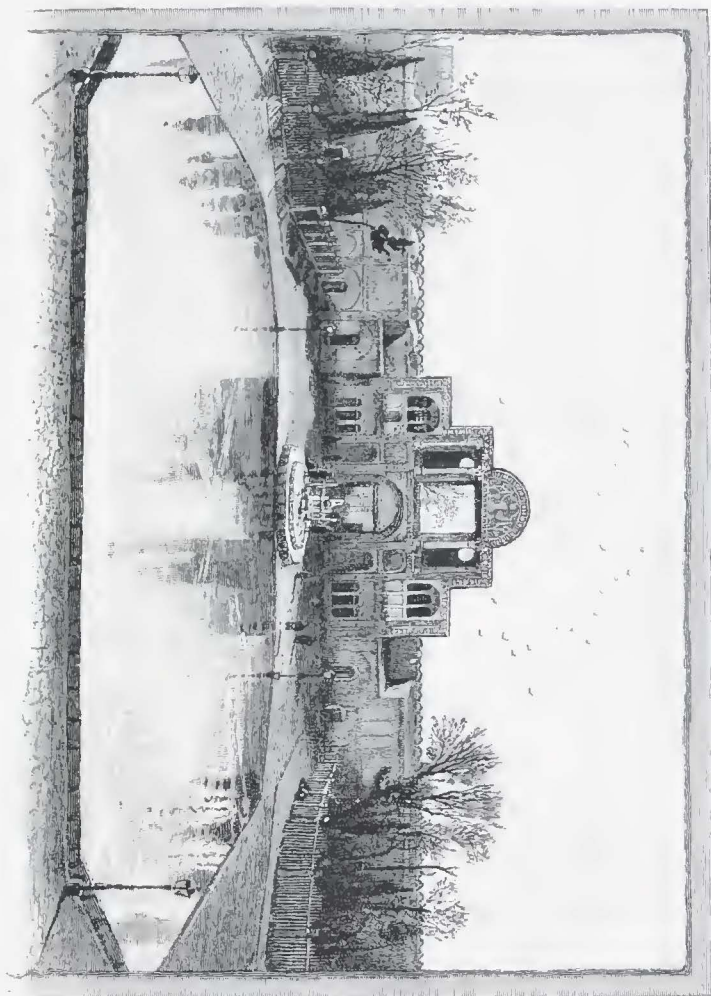
simply stripped of their branches and bark. They may be crooked, but that matters not; the master workman tells his subordinate to shape the post into an elegant pillar with *gatch*. Depending only on his eye and the skill of his hand, this simple artisan moulds the plaster round the trunk into a fluted shaft and crowns it with a graceful capital and cornice, showing a lively inventive fancy. If judged by the strict application of rule and compass, these decorations may sometimes be off a straight line; but of the artistic beauty of the conception there can be no question. In like manner walls and ceilings are tastefully decorated.

Now, I have spoken of the windows of Persian houses as representative of the national taste. Instead of piercing the wall of each apartment with several ineffective apertures, the architect of Teherân groups all in one large central window reaching from floor to ceiling. This is again divided by mullions into three or four spaces. The sashes are filled with small square or diamond-shaped panes of stained glass. Both the exterior and interior effect is very agreeable, while in warm weather the whole side of the apartment can be opened like a piazza by raising the sashes.

The larger apartments are often divided by partitions of sashes and mullions similar to the windows. In winter the rooms can be thus reduced in size, while in summer a current of air circulates everywhere, aided by picturesque wind-towers or shafts on the roof called *badgér*. The doors are closed by superb portières, and the floor, which is invariably of earth beaten hard, is covered with a matting overlaid with rugs and carpetings. Latterly the Persian gentleman of Teherân, when receiving Europeans, has learned to offer them chairs; but when by themselves the Persians still prefer to sit on the floor, resting on their heels, but with cushions behind them. This posture must be acquired in childhood to be tolerable.



SOUTHERN GATE OF THE AER.





Adjoining the Beroon is the Anderoon, or house devoted to the feminine portion of the family. It has a court of its own, and is as sacred from the impertinent eyes of the inquisitive as if it were a convent. The master of the house alone has access to the Anderoon. And when he retires hither for dalliance or repose, no one can disturb him; neither can one be permitted to open a window overlooking any part of such an establishment.

After what has been said of the charms of a dwelling in Teherân, it may be a surprise to learn that even the most costly mansions are constructed of sun-dried bricks, and that the flat roofs are of mud. But in a climate like this, these bricks are very durable. Some of the towers of Rheï, still standing after twelve centuries, are of this seemingly perishable material. Lightness, combined with strength, is often gained in Persia by ingeniously building a wall of square sun-dried bricks, arranged in hollow cubes as in a block-house. They are cemented by a layer of mud mixed with straw, over which in turn follows a coat of white plaster. Where great strength is required, the angles are fortified by a layer of burnt bricks. Such a wall will stand for ages. It is interesting to watch the builders at work. They wear long tunics, which are tucked into their girdles when working, displaying a length and muscular development of limb I have never seen equalled elsewhere. The one above sings out in musical tone, "Brother, in the name of God, toss me a brick!" The one below, as he throws the brick, sings in reply, "Oh, my brother! [or, oh, son of my uncle!] in the name of God, behold a brick!"

Less can be said, however, in favor of the roofs of mud. The only reason why they should be used is the rarity and costliness of wood in central Persia: perhaps, also, because a roof of great density better protects the house from the long dry heat of summer. In that temperature, also, lies the safety of these roofs. Heavy undressed timbers are laid across the walls. Over these

comes the lathing, or a layer of dry twigs. In the better houses square, broad burnt bricks are laid on the lathing, and over these is put a layer of mud ten to twelve inches thick. But generally the bricks are dispensed with. During the summer such a roof becomes very hard; and when the surface is slightly inclined, to allow the water to run off, long and heavy rains are required to penetrate it. After the wet season the surface is rolled again for the next winter. With these precautions such roofs last a long time in Persia. But there comes a time with most of them when a little seam appears in the ceiling; then follows a trickling stream, and the occupants, thus warned, remove the furniture without delay to the adjoining apartment. If the rain continues, the ceiling falls in. Occasionally one hears of fatal accidents, or very narrow escapes, from falling roofs in Teherân. But accidents may generally be avoided by proper precaution.

The system of supplying Teherân and other Persian cities with water is remarkable, and probably unique. There is scarcely a civilized country so poorly supplied by Nature with wood and water as Persia, and the stranger would be at a loss to know the source of the vast quantity of water constantly supplying so many large basins and fountains. During the short winter there is some rain and snow, upon which are dependent the crops of the neighboring district of Veramân, the granary of Teherân. But during the remainder of the year there is absolutely no rain except on the extreme mountain-tops. The question naturally arises how are the cities to be supplied with water, for it cannot easily be obtained by digging wells, since they must be carried to a great depth. But the snow and rain on the mountains feed the streams dashing down the precipices, or the springs near their base. These streams and springs are tapped, and their water conducted to the city by subterranean aqueducts, called "comanghts." In order to guide these ducts in a straight direction, shafts are dug at intervals of thirty to eighty yards. The

earth thrown out of the shaft forms a hillock, which is allowed to remain. Thus the landscape is marked by many hundreds of these elevations resembling ant-hills. The mouth of the shaft is left uncovered, and hunters or travellers by night must exercise caution not to fall in. Who falls in remains there. The water thus obtained is naturally expensive, and each person pays a proportionate sum per month for the supply for his garden or household. Teherân is provided with no less than thirty-four of these aqueducts, excavated at immense cost and labor.

The city of Teherân properly consists of the old part and the new, — the latter called the European quarter. In this are the English, French, Turkish, and United States legations. The Austrian, German, and Russian legations are in the old quarter. The number of Europeans in Teherân is about three hundred. But they probably constitute not one fortieth of the population of the European quarter, in which many Persians of wealth and station have elegant gardens and residences, — among which may be mentioned the extensive and beautiful grounds of the Mohper-ed-Doûlêh, or Minister of Mines and Telegraphs, and of the Prince Governor of Ispahân, the eldest son of the Shah, the Zil-î-Sultân. Here also are two spacious gardens of the King and the new public garden. The former, for the benefit of the public, are enclosed by a fence instead of a lofty wall. The latter is open to all, and commands a noble prospect over the Shimrân and Mount Demavênd. The broad streets of this quarter are lined with shade-trees. The main avenues run north and south; and towards evening the Persians enjoy strolling there and gazing upon the ridge of the Shimrân roseate in the light of the setting sun.

In the old quarter, occupied by over one hundred thousand people, the streets are generally narrow and tortuous; relieved, however, at intervals by squares beautified in the centre by vast tanks. Here, also, are the covered bazaars, considered to



be the most interesting and complete in Persia. In threading these streets and bazaars, whether on foot, on horse-back, or in a carriage, — for there are over five hundred European carriages in Teherân, — one sees the advantage of having attendants to clear the way. Without them it would be very difficult to proceed, as there are no sidewalks, and the way is often blocked by a motley throng of beggars, porters, fruit-venders, donkeys, horses, and camels. These attendants use no ceremony in jostling every obstacle out of the way, laying on the lash on man and beast alike, and bestowing various epithets, of which the most common is, “Oh, son of a burnt father!”

The nucleus of the old part of Teherân is the Ark, or Citadel. Is there any relation between this use of the word and our word “ark”? We use it in the sense of an object of safety, and is not a citadel the place of refuge and safety in a city? The Ark of Teherân is still surrounded by high battlemented walls studded with round towers, which could offer no resistance to modern artillery, although possibly of use in resisting a popular *émeute*. The Ark includes the barracks of the garrison, the foreign and other offices of the Government, the arsenal and chiefly the city palace, occupied by Nasr-ed-Deen Shah and the ladies of his Anderoon.

Having been favored by a permit of his Majesty to visit many of the apartments and the grounds of this palace, I can state that in elegance, splendor, and artistic beauty they compare well with the handsomest royal residences and gardens of Europe. The exterior of the Palace of the Ark is picturesque rather than imposing, although offering many admirable artistic effects. The open pavilion where the Shah grants an audience to the court at No Rooz, and the new pavilion called the Shams-el-Imarêt constructed for the Anderoon and on one side overlooking the street, are especially beautiful and rich in architectural merit; so also is a

long, low pavilion divided into apartments, in one of which are three excellent portraits of the Shah taken at different periods. Several of the most sumptuous apartments of this Palace are decorated with small bits of mirror-glass in the style called *ainâh karee*, presenting innumerable facets, and having the effect of crystal and burnished silver. The Royal Library is also a very interesting apartment, containing many inestimable manuscripts, including an immense folio manuscript of the "Arabian Nights." A scholar turned loose in this treasure-house of oriental wisdom would doubtless find many rare examples of literature and the calligraphic art.

But the most imposing portion of the palace of Nasr-ed-Deen Shah is the grand audience-chamber, which in dimensions and splendor of effect is one of the most imposing halls in the world. The ceiling and mural decorations are of stucco, but so were those in the Alhambra. The floor is paved with beautiful glazed tiles, arranged in the most exquisite mosaic. In the centre of the hall is a large table overlaid with beaten gold, and a long row of arm-chairs are massively splendid with the same costly material covering every inch of space. At the end of the hall, facing the entrance, is the famous Peacock Throne, brought from Delhi by Nadîr Shah, covered with gold and precious stones in a profusion that places the lowest estimate of its value at not less than thirteen millions of dollars.

The magnificence of the Shah's audience-hall is still further heightened by the fact that here also are stored many of the crown jewels. The reserve of coin and bullion which the Shah has saved from his revenues, equal it is said to a sum of thirty millions of dollars, is safely locked up in the vaults of the palace. But one need only see the treasures in the audience hall to obtain an idea that Persia is still a land of wealth, and that the tales of splendor recounted in oriental story were not wholly the fictions of a fancy steeped in opium or b'hâng.

Among the spoils of ages gathered in the Shah's treasury are superb crowns and jewelled coats-of-mail dating back four centuries, to the reign of Shah Ismaël. In a glass case one sees a large heap of pearls dense as a pile of sand on the seashore. Diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and sapphires catch the eye at every turn, sometimes flashing forth like a crimson or a green fire on the boss of a buckler or a helmet worn at the front of battle ages ago. One ruby there is in that mine of splendor which, on being placed in water, radiates a red light that colors the water like the blood of the vine of Burgundy. There, too, is a globe of the world, twenty inches in diameter, turning on a frame of solid gold; the surface of the earth is represented by precious stones, different colors being used to indicate the divisions of land and sea: the ocean is entirely of turquoise, and Persia is represented by a compact mosaic of diamonds. The famous *Dar-i-noor*, or Sea of Light, the second of known diamonds in quality, size, and value, is kept carefully locked in a double iron chest, but is shown on rare occasions, and is worn by his Majesty on great state days.

I have mentioned but a few of the many objects of splendor collected in this magnificent chamber of audience, which still cling to the skirts of this old Empire as evidences of her past triumphs and glory. If such are her diadems and crowns to-day, what must have been the splendor of the courts of Darius and Xerxes, of Amurshirwân and Chosrû, of Shah Abbass and Nadîr Shah? Let one but consider the many ages of Persia's national existence, the nations that contributed to her riches, the pageantries for which her court has always been renowned, the vast extent of territory once swayed by her sceptre; let him consider that it is scarce two centuries since Nadîr returned from the sack of Delhi, every soldier of his army weighted with treasures, and the conqueror reserving for his own share gems valued at upwards of one hundred millions.



Another interesting and important palace of Teherân is Negaristân. It was built by Shah Aga Mahomed Khan, and enlarged by Fethi Alee Shah. At that time it stood nearly a mile beyond the old city walls, but now Teherân has grown so



WEIGHING MERCHANDISE IN A CARAVANSARY AT TEHERÂN.

as to include it. The entrance faces a large square, whither at the feast of Courbân Bairâm a camel is led forth decked with ribbons and slaughtered as a sacrifice. On entering the grounds the visitor passes into a spacious garden beautified with a triple row of plane-trees girt with ivy. No other building than a

modest porter's lodge is visible; but on threading a narrow passage in this structure we are surprised to find ourselves suddenly in a large walled park, laid out with gravelled walks skirted by streams coursing in stone channels. About the entire scene is such an air of rural quietude, broken only by the twitter of sparrows or the rapturous melody of nightingales, that one forgets he is still in a large city. The paths lead to a marble tank, and a small but beautiful pavilion beside it lavishly decorated in stucco. The interior consists of a single cruciform apartment with a vaulted ceiling. The entire surface of this arched ceiling is a mass of delicate designs in stucco, gilded or colored green and scarlet. The same scheme of coloring is followed on the graceful spiral pillars which support the dome in the centre. Three arms or alcoves of the pavilion are furnished with luxurious divans on either side reaching to the windows, which are closed by sashes capable of being raised, and opening the entire side to the air and the prospect. The sashes are designed with the intricacy of a Gothic rose window, and are filled with stained glass. The floors are spread with expensive rugs. The plan is symmetrical, while the details are so rich and harmonious as to be highly poetical and artistic.

From this pavilion we re-enter the park and continue our walk, until it brings us to another broad tank and the apartments formerly occupied by the king. An interesting feature of this building is a small reception-room, whose two largest sides are capable of being opened, and at the same time protected from the sun by large awnings. At each end of the room is a life-size painting representing the sons of Feth Alee Shah. From this apartment we pass into an octagonal court around which the chief building has been erected. The area of this court for a space of nearly eighty feet is occupied by an immense tank. Thence another walk through the park takes one to the Anderoon, formerly occupied by some of the numerous wives of Feth

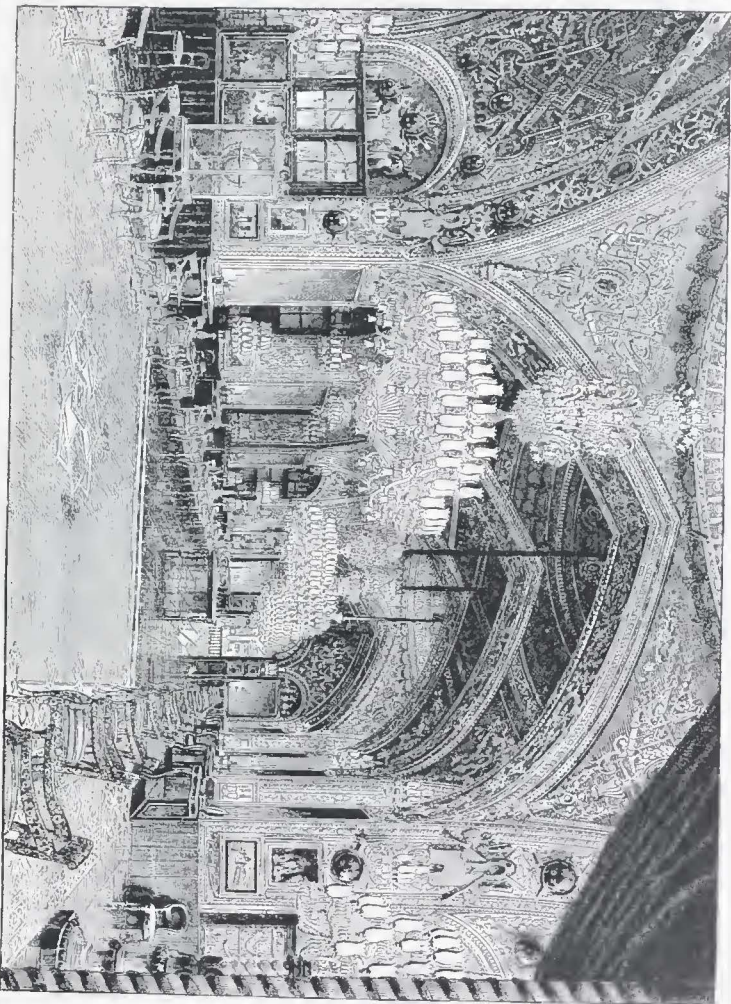


Alee Shah. The parlor of the king in the lower story of this building offers another highly interesting example of Persian art. The vestibule is low, but richly tinted and gilded, and is separated from the parlor by light pillars of wood, whose form and capitals, although on a far smaller scale, suggest the grand columns of Persepolis. The ceiling of the parlor is high, considering the small size of the room. Every portion of this apartment is enriched with green, scarlet, and gold, alternated with panels representing hunting-scenes painted directly on the plaster. These pictures, although blending agreeably with the other decorations, are of a coarse style of art, evidently borrowed from cheap European prints, and do not enhance the beauty of the apartment. But one soon forgets to notice them in the magnificent historical mural paintings which on every side fill the upper half of the walls. We see before us in well-arranged groups full-length life-sized portraits of Feth Alee Shah on his golden throne, with his thirty sons gathered around him, and on either hand the English, French, and Russian ministers, and the chief courtiers and officers of the realm. The portraits are evidently characteristic likenesses, while the various court costumes of eighty years ago—silks, embroidered sashes, tunics of Cashmere shawls, and glittering decorations and armor—are represented with a fidelity that give great historic value to the painting. Feth Alee Shah was a patron of the arts, and also one of the chief poets of modern Persia: his poems partake of the style of Hafiz. He was a man of striking appearance, and paid much attention to the care of his person, especially of the magnificent beard for which he was celebrated.

It was in this palace that the great Kaimakâm, or prime minister of Mohammed Shah, met his untimely fate. This monarch, third in the succession of the Khajar dynasty, was not so cruel as many oriental despots, but was naturally rendered suspicious

by his position. The Kaimakâm was not only a famous poet, he was also a statesman, who had the address to acquire a very prominent part in the administration of affairs. This finally aroused the jealousy or apprehension of Mohammed Shah, although there seems to have been little reason for the tyrant's fears. One pleasant afternoon, when the Vizier was sitting in the park of Negaristân, quietly sipping a cup of tea, the executioner brought him the order of the king that he had but five minutes to live. The Vizier received the summons with calmness, and composed two lines on the spot, which have become proverbial in Persia. "Such is life; now it overwhelms us with honors, and anon it clothes us with thorns. Fortune, like a juggler, delights to play us a thousand tricks like this." Five minutes later he was suffocated by a mattress laid over him in an apartment of the palace, although one living at the time told me he died by the cord.

Before leaving the Anderoon we are taken to the bath, where the royal ladies were wont to disport themselves. Proceeding down an inclined plane, we enter a subterranean hall of marble supported by pillars clustered around a circular pool. Opposite to where we entered is a steep slide of polished marble. This was built to enable Feth Alee Shah to indulge in an original sport, which reminds one of the delights of the gardens of Armida. From the upper story of the Anderoon his wives proceeded, somewhat thinly clad, to the top of the slide, and with much merriment deftly slipped into the arms of the royal husband who waited for them below. The bath is connected with this subterranean hall, and consists of several apartments faced with marble and floral designs on glazed tiles. No more are peals of laughter heard there, nor the song warbled by ruby lips. All are gone who once imparted life to this lovely scene. The livelong summer-day the nightingale trills in the rose-bush, and the turtle-dove coos in the chenârs, and the murmuring



AUDIENCE CHAMBER OF HIS MAJESTY NASR-ED-DEEN SHAH.





water dashes down its marble channels, but no one dwells there now save the idle sentinel and the venerable custodian.

Although the bazaars and shops of Teherân are well stocked with the goods of native and foreign markets, the upper classes and the European population make most of their purchases through a numerous and intelligent class of itinerant venders who carry their wares from house to house on minute donkeys. Keats, in his "Eve of St. Agnes," gives a delicious descriptive catalogue of oriental fruits and sweets. What poetic figures, what glowing strophes would he have employed, had he beheld the wares unfolded by these peddlers to the wondering sight of the purchaser! The imagination is kindled, the yearning to possess is stimulated to an unusual degree, when the lover of the beautiful beholds the floor of his apartment spread with the various exquisite articles which the turbaned dellâl unfolds to his gaze. Not a day passes but one or more of these men appear. Bowing low, they beg permission to display their wares, holding up at the same time some choice antique, — rug, embroidery, or porcelain, — such as you are known to prize. It is useless to resist; whether intending to buy or no, you order the saddle-bags to be brought in and their contents revealed. Then shall you behold rugs, ancient and modern, of Kurdistân, Turkistân, or Kernân; shawls of price from Cashmere, dazzling embroideries from Resht and Shirâz; kaliâns of silver and gold inlaid with superb enamels; boxes carved and painted with scenes of Persian life, or inlaid with delicate ivory patterns; veils exquisitely embroidered; velvets massive with silver and gold thread; blades from Khorassân; wavy daggers and coats-of-mail inlaid with silver and gold; bowls and plaques of cashee ware; reffet tiles, three hundred to one thousand years old; antique coins and gems, engraved with verses from Hafiz or the Koran; rare old manuscripts of the poets, illuminated and illustrated with quaint and characteristic designs; peacocks,



elephants, salvers, vases, and bowls beautifully and elaborately engraved or wrought in open designs of brass; diamonds, rubies, pearls, and turquoises, for which Persia is famous; coffee-sets in silver filigree, and bracelets wrought in yellow gold; tigers' skins from Mazanderân; furs from Astrakhân; old flintlocks with inlaid stocks, and even swords, captured from the English in the Afghan wars; chess-men curiously carved; silk sashes fit for the person of royalty; gaily-wrought saddle-cloths and superb bits of mosaic from the mosques and palaces of Ispahân.

Such is a brief resumé of the character of the wares almost daily exhibited at my house. One soon learns that if he does not buy an article when offered him, thinking he can get one like it another time, the opportunity of doing so rarely returns. It is the great attraction of oriental art that it is individual. Until a European firm in Persia employed some of the carpet-makers to reproduce certain ancient patterns, it was impossible to find two rugs or carpets in Persia identical in design. The same holds true of all Persian decorative art. Each artisan stamps his own individual taste and fancy on the products of his labor. This is indeed art: how different from that everlasting repetition of the same design which is at once the bane and the blessing of European and American decorative art, especially in textile fabrics and furniture! It is a blessing for the poor, who can obtain pretty things for a price within their means; but a bane for those of the middle class, who wish original objects, but cannot afford to pay the price demanded by the artist who produces only unique results for sale.

Therefore, if a Persian pedler offers a certain object that you desire, it must be bought then and there, or it will be snatched up by some one else. This is especially the case with antique *curios*. These *dellâls* generally sell on commission. It is not uncommon for a lady of rank who wishes to realize on her

treasures to place a costly cashmere shawl or embroidery in the hands of a dellâl, of a quality which perhaps one might seek for in vain through the bazaars. By shrewd management and much



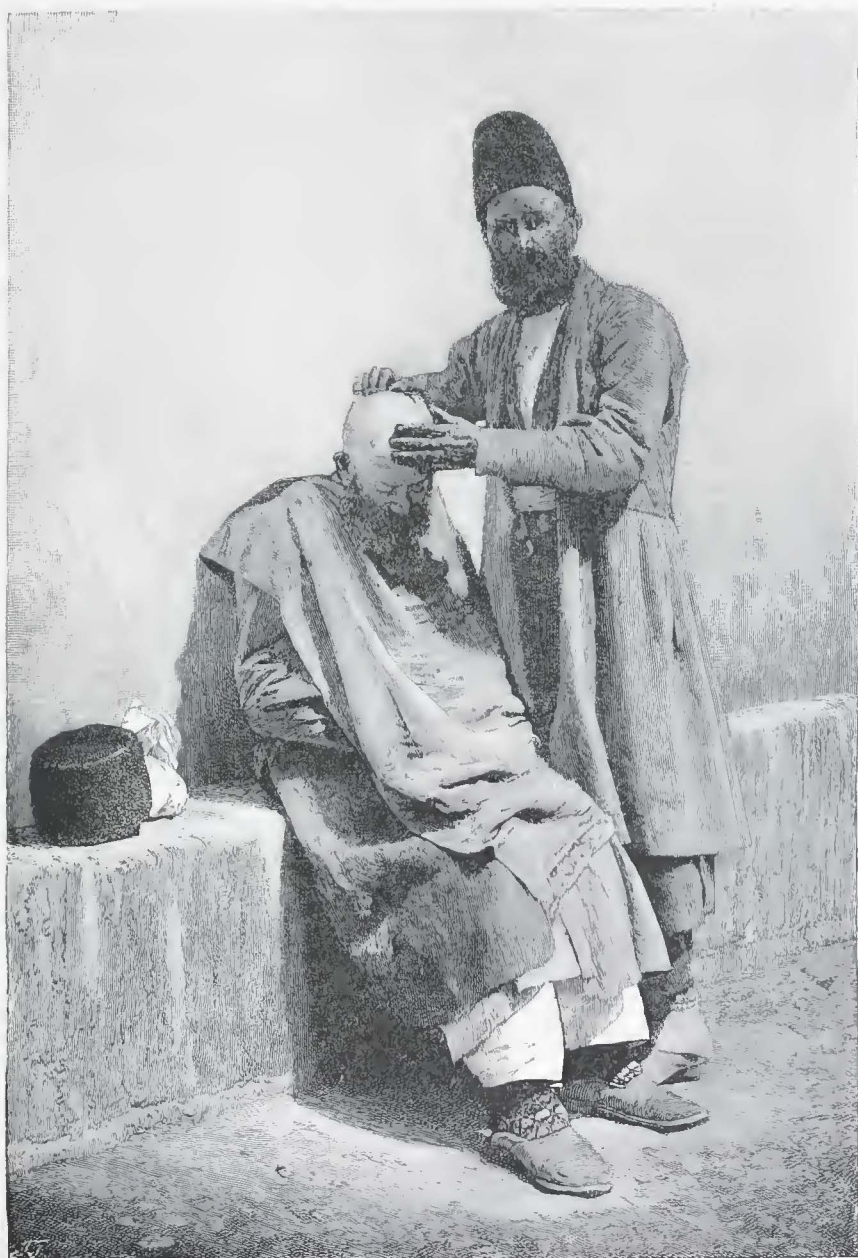
EXAMPLES OF PERSIAN WORK IN BRASS.

chaffering, such an article may sometimes be bought at a great bargain. The old armor is also difficult to find now, while the demand for this, and also for old coins, is such that the artisans

of Hamadân and Ispahân, taking advantage of their genius for imitation and the low price of labor, make many fine reproductions of the antique, which are shipped to Europe or sold to European residents or travellers. The old armor of Persia is justly renowned for the picturesque beauty of the designs lavished upon it, and the admirable temper of the metal. Both are cleverly imitated now to the eye, and he who cannot secure the genuine antique may well purchase the imitation to decorate his dining-room or studio.

The process of bargaining with these *dellâls* is very amusing. Their favorite phrases are, *Mal-i-kudcem est*, — “It belongs to the old time;” or, *B’ Cheshm*, — “On my eyes be it;” that is, “I swear by my eyes,” — a phrase constantly met in the “Arabian Nights.” Another form of expression, when they wish to assure one of the truth of their statement, is to swear by their own beards, or to pluck hold of the beard of the purchaser and swear by that. They are courteous and patient to a degree, never showing any spite if after an hour’s chaffering and unpacking and repacking their goods they have only sold a few cents’ worth. If an article subject to negotiation be one of value, it is common to leave it for a day or two to allow the purchaser ample time to consider its attractions before permitting the chance to escape for acquiring possession. It is a pleasant thing to deal with Persians, even if their slow ways sometimes try the patience of the more expeditious Westerner, for they are good-natured and respectful. It is another peculiarity of these *dellâls*, that if one does not make a purchase of them they rarely return. It is well, therefore, to buy some trifle of them in order to have another chance at their wares at a more convenient hour. If an important purchase is made of one of them it is soon known among the whole fraternity, and for several days other *dellâls* will frequent the house with similar goods. There is also a somewhat annoying custom, not easily avoided, which allows





AN ITINERANT BARBER.





the servants to levy a commission from the *dellâl*. If he does not agree to the terms, then the porter excludes him, — and thus one may miss of some rare article, which is then caught up by a fortunate neighbor.

But interesting as may be the works of art, the palaces, or the scenery of Teherân, they yield in attraction to the never ending raree-show of human life, the ever shifting scenes in which types of character are brought to our attention, and customs which have either grown out of the characters we see, or have aided to mould these men and women into what they are. A few customs will show the nature of the wide differences, the radical and permanent distinctions, between the men of the East and the West. A Persian mounts his horse on the right side; he draws the saw towards him in cutting wood; he reads and writes from right to left. These may appear trifling in themselves; but they are typical of the profound divergences existing in the intellectual cast, the thought, of the two great divisions of the human race, the Asiatic and the European. One peculiarity in this difference lies, furthermore, in the fact that a European, by greater flexibility and adaptive power, may accommodate himself to the Asiatic and become almost an Asiatic; but the Asiatic never succeeds in wholly adapting himself to the conditions of European life, or to a knowledge of European character. Hence the chief reason why the European, who is otherwise not the intellectual superior of the Asiatic, but only different, is able in the long career of history to obtain the mastery over the wily but less adaptive Asiatic.

Herein also lies the source and the weakness of Russian influence. Russia combines, to a certain extent, the characteristics of both the European and the Asiatic; therefore she is, and will long continue to be, only a half-naturalized exotic in Europe, while on the other hand she has peculiar advantages in pushing her conquests in Asia; and her future destiny points to the re-

duction of her power in Europe, but a probable increase of her dominion in Asia, where she really belongs. Is there anything more an anachronism and an exotic in Europe to-day than an autocratic sovereign ruling with unlimited power over a people sunk in abject and fanatical acceptance of the white Czar as the Heaven-deputed patriarch of what, but for its numbers, would be a mere pastoral tribe on the Oxus? Could there be anything more Asiatic than the craft, dissimulation, and unscrupulous selfishness of the policy which proclaims the character of this same white Czar? The Tartar in European Russia is as much an accident as the Turk. But the Russian, being of Turanian origin, has less refinement and intellectual acuteness than the Persian or the Indian, who are of Aryan stock.

The most singular feature of this race-question is the fact that whatever be the stock of an Asiatic people, from China to Egypt, all have certain customs and modes of thought which mark them distinctly from all European races except the Russian. Is it the climate; is it the soil; or what is the subtle cause that thus divides the world into two great races, the Asiatic and the European?—just as the human race is divided into men and women, who, whatever be their national origin and ties, are above all men and women, recognizing each other as such, and forming intimate friendships and association without regard to the question of race or nation.

All oriental life must possess charms for the student of human nature for ages to come; but that of Persia is of special interest, because, while apparently cast in certain moulds of immemorial usage, it is more plastic and mobile than that of most Eastern nations. It is doubtless true that the Persian who smokes his *kaliân* at Teherân to-day, and still meditates “treasons, stratagems, and spoils,” is in no essential particular different from his “burnt fathers” whom Xenophon describes,—no less unscrupulous, no less acute and wily and intellectual, no less absorbed

in discussing mysticism and song, no less inclined to corrupt meditations, and no less moved by an astonishing and pervasive inspiration for the beautiful in Nature and art.

But while apparently unaltered, the Persian is of a lively, mercurial temperament, and has none of the settled aversion to change as such which is so marked a characteristic of the Chinese and the East Indian. The climate suggests certain customs, which as suited to the circumstances require only slow modification, while the rigidity of a theocratic code necessarily operates to retard social movements and changes. Were it not for these facts, Persians would naturally be less distant in the rear of this progressive age. But would they be happier for it? Is there not some compensation in repose? As it is, we find in Persia a somewhat complex civilization, and a diversity of races which gives variety to the study of character in that historic land.

Three points are especially noteworthy in considering life in Persia: it is essentially an out-of-door life; it is marked by an apparent publicity and absence of reserve; and in direct contrast with these characteristics, there is about its domestic side a profound mystery and seclusion. The two former are results of the climate, and necessarily follow from the simplicity of primitive and pastoral life in all lands; but the reason for the mystery of the domestic institutions is more obscure, for it cannot be attributed to the precepts of the Koran alone, having been a marked feature of oriental life in all ages.

The Persian traveller entering Teherân in the morning, after a long night's journey, resorts at once to one of the numerous caravansaries which serve both as inns and depôts for the storage of goods. On the country roads these caravansaries are generally small, and animals and loads remain out in the open while resting, as the country is at present in good order, being far more safe than the adjoining districts of Asia Minor. Men of wealth or position travelling in Persia are accustomed to

send in advance and hire a dwelling for their sojourn, or they are entertained by friends or gentlemen of equal rank. The boasted hospitality of the past, still dispensed in Eastern countries, is no indication of superior breeding or amiability; it results from the condition of society, being a system of reciprocal accommodation, — the host offering a courtesy which he may in turn require. Men of the middle or lower classes, and especially merchants, generally seek the caravansaries or inns, where they hire a room, have it swept, cook their own meals, and sleep on rugs they carry with them. In Teherân a stranger generally resorts to an inn, where he finds himself in the company of fellow-townsmen or those from his own province. Aware of this fact, I made use of it in searching and arresting fugitive rogues guilty of offences against American citizens, tracing them through information furnished by those sojourning at the inn.

Having unloaded his goods, the traveller follows the custom of going to the public bath. These baths abound at Teherân, and every one resorts to them at least once weekly; some do it daily. The wealthy have luxurious private baths in their own houses. Christians and Jews are never allowed to enter the baths of the Mahometans in Persia. The Persian bath is similar to that of Turkey, the chief features being steam and the cold-plunge tank. Although the water in the public baths is not changed with sufficient frequency, yet they are a useful and indispensable luxury in such a climate. The numerous directions regarding ceremonial purification required by the laws would be almost inoperative but for the facilities offered by these public baths.

After steaming himself thoroughly, and further soothing his system with a kaliân, the Persian traveller turns to the bazaars to transact the business that has brought him hither. He finds the extensive labyrinth of covered streets refreshingly cool, even





GATEWAY AND AVENUE LEADING TO THE PALACE.





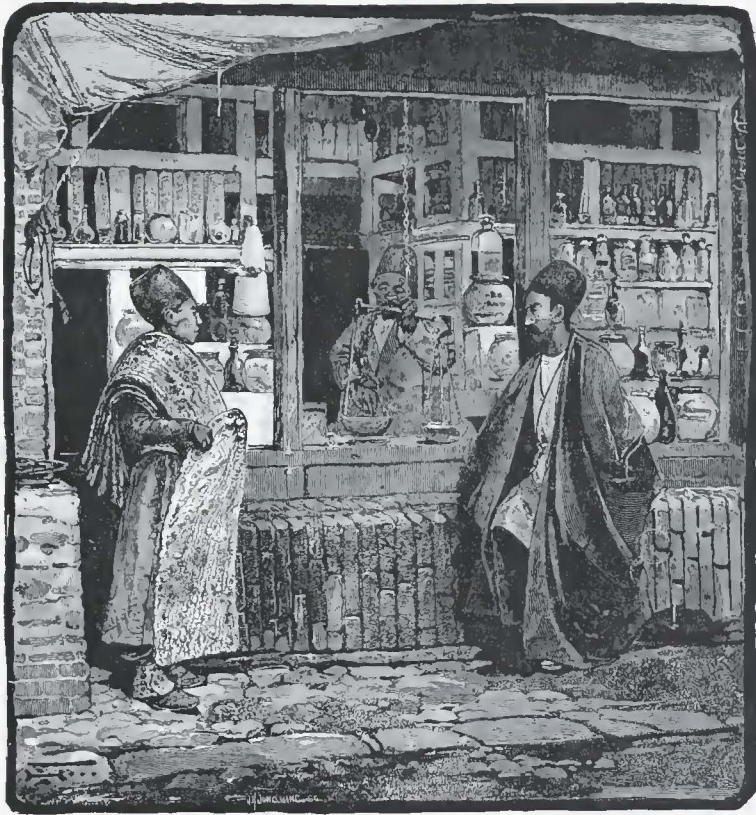
when the heat is scorching elsewhere. Where two streets meet in the bazaars they are covered by a Saracenic roof of brick, groined, and decorated with elaborate honeycomb work. Each trade or fabric has a quarter in the bazaars allotted to it, — the shoemakers being in certain streets, the weavers, the workers in brass and copper, and the carpet dealers in other streets, and the like. But for the accommodation of all, bakeries, confectioneries, or eating-shops (where one may obtain a dish of kebâbs, or rice in its various preparations called chillô and pillô), and tea and smoking-shops, are found everywhere. The shops are invariably open to the street like booths, and the purchaser must be prepared to fly at any moment for shelter from the ever-shifting, unceremonious, bustling throng of pedestrians and riders, horses and mules, loaded porters or grandees attended by a host of rushing, arrogant retainers who have no respect of persons. A European carriage with its outriders wending through the bazaars, proceeds with the same precariousness as a ship threading her course among reefs and shoals; and woe be to the luckless European whose equipage chances to maim or kill some careless wayfarer who insists on blocking the narrow way. An Austrian officer told me that he was passing through the bazaars one day, when his horse became refractory; he was in imminent danger of his life, not because of the risk of being thrown from the saddle, but from the fury of the mob, who said, “Are our lives to be endangered by this dog of a Christian?”

Of course the business of Teherân is not confined to the covered bazaars in the centre of the city, — which, by the way, a European lady has not considered it proper to traverse until recent years; but with the rapid growth of the capital, grocers, hucksters, bakers, butchers, blacksmiths, and carpenters have become necessary in all parts of Teherân. With this thriving activity and complex artificiality of a busy capital, it is odd to

observe on all hands traces of a social simplicity that transports the mind to primitive or nomadic usages. Everything is open to the public. The carpenter, finding his shop too contracted for the window-sash he is framing, lays it on the pavement on the shady side of the street, heedless of the passers-by. These carpenters of Teherân are a curiously independent guild, requiring so little for a livelihood that much of their time is spent in smoking and sleeping; and these habits are encouraged by the custom that allows them to claim an advance for a job, ostensibly to pay the cost of materials. If lazy, which is doubtless the case, they spend this money in smoking; and after that they are forced to make shifts to purchase the needed wood and nails, which adds to the already long delay in completing the work in hand.

The out-of-door-ness of life at Teherân is again suggested by the publicity given to instructing the minds of the uelims with close-shaven polls. The schools are open to the streets like booths in the bazaars. The old pedagogue, with goggles on his aquiline nose, keeps one eye and a half on what is going on in the street, and with the remaining half-eye glances occasionally on the pupils seated in rows before him on their heels, reciting their lesson in chorus. The barber performs his functions in the same public manner, — barber and barbered being alike indifferent to the public gaze, the operation being often performed on the pavement in a shady corner of the highway. An admirable characterization of an oriental barber is found in the Tailor's Tale in the "Arabian Nights." As it is the custom and law for Persians to shave the head, it is evident that the barber's profession is one of consequence there. To the use of the razor and the shears, he adds the pulling of teeth, leeching, and venesection, — the latter a very important pursuit in Persia, for even well persons are bled once or twice a month as a preventive to disease; while the slightest pain or colic sends them

in haste to the barber, who being, like barbers elsewhere, loquacious, at the same time gives them the latest scandal of the neighborhood as a *placebo*. It is also the custom to bleed horses once a month in Persia. As Persian horses are every way admirable, and possessed of great staying powers, it would seem



A CONFECTIONERY ; ON THE LEFT IS A BAKER VENDING BREAD.

that this usage is at least not injurious, and in such a climate may have decided advantages.

Another familiar character at Teherân is the baker, who is absurd enough to pursue his vocation in violation of occidental notions about professional secrets. Whatever the baker of Teherân does is done "free and above-board;" if the customer



is cheated, if the bread is full of grit and stones, he only has himself to blame. The baker kneads and rolls his dough before the public, regardless of the mangy curs sleeping at his feet; he flattens the loaves into long thin sheets on his bare arms, and after the bread is baked lays it on a ledge in the street-wall by his shop, or tosses a quantity of it over his shoulder like so many sides of leather, and peddles it. Notwithstanding these primitive processes, this *noon*, or flat bread, which when baked is but the tenth part of an inch in thickness, is nourishing, sweet, and palatable when just from the oven, and even foreigners learn to prefer it to any other.

But the growing heat of the day suggests to our traveller that the hour for lunch and repose has come. The noon-day meal is light, composed of grapes, figs, or melons, with salads and bread. After it, perhaps, follow a cup of tea and a *kaliân*, and then a siesta, in which high and low participate. In the middle of the day during the hot season, the entire city, the very walls and streets, are in a deep slumber, gradually arousing again as the sun begins to drop towards the west. After his nap, the Teherânnee says his prayers, or is supposed to say them. In spite of, or more likely as a result of, their burning fanaticism and bigotry, modern Persians are but little addicted to devotional exercises. Their religion is rather like a loose garment that may be fitted to any occasion without pinching, a shibboleth that takes the place of patriotism, a *môt d'ordre* to swear by, rather than a code to be practised and give shape to life and character. But the Persians are not singular in this respect; nor would it be just, perhaps, to call them hypocrites because they practise not what they believe. It is the tendency of all sects, after the first fervor, to degenerate into mere formalisms.

After smoking again, the Persian gentleman at Teherân salutes forth towards the cool of the evening with a rosary in his





A WELL-KNOWN HOLY MENDICANT OF TEHERÂN.



hand, attended by a servant or a companion. It is the hour of peace; a rosy light bathes the housetops, but the stately avenues leading north and south are in shadow, and cooled with water sprinkled over the dust by the sakkhâs. The tender light of evening rests on the snowy crests of the vast ridge of the Shimrân. The evening glow, before it fades into twilight, lingers last on the icy cone of Demavend, ever present in every prospect, like the presiding genius that watches over the destinies of Persia.

With slow and dignified steps the gentlemen of Teherân stroll along these inviting avenues engaged in genial converse, in low, well-modulated tones. Their flowing robes, their massive beards, their lofty caps or voluminous turbans, impart to their bearing a singular stateliness as they wend on their way undisturbed by the numerous carriages, or the hideous, unkempt, and unwashed dervishes who claim alms by reason of their sanctified rags.<sup>1</sup>

At this hour the tea-houses are thronged. One may be surprised to learn that the national beverage of Persia is not coffee, but tea. It might be naturally supposed that the neighborhood of Araby the Blest and the aromatic groves of Mocha would lead to a preference for their fragrant fruitage. Of course much coffee, prepared in the Turkish way, is consumed in Persia; but the fact remains that the Persians are a tea-drinking race, imbibing that beverage in vast quantities, without milk, but sweetened almost to the consistency of a syrup, and flavored with tourchee, which is the prepared juice of the lime. This custom is probably the result of a commercial intercourse which was for ages carried on between China and Persia, both by land and sea. At Teherân tea-houses abound on every side, of every

<sup>1</sup> Occasionally, however, one meets among these santons a striking and picturesque figure, like the one represented in the accompanying engraving, who is a well-known character in the European quarter of Teherân.

quality of rank and degree of comfort, but all alike resorts for repose and entertainment. Here also are to be seen public dancers, who by law are compelled to be men, although women of questionable repute sometimes exhibit in the harems. The male dancers are brought up to their vocation from boyhood, and invariably wear long hair in imitation of women, and shave their faces smooth. The lasciviousness of oriental dances makes them offensive and indescribable.

What offers more attraction to a European in these tea-houses than the dances, are the recitations from the poets. The songs of Hafiz may be heard there, and entire cantos from the great epic of Firdôusee, chanted with resonant modulations and listened to with enthusiastic rapture. Here, too, one may hear the "Arabian Nights Tales" repeated without any attempts to expurgate passages offering a peculiarly oriental flavor. It is, however, these very passages which largely contribute to make of these immortal narratives a picture of oriental life and manners the most remarkable in literature.

As one continues his ramble through the streets of Teherân at this hour, he sees a crowd amused by baboons dancing to the beat of tambourines, — animals which, if they do not obtain all the happiness they deserve as servants of the public, at least have, or ought to have, the high moral consciousness of well fulfilling their humane mission of ministering to the entertainment of myriads by their whimsical antics and grimaces. The longer one lives, the more evident does it become to him that men as well as animals are not brought into this world to obtain or to seek their own happiness, but to contribute to dispelling the misery common to all. Farther on, we see a poor chained lioness put through her paces, or wearied by the part she has been forced to play in life, and unable to escape from it by suicide, sleeping heavily on the pavement. But one of the most ordinary sights in Teherân at this hour, — a sight which

always draws a crowd, — is a match of trained wrestlers or athletes exercising with clubs, at which the Persians are expert.

The afternoon or the early morning is the time when the gentlemen of Teherân exchange calls; never in the evening. A Persian gentleman never calls on a Persian lady; he does not even venture to inquire after her health, or even to mention her to her husband. But after her death it is proper to call on the male relatives of the deceased, to express condolence. A father or a brother may visit a daughter or sister, unless forbidden by the husband. Notwithstanding these restrictions, the exchange of visits among ladies, or among gentlemen, is a common custom at Teherân, and is a most formidable affair, affording a complete display of the elaborate etiquette for which Persia has always been famous. All the ceremonies attending such a visit are shaded down to the finest point, and form part of the education of every Persian, becoming in fact a second nature to him.

Before making a social call, a servant is sent (generally the previous day) to announce it. The rank of the servant who is sent is suited to the rank of the gentleman who is to receive the visit. If a person of very high degree is to call on one of similar position, it is considered eminently proper to announce and accept the visit in an autograph note. If the caller be of the higher rank, he simply states that he proposes to call at such an hour; if of equal or lower rank, he asks permission to call. The call must be made on horseback or in a carriage, and the number of mounted attendants depends on the rank of the person visited.

On approaching the house the visitor, if of high rank, is met by mounted heralds, who immediately return at full speed to announce the approach of the guest. If the host be of very high rank, he will try sometimes to see the effect on his guest of coming into the reception-room after the arrival of the guest. Supposing he has not tried such a manœuvre, a courteous skirmish



occurs when the guest enters the door: each seeks to outdo the other in politeness, while each is exceedingly careful not to accept or allow a position to which he is not entitled by rank. The corner of the room the most remote from the entrance is the place of honor; the guest, if he outranks the host, while strenuously declining to take that seat, will be very careful that his host does not occupy it instead, and quite as careful not to accept it if inferior in rank, although urged, for to do so under such circumstances would be to affront the host, and invite an affront in return. The host, when in the apartment on the arrival of the guest, advances outside of the door of the reception-room to receive one of superior rank; meets him at the door if of equal rank, and leads him by the hand to his seat; goes half-way the length of the apartment to meet one of slightly inferior rank, but does not condescend to advance a step for a guest far below in social or official position. When the host and guest are of equal rank, chairs or cushions are arranged in corresponding position opposite the refreshment table, — and so on through all the various social grades. Other things being equal, the left hand, and not the right, is the place of honor.

The serving of refreshments is another important question regulated by undeviating custom. The nazir, or head-steward of the household, enters in his stocking-feet, ushering a number of servants equal to the number to be served. If host and guest be of equal rank, the cup is presented to each exactly at the same moment; but if one outranks the other, he is first served. When there is present a member of the royal family, or one of the cabinet or council of the Shah, or a foreign minister, the servants must always retire backward to the door. The number and character of the refreshments depend on the rank, the hour, and the season. In the morning tea is served once. In the afternoon, the guest being of equal or higher rank, he is first served with tea in dainty glasses. This is followed by the kaliân,

or water-pipe. When several persons of equal rank are to be served, it is the proper thing to bring an equal number of lighted pipes; but if one present outranks all the others, only one pipe is brought in, which is handed to him. Before smoking, he makes a feint of offering it in turn to all present, but woe to him who incautiously accepts before he of higher rank has smoked, for in that case he will be made to feel the withering scorn of which a Persian gentleman is capable.

The Mestofi-Mamolêk, the highest official in Persia after the King, has not smoked for forty years. He took a solemn resolution against tobacco, because, when a young man, the kaliân was on one occasion given in his presence to a man whom he considered of lower rank, before it was offered to him. When the pipe was presented to him he dashed it aside, and swore never to smoke again, in order to avoid the possibility of being a second time subjected to such an affront.

After the first kaliân, tea is served again, followed by a second pipe. After a proper interval, the length of which is regulated by the acceptability of the visit, coffee is served in tiny cups, followed in turn by the pipe. This is the signal that the limit of the entertainment has been reached, and soon the guest in honeyed words expresses his acknowledgment for the courtesy of the host, and requests permission to depart. When the Persian New Year begins, with the spring equinox, the season is indicated by the substitution of a cool sherbet for the first cup of tea, and sometimes of an ice in the place of coffee; but after the September equinoctial the tea and coffee are resumed. These may seem trivial matters, but in Persia they have great weight; and not only is the taste of the host indicated by the quality and style of the refreshments, but the *savoir-faire* and the rank of the guest are weighed by his bearing on such an occasion. It is of no slight importance that a European in Persia should understand the force of these laws of etiquette, otherwise

he is liable to have his breeding as a gentleman misunderstood; while by strongly asserting his claim to all the privileges which he has the right to demand, suitable to his rank, he receives the respect which is his due, but which no Persian will give except when he sees him firm on these points.

Thus far we have been considering life at Teherân as it appears in public. But there is another phase of life in Persia, of which even he who lives years in that country knows little or sees less, — a state of mystery, a system hidden in the midst of a city busy and apparently open to the widest publicity. I refer to the domestic customs of Persia, and the mode of existence followed by woman in that land of romance and song. Without woman, how can there be romance and song; and where are the women of Teherân; and how is the poet who would sing their praises to see and appreciate the charms that quicken the chords of his lyre? Yet at Teherân one sees but rarely the face of a woman unless she be a Nestorian, an Armenian, or a Guebre, of whom all go but slightly disguised; or unless he be a Mussulman, in which case he may have all the concubines he pleases. Every Persian house is constructed upon a plan of secrecy. No windows are visible from the streets; but the interior is constructed around several courts, with lovely gardens, tanks, shrubbery, and even luxuriant groves of fruit and shade trees, of all which one obtains not the slightest hint from the street. In the main dwelling the master of the house lives and transacts business during the day; but his business over, he retires for the night to his Anderoon, which is the quarter of the residence devoted to the women. The Anderoon is jealously guarded by the eunuch, and no man ever enters it save the proprietor. When he is there in the bosom of his family, he cannot be disturbed; it is sufficient to say to any one who inquires for him, "He is in his Anderoon."

This is an asylum from outward cares which it would be well to import into the United States for those who seek effectual quiet and repose. To the Persian it takes the place of a club, — the more so as clubs, theatres, and other places for evening resort are not permitted in Persia. The influence of the women is alone sufficient to prevent the establishment of institutions which would result in a complete reversal of the present domestic system. Knowing nothing better, and being accustomed to and satisfied with matters as they are, the women of Persia are content to have the present domestic system continue.

It would be a mistake hastily to conclude that this indicates a low order of intellect or an abject spirit among the Persian women. If uneducated according to our ideas, they are, from all I can gather, by no means stupid, and enjoy an influence and controlling power in domestic and state affairs not inferior to that of women elsewhere, only it finds expression by different methods. It is not the semblance of power that is to be feared, but the unseen power behind the throne; and I can affirm emphatically that in no country do women have more of such power than in Persia. Women of great talents are occasionally found in the anderoons, skilled in music, poetry, and painting, and in the diplomatic art. All of them are clever in embroidering, which has been carried in Persia to a degree never elsewhere surpassed. Diplomacy, intrigue, and influence in that country are dependent in a large measure on the force of character displayed by the women. If a man wishes to influence another in an affair of importance, he manages it by confiding the matter to one or all of his wives, who in turn visit the wives of the man to be influenced, or the wives of one who has influence over him, and by urging and presents seek to obtain their object. Many important transactions in Persia are conducted in this manner.

The profound disguise worn by the women of Teherân in the street, supposed by foreigners to be a serious inconvenience,



is, under existing conditions, of very great advantage, and the women themselves would be the last to advocate a change so long as polygamy exists. No argument is required to show



PERSIAN WOMAN IN STREET COSTUME,  
THE VEIL DRAWN ASIDE.

what a power for intrigue exists in such a costume. In her mantle or veil, completely covering her from head to foot, a woman can go wherever she pleases without the slightest possibility of her identity being detected. Not even her husband would dare to raise her veil; to do so would render him liable to instant death. On the other hand, if a Persian woman wishes to disclose her charms to any one, she generally contrives to find a chance to withdraw her veil for an instant; the rest is arranged by third parties, who are always on hand. The women of Teherân can thus go anywhere with little risk of detection; only the wives of the Shah and of his sons are debarred

the privilege, never going abroad without numerous attendants. The former are always accompanied by the royal guards, who, at a certain distance before and behind the royal ladies, keep the way clear. When these ladies propose to leave the palace, the event is announced by heralds in all the streets by which they

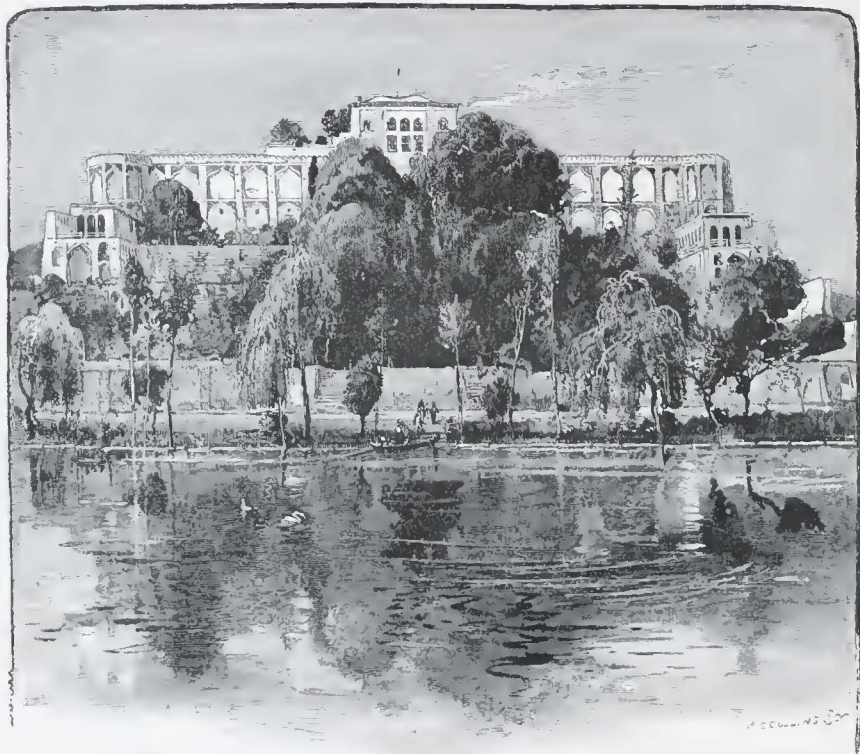


are to pass; the shops are closed, and every one is expected to take himself out of the way. Until recently it was impossible, for this reason, to construct windows overlooking the principal avenues, and any unlucky person found in the passage of the royal cortége was put to death on the spot. But the most that could now happen would probably be that he might be severely handled, even if he turned his face to the wall.

There could hardly be a greater contrast than between the out-of-door and the in-door costume of the ladies of Teherân. The latter was formerly more modest than it is at present, but another fashion came in with the present century, — which, like the costume of short clothes worn by men in the last century in Europe, requires a good figure to show it off to advantage. The scant garments worn indoors admit of considerable scope in the exercise of taste for color and embroidery, but otherwise there is no difference in the home-dress worn by the Persian women of Teherân either in the palace or the meanest hovel.

The simplicity of this dress is, again, in strong contrast with the elaborate and costly costume worn by gentlemen of the court. There is now a tendency to adopt a modification of the European dress, resembling a military uniform. But on state occasions the magnificent and imposing robes of office are worn as of old, made of the richest stuffs of Cashmere and Kermân, and worked with exquisite designs. At a royal audience the invariable kolâh, or black lamb-skin cap, is exchanged for a white turban, which is doffed on retiring from the royal presence, and given to a servant who has waited outside the palace gate. As may easily be imagined from the account we have given of visiting etiquette, the court ceremonies of Persia are of the most elaborate and punctilious character, although indicating at present an inclination to relax a little from those that are burdensome in details. It must be admitted that such pomp is qualified to

impart an air of majesty to the monarch, and to assist in the maintenance of power in a despotic government. It was the great court pageants and ceremonials of Byzantium which aided to prop up the decaying Roman Empire long after it had lost its



KASR-I-KHAJÂR.

vitality, presenting by its continued existence for centuries after it became moribund one of the most extraordinary phenomena in history.

Before closing this chapter it is proper to allude to the numerous villas, pleasure-houses, and retreats in the suburbs of Teherân. Doshântepê is a favorite resort of the Shah, three miles from the city. It is perched on the summit of a lofty,

isolated rock, and is approached by a picturesque stairway. At the foot of the eminence lies a spacious garden containing an interesting menagerie composed largely of native animals; one observes there several noble lions from the vicinity of Persepolis. Another very interesting palace is that called Kasr-i-Khajâr, or castle of the Khajârs. It is one of the most pleasing objects of Teherân. The present Shah, inheriting the love of the chase peculiar to the monarchs of Persia from the oldest periods, often resorts to these choice retreats in order to be in the neighborhood of his hunting-grounds.

The European colony spends the summer at the Shimrân in the villages of Tejrîsch, Gulahêk, and Zergendêh. The two latter were royal gifts to the English and Russian legations respectively. The carriage roads are numerous in the vicinity of Teherân, and most of them are excellent, in several cases being well protected by avenues of shade-trees. The most charming and romantic drive in the neighborhood is that of Yusufabâd. It gently ascends towards the mountains, and commands a superb prospect of Demavênd and the nearer ranges, as well as the plains of Teherân far to the south beyond Kanaregird. When there is a slight haze or mirage, as often happens, the plain assumes the deep purple blue of the sea when a fresh breeze is blowing over it; the rosy ridges beyond resemble islands as seen at sea, and the white houses glistening here and there, mere gleaming specks, look like white caps, while the walls of Teherân suggest surf beaten into foam on far-extending reefs.

## CHAPTER V.

### COUNTRY SEATS IN THE SHIMRÂN.

BARON S——, when gazing over our spacious terraces one pleasant afternoon in July, under the seductive influences of coffee and cheroots, enthusiastically observed, "You have a typical Persian country seat." As I was very much of this opinion myself, it seems not amiss to give some account of the place occupied by the United States Legation during the summer of 1884 in the Shimrân. Passing out of the elegant Shimrân Gate described on a previous page, one enters on the Shah's<sup>1</sup> road to the Shimrân, and soon finds the plain ascending by an easy and steady slope to the mountains. This slope continues for perhaps ten miles, till it reaches a height of 2,000 feet above Teherân. At that point it meets the mountains, which spring thence by barren, precipitous, reddish crags to a height of 12,000 and 13,000 feet. Of course in winter this stupendous range is enveloped in a pure mantle of ermine, which sometimes descends and lies on the plain for weeks, while in summer the snow lingers on the higher peaks until the last days of August. Fifty years ago there were scarce any villages on the sloping talus of the Shimrân, and only the merest sprinkling of population; neither was there any vegetation excepting the spiky herbage cropped by asses and goats. The plain was phenomi-

<sup>1</sup> Roads in Persia, whenever any expense is bestowed on them, are made either by appropriations from the Royal Treasury, or by men of wealth who wish easy access to their villas or villages. In the former case they are called the Shah's roads.



nally arid, and the summer heat of Teherân averaged 115 to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. I have my facts from old and intelligent residents, such as the Mestofi-ul-Mamelêk.

But the time came when Teherân began to feel the impulse given to it by becoming the seat of government under the Khajâr dynasty. The old city described by Chardin and Della Valle has been largely extended, chiefly in a northern direction. Feth Alee Shah built the summer palace of Negaristân, beyond the then limits of Teherân, in the midst of extensive grounds. He also constructed the superbly-situated summer palace of Kasr-i-Khajâr on the brow of an eminence, at the head of vast and delicious groves cooled by tanks of immense spaciousness. The Il Haneé of the Khajârs took the hint, and also laid out a beautiful garden and built a pleasure-house outside of the city; now it is but a few rods north of the United States Legation and south of the British Legation. The Sedr Azêm and the Mestofi-ul-Mamelêk proceeded still farther up the Shimrân slope, and laid out sumptuous country seats at Jusufâbad and Daondiêh; and the Moatam-ed-Doûlêh fashioned for himself a place of *pleasaunce* in a gorge by a brawling stream, into which rush the artificial cascades of the garden. Now, therefore, one sees the long slope of the Shimrân covered with the dense verdure of numerous gardens and villages, which are sometimes detached, but more generally adjoining, — one being simply a continuation of the other. This mass of vegetation extends from Vanêk on the west to Kamaraniêh on the east, some twenty miles; and the population of these villages, I am informed, exceeds thirty thousand. The name of Shimrân, first applied to the mountains, is therefore extended now to the district of villages which has sprung up within the last generation.

It must be admitted that these villages are dependent for their prosperity on the growth of Teherân, because the increasing wealth and luxury of the capital led to a demand for country

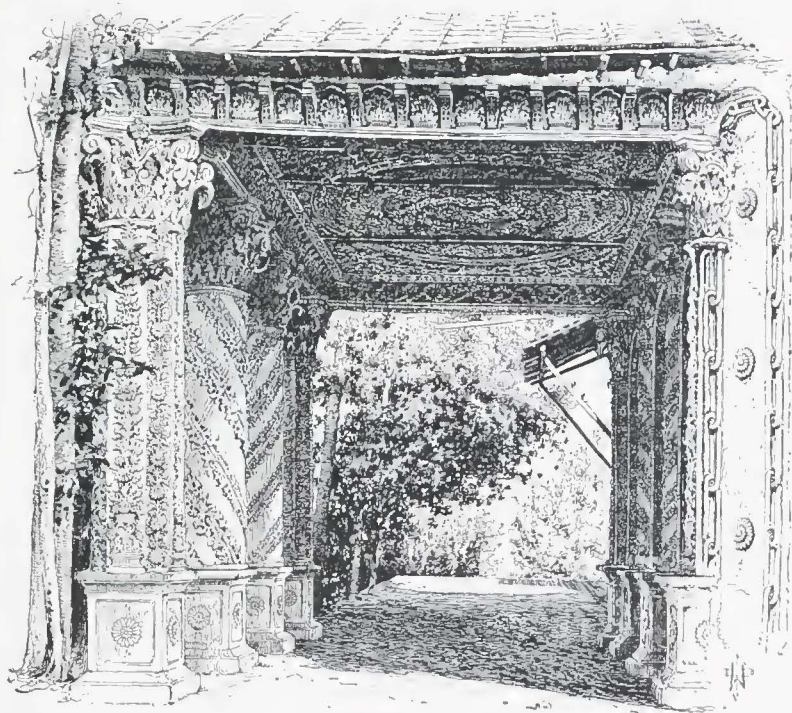


seats, and for vegetables and wood for food and building, — but more perhaps to the increasing supply of water which the capital required, and which has been brought to it by upwards of thirty *connaughts*, or subterranean aqueducts, which water the villages of the Shimrân in their course to the city. These villages are now beginning to yield in turn a *raison d'être*, like most things in this complicated and interdependent arrangement of mundane affairs. For the vegetation of the Shimrân has now so vastly increased, that it actually has begun to affect the climate and rain-fall of the district of Teherân. It is the universal testimony that the average summer-heat of Teherân is some ten degrees Fahrenheit lower than formerly, while the rain continues longer in the spring, and the showers in the Shimrân are more frequent in early summer. As many of the trees in the Shimrân are the tall slender chenârs and poplars cultivated for the wood, the timber market of Teherân is also sensibly affected by these groves, which are annually thinned out and the product used for building and furniture. Care is taken at the same time to replant trees in place of those cut down.

Many years ago the English and Russian Legations received grants respectively of the villages of Gulahêk and Zergendêh; semi-European dwellings have been put up in each for the ministers and attachés, and a wilderness of foliage has grown up around them. Each has also attracted to itself a colony of Europeans during the summer, and a number of Persians likewise occupy or own houses in these villages. But the exclusive jurisdiction rests with the ministers. No one can buy or rent in either without permission of the proprietary Legation; and all disputes occurring among the residents of these villages must be settled at the Legation, exactly as if one were living in England or Russia. The French and Austrian Legations, on the other hand, rent places for a term of years in the adjoining villages of Tejrîsch and Dezeshoob; the Ottoman Legation has

also purchased a handsome house and grounds on one of the most commanding and agreeable sites at Tejrîsch.

The United States Legation, it is apparent, was therefore the only one at the opening of spring that was obliged to make diligent quest for a summer retreat. To remain in the city during the summer heats, the Court being also absent and the



A PORTICO AT BAGH FERDÔZE.

Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Shimrân, was evidently not to be thought of, although the expense of such a place would have to be paid from the minister's private funds. It was necessary therefore to begin a search immediately after the No Rooz, lest the more desirable and available places be taken by Europeans or Persians. It was not expedient to return to the garden of Serrasiâb, part of which we occupied the previous summer

through the kindness of the missionaries, as we had arrived too late to make other arrangements. When beginning our search for another place, it would have been pleasant, and also in the end economical, to purchase or to lease for a term of years like the other Legations: but as there is only a pitiful surplus of \$394,000,000 in the vaults of the United States Treasury, it was out of the question to talk of purchasing, although a handsome place might have been obtained for a moderate sum. It was also inadvisable to rent for a term of years, because the whimsical instability of Congress and the absence of a high sense of national dignity and pride among our masses make it impossible to foresee any degree of permanence in the conduct of our diplomatic service.

Ordering out our equipage and taking care to carry with us a basket containing a good lunch, we made several expeditions to the Shimrân during the month of March. The roads were still muddy, and proved a severe strain on the carriage horses; but an inspection of the numerous charming seats of the Shimrân afforded us a never-to-be-forgotten pleasure. All the places we visited, with scarce an exception, are well worth ample description, although I must confine my observations to one or two of the most remarkable. But one feature we noticed as common to all, — the utter impossibility of forming any idea of the house and grounds, either from the road or from an adjoining height; a circumstance owing partly to the high walls surrounding each garden, the broken character of the site in some cases, and in all to the lofty avenues of trimmed *chenârs* and *poplars* skirting the grounds and serving as a veil to conceal the fairy-like attractions within. In most instances the gardens are so extensive that the dwelling is at a distance from the entrance. This seclusion, so different from the publicity of country seats in Europe and America, is, I must confess, a great charm, for which ostentatious display can be no compensation. Country life loses



half its nameless attractions when it is deprived of privacy and modest retirement from the whirl of fashion and restlessness of social distractions.

Another feature common to all these country residences of the Shimrân, is the absolute and refreshing individuality displayed by each. There is nowhere apparent any evidence of imitating any other place; no suggestion of conventional designs, slightly altered perhaps to suit different customers; no slavish cringing to formal and universally accepted models or styles. They all, it is true, show a certain noble adherence to the underlying principle of architecture, — adaptation to climate and materials; but in all other respects one everywhere perceives that the proprietor, the architect, and the gardener have been guided by individual taste, and have allowed the location to dictate the character of the place without regard to any fashion or conventionalism. In all of them, however, respect is shown to the custom of separating the apartments of the men from those of the women, which has led many of these residences to place the main building, or Beroon, in one garden, and the Anderoon (or quarter for the ladies) in another enclosure. I may add that all share the universal attraction found in an attempt, with more or less expense and success, to employ running water both as a means of decoration in landscape gardening, and to cool the aridity of the atmosphere during the long rainless summer. The value of these places largely depends on the supply of water belonging to them. This is an inalienable privilege that goes with the establishment. A domain, for example, which is supplied by two *connaughts*, and has the privilege of water every day until the supply begins to fail towards the end of the season, is valued from fifteen to twenty per cent higher than if the water came to it only every other day.

Among the finest country seats of the Shimrân which we visited in the spring was Daondiêh. It was built by the Sedr

Azêm who precipitated the war with England in 1858. Daoudiêh when completed was so magnificent that the Shah confiscated it, as indicating too great an absorption of wealth by a subject. It was afterwards restored conditionally to the family, after the death of the Sedr Azêm. The situation is unfortunate, being too near the city, on a stony plain under a hill, which prevents circulation of the southwest breeze at midday. Daoudiêh is therefore warm, and said to be infested by mosquitoes. In other respects it is indeed a mansion fit for a king. The grounds form a park nearly a mile long and over quarter of a mile wide, comprising a piece of woodland at the north, surrounding an immense tank for watering the place; the central portion, which most concerns the visitor; and south of this a spacious orchard well stocked with fruit, adjoining which are the quarters of the servants and the bath, the latter entirely under ground, divided into several apartments, and of considerable extent.

The central portion of Daoudiêh is approached by the open stables, containing mangers for one hundred horses, — the mangers being hollowed out of the side of the wall of mud, and protected with matting or boughs in summer. Passing the stables, we enter a paved avenue of superb dimensions. Through the centre of the avenue runs a musical stream in a stone channel. On either side of this towers a double row of venerable chenârs, upwards of a hundred feet high. This avenue leads to the mansion, a lofty and graceful structure of three stories. One is surprised on entering to find the interior a spacious hall like a throne-room, springing to the vaulted roof seventy feet above. The centre of the paved floor is relieved by a spacious tank of glassy water, and the vast piers which support the roof of this octagonal hall are divided at the angles by winding galleries, that allow the passage of air and give lightness to an otherwise massive effect. The exterior appearance of three stories led us, however, to suspect that this hall is not all of the building, and



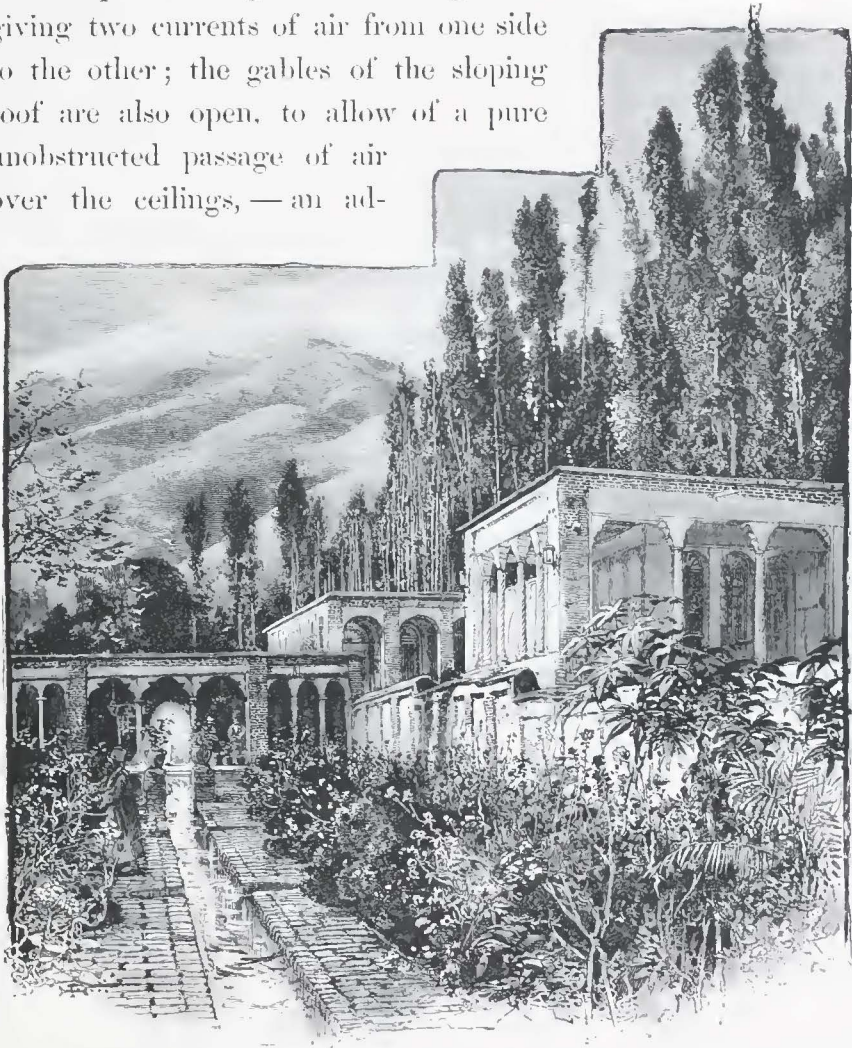
we soon found a winding stairway that conducted us from the spacious apartments surrounding it on the first floor, to a labyrinth of galleries and apartments also surrounding it on the two upper floors. Their continuity is however broken on the north and south fronts by two broad galleries, or balconies, commanding an extensive prospect when the embroidered curtains are rolled up. With these curtains raised, an unobstructed circulation of air sweeps through the entire building. The end walls of the north gallery are decorated with life-size portraits of the Sedr Azêm and his family of boys, painted on the plaster in oil. These lads are now grown up, and occupy positions of more or less prominence under the Government. Three of them I know: the elder an unmitigated talker, inflated with pomposity and family pride; the next a dwarf of unusual perversity, and in deportment singularly brusque for a Persian; and the younger, who is a very amiable, polished, and unassuming gentleman. Northward the grounds are shaded by a quadruple avenue of *chenârs* and *poplars*: the slightly rising ground is terraced, and the walks between the trees are paved. A channel in the central avenue conducts a stream from the mountains, which falls over the terraces in mimic cascades. The whole place is characterized by taste, elegance, and grandeur.

Another garden that we visited is not unlike Daondieh in general effect, although thoroughly individual and especially differing from it in that it stands on the steep slope of a hill instead of a slight incline. This magnificent place, in my opinion the most sumptuous and tasteful in the Shimrân so far as my observation goes, is the Bagh Ferdôze, or Garden of Paradise. It was laid out by the father of the Moayêr-ul-Mamelêk, and completed by his son, whose adventures will be described on a subsequent page. During his absence in Europe the place was unoccupied, and fell into neglect and decay, — a fate that rapidly comes to unoccupied buildings in Persia, owing to the friable

materials of which they are constructed. The grounds probably include four hundred acres. The lower part is a dense forest of *chenârs*, grouped in such masses as to present a velvety surface when seen from the porticos of the mansion, from which they are separated by a spacious and elegant terrace carpeted with parterres of flowers. This part of the place forms a superb foreground to the receding landscape of the plains of Teherân, skirted by roseate hills and fading far away to the south, mirrored in the phantom waters of the noonday mirage. The grounds behind the mansion, shaded by columnar *chenârs*, differ from many Persian places in the absence of basins and fountains; but at one side, at the foot of the trees, are stalls for the horses, made of baked earth. Certainly never were horses stalled in more magnificent quarters, under a vaulted roof of green rising one hundred feet above them, and overlooking an enchanting prospect.

Centrally situated and overlooking all these princely domains stands the palace itself,—less than palace it could hardly be considered. What first impresses one is the stately massiveness of its proportions. Although surrounded by enormous *chenârs* whose vast limbs sway like gigantic plumes over the roof, the building is not dwarfed by its colossal *entourage*. This effect, I apprehend, is chiefly due to an evident intention to harmonize the structure with the surroundings, to mass the decoration on central points, and to keep the outline simple and severe: to this end also the porticos are each supported by four pillars of great diameter, instead of by a larger number of smaller pillars, whose style shows architecture in Persia to be in a transitional period at present. The otherwise heavy effect of such massive piers is relieved by the intricate and superb vine-tracery which runs in spiral lines around the drums, meeting capitals of extreme elegance and richness, and continued along the cornice; and thus they seem almost like a repetition of the large tree-trunks by

which they are surrounded. The necessities of the climate have caused the wide passages between the centre and the wings to extend quite through the building, thus giving two currents of air from one side to the other; the gables of the sloping roof are also open, to allow of a pure unobstructed passage of air over the ceilings, — an ad-



ARAJEB, LOOKING NORTH.

mirable feature in many Persian country houses, which might be followed to advantage in the villas of the United States.

The reception-room extends the entire width of the building. The doors are of inlaid work; each end of the apartment con-



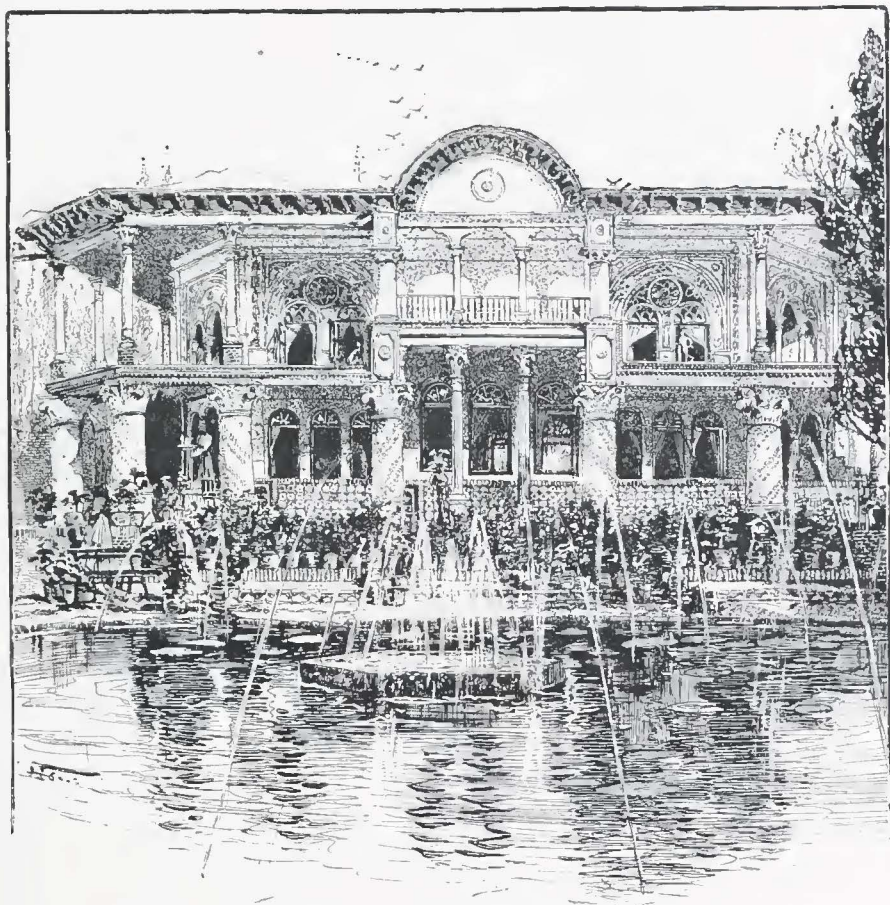
tains an immense window reaching from the floor to the lofty ceiling, and extending from one side of the room to the other. Each of these windows is filled with intricate and exquisitely designed casements beautified with stained glass. The dado is of polished alabaster, and the wall is decorated with panels containing paintings of dancing girls. In addition to this noble reception-hall, the palace contains numerous apartments, each filling the beholder with surprise at the bewildering prodigality of fancy displayed in the decorations of stucco and glass work lavished upon them. The portico on the south side facing the plain of Teherân I have never seen surpassed for stateliness.

When the visitor feels that his powers of admiration are nearly exhausted, he is ushered into the most remarkable portion of this fairy-like dwelling. One is first led into an exquisite gallery, from whence he looks on one side over the landscape, and then, turning, gazes into what seems like a hall in the grotto of Antiparos, for he sees a roof composed of what look like clustering stalactites. Proceeding thence to the floor below, the visitor stands under this roof, and studies at leisure one of the most remarkable examples of Persian constructive skill and decorative genius in existence. It is the honeycomb work for which the East is famous, carried to its extreme limit. When the eye is pleased and the fancy quickened, one does not care to analyze the causes; still, it was interesting to know that this complicated piece of decorative art was made by a system of iron frames skilfully concealed by the overlaying of lathe and stucco.

Another superb palace of the Shîmrân is Kamaraniêh, the country seat of the Prince Kamarân, Naîb Sultanêh and Minister of War. A partial idea of the character of this beautiful place is given in the accompanying cut. But I turn to give a fuller description of an humbler, yet in its way scarcely less picturesque, place. I refer to Arâjêh, — the place occupied by the United States Legation during the summer of 1884. This was



of course in point of costliness not to be compared with the villas just described. Its decorations were far simpler, and the grounds less extensive and ornate; but the attractions of location were scarcely inferior, and it offered a very fair example of the average



KAMARANIÉH, COUNTRY SEAT OF THE NAÏB SULTANÉH.

country villa of a Persian gentleman. The dwelling was situated on the side of a steep slope, near the centre of a demesne comprising nearly sixty acres, filled with shade and fruit trees, on the broken sides of a steep hill at the entrance to a wild gorge of the Shimrân. Through this gorge rushed a mountain stream

crossed by rude wooden bridges. At night the brawling of the river blended with the song of the nightingale. A chattering brook also dashed down behind the house through the grounds.

Passing through the village of Jeferabâd by steep and narrow roads, the rider approaching Arajêb came to a little hollow, where the road widened and showed a lofty gate and green espaliers, through which was seen the orchard of the Legation. From the gate one passed up a serpentine avenue of stately *chenârs*, until a turn of the road revealed the terraces round which the dwelling was built. Ascending to the first terrace, one saw a paved esplanade three hundred feet in length, decorated with parterres of flowers; a stream coursed through the centre. At the northern end the terrace was raised a little, and contained a large circular tank fringed with pots of flowers. Beyond this was a building containing three rooms, with a broad graceful portico facing the south: on the other side was a small court containing a tank and a jet, surrounded by parterres of rosebushes trained in the form of trees. This was the Anderoon of the Persian proprietor. At the opposite end of the terrace were the buildings occupied for dining-room and kitchen. The stream which irrigated this terrace ran under the dining-room, and burst forth under the windows in a foaming cascade. The second terrace contained three buildings, equally distant from each other. The one at the southern end contained two rooms, used for the official business of the Legation. The central building, while exceedingly simple in its construction, was so proportioned as to produce a stately effect. Its commanding position, looking as it did over the terrace and the grounds below and the plains of Teherân beyond, and flanked by lofty groups of poplars and *chenârs*, made it seem by moonlight like a temple in Arcadia.

The main features of this dwelling were dignity combined with repose, and lightness with strength; this result was obtained by giving great breadth to the portico which encircled it on three

sides, supporting it by heavy square piers at the corners, and relieving them by slender spiral pillars with broad capitals between. This room was used for an informal reception and smoking room. At the northern extremity of this terrace stood the apartment intended as the *Salaamlîk*, or reception-room of the ladies of the *Anderoon*, and applied by us to a similar purpose,—that is, of a drawing-room. This apartment was peculiarly shaped, being about thirty-four feet long, and only fourteen feet wide. The side which abutted against the hill of course presented a blank wall, but the three other sides were filled with doors, or rather windows reaching to the floor; and when these were all thrown open, the apartment had the appearance of a piazza. As if this were not enough to convey a sense of airiness, a broad veranda, with pillars connected by arches, surrounded two sides of the reception-room, and at the farther end was an anteroom whose windows were filled with a grating made of bricks faced with a blue glaze. This vestibule was connected with the *Anderoon* by a staircase. The walls of the reception-room were decorated in the old-fashioned style of Persia, with mural paintings representing scenes from life in the Harem, united by tracery in gold and scarlet, and executed with some cleverness. One who cannot have access to a Persian *Anderoon* may form a fair idea of some of the scenes which occur in those retreats of pleasure, from the numerous representations of them which Persian artists are so fond of painting on their walls and mirror-cases.

Strange to say, the ceilings of all these apartments were of the rudest character, the undressed timbers of the flat roofs being covered by neither lathing nor plastering; and both for looks and in order to prevent insects from dropping on our heads we were obliged to cover them with chintz nailed from one end of the room to the other. The custom of leaving ceilings in this unfinished state is very common in the rural districts



of northern Persia. It is alleged that the rains and snows of winter and spring in the neighborhood of the mountains are so liable to cause the flat roofs of mud to fall in, that it would only be a useless expense to add a finished ceiling to them.

The plan of Arajêb, it must be evident, was such as to produce a succession of interesting effects; it mattered not what might be the time of day, or what the point of view, it was always impressive and beautiful,—especially when the jets in the centre of the tanks, of which there were two on each terrace, were playing, and the splash of waters was heard on the stillness of the evening hour. But when the terraces and pillars of Arajêb were silvered by the radiance of the full moon, nothing could exceed the majestic beauty of this romantic spot, skirted by ranks of lofty *chenârs* casting their shadows across the terraces, and enclosed by the mountains which arose like mighty walls to the stars. The owls hooted from the distant tree-tops their melancholy watch-cry, while in the nearer thickets the full-throated nightingale warbled till dawn. Sometimes, too, we heard the yelp of little jackals skulking through the grounds. During the first month of our residence at Arajêb the season in the mountains was not yet quite adjusted, and dark clouds gathered nightly, and a great wind rushed down from the gorge with a mighty roaring and a dash of rain, bending the tall files of *chenârs* till they seemed like an army of mourners bowing over the grave of some Titan of old. In half an hour the storm would be past; the stars would again shine forth as they only shine in Persia, and all would be serene at Arajêb. But when June came and the trees were white with blossoms, the clouds and the rain passed away to return no more for six months, and the boisterous winds became soft and low.

Of course a place so extensive as Arajêb required to be carefully watched, and besides our troop of servants we were obliged after nightfall to distribute our fifteen guards around the



buildings, in a way to prevent robbery and arrest interlopers. A fresh password was given every night to the soldiers, and after nine o'clock not even a member of the family could cross the grounds without the password. One evening, one of the foreign Ministers who had been visiting the Legation was actually detained by the unreflecting sentinels at the gate, who crossed their muskets before him to prevent his leaving, until the writer appeared and released him from his predicament. Upon another occasion when I was absent, the Hakêm (or governor) of the village of Jeferabâd being sent for by his brother, incautiously thought to shorten the distance by crossing the garden of the Legation. He was arrested by the guard, and being of course unable to give the password was detained until morning, when Mr. Keim, the dragoman of the Legation, was sent for to release him. These precautions were really required to keep off marauders and prevent the occurrence of incidents which might have led to serious results. In order to maintain the discipline of the guard, it was almost impossible to make exceptions in favor of any one. If, for example, robbers had undertaken to enter any of the apartments, supposing the place to be unprotected, and any of them being Mahometans had been killed, the complications resulting therefrom might have proved very serious. It was far better therefore to prevent the incursion of such gentry, by having it well understood that the place was carefully guarded. This was still more important in a village like Jeferabâd, as it was at a long distance from the other Legations and but little frequented by Europeans, while its villagers were unusually fanatical and turbulent.

Although affrays and disturbances occurred repeatedly during the five delightful months we passed at Arajêb, these were but ripples on the surface of a season of content. My social relations with the Persian gentlemen of the neighborhood were agreeable and improving. The Hakêm (or governor) of Jeferabâd called

on me among others in the neighborhood, as did also the chief mollâh of the Imâm Zadé of Tejrîsch, a most courteous gentleman, and the Malêk (or head) of the Merchant's Guild of Teherân. The Malêk is a typical Persian gentleman, who appears to have stepped out of the "Arabian Nights." A man of superb presence, his handsome face presented an interesting combination of high culture and intelligence, refinement and shrewdness, with evidence also of a keen love for the pleasures of sense. He disdained to wear any garb suggesting foreign ideas. His flowing robes were of the finest stuffs, and presented a perfect modulation of colors. When he went abroad it was with few attendants, but his mount was of the best blood of Nedjêd. When he received, it was with the air of a prince: the guest was seated on a raised daïs in a pavilion that left nothing to be desired; the waters spouted from a star-shaped tank under an azure vault picked-out with stars of gold; the open window like a frame enclosed the splendor of flowers massed in colors, revealing also in the distance the plains of Teherân; the refreshments were served in the daintiest of china, and the perfumed cigarettes were of the finest of tobacco. The conversation of the host was brilliant with repartee, or characteristic anecdotes and parables, or apt quotations from the poets of his country recited with admirable intonation,—the literature of the East being at his fingers' ends. To know the Malêk was to gain a new insight into the "Arabian Nights;" and to be entertained by him was to see the details of an elegant hospitality elevated to one of the fine arts.

I exchanged calls likewise with another neighbor, the Shah Zadé, Ibrahîm Mirzâ.<sup>1</sup> He was a great grandson of Feth Aleé Shah; and hence the term Shah Zadé, or scion of a king.

<sup>1</sup> "Mirza" is equivalent to our titles of "Mr." and "Esquire." It always precedes the name, except in the case of Princes of blood royal, when it follows the name, and takes a strong accent on the final syllable.

Feth Alee Shah being a man of great powers and amorous inclinations, left a goodly colony of descendants, who in former ages would have most likely lost their lives or their eyesight, in order to prevent attempts at usurpation. But this atrocious custom is no longer possible in Persia; the scions of royalty now live at ease at her court. Is not this a mark of progress? The day on which I returned the call of Ibrahîm Mirzâ, the elaborate waterworks he had constructed to beautify his garden played for the first time. After the water had run a little while, it suddenly turned to a crimson hue. On my calling the attention of the Prince to this singular occurrence and asking the reason, he exhibited some annoyance, and earnestly begged my pardon that it had happened during my visit. He explained that it is the custom in Persia, when water for fountains or irrigation is first turned into a garden, to sacrifice a lamb and allow the blood to mingle with the water, in order to propitiate a blessing on the garden. Not to offend me by such a sight, Ibrahîm Mirzâ stated that he intended to postpone the sacrifice until after my departure, but had neglected to give the necessary orders; and he now hoped that I should not as a foreigner carry away an unpleasant impression of his place. The entertainment offered by the Prince was so agreeable, that I could truthfully reply that no apologies were required.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE DIFFERENT RACES OF PERSIA.

THE population of Persia is roughly estimated at about nine millions. Some consider it but seven millions and a half. The Russians place it at the latter figure, the Persians somewhat above the former. My own impression is that it is not far from nine millions. It was somewhat larger a few years ago, before the great famine and pestilence of 1875, which seriously reduced the population. But there is no reason to believe that the population of Persia was ever very much larger than it is at the present day. The southern districts might have been more densely populated in earlier periods; the remains of old cities in the south, which are now entirely abandoned and destroyed, seem to indicate that this was the case. But at the same time it must be considered that we are liable to be misled by the accounts of the great armies which Persia and other ancient countries were accustomed to put into the field. We read of vast hosts being collected, and of men being slaughtered almost by nations in great battles. In the course of a few pages such events are frequently mentioned; but we forget that those few pages perhaps cover the lapse of ages, and that between the battles there were often long intervals of peace and repose, during which the sword was changed for the pruning-hook; we forget that the simple military tactics of those early periods, and the absence of firearms prevented those elaborate manœuvres and indecisive conflicts characteristic of modern warfare. Perhaps

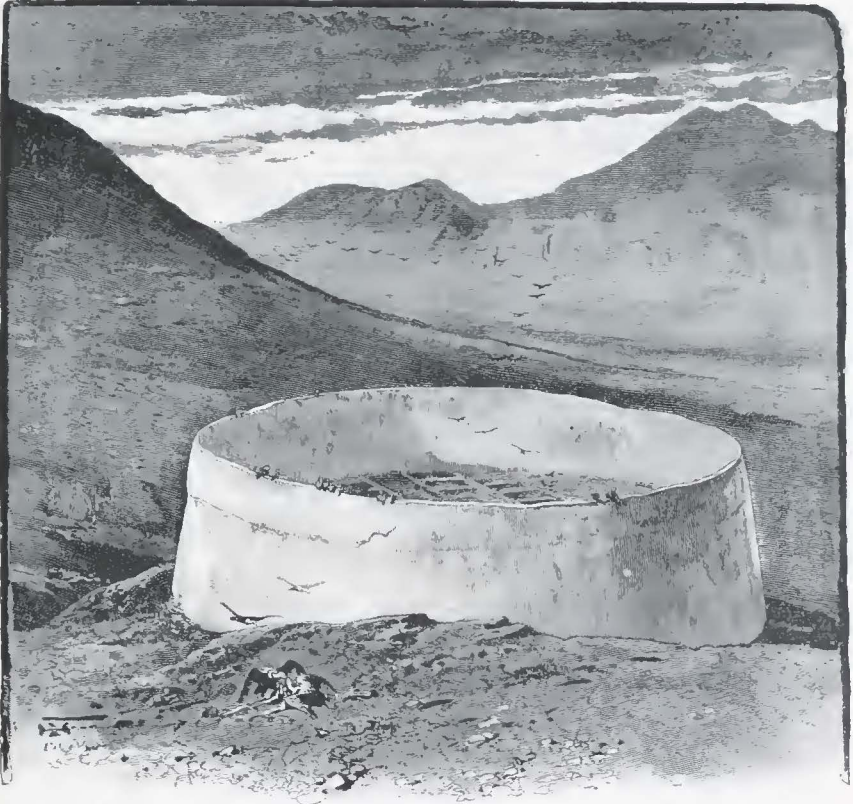


all the military resources of a people were concentrated in one or two battles, including all the men that each side could contribute; and the vanquished army being not only beaten but exterminated, the war came to a close. Thus it happened that in those times forces were assembled on a battle-field entirely out of proportion to the population of a country. It should also be remembered that when Persia entered upon foreign conquest under Darius and Xerxes, invading Scythia and Greece, she already had many Asiatic tribes and nations under her dominion; they were held under control by the numerically small but active and intelligent population of Irân, and were forced by her to contribute by far the larger number of the troops that composed her vast armies. At Salamis, for example, we see this fact clearly illustrated. Besides the various nations represented in his land forces, Xerxes had enlisted into his service the fleets of every people on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, from Egypt to the Hellespont.

It is in this very meagreness of the population of Persia proper, that we find one of the strongest evidences of the vigorous intellect of her people. Neither from theory or fact, therefore, are we warranted in assuming that the population of ancient Persia was much larger than it is now. A very large portion of the country is mere barren waste-land, incapable of supporting a population; and there is no good reason to believe from geological data that it has been otherwise since the foundation of the Persian Empire. An exception may be made in regard to the region north of the Elburz range,—the ancient Hyrcania, now represented by the provinces of Ghilân and Mazanderân. History and legend seem to indicate that the population of that district was at one time more numerous than it is at present; the remains of a large number of cities and fortresses still exist there, concealed in the profound depths of its vast forests, or perched on the crags of its tremendous defiles.

Although the present population of Persia is so limited, it is yet anything but homogeneous. The genuine Persians or Iranees are of course found in all parts of the country, but they are naturally most numerous in their old stronghold, comprising the central province of Irâk and southwestern Persia. They are a handsome, witty, vivacious, and intelligent race of Aryan stock; their language is Sanscrit, but greatly modified by the changes of time and the addition of Arabic words, which have crept in with the adoption of Mahometanism. They represent the intelligent part of the population. To them are due the arts, the philosophy, the science, and the poesy for which Persia is famous. Since the fall of Persepolis, the most interesting cities of Persia have been Shirâz and Ispahân. Hafiz and Saadi composed their immortal strains amid the bowers of Shirâz, and their tombs are there to this day enbowered with roses. The great Shah Abbass revived the arts at Ispahân, and her artists are still the most brilliant in the land. These facts illustrate the intellectual qualities of the Iranee, for Shirâz and Ispahân are Aryan cities. Although the Iranees have intermarried with foreign slaves, they have never done so to the same degree as the Turks, and they have generally selected Circassian women: as the result, their race is comparatively genuine, what intermixture there has been having rather tended to improve than deteriorate the quality of the original stock. In the small number of Guebres, or fire-worshippers, who still survive, we find more nearly than elsewhere remains of the race whom Cyrus led to victory; for the Guebres have never intermarried with any other people. They are now found chiefly at Yezd and Teherân, where they are generally devoted to silk-weaving and husbandry. They are called Guebres, which is a corruption of the word *kâfêr*, or "infidel;" but they should properly be called Parsees,—a term that is still applied to those fire-worshippers who, flying from persecution, established them-

selves at Bombay. The word *Parsee* is derived from *Pars*, the old name of the province where the Persian nation was born, and from which we derive the modern name of Persia. In the Persian language, the letters *p* and *f* are often inter-



GUEBRE CEMETERY AT TEHERÂN.

changeable: and hence the province of *Pars* is now called *Fars*, and *Ispahân* is often pronounced *Isfahân*.

The northwest of Persia resembles the adjacent territories of Asia Minor in the variety of its population. It contains numerous Armenians, part of it belonging in fact to ancient Armenia. There is also a colony of thirty thousand Nestorians, who in Persia are called *Nasrancee*. They are, in point of fact,



Chaldeans, descendants of the people who studied the stars from the top of Babel's Tower, and their language is Chaldaic. They are adherents of the doctrines of Nestorius, who was Patriarch of Constantinople in the fifth century A. D. The labors of most of the American missionaries in Persia are chiefly devoted to the conversion of this people. They have frequently been subjected to the inroads of the fierce Kurds, who have treated the peaceable Nestorians very much as wolves treat lambs. The Kurds are descended from the ancient Carduchi, with whom Xenophon and the ten thousand had so long a struggle. The region they occupy is as rugged as their character; they are by far the most turbulent of the subjects of the Shah, and were it not for the beautiful rugs they manufacture in their rude dwellings one would be at a loss to imagine a reason for their existence. The costume, both of the men and the women, is exceedingly picturesque. The men wear a fierce aspect, which is not belied by their deeds; the women have a high complexion, with eyes and hair intensely black: their beauty is not of a refined type, but at the same time its traits are so strongly emphasized that they prove highly attractive to the artistic eye. The Kurds present an ethnological mystery; they stand among the Asiatic races like the Basques and the Lapps in Europe. Their origin is wrapt in obscurity; they seem to have no relationship with any other race; their language is unique, and like Cain their hand is against every one, and every one's is against them. The ethnologist, who places little value on his life, might find a few months among the mountains of Kurdistân of some profit to science.

A large part of the northwestern province of Persia, which is called Azerbaïjân, is inhabited by Turks. Long accustomed to the Persian rule, they are thoroughly identified with the religion and government of Persia, while retaining their language and race-characteristics. Indeed, the Persian Turks are



the most fanatical of the Sheahs. This may be owing partly to the fact that the district they occupy adjoins the Ottoman dominions, whereby they have often been brought into hostile contact with the Sunnees, or rival Mahometan sect of Turkey. The capital of Azerbaïjân is Tabreez. It is the largest, and until recently has been the most important, commercial centre of Persia, being near the Turkish frontier, so that goods which come by the great highway of Trebizond and Erzroom are entered at Tabreez. This city has been besieged and sacked many times. The population is exceedingly fanatical, and even as late as last year the foreign residents were in some danger of being massacred during the holy frenzy of the religious festivals. In July, 1885, a number of zealots and ruffians so worked on the fanaticism of the populace of Tabreez that the Crown Prince of Persia, who is Governor of Azerbaïjân, telegraphed me to request the missionaries at Tabreez to close their services and schools in order to avert a threatened massacre of all the Christians in that city. His request was couched in such polite terms, and was so evidently based upon friendly feeling for us as well as upon a genuine apprehension, that I immediately advised the American citizens at Tabreez to accede to the wishes of the Prince for the time. Although the faith of some of them was so fervent as to make them wish implicitly to trust in the Lord, without regard to results, and to accept martyrdom rather than appear to retire from the post of duty in the face of the enemy, I must do them the justice to admit that they generally received the advice in the spirit in which it was given, and by acting upon it showed that they allowed prudence to temper their zeal. One important consideration adds to the difficulties of the situation,—the anxiety of missionaries in Persia, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, to proselyte the Persians or Mahometans in spite of the laws and expressed wishes of the Government. But however they may themselves be willing to accept the possible conse-

quences of missionary effort among a fanatical people, ought they not to hesitate before they act in such a manner as to cause disturbances that may result in damage to the life and property of other foreigners resident in that country, and add to the difficulties of the Government by whose sufferance and hospitality they are permitted to live there? It is a serious question exactly how far missionaries are justified in disturbing the tranquillity of nations, and then throwing the responsibility of the results on those people, or on the Lord. I say this tentatively, and with no unfriendly feelings toward missions, — my actions have already shown sufficient friendliness, — but purely from the point of view of a layman, who sees that this, like all other questions, has two sides.

In the southwest of Persia there is a considerable number of Arabs; and it is to them, doubtless, that Persia is indebted for her very fine breed of Arab horses. The horse of Shirâz, called the Shirazee Arabian, is one of the finest varieties of this noble stock. The inhabitants of the thinly-peopled southern province of Kermân are chiefly of Iranian blood. Their most important industries are weaving and embroidery, in styles resembling and but little inferior to those of Cashmere. The goats of Kermân are allied to those of Cashmere, and produce a wool scarcely less fine. This province is celebrated for its sand-storms. In many parts the surface is ridged with shifting hills of sand, like waves of the sea. Travel here is occasionally attended with considerable danger, owing to the suffocating heat, the terrific winds, and the vast volumes of hot sand which have buried caravans and even armies. Of course green valleys, pasture-lands, and water-courses are found in various places, especially near the western part; but in general the province of Kermân resembles the adjoining country of Beloochistân, which is claimed as part of the dominion of Persia, and is sometimes included in maps of that country; but it is practi-

cally independent, and its wild tribes rove at will over its thinly-peopled plains.

No province of Persia presents greater contrasts of scenery than that of Khorassân. A large part of it is a vast desert of sand and salt, half-veiled by quivering mirage, supplied with water only at long intervals, and overrun by the onagre, or wild ass, and the gazelle. The receding horizon is skirted by dim mountain ranges that tantalize the traveller, roaming over those hot wastes, with the sight of inaccessible snows. There is reason to suppose that this part of Khorassân is the bed of a sea which long since dried up. It is a well-ascertained fact that the Caspian Sea is gradually evaporating; and thus, in the course of time, Russia may have another large province added to her already vast territories, without having to resort for its possession to the treachery and bloodshed which have characterized her previous conquests. In Khorassân the transition from extraordinary aridity to a teeming verdure is as abrupt as it is attractive and refreshing. It is these sudden contrasts of scenery which have furnished the chief traits and the peculiar images that so frequently recur in Persian poetry. Nishapoor, where Omar Khayâm lies buried, is fragrant with roses and the bloom of fruitful orchards; Meshed, the sacred city of Persia and possessor of her noblest shrine, is girt with lovely gardens; Astrabâd lies hidden on the banks of a river under an almost unsurpassed wealth of verdure, — her gardens, her fruit-trees, and her groves are celebrated and sung throughout the East. No part of the kingdom is more dear to the Persian than the eastern districts of Khorassân, but of none is she more likely to be bereft; for the Russian eagle is hovering fiercely on its border, and the insatiable and unscrupulous hunger of the Muscovite bear constantly threatens to snatch from Irân one of her fairest provinces. Some of the oldest cities in Persia are found in this province, of which several would undoubtedly repay archaeological research: of

these Damghân, the Hecatompylos of the Arsacidæ, is one of the most important. The far-famed turquoise mines, forming one of the most valuable sources of Persian revenue, are in the neighborhood of Nishapoor. Aside from a number of the nomadic tribes, most of the inhabitants of Khorassân are of Iranian

stock and are industrious and intelligent.

The numerous nomadic tribes of Persia offer one of the most interesting and important divisions of its population. It is impossible to ascertain their exact number, but it is probably somewhat over a million. Although called nomads, there is a certain regularity in their movements and their *habitat* which renders them practically fixtures of the soil, — almost as much as the English gentlemen who make a rule of spending part of the year in the country and the other



A PERSIAN NOMAD WOMAN.

part at the capital. The nomads of Persia spend the winter in mud villages on the plains; in summer, they move to the mountains with their flocks, and dwell in goats'-hair tents. They resort to the same spot year after year; and any tribe or clan or family that should pitch its tents in a place previously occupied by another, would be considered an interloper.

It must be said that in a climate like that of Persia such a



life has many attractions. I spent several weeks, each summer of my residence there, in a tent among those mountain valleys. The crisp pure air was invigorating as an elixir. It was a joy never to be surrounded by stone walls; ever to be in the presence of the mountains and the stars; to watch the flocks and the herds browsing in the solitude, where scarce a sound was heard except the distant bark of a shepherd's dog, the babble of a stream, the scream of the hawk circling in the sky above, or the merry laughter of the nomad girls wandering from settlement to settlement, and the voice of the copper-colored children romping half naked before the tent-doors, while their mothers and sisters wove rugs to sell in the cities, or stuffs to clothe themselves when the short winter should set in.

These nomads are a thrifty set; and what with the sale of butter and cheese, of mutton and wool, and textile stuffs, they generally keep the wolf from the tent door, and accumulate enough at least to endow their daughters with flocks and jewels. I gathered these facts not only from observation, but also from conversing with some of the nomads themselves. They told me that the tax-collector comes around every month and counts the flocks. The regular tax is four shahis, or three cents, per month on each sheep and goat. This practically amounts to forty per cent on the value of each animal per annum, if sold on the hoof; but really it is considerably less than that proportion, for during the year a large amount of wool is sheared from the flocks, which is so much over and above their market value, while the cost of feeding the flocks and herds is next to nothing. Thus it is evident that a good margin of profit remains to these thrifty roamers of the Persian wilds. Of course, the chief of each tribe gets the lion's share of the profits, and can sometimes indulge in considerable pastoral display: occasionally, too, the governors of the districts make unusual levies on them for contributions of money; a large proportion of the Persian army, especially for

the cavalry, is also drafted from these tribes. They submit to the latter hardship with ill grace sometimes, although they make the best soldiers in Persia. But all things considered, no class of the Persian population is so comfortably situated as its nomadic tribes. By special treaty-provision with Russia, about forty thousand of these nomads, chiefly of the tribe called the Shah Sevênd, whose winter quarters are near the northwest frontier, are permitted to cross the line and pasture their flocks during the summer-time on the fat pasture-lands of the Araz in the southern Caucasus.

While the habits of these tribes vary but little, very great race-differences exist among them. They are all nominally Mahometans, although their religion sets lightly on them, and their superstition and ignorance are phenomenal. The distinction to which I refer lies in the fact that some of these tribes are of pure Aryan or Persian stock, and speak various dialects of Sanserit; but all the tribes who are not of this stock are of Turanian or Turkish origin, allied to the numerous Tartar tribes that wander around the Oxus, and gave armies to Zengis Khan and Timoor. While the Aryan tribes are found in all parts of Persia, the Turkish tribes, who form about a third of the entire number, live only in the north of that country, extending at intervals from the western to the eastern frontier. At present, the most important of these Turkish tribes are the Khajârs. This is owing to the fact that Agâ Mohamed Shah, the founder of the present dynasty of Persia, was a chief of the Khajârs. Although still included among the wandering pastoral clans of Irân, a natural consequence of the fact that the sceptre of so great a monarchy is held by representatives of a race of shepherds, has naturally tended to lead many of the Khajâr tribe to abandon pastoral life for the excitements and ambitions of the capital. The chief of the Khajârs himself now resides at Teherân, where he enjoys especial privileges, and administers

separate laws for his people, exactly as if he were still a patriarchal chieftain dispensing justice in a breezy tent on the Elburz Mountains, surrounded by the bleat of flocks and herds. One of the most difficult cases I had to manage was long prevented from reaching a successful issue because the mortgagee was a Khajâr, and the operation of the ordinary laws was checked by the chief of the Khajars, who protected him against our just demands.

The nomads of northern Persia are generally a peaceable, inoffensive class; but the Aryan tribes of central and southern Persia are treacherous and turbulent, addicted to bloodshed and robbery, and yielding only a half-hearted allegiance to the crown. The most important of these tribes are the Loories and Bacthiarees; they number about five hundred thousand, of which three fourths belong to the latter tribe. The late chief of the Bacthiarees, whose titular name was the Il Haneé, had his headquarters at Changanghoor, where he built himself a palace partly furnished with articles imported from Europe, and lived in a style singularly contrasted with that of his subjects, whose goats'-hair tents blackened the surrounding landscape. He had the habit of taking a pill every morning before eating, as a preservative against all ills; this pill was made of a ruby, ground fine and mixed with a paste. This costly remedy does not seem to have been sufficient to avert the catastrophe which terminated his career. He had secretly collected many arms, and was suspected of designing a revolt against the Shah, or at least of throwing off the obligation to pay the annual tribute of money and men. As the Bacthiarees are war-like and brave, such a disturbance in the heart of the kingdom might prove exceedingly troublesome in a country constituted like Persia; it might lead to brigandage, and perhaps risings elsewhere, and possibly to foreign complications, owing to the readiness of Russia to interfere on every possible occasion. Such a revolt would also

necessarily be more serious if it were among the very class which furnishes some of the best troops of the Shah. The Prince Zil-i-Sultân decided to nip the difficulty in the bud by a measure highly characteristic of governments in the East. He invited the Il Haneë to visit him at Ispahân, and violating the sacred rights of hospitality in which his guest confided, caused him



ZIL-Î-SULTÂN.

to be secretly assassinated. The Bachtiarees, being thus deprived of their able and ambitious leader, were of course obliged to postpone open expression of their discontent to a more favorable occasion. The Prince has been severely blamed for this arbitrary measure; but I think there is something to be said in his favor. It is not unlikely that the death of the Il Haneë was decided

upon by the Shah himself as a political necessity. It should also be remembered that Orientals would view such a summary deed far otherwise than Europeans; that the Il Haneë himself was very well aware, from the customs of his country, what was likely to be his fate in case his designs were suspected; and that such a method of taking him off probably resulted in this case in far less bloodshed than if regular processes of law had been attempted, and was much more likely to produce order in such a country than measures more public and strictly legal.

In many of their habits the Bachtiarees suggest the North American Indians. Unlike other Mussulmans, they name their



children usually, not after the Prophet and his descendants, but after wild animals, such as wolf, lion, tiger, or the like, adding some descriptive epithet. They are brave, and at the same time cunning and treacherous. A stranger can travel safely among them only by first obtaining permission from their chief, who delegates one or more young men of the tribe to escort him and be responsible for himself and the safety of his goods. They are extraordinary thieves, skilled to an astonishing degree in the high art of purloining without detection. A European gentleman of my acquaintance who was travelling among them was sitting in his tent at dead of night; he had taken the precaution to remove every object from the edge to the centre around the tent-pole. All was still; the dogs inside and out were asleep; there was absolutely not a sound to be heard, when he suddenly perceived a long sinewy arm creep stealthily as a snake under the tent, and move around seeking some object to steal. Raising a heavy stick, my friend brought it down with full force on the arm; instantly it was withdrawn, but not a groan or a whisper escaped to indicate that a man was behind that mysterious arm. A Persian dignitary travelling among the Bachtiarees gathering taxes was reading in his tent; his back was supported by cushions; he bent forward a moment to bring his book nearer the light, but when he leaned back again he found the cushions had been removed, and fell flat on his back, heels in the air. The mattress on which a man and his wife were sleeping has actually been taken by these clever rogues. When the pair awoke in the morning they found themselves on opposite sides of the tent, their bed vanished, spirited away, whither and how and by whom they knew not.

Before closing this sketch of the different people who make up the population of the present Persian Empire, a few words should be said about the restless Afghans, who find their way into Persia and make their headquarters at Teherân. Although

not numerous, they form a marked feature of that capital; for they are often seen in mounted squads, going forth for exercise, and none of the motley throngs in the streets of that city present a more striking and picturesque appearance. Their complexion is swarthy; the eyes are intensely black and inclined to bulge,—a sign which is supposed to indicate loquacity, without proportionate intelligence: in the case of the Afghans, this loquacity is combined with mendacity. Their eyebrows are heavy, and the beard is intensely black; the nose is high, prominent, and strongly aquiline; the hands and feet are small, the form medium size, well proportioned, and slender but strong. One end of the many-colored sash which is wound around the head as a turban hangs like a festoon over the left shoulder; the loose coat is held together by a scarf wound around the waist, and numerous daggers, old-fashioned pistols, and a scimitar, or perhaps a sabre captured from the English, complete the appearance of this most effective figure, as he rides his mettlesome steed with easy grace through the streets of Têherân.

The Afghans and the Rohillas of India are undoubtedly descended, in part at least, from the Jews. They themselves acknowledge this to be the fact, but decline to have aught to do with other Jews, because of their religion,—the Afghans being, of course, fanatical Mahometans of the Sunnee faith. The term *Afghân* means “wailing;” this seems to suggest that they are descended from the mysterious Ten Tribes, who it may reasonably be supposed lamented their distant captivity. It is deeply to be regretted that this endless problem, which is of not the slightest practical value, cannot be settled once for all by accepting this solution of the question. The Afghans continue to preserve a sort of tribal organization, being divided into numerous rival clans, each of which seeks in turn to gain the ascendancy. The most prominent of these tribes are the Barukzâi and the Saduzâi. Abdubrahmân, the present Emeer of Afghanistan, belongs to the Saduzâi.

The relations between Persia and Afghanistan have always been most intimate, and the frontier between them has often been hazy. Persia has frequently overrun her neighbor's territory, and once held a portion of Afghanistan for centuries. In 1852 a Persian army besieged and captured Herât. Early in the eighteenth century Persia was invaded by Mahmood, the Afghan, who overthrew the dynasty of the Abassides, and held the country for several years. In the frenzy of fanaticism he wasted the splendors of Ispahân, slaughtered the greater part of the population of that magnificent capital, including almost all the artists of Persia, and brought upon the nation such calamities as she has not recovered from to this day. The Afghans were driven out by Nadîr Shah, but from that time the deposed Emeers of Afghanistan, or their subjects fleeing from the perils of political feud, have been accustomed to find an asylum at the court of Persia, where they have sought by intrigue to obtain the aid of the Shah in order to reinstate themselves in power.

"How is it," said Feth Aleé Shah to an Afghan chief, "that Persian scimitars are curved, while the Afghan swords have straight blades?"

"It is because the Persian character is crooked, while the Afghan goes directly to the point."

The antithesis is good, but hardly in accordance with facts, for both people are sufficiently crooked in character. At the present day, however, the Afghans are of the two the more ignorant and cruel; but it is a curious circumstance that the Persian language is nowhere so correctly spoken as at Candahâr, in Afghanistan.

In the reign of Feth Aleé Shah, the blood-feud between the great rival tribes of Afghanistan reached a severe crisis. Representatives of both tribes had sought refuge at Teherân, including the deposed Emeer of the Barukzâi, who could not be attacked by his enemies so long as he received the hospitality

and protection of the Shah of Persia. After long intrigues, the Saduzâi succeeded in persuading Feth Alie Shah to withdraw his protection from the Barukzâi, who were at the capital, sheltered in the palace of Kasr-i-Khajâr. The Shah announced this decision by saying, "I am going hunting to-day, and these people are not my guests in my absence." This was sufficient to indicate that he abandoned them to their doom. The Saduzâi at Teherân thus learned that they could wreak their vengeance with impunity; they burst into the palace of Kasr-i-Kajjâr, seized the unfortunate Barukzâi and his family, dragged them to a little eminence outside the gates of the palace, and cut them to pieces.

The number of Afghans resident at Teherân is at present unusually large, owing to the internment of Eyoob Khan in Persia and the recent difficulties in Afghanistan. The chief business of the Afghans at Teherân is intrigue.

Besides the numerous other populations residing in Persia and enjoying the beneficent protection of Nasr-ed-Deen Shah, there is a small number of Europeans, who are scattered about the chief cities of the land. Of course, many of these are connected with the diplomatic corps and the various consulates; and besides them must be included those natives who as employees of the Legations become foreign protégés: these last form quite a little army in themselves with their families, who also enjoy similar protection. [Russia claims the largest number of the foreigners resident in Persia; but many of them are Armenians of Persian birth, who have succeeded in transferring themselves under the Russian flag in order to conduct their business at Resht and Tabreez with less annoyance. The total number of foreigners at Teherân is nearly three hundred, excluding, of course, Turks and Afghans. They include representatives of almost every nation in Europe, besides a number of Americans. Many of them are connected with the Indo-European Telegraph Company; several are in the employ of the Persian Government, as instructors in



the army or the Royal College, or as physicians, or teachers of the military band. This little foreign colony contains a number of adventurers who have fled from Europe with speckled reputations, and are seeking to rebuild their fortunes in Persia. There are several European commercial houses at Teherân; and a small hotel kept by a Frenchman affords reasonable accommodations for the occasional traveller, who prefers being lodged and fed in French style to resorting to a native caravansary. These Europeans live quite by themselves, having but few social relations with the Persians; although the leading dignitaries of the court frequently accept invitations to entertainments at the Legations. Like all such colonies the European community at Teherân is split up into cliques and perpetually disturbed by jealousies and scandals; but some of its members are exceedingly agreeable and intelligent, and one may pass many attractive and profitable hours in their society.

The number of Legations at the Court of Persia is now seven, established in the order given here: the Russian, the English, the Turkish, the French, the Austro-Hungarian, the United States, and the German. The Ottoman is strictly an embassy, and therefore takes precedence of all the others.

The United States interests in Persia are protected by a special treaty between the two countries. This treaty was negotiated by the Hon. Carrol Spence and Ferûkh Khan, who respectively represented their countries at Constantinople during the administration of President Buchanan. Privileges not specifically treated in separate articles of the treaty are admitted under the "most favored nation" clause of the famous treaty of Turkoman Tehai, drawn up between Russia and Persia early in this century, and affording a basis for most of the treaties negotiated with Persia since then. One of the most important clauses of the treaty with the United States refers of course to the protection of our citizens. It is agreed that all cases in

Persia between the United States citizens and Persian subjects shall be tried in the usual courts of Persia according to Persian law, but in the presence of a United States official, who shall see that the law is justly administered. In point of fact, the practice has been to settle such cases by mutual conference between the United States Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and in minor cases by conference of their secretaries. Considering the peculiar character of Persian law and justice, this seems to be the most satisfactory method of allaying difficulties; but it is evident that so far as American interests are concerned, — distant as the Legation is from Washington, isolated, drawing little aid from the home Department, and experiencing none of that strong moral support which would come from a nation having a decided foreign policy, — the United States Minister in his dealings with the Persian Government must have tact, judgment, knowledge of the people, and be above all a *persona grata*. Cases between American citizens and the subjects of Powers other than Persia are tried in the Legation or Consulate of the defendant, according to the laws of his country, or of the code specially prepared for that Legation, or upon terms agreed upon by the respective Ministers. In accordance with this principle, and following the usage at all our Oriental Legations, it became my duty in turn to prepare a code for the Legation at Teherân and our Consular courts throughout Persia. Finding the code in use at our Legation in Turkey to be in the main sufficient for our purpose, I adopted that, with certain modifications suited to the somewhat different conditions existing in Persia; and these were approved by the Department at Washington.

It is needless to say that the duties of the Legation at the Court of Persia were arduous, constant, and sometimes exceedingly difficult to arrange. Before the establishment of our Legation, American interests in Persia had long been protected by the courtesy of her British Majesty's Minister at the Court of the

Shah. But these interests in time came to absorb so much of his attention, that her Majesty's Government finally signified to our Government that it must provide other means for protecting its interests. It was a disgrace to a great Government like ours, that it should so long have allowed our worthy citizens in Persia to be without a Legation of their own. It was culpable neglect for a country possessing such vast commercial interests as ours to neglect so long to avail itself of the privileges accorded by the treaty, and to establish the means by which those privileges could be turned to account.

This is not the place, nor would it become me at present, to enter into a relation of the cases called to the attention of and adjusted by the United States Legation at Teherân during my residence there. Doubtless an incumbent of that office might for a time draw his salary, and accomplish little else if so minded; but one who accepts the post with a conscientious sense of duty will find it one of the most laborious offices in the gift of the United States. In this connection I take the liberty of quoting a passage from a very able document prepared by the late Secretary of State, the Hon. Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, who was at once an accomplished diplomatist and gentleman, and who in his relations with our representatives abroad never once forgot the amenities belonging to those relations. The following is the passage I allude to:—

“The duty of a diplomatist is to seek to avoid issues by procuring a satisfactory settlement before a subject of formal discussion is presented. The essence of any such arrangement is its informality and secrecy. It would not of course be consonant with the public interests for the undersigned to allude to any specific instance in this connection; but he may say that many examples have occurred where American citizens have been saved serious inconveniences, imprisonment, or loss of property by such informal and confidential interposition of their Ministers, when if a formal complaint had been made, the technicality of the law, or the policy of the foreign Government in the treatment of its own citizens, would have forced it to the action we wished to avoid. The successes of a diplo-

macy are therefore usually known to but few, which perhaps not unnaturally has led to the belief, held by many, that with the introduction of the steamship and telegraph the duties of a Minister have ceased. However fast the mail or efficient the telegraph, neither can ever supply the place of the diplomatic agent who advises his Government of the disposition of the other, and conducts the personal negotiations under general instructions from home. The home Government can only outline the policy; it is for the agent to accomplish the end sought. The important duty of diplomacy is the daily work which attracts no attention, and is, in fact, successful in proportion to its silence and apparent repose."

In closing these observations, it is proper to add that at present the duties of a United States representative in Persia are chiefly diplomatic. The demands for a fuller consular service will increase when our merchants decide to avail themselves more fully of the advantages of trade with Persia. Justice to the writer's exertions in that direction warrants the statement that efforts to secure such a trade have already begun.



## CHAPTER VII.

### CONDITIONS OF SERVICE IN PERSIA.

ONE of the most remarkable institutions of Persia is the "Modahûl." In plain English, this means a ten per cent commission; in its broader application, it means an allowable commission or percentage, exacted by every one who buys for another or does him any service or favor, above the cost of the purchase or the wages previously agreed on for the service. It may be objected that this is not a system peculiar to Persia. In a sense this is true. The world over men get what they can, and do something for nothing as rarely as possible. But there are certain features in the modahûl, as practised in Persia, which give it a character of its own, and are a striking illustration of life in that isolated land. In the first place, the secret or open exaction of a commission for articles purchased by servants is elsewhere confined chiefly to household servants, and is considered to be a transaction, if not disgraceful, at least one to be kept secret. But in Persia every employee demands the right to add ten per cent to the price of goods purchased for his master, and no one hesitates to allow it to him. Why not? It is a custom established by immemorial usage. If this were all, one might set it down as an ordinary average expense, and say no more about it. But the difficulty a foreigner finds in accepting this usage lies in the fact that he soon learns that the Persian servants not only purchase inferior articles and charge the price for the highest grade of articles, but they add far more than the simple addition of a ten per cent modahûl would

warrant. Thus the employer, or master, can only by close, un-remitting, and vexatious vigilance reduce the so-called *modahûl* to a reasonable average of loss.



STROLLING MUSICIANS, WITH DANCING MONKEYS.

Nothing can exceed the cunning of these Persian servants. Their endeavors to steal a penny here or a penny there are so constant, and often so ingenious, that one might easily believe

they sat up all night to devise means for defrauding their masters. We had a cook who even at Teherân was notorious for his craft and villany. One day he stated that he had an opportunity to buy a turkey from a countryman for a low price. It was true, he said, that it was a small bird for a turkey, but at any rate it was toothsome and tender, — that he could vouch for; and all things considered, it was cheaper than a chicken. Would we have it? The answer being in the affirmative, the turkey was served to us at dinner. The appearance of the fowl was suspicious both as to size and shape, and the first application of the knife showed it to be an old and leathery hen. The rogue had procured it for a mere song, and by passing it off as a turkey proposed to put the difference in his pocket.

On another occasion he played a trick which came near to costing him dear with his fellow-servants. A cattle disease was prevailing, which in the absence of sanitary laws made it dangerous to purchase the beef for sale in the markets. We therefore restricted ourselves to mutton and game, — which was no severe hardship, as both are abundant and excellent at Teherân; and we gave strict orders that no beef should be brought on our table, either roast, or disguised in the form of ragoût, or soup. Many were the times this varlet of a cook sought to palm off the forbidden meat for some other, for from the very fact of its being diseased it was the cheapest meat in the market. Whenever the cheat was detected we sent the dish back to the cook, with the word that it was a “pishkesh,” — that is, a present; by which we meant we would not pay for it. And yet though often detected and made to pay for his tricks, the fellow never ceased racking his brain for some new device. For example, — a ham having been boiled for the table, he undertook on the following day to serve up the broth as mutton soup. The deception being discovered, he gave the soup to his unsuspecting fellow-servants. They were all Mahometans, and of course



would have rejected it if aware of its character. But on the following day they learned the facts; and after venting their rage on the cook both in words and blows, they all took an emetic, and purified themselves at the public bath. When no other means of deceiving occurred to his wily brain, he had a way of being sent for to his house, either because his child was ill or dead, or one of his wives, or because of some other plausible exigency. Thus excusing himself from preparing dinner for us, he would then assist at the cooking of a state entertainment at one of the other Legations or a Persian magnate's, and make his *modahûl* there. This is a common device at Teherân among the best cooks.

Among so many servants as one is obliged to employ in Persia, it evidently follows that one is constantly busy watching their attempts at cheating. The head-servant, or major-domo, is called the "nazeer." It is assumed that if he is capable, the *modahûl*, or commission, with its attendant exorbitant demands and leakages, will be confined to his accounts. But this is far from being the fact. If one has unlimited means at his disposal, and prefers to pay three times the value of articles in his household expenses rather than have his repose or time infringed upon, this is very well. But if economy is essential, then prepare for a steady battle with all your servants in Persia. They are respectful, good-natured, not unwilling to work, and sometimes display real fidelity and attachment to their masters; and some of them may be relied upon not to pilfer. They bear rebukes meekly, which is a great point, and are often in every respect but one model servants. But they all lie unconscionably, and all to the last man claim the *modahûl* or take it, which in this case means as much beyond the allowable ten per cent as they can juggle out of the master, or of causing the price of articles sold to him to be raised to cover the ten per cent the vender must pay to them. European residents in Persia have been



obliged to adopt the system of paying wages somewhat above those given by Persian gentlemen, and allowing the servants to board themselves. As all these domestics are married, as a matter of course, they do not object to this plan, and it certainly offers less opportunities for stealing. The domestics of a large household take turns to sleep at home.

One of the most difficult departments to manage in a household in Persia is that of the stables. As—excepting to a limited degree at the capital and two or three other cities—the only means of locomotion is on horseback, and as a certain degree of style is essential when riding abroad, not only for ostentation but for security as well, and because of the extensive arrangements necessary in going even a short distance, it is the custom to have many horses, which fortunately are both good and cheap. This presupposes a proportionate number of retainers for this service alone, established by immemorial usage. There is first the *mirahor*, or equerry, who has general supervision, and is responsible for the purchase and dispensing of the provender as well as for the condition of the horses and the stables. Under him is the *gileodâr*, or leading outrider, who proceeds in the van of the cavalcade and clears the way: in a large ménage he has a number of mounted assistants. The hostler of course plays an important part in a Persian stable. He is entitled to a *chagird*, or prentice assistant, for every four horses in his charge. He lodges in the stable on a raised earthen platform, and has the privilege of keeping fowls in the stable. It is possible, also, that he has for a fellow-companion a pig, or even a wild boar. It is a superstition of the Persians, although they will not eat swine, that the unclean animal is desirable in a stable, having some occult influence over the horses. It is therefore not uncommon to find a pig in a Persian stable. A young wild boar was presented to me,—a wild, unkempt, roaring beast,—which had no tailable instincts. I put him in the stable, and there he stayed

content, until a kick from one of the horses settled his destiny. A friend of mine likewise kept a young boar in his stable. The boar and his riding horse became friends; whenever the gentleman went to ride, the boar followed after like a dog, with wild squeaks of delight. One day they met a troop of wild boars, and this young boar found their society so congenial that he forsook civilized ways and returned to his native woods.

The horses used in Persia are invariably stallions; but although spirited, they rarely exhibit the vicious fire of stallions in America. They are gentle, and accidents with them are rare. I ascribe this partly to the fact that they are constantly in contact with men, who sleep with them and treat them kindly, almost as if they were human.

The Persians blanket their horses very heavily, even in summer, which is contrary to our usage. But I am convinced that they understand very well the art of caring for horses, although foreigners who live in Persia are in the habit of decrying the knowledge of the natives on this subject. But the Persians for thousands of years have reared breeds of horses unsurpassed for excellence: this cannot be entirely the result of accident. There are no stalls in the stables; the mangers are simply apertures in the sides of the mud walls. The horses are tethered to spikes in the floor of the stable. In winter, the stable is closed and dark; in summer, the mangers are in the garden-walls, under the trees. The summer stable of a Persian nobleman resembles a camp of cavalry.

It is a singular custom of Persia that a criminal may always find absolute protection by seeking refuge in a stable. It matters not whether it be the stable of a king or of his meanest subject. The fugitive from justice sleeps at the foot of the master's favorite horse; while he remains there, the owner of the stable must feed him. No one can harm him, not even the sovereign him-

self can touch a hair of his head, while he chooses to remain in that asylum. The origin of this custom is lost in obscurity, but most probably has some relation to early nomadic habits.

It is a pity that the security offered criminals in Persian stables could not also be extended to the general management of the provisions for the horses. Every one connected with a Persian stable seems to be in conspiracy with his associates to plunder the master in every possible way. First, they begin by trying to make him pay for more provisions than have been delivered, or they charge him double the amount of the value. Then they give the horses less than their necessary rations, and continue this until the horses show that they are underfed. If detected in this, they will sometimes make holes in the back of the manger, and while they put the full amount of barley into the manger, half of it perhaps slips through the hole and is caught by an accomplice outside the stable. If the door of the stable is locked at sunset, and the key returned to the pocket of the master, the hostler will arise at midnight and lower a bag of stolen plunder from the top of the wall to confederates waiting outside. Clever means are also taken to injure the blankets, halters, or saddles, in order that he may make a commission out of the man who repairs or replaces them. Whenever it is possible, the hostler will also bring his friends into the stable to sleep there, or admit humble strangers coming to the city, who in consideration of such entertainment pay him part of what they would otherwise have to pay if they lodged at a caravansary; or they carry off some of the provender and divide the proceeds with him, or they find an opportunity to rob the house during the night. I remember on one occasion one of my servants, who had a grudge against the hostler, came to me just after I had retired for the night, and told me in great secrecy that I might do well to repeat the rounds I took every night about the place. Taking with me the corporal and two

soldiers, I repaired to the stable. I pushed the door open suddenly, but discerned nothing peculiar by the light of the dim lantern; through a chink in the door of the back stable, however, a bright light seemed to indicate that something uncanny was going on within. On bursting open that door, six armed ruffians were revealed quietly smoking with the hostler. They were so astounded by our appearance that they dared make no resistance. By my orders the soldiers unceremoniously ejected both them and the hostler from the premises. It is needless to say that he forfeited a month's wages that was due him at the time.

Although Persian servants are not ill-natured, it seems difficult for a number of them to live together in the same household without frequent quarrels, which give much trouble to the master. Dissensions between the servants of rival houses are also of frequent occurrence. While in the former case this has the advantage of reducing the amount of stealing, inasmuch as one servant will report the misdeeds of another, yet it is on the whole one of the most serious inconveniences of life in Persia; and after the occurrence of several violent affrays, I was obliged to tell my servants that a repetition of these disturbances would result in their losing my protection. Quarrels among the servants of the same household are often due to the fact that the domestics not infrequently belong to different religious sects. My best servant was a member of the small Mahometan sect called Aleolahée, and all the other domestics seemed to feel bound to persecute him in every possible manner, hoping thus to cause his expulsion.

As an instance of the difficulties we had to encounter from this source, I may mention an incident that occurred during the summer that I was living at the village of Jeferabad. Our residence was on one side of a mountain stream; on the opposite side was the country seat of the mother of the Zil-î-Sultân,



oldest son of the Shah. She came to the country one day, intending to remain some weeks. She was attended by a hundred servants; many of them were Lutees, or professional blackguards, and all were inflated with a sense of the importance of the service in which they were engaged. A number of these fellows crossed the brook and began to insult the wife of my hostler. Several of my servants flew to the rescue, and in the *mêlée* that succeeded they were roughly handled by the superior numbers of the servants of the Princess. One had two teeth knocked out, another lost a finger, and a third was severely bruised. The circumstances were such as to require prompt action. I immediately dispatched our moonchee to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, representing that bad blood had been excited between the domestics of the two households, which threatened further collisions, and perhaps a riot, unless immediate attention were given to the matter. The Minister, who at the time was at the palace of the Shah, immediately, with commendable promptness, returned to his residence, which was near that of the Princess, and proceeded to try the ringleaders, although by this time it was ten o'clock at night. Three of the servants of the Princess were found guilty of disorderly conduct, and were summarily thrashed by torchlight under the trees, and on the following day the Princess sent over her apologies and regrets. The results were salutary. No other difficulties occurred between the two households during the remainder of the season.

Upon another occasion a servant of the United States dragoon became involved in a dispute with an old villager, and broke two of his ribs. It was immediately reported that the old man was killed, and he certainly had a narrow escape with his life. The people in Jeferabad were wild with excitement; the family of the injured man filled the streets with screams; the whole village arose as one man; they flew to the

house of the dragoman. He was a Christian and a European, and hence part of the popular fury was due to fanaticism. He escaped by the back door, and repaired to the house of one of the secretaries of the Foreign Office. The people followed him thither, and a tremendous clamor arose, which began to take form in a cry that as they could not get possession of the dragoman they would storm the Legation itself. They were blind with rage, and cared little who were the victims of their vengeance if only they were Christians and foreigners. As all this occurred ten miles from the capital, there were no troops at hand who could be summoned in time to quell the disturbance. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, who lived across the brook, sent a hasty messenger to warn me to be on my guard against an attack. This was not an easy affair, for the grounds of the Legation were extensive, and could be entered at many points; but I ordered our small corps of fifteen guards<sup>1</sup> to load their muskets with ball, and distributed them to the three most important points. I also loaded the Spencer rifles and revolvers I had brought with me, to be placed in the hands of the servants, who, it must be said to their credit, showed no hesitation at this critical time. The mob was already moving towards my gate, when it was finally stopped by the strenuous exertions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, aided by a report that the physician whom I had dispatched to the wounded man stated that his wounds were not fatal. When the rage of the villagers was somewhat abated, they contented themselves with a firm demand through the *ketkhodâh*, or governor of the village, that the servant who had caused this trouble should be delivered up by me for summary punishment. Fortunately, the action of the servant had been such as to make it easy for me to

<sup>1</sup> By the request of the Persian Government, all the Legations at Teherân are provided with soldiers detailed quarterly from the garrison. The Russian legation has no less than forty. Our Legation had fifteen in summer and thirteen in winter.

evade this demand. I had reason to believe that he was the offender in this case, but this would not have prevented him from claiming protection as a United States *protégé*, at least until he should have a fair trial, had he not forfeited this right by flying to a Mahometan shrine for refuge, instead of seeking protection under the American flag. I therefore disavowed him, and he remained in the asylum he had sought until his victim had recovered. The affair was then compounded for a small sum of money, and he went forth a free man again, but was forbidden to re-enter the service of his former master.

Another incident characteristic of the instability of the disposition of the Persian masses towards foreigners and Christians occurred just before my arrival at Teherân. A sick mendicant applied for aid at the house of Mr. Nelson, an English resident. As he persisted in his demands, Mr. Nelson ordered his servants to put the man out. The beggar lay down in the street before the gate, unable to move, and died there, — apparently from some heart trouble, for it does not appear that the servants treated him roughly. But one of the Lutees, or sons of Belial, who abound there, spread the report that it was the result of ill-treatment by “a Christian dog.” The neighborhood took fire, and a furious mob burst open Mr. Nelson’s gates. They sacked the house, destroyed the furniture, and beat Mr. Nelson and his wife, leaving them for dead. Such events as these teach the Europeans residing in Persia that they need to bear themselves with great circumspection. During the insurrection of the Machdee in the Soudan, the undercurrent of fanaticism in Persia was such that many of the foreigners at Teherân lived under constant apprehension of a rising that would cause the massacre of all Christians in Persia. Nor were their fears groundless.

The habitual dishonesty of the Persian servant is indicated in nothing more characteristically than in the difficulty we found in procuring pure milk. This difficulty, of course, occurs every-

where ; but in our cities, at least, there are laws regulating the sale of milk, and the person found guilty of selling impure or watered milk is liable to fines and punishment. But it is quite otherwise in Persia. Having exhausted every other means for obtaining the pure article, we decided to have the cow brought to the house and milked there. We found that the servants succeeded in watering the milk while it was being brought across the yard to the house. Then we had the cow milked under the window, and the milk was handed in through the window. When the servants found that we had got the better of them, they caused the cow to be milked before she came, and then alleged that it was impossible to find a cow that would give sufficient milk ; this in order to force us to send out for the daily supply of milk as before. We finally hit upon an expedient for bringing the rascals to terms. All the servants were summoned, and emphatically informed that not one of them should receive the customary present of clothes and money at the No Rooz if we had any further difficulty in regard to the milk. They all saw the point, for such a plan obliged those who were not in the conspiracy to defraud us to report against the others. After this the supply of milk was abundant and good.

A large establishment in Persia includes not only the servants actually employed, but also their families, as, contrary to custom in European countries, Persian servants are invariably married, no matter what may be their age. A mere youth of sixteen has his wife and children ; if older, he has perhaps two or three wives. Thus a household that includes only fifteen servants may easily represent a community of from eighty to one hundred persons, — which is especially the case with a Legation or a high dignitary, — resembling the feudal houses of olden times. All this little community looks up to its master as to a protector and lord. Whenever one of the servants marries, — and this occurs often



enough, — then he expects a present for his wedding ; then the bride must wait on the mistress of the household, and in turn receive a present. If a child is born, another present is expected ; and if a physician is needed, the interposition of the master is again required, with a note to the doctor requesting him to call at the house of the patient. The authority of the head of such a household is practically patriarchal. Almost daily some case is brought before him requiring his interposition. While this system adds to the dignity of a household, it is also attended with inconveniences. The matter of giving presents, for example, is one that a foreigner finds very annoying, because it is a custom prevailing in all the grades of Persian society, and often places the recipient in a dilemma by obliging him to give a pecuniary gift in return, which amounts to a species of blackmail ; for if he declines to accept the gift and reciprocate with one of at least equal value, he loses in the estimation of the people, and consequently also in influence.

One can better understand how this may be when informed that it is the custom of the Persians to pay their servants in part (whether in public or private service) by the fees received in return for gifts or favors rendered. Thus, a Persian gentleman sends a present of game or of fruit to a friend. The receiver is expected handsomely to reward the servant who takes the present ; that is, with a pecuniary fee, or an article of price proportioned to the rank of the donor. This fee belongs to the servant, and is accepted by him in lieu of wages from his master. The latter, in turn, likewise rewards the servant of his friend on a similar occasion ; and thus the account is presumably squared. The higher the rank of a man, the more he makes out of such a system, for the larger is the number of those below him who, on receiving his gifts, must give in proportion to his superior rank. Naturally, the sovereign finds the custom more profitable than any of his subjects, and he is careful to take every advan-

tage of a usage that practically adds largely to the economy he is obliged to practise.

The salaries which his Majesty pays to his high officers are far below what they are obliged to spend in order to maintain the display required in a country so ostentatious. But they are expected to add to their revenues by practising the gift system in a manner so judicious as at once to increase their wealth and properly sustain the public interests. This may be done, we will suppose, in the case of a cabinet minister, either by sending presents or selling offices to those who come within the range of his appointing power. This is not called "selling offices," but rather a *quid pro quo* arrangement, in which the appointee agrees to show his estimate of the favor given to him by a proper pecuniary return, — a laudable system, which he in turn practises on his underlings.

The Shah who desires to add to the salary of one of his officers does not do it by actually paying him an additional sum, but he deposes him to carry a *kelât*, or royal robe of honor, to some wealthy dignitary who is known to be able and willing to pay a round sum for a mark of royal favor that greatly increases his fame and influence in the community where he resides, — for that is the result of such an act of high condescension from the "Asylum of the Universe." The resulting benefit is threefold: the receiver of the gift is gratified beyond measure; the officer who carries the gift is pleased by a pecuniary reward that perhaps balances a salary already in arrears: and the Shah has made grateful subjects, and covered into the royal treasury the sum due to a faithful servant. This system could not well be adopted in our country: but it is not to be indiscriminately condemned, as it has its advantages in a government like that of Persia.

The Shah also avails himself of the custom of selling office to the highest bidder, and thus adds very materially to his reve-

nues. This, however, is done with discrimination, — a reasonable consideration for the welfare of the Empire being included in the selection made. The position of Premier, for example, is not given to any one who may offer the highest sum for the post; but of two or three who are best qualified for it, that one is selected who is prepared to make the largest present to the Shah. Contrary to what one might think, this custom is not opposed to permanence in office. If a high official continues to give satisfaction, he is often permitted to remain for many years, provided he is able to make a valuable annual pecuniary present to his Majesty. The late Minister of Foreign Affairs served the Government upwards of thirty-six years, being gradually promoted to the position he held for the last twenty years of his life. The present Prime Minister entered office when he was fifteen, his father being High Treasurer; and he has now been in steady service for nearly sixty years. The conclusion one arrives at, on reflecting upon such a system, is that no form of government is wholly bad or wholly good. In our own country, which we are accustomed to think happy in the possession of a perfect political machinery, offices are not openly bought and sold; but on the other hand it matters not how faithful or useful a public servant may prove, he must retire to private life at the end of a brief period, or is subject to the whims and caprices of the head of a department, who disposes of the office to one who may give him important influence in his Presidential aspirations. There is little to choose between the two, so far as the country at large is concerned,—which would perhaps be less likely to suffer from the Persian system than from ours.

In spite of the political corruption that has been practised in Persia for many ages, she has contrived to exist for upwards of three thousand years; her people are as happy on the average as other people, and she continues to show great recuperative vitality; while a country like England, with a liberal constitutional gov-

ernment, shows signs of decay within less than a thousand years, and the political corruption in our own country has reached such gigantic dimensions as to create in the minds of our wisest and most patriotic citizens an intense conviction of the absolute necessity of a speedy and radical correction of the evil. Of course, such sentiments will be scoffed at by those optimists who assume that agitation necessarily means health, and that all change means progress. It is said that there is not much patriotism in Persia; that its officials are entirely absorbed in self-aggrandizement. It may be so; but is there any more patriotism among the politicians engaged in the everlasting scramble to reach our halls of Congress, and is not every act of too many of our senators and representatives instigated by a consideration of what will benefit themselves individually than prove to be for the best good of all?

Let us be just, however. It may be granted that our political system is of a more elevated character than that of Persia, because, while the results are often unsatisfactory, it aims at a higher ideal. We have a standard of political rectitude, and occasionally we have public servants who live up to it; but Persia has no such standard and no such men, and the absence of such a standard makes public officers there care far less to assume the appearance of virtue than is the case in the United States. In consequence, there is a certain *amour propre* with us which is not found there, and the absence of which causes men there to conduct themselves sometimes in a manner well-nigh impossible among the European races, where even a scoundrel prates of honor. This result, it must be added, springs also from the peculiarities of the Oriental character, and the fact that men who are taught to consider themselves the slaves of an absolute monarch rather than free citizens are rarely moved by a high sense of honor. We find this, to a degree, exemplified also in Russia. Although nominally Europeans and Christians,



the subjects of the White Czar, even in the highest ranks, show little of that delicate chivalry which distinguishes the gentleman in other European countries, and from the monarch to the serf are capable of acts which would be impossible elsewhere in Christendom. Being in fact neither Europeans nor Asiatics, and slaves of an arbitrary monarch, they possess neither the chivalry of Europe nor the refined qualities which enable a Persian gentleman partially to redeem the absence of chivalrous traits in his own character.

I can best illustrate the radical differences between the Oriental and the Occidental by two or three typical incidents. The *Mehmendâr*, or entertainer of the guests of the Shah, who received me on arriving in Persia, and accompanied me to the capital, was a man of agreeable disposition. He had lived many years in Europe; he spoke French with facility, and his manners were easy and graceful. On brief acquaintance, one would have set him down as a gentleman comparing favorably with gentlemen and men of affairs in Europe; and it was easy to believe that he would resent any attempt to present him with a trifling gift as a recompense for the services he rendered officially for his Government, and for which he had, presumably, been compensated by the Shah. This would have been the conclusion reached by one unacquainted with oriental character; but my experience in the East led me to think otherwise. I felt that it would be safer to venture to offer him an official tip than to risk offending him by showing too much delicacy in the matter. On arriving at Teherân, I therefore presented him with a new saddle and bridle I had brought with me. He showed not the slightest hesitation at the proposal of such a present, but returned the saddle after inspection, on the plea that it was shopworn, and that out of respect to me he would prefer not to show to his friends a gift that seemed to be unworthy of a Minister of the United States. As the saddle was

entirely new and in perfectly good condition, I saw at once that his object was to receive a more valuable present, possibly in the shape of money. I therefore sent the saddle back to him with a message that I did not need instructions as to what kind of a present I should give, and that he ought to be thankful that I had remembered him at all. A European gentleman, who might have been Consul for ten years, and held the rank of General and Receiver of the Royal Guests, to whom such a message should be sent, would probably reply with a challenge; but I had not mistaken the oriental character. The saddle was accepted with a profusion of thanks.

A similar case was that of a prominent official at Tabreez. He had an altercation with an English gentleman, and repeatedly called the other a liar to his face. The Englishman, who seemed not to be acquainted with oriental character, sent him a note demanding either an apology or that he should accept a challenge to fight. The Persian was not a coward, — few Persians are poltroons, — but the idea of risking his life because he had called another man a liar seemed to him preposterous, as it would to some Europeans and Americans as well, who do not accept the absurdities of the duellist's code.

"I fight!" said he; "what shall I fight for? I only called him a liar, and now he wants me to fight him; never was anything more absurd?"

"Well," said the gentleman who took the note to him, "he says you will have to fight him; there is no way of getting out of it. It will never do to call an English gentleman a liar."

"But I say I won't fight," replied the other.

"Then you must apologize."

"Apologize! what does he mean by apologizing?"

"Why, take it all back, and say that you are sorry that you called him a liar, — that is what it means."

"Is that all?" replied the Persian. "Of course I'll apologize; I'll say whatever he wishes me to say. I lied when I called him a liar. I am a liar, the son of a liar, and the grandson of liars. What more does he want me to say?"

To return to the subject of service in Persia. Aside from the faults inherent in the character of its servants, the system is attended with another great abuse, which results in serious injury to the country. Xenophon, describing in a passage in the "Anabasis" the visit of a Persian dignitary to the Greek camp, says that "he came attended by many servants, as is the custom with Persians." This custom continues with scarcely any abatement to the present day. This is partly a result of the fact that labor is cheap; partly, also, because few oriental servants are willing to do more than one thing, which may be caused perhaps by the lassitude of a steady warm climate; but it is also doubtless due very largely to that love of ostentation common to the Oriental. Many of the household servants of a Persian gentleman are retained purely for the purpose of adding dignity to his position, and to accompany him when he goes abroad. This class of servants receive no wages from him; but as his retainers they and their families are entitled to his protection, which in a country constituted like Persia is a matter of prime importance. They pick up a livelihood by eating at the open table which every Persian gentleman of rank maintains, where they and every passing mendicant and *santon* may at any hour have a plain dish of mutton and pillau of rice. These unsalaried retainers also pick up a precarious and not always honest living out of the vails or extortions or commissions constantly occurring in an establishment of this description.

Not to speak of the thousands of domestics connected with the royal household or the establishment of the Princes, we find that the Sedr Azêm, or Premier, — the greatest subject in the kingdom, — keeps no less than three thousand men in his employ.

Of these, many have been in his family from childhood. Numerous other Persian dignitaries maintain from fifty to two hundred servants. While it is true that many of these domestics are employed in caring for the extensive plantations of these gentlemen, by far the larger number are non-producers. It requires little reflection to perceive that a nation having only nine millions of people must suffer very seriously, especially when it is in a state of decadence, by such a steady drain on its most valuable resources. This army of servants absorbs the wealth of the country and produces nothing in return.

Slavery no longer exists in Persia; it was abolished some years ago through the influence of the foreign Legations, following the visits of the Shah to Europe. The purchase of women for the harems probably continues to a certain extent, but this is a form of slavery not reached by foreign interposition; and while the system of polygamy continues to be so often attended by such decided advantages in promoting a woman from a low condition to one where she practically becomes the wife of a man of wealth, it is hardly worth while to consider its victims as objects of pity. Most of the peasantry or inhabitants of the villages, according to long-established custom, are serfs, or villeins, attached to the village where they are born, and unable to travel about the country without the permission of the lord of the village. This is the law; but practically it ceased to have any effect long ago, and there are few countries where the lower classes are more at liberty than in Persia to go where they please. Combined with this freedom of movement, great liberty of thought and speech is universal. So long as a Persian, be he noble or peasant, does not openly attack the authority of his superiors or his sovereign, he can have unbridled use of his tongue; and one is often surprised at the license used in speaking of the Government, the clergy, and the established religion. Not that the present reigning Shah is unpopular, quite





INDOOR COSTUME OF PERSIAN WOMEN.



the reverse; but people of active temperament and intellect require vent of some sort, and if they cannot do this in talking, they are all the more likely to conspire against the powers that be.

The peasant class of Persia are doubtless as ignorant as peasantry in other parts of the world, but they are generally a very handsome race, the women probably not being surpassed in this respect by women of their class anywhere. Of this I can speak from personal observation, because they take much less care to conceal their faces than their sisters who live in the city; and one who rides about the villages may often see a pair of black eyes peeping over the hedge, shooting Parthian arrows before the mantle is drawn over them. Notwithstanding their ignorance, the Persian peasantry have a native vivacity and intelligence that elevate them above their class in many other countries. They have a decided taste for poetry, and often fly the heat of midday and find shelter under the great *chenârs* in the centre of the village, where they listen to recitations from the Odes of Hafiz or the *Shah Namêh* of Firdôüsee. They pay their rent and taxes in kind. They are thrifty and reasonably industrious. If they do not work as many hours in the day as laborers elsewhere, it is due in part to the heat, and in part to the fact that the soil, wherever watered, is so rich that it easily produces enough to meet the humble wants of the poor peasant. To raise more than that would be simply to render him the victim of extortion; but supposing there were no extortion, it would still be useless to raise more than is required in most parts of the country, because of the absence of means to export the surplus.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### NASR-ED-DEEN SHAH AND THE ROYAL FAMILY.

FOR a sovereign to sit on the throne founded by Shah Jemsheed in pre-historic ages, strengthened by Cyrus and Darius, and made glorious in turn by Anurshirwân and Shah Abbass after intervals respectively of eight hundred and a thousand years, is of itself a rare and notable event. It is not less remarkable if it can be said of such a monarch that he is not unworthy of his great predecessors.

Nasr-ed-Deen Shah, the reigning sovereign of Persia, succeeded to the throne in 1848, and during his long reign has maintained a dignified character and shown a disposition to place his country in the line of progress of the age. He possesses a vigorous and cultivated mind, and, in spite of the difficulties of his position and the errors of early education, shows a humane intention of rising above the sanguinary tendencies which have marked the reigns of most oriental monarchs. He is the fourth of the Khajâr dynasty, which was founded one hundred years ago by Shah Agâ Mohamed Khan, a man of very great military and administrative ability, who succeeded in crushing three rivals to the throne of Persia, including the lion-hearted Lootf Aleé Khan, the nephew of the great and good Kereem Khan the Zend, whose capital was Shirâz. But Shah Agâ Mohamed Khan had suffered mutilation in youth, which tended to exasperate an already cruel disposition, and he tarnished the glory of his reign by leaving the record of being one of the most atrocious monsters in



history. It is doubtless true that after the capture of Kerman he caused the eyes of many thousands of the unfortunate inhabitants to be brought to him on a salver. This story has been told of the present monarch, but it is pleasant to be able to state that no such fearful horror has marked his reign. The political sagacity and military genius of Shah Agâ Mohamed Khan enabled him to cope successfully with the unscrupulous designs of Russia against the integrity of Persia. Were he living now, her chances of averting the insidious inroads of that power would probably be considerably improved.

The reign of Nasr-ed-Deen Shah, notwithstanding his humane disposition, has been marred by a number of painful incidents that doubtless he now regrets as much as any one. In the early part of his reign he was induced to banish from power Mirza Taghy, the Prime Minister, who was married to the sister of the Shah. He was a man of intelligence, and devoted to introducing reforms tending to diminish the corruption which for many ages has been the bane of every department of the Persian Government. Fear and jealousy were aroused alike, and the Shah, then a mere youth, was induced by the enemies of the great Minister to depose him from office. Dreading the worst, the wife of Mirza Taghy, who was tenderly attached to him, exercised the greatest watchfulness. But in vain; for the fatal messenger from the Shah at length came, and by treachery succeeded in strangling one of the few great and good men of modern Persia. Too late the Shah discovered his error; and it is said he has ever since lamented the murder of his brother-in-law, whose fall was the greatest misfortune the kingdom has suffered in the present reign. It may be that it is to the remorse caused by his action in this case that Nasr-ed-Deen Shah has since that time permitted so many of those in power to go unpunished who really merit the severest penalties for their corruption and treasonable dealings with Russia. While the

Government of Persia continues to be an absolute despotism, there are but two methods open for preserving law and order, — hope and fear; hope of emolument and reward, fear of swift and condign punishment. This must be and is a strong palliation for many of the bloody and arbitrary acts of oriental sovereigns which a larger freedom and a representative government would render unnecessary.

The last important case in which Nasr-ed-Deen Shah displayed in a thoroughly oriental style the tremendous power of an Eastern king was shortly before his last visit to Europe. He had just left the palace to visit the shrine of Shah Abdûl Azeem in his carriage. Through the corruption of the paymasters of the army the garrison had not been paid for some time, and the troops were actually in want. According to oriental usage, a number of them seized the present occasion to gain the personal attention of their sovereign to a consideration of their grievances by presenting a petition to him, and the petitioners crowded around the royal equipage to catch the eye of the Shah. The delinquent paymasters interfered, dreading detection; and a tumult ensued, during which a few stones were thrown, several striking the royal carriage. Although it does not appear that the stones were thrown by the soldiers, or that there was any organized plan in any way to assault the Shah, he was naturally much agitated, doubtless remembering the attack made on his life in the early part of his reign by the Babees, at which time he was dangerously wounded. He returned to the palace at once, and ordered the soldiers who had been arrested during the *mêlée* to be brought before him. His indignation was fanned by a categorical statement that these culprits represented another defined conspiracy of the Babees, — a story which was in all probability invented by the men who had been the cause of the riot through their iniquitous treatment of the troops.

An eye-witness has described to me the terrible drama which



NASR-ED-DEEN SHAH.





followed. The vast outer court of the Ark, or palace, was packed with attendants and eager throngs of the populace. My informant had been to the Foreign Office, and anxiously strove to avoid the scene which he knew was to be enacted. But he was thrust back by the *ferashes* and forced to remain on the steps of the Foreign Office, an unwilling witness of what followed. The *Sedr Azem*, or Prime Minister, was standing near to him trembling with excitement and dread, but powerless to interfere. Perhaps his conscience whispered to him a complicity with the iniquity which had brought about this crisis. On the portico opposite stood the Shah alone, leaning with outstretched arm against a pillar and violently twitching his long mustachios. He was ignorant of the true facts of the case, and only perceived that his life had been endangered by the riot; and what was more, that the majesty of the throne of Persia had been outraged. Twelve soldiers, tightly bound and ashen-hued, stood before him awaiting their doom. Gazing on his victims with a stern, fierce countenance, the Shah, after a few terrible moments of suspense and without having examined or questioned them, gave the fatal decree with a sudden gesture of his hand. Instantly the executioners threw the cords around the necks of the twelve men, and strangled them before the Shah. One poor youth was so robust that the executioner could only extinguish life by stamping on his breast.

Several days after this event Nasr-ed-Deen Shah started on his second journey to Europe. But the news of this arbitrary judgment preceded him, without a statement of the circumstances which undoubtedly palliated the deed. In the reception accorded him at various courts he was made to feel in many ways the indignation of Christendom at such a display of the so-called barbarism of other ages: the despots of Europe have more refined methods of increasing the burdens and miseries of their subjects. At any rate, the effect of this hypocritical indignation

was salutary on the character of Nasr-ed-Deen Shah, who is naturally of a humane temperament, and there is no question that it has proved an important factor in leading educated Persians to respect the good opinion of Christendom, which thus becomes indirectly an influence in the Mahometan dominions of the Shah.

It is difficult, when conversing with some of the courteous gentlemen of the Persian Court and the royal family, to realize what arbitrary and sometimes needlessly brutal deeds they have perpetrated, and with what cold-blooded indifference they have administered torture and death. Judging from what I have seen of the Khajâr tribe, to which the present dynasty belongs, I am inclined to think they have more of the stolidity and deliberate ruthlessness of the Turks than other Persians of similar rank at the present time, although in past ages it must be admitted there was little difference between the oriental races on the point of cruelty. At all events, the manners of all the Khajârs I have talked with, from the Shah down, are more vigorous, bluff, outspoken, and honest than those of the polished, smooth, but insincere gentlemen of the pure Persian race. The difference, although in less degree, is not unlike that existing between typical Englishmen and Frenchmen. In point of fact the Khajâr is a Turanian, or Turk, pure and simple, — but in religion a Sheah, and because of long identification with Persian sway a Persian in feeling. In aspect the Khajârs are generally less crafty than other Persians; their features are full, bluff, and hearty, the eye radiant with *bonhomie*, although sometimes cold, sensual, and cruel.

The Firmâ Firmâ, one of the uncles of the Shah, is one of the handsomest men of a Court abounding in good looks. He is seventy years of age, his well-trimmed beard is snow-white and his mustache is black. His eye is keen and clear as an eagle's, his carriage is erect, and his manner courteous and stately to the

last degree. He has a taste for letters, and has, among other works, published a vocabulary in Persian and English and a geography of the world. His brother, the Moatamêh-ed-Doûlêh, is also a man of stately presence, although bent with age. When he was viceroy at Shirâz he established a lasting renown for the character of his administration. He found southern Persia swarming with brigands, and corruption universal; but during his rule the taxes were collected with regularity and rendered with reasonable honesty; robbers were exterminated from the district, and order reigned to a degree unusual in Persia since the days when Kereem Khan the Zend maintained a just but vigorous sway at Shirâz. But the Moatamêh-ed-Doûlêh ruled with an iron rod. Fear was his weapon. A thousand men were slaughtered before his eyes. Many of these victims, even though criminal, scarcely deserved death; but the viceroy knew the people he had to deal with, and it must be admitted that this stern ruler showed little pity in his manner of administering justice. He seemed to take pleasure in interrogating his victims, much as a cat plays with a mouse before devouring it; when weary of the sport he would say, "Well, I will put an end to your troubles." As these fatal words were pronounced, the executioner advanced and did his work.

On reflecting upon the cruelty of men possessed of unlimited power and brought up amid the associations of absolute despotism, I am sometimes inclined to think a measure of charity should be extended towards such rulers even when they are brought up as Christians, like the Czar of Russia. It is impossible to believe that all the Persian rulers I have seen who have been guilty of deeds of blood are wholly depraved. The amiability of their manner, the acts of courtesy and kindness they often display, cannot proceed from a nature entirely void of goodness. But the necessity of acting with quick decision in a despotic government, and the power to do so familiarize the mind to harshness



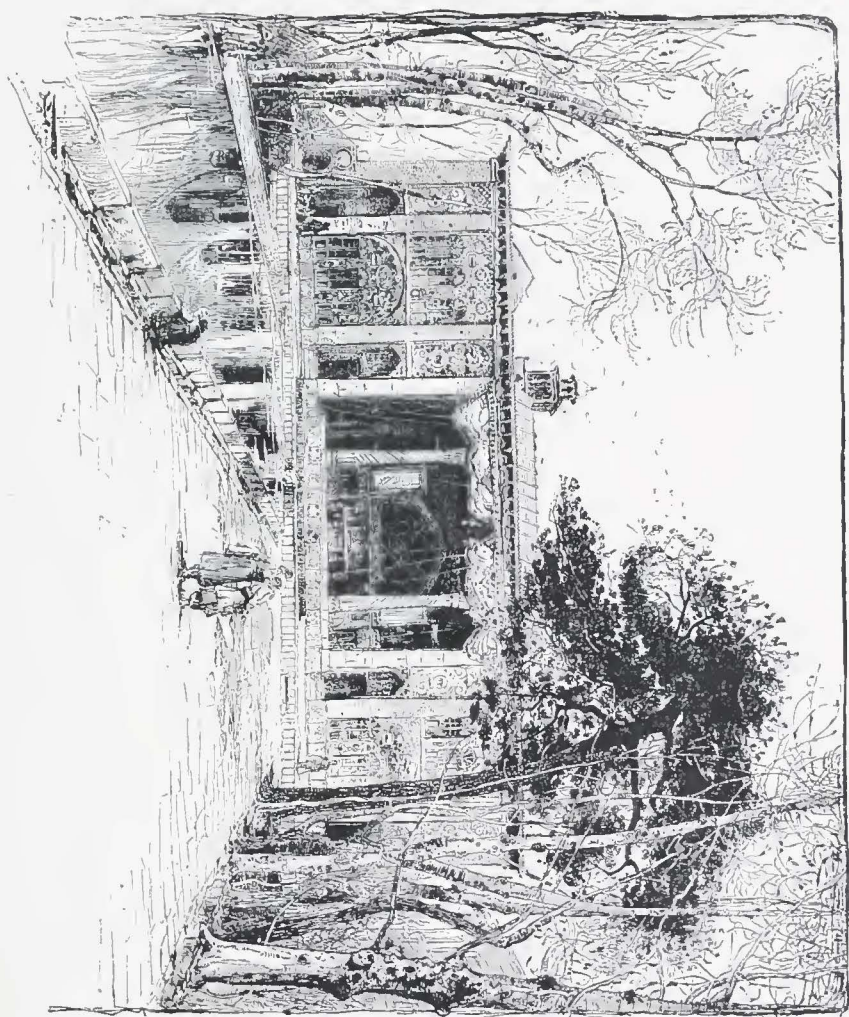
and blunt the sympathies; while it is also true that men, and even women, who have always moved in the upper ranks fail from that very fact to realize that the classes below them are of the same blood and nerves as themselves, and no less capable of suffering. Such I imagine to be the case with the Moatamêh-ed-Doülêh, who is a man of cultured tastes, the most perfect manners, and wide intelligence.

And the same palliating circumstances may be alleged for the Izz-ed-Doülêh, brother of the Shah, and Governor of Hamadân while I was in Persia. He is a small, slightly built, boyish-looking man. He wears a closely-cropped, iron-gray mustache; his general manner is very quiet, not to say diffident, suggesting a character mild and retiring were it not for the small, steel-colored, lizard-like eyes, darting restless, furtive glances. These eyes betray a nature quite opposite to what one might infer on a first interview. The Prince is a man of gentlemanly tastes and studious habits; he reads the literature of America as well as of Europe, and is familiar with French and English. He converses with some intelligence, and in such a tone as to lead to the conclusion that he is one of the most enlightened and least fanatical men in Persia. And yet this seemingly inoffensive gentleman, when he was Governor at Kermanshah, actually caused seventeen men to be strangled in his presence. As Governor of Hamadân, he has also given the United States Legation more trouble than any other Persian official. Friendly enough during the interchange of visits, and earnestly disavowing, when approached on the subject, any intention of ordering or permitting the outrages committed against the United States citizens in Hamadân, one needed to know him long and well before he could believe what a capacity for evil dwells in the character of this Prince.

Nevertheless, I am still inclined to think that much of the wrong-doing in his administration resulted directly from the



PAVILION WHERE THE SHAH GIVES AN AUDIENCE AT NO ROOZ.





fact, that he had been taught to consider all who were below him in station to be too insignificant to have rights which require to be respected by a Prince of blood royal, rather than from a wanton love of oppression and cruelty. His son, the so-called Little Prince, who resided at Hamadân and acted as deputy-governor, was greatly under the influence of his tutor, a corrupt and crafty fanatic named Mirza Achmêt, one of the greatest knaves in the country. The Little Prince voiced the sentiments which prevail among Asiatic despots towards the classes below them, when he said to the United States dragoon, who by my instructions had gone to Hamadân to protect our citizens there, "Why does your Government take so much trouble for these Americans of Hamadân? They are only three or four in number, and simple people; why make such a fuss about what you call their rights?"

But while so much can be said to extenuate some of the arbitrary deeds of Nasr-ed-Deen Shah and his governors and princes, who are far less sanguinary than their predecessors, or than many European rulers of two or three generations ago, so much cannot be conceded in favor of the Zil-î-Sultân, Massood Mirzâ, the oldest son of the Shah, who is the governor of the great central provinces of Persia, with his capital at Ispahân. His Royal Highness is a thick-set man of medium height, and about thirty-five years of age. His manner indicates immense force of character. Never has any one impressed me more deeply with the air of one born to command. But with all its force, his face has in it an unmistakable suggestion of craftiness, and the events of his life have abundantly proved alike his abilities and his cunning.<sup>1</sup> He told me that he had been a ruler since his tenth year. Doubtless, at first a man of experience was at his elbow to direct him. As may be imagined, the Prince is goaded by an intense ambition, which is not checked by the fact

<sup>1</sup> A likeness of the Zil-î-Sultân is to be found on page 140.

that according to the laws of Persia, although he is the eldest son and therefore the natural heir to the throne, that right has been vested in the second son of the Shah, who is Governor of Azerbâijân. This is due to the fact that the mother of the latter was of high birth and royal blood, while the mother of the Zil-î-Sultân is of plebeian origin. This is particularly unfortunate, because this Prince is not of a temper to accept such an abrogation of his natural rights, and it is to be feared that when the succession comes to his brother it will be contested by the ambitious and astute Prince-Governor of Fars. He has accumulated enormous wealth, and although forbidden to maintain a separate army or to import arms, has contrived to get control of the contingent of his provinces. They are armed and uniformed like the German army, and in drill-practice form the finest portion of the present military force of Persia. The Prince has great influence with his royal father, who admires the abilities of the son and probably sympathizes in secret with his aspirations, and also with his decided friendship for the English and his aversion towards Russia. Were the Zil-î-Sultân on the throne, there can be little question that he would bring matters to a crisis with Russia by forcing her to show her hand, and either to stop her steady and insidious encroachments or openly to attack Persia and settle the question once for all.

But the Zil-i-Sultân, while resembling Shah Agâ Mohamed Khan, the founder of the dynasty, in administrative ability, unfortunately resembles also too many oriental despots of former ages in his indifference to suffering and bloodshed. I grant the necessity in such a government as that of Persia of swift and stern penalties, but that is quite another thing from cold-blooded and malignant cruelty. The murder of the great chief of the Bachtiarees when an invited guest at the palace of the Zil-î-Sultân, although a gross breach of the laws of hospitality, may be palliated on the ground of supposed necessity. But what



can be said about the murder of the wealthy merchant of Ispahân? According to the story related to me, the unfortunate man had been mulcted in a large sum by the Prince, far in excess of the just taxes. The Prince declined to restore the spoil, and the merchant rashly repaired to Teherân and laid a petition for redress before the Shah. His Majesty proved gracious, and gave his injured subject a royal order to present to the Zil-î-Sultân, enjoining him to make restitution and to be more careful in respecting the rights of the subjects of the Shah.

Full of hope, the poor merchant travelled back to Ispahân and presented himself before the Prince with the royal mandate. Having read the decree, the Prince looked keenly at the man for a moment, who, notwithstanding that dangerous look, never doubted that he was now to have his property restored. But instead of doing this the Prince sarcastically exclaimed: "Ha! so you thought to frighten your Prince by reporting me to the Shah? You are indeed a brave man! I little thought you a man of such courage. So brave a man as you must, indeed, have a brave heart, — a large heart! I must see your heart and learn courage from you!" Then in a louder tone the Prince cried to his servants, "Take out his heart!" The menials seized the thunder-stricken merchant, cut him open on the spot, and tearing out his heart presented it on a dish to the Prince.

I was, of course, greatly shocked when the story of this outrage was brought to me, and recollected that I had repeatedly enjoyed agreeable and humorous conversation with this very Prince. But subsequent reflection leads me to be less severe in my judgment of the Prince. Aside from the fact that it may have been necessary to show his subjects his own authority, it cannot be questioned that he acted in bad taste in selecting such a method for venting his spite. It is always "bad form," to say the least, for the strong to exercise too much overt force in dealing with the weak; and, besides, physical punishment is now

going out of fashion. To inflict mental pain is more refined; and the blame for inflicting it can be more easily shifted from the shoulders of the one who causes it, and is also more likely than vulgar physical penalties to arouse the humor rather than the sympathy of the community, which is exactly what the inflieter should seek. The Zil-i-Sultân would have received quite as exquisite satisfaction himself, and he would have escaped the condemnation of public opinion, and quite likely given pleasure to many of those who are diverted by the sufferings of others, if he had maintained a newspaper as an organ. In this periodical he could have exquisitely tortured the merchant by dark insinuations against his character, by suggesting the infidelity of his wife, and in other ways blackening his social and business standing and holding up his quivering heart for the public to gloat on, and then declining to publish his denial of the charges, or publishing it with the accompaniment of an additional editorial stab intended as a *coup de grâce*. The punishment thus inflicted would have been more severe than the method followed by the Prince, because a more lasting torture; and it would have the further advantage of being approved by the tyrants of the present age. Human nature is little better now than formerly; each epoch has its special forms of malignity and tyranny. In some lands and ages it is the rack and the sword; in others, the human tongue and the press.

The second son of the Shah, his Royal Highness Musaffâr-ed-Deen Mirzâ, Valiâh-ed-Doûlêt-i-Irân, the heir-apparent of Persia, is *ex officio* governor of the very important province of Azerbaïjân and the adjacent northwestern districts bordering on the Russian frontier. It has not been my pleasure to have a personal acquaintance with his Highness, as he remained at Tabreez during my entire stay in Persia. But from all I have heard, I am inclined to be favorably impressed with his character. He undoubtedly possesses good powers of administration,

and is urbane in manner and of humane disposition. He is reputed by some to be intellectually weak : but from what official relations I have had with him and other sources of information, I am quite sure that if he gives such an impression it is done with a far-seeing purpose. He is also reputed to be a fanatic, and at the same time to favor the pretensions of Russia. It would naturally be his policy to appear to do both ; but it is impossible to believe that he can be sincere, at least in the latter respect. To arouse the opposition of the Mahometan hierarchy of Persia by indifference to their power would be simply to add to the difficulties of a succession that is sure to be contested. To appear hostile to Russia would also



MUSAFFÂR-ED-DEEN MIRZÂ, CROWN PRINCE  
OF PERSIA.

make her the friend of one of the other Princes ; while by making secret concessions to her he secures her assistance to place him securely on the throne. But while it would be perhaps too much to ask of Asiatic human nature to decline the offers of a powerful



ally who would prove a dangerous foe if rejected, it is impossible to imagine that his Royal Highness should feel aught but stern opposition towards a power whose ambition and well-known wiles are ever menacing the existence of an empire majestic even in old age, and having abundant right to continue independent for ages to come.

His Royal Highness, the Naïb-e-Sultânêh, Kamrân Mirzâ, is the third son of the Shah. He lives at Teherân, and as Minister of War and Administrator of Teherân is in constant communication with his Majesty. Having the army and the capital in his hands, he might prove a very dangerous competitor to his two brothers if they were left to settle the succession unaided by European bayonets and gold, or if he were a man of great force of character or deep designs. But his Highness, who is a young man of great amiability, handsome in person and courteous in manners and skilled in giving elegant entertainments, conveys the impression of one who does not care to struggle with the inevitable, but prefers rather to accept it gracefully. Still, one cannot confidently affirm that he and his councillors may not have the address to conceal ulterior plans. There is no love between the three Princes. They tell a story that when the Zil-i-Sultân was in Teherân he was invited to a breakfast by his brother, the Naïb-e-Sultânêh. The service was, of course, of princely elegance; but the haughty elder brother disdainfully declared that it was not his wont to eat off aught but silver and gold, and before touching the breakfast he ordered his servants to bring his own service from his palace. The difference in age and rank obliged the younger brother and host to submit to the indignity.

It is no small testimony to the tact and ability of Nasr-ed-Deen Shah that he has been able to maintain the peace between his three sons, and to occupy the throne so long without serious disturbances, and while holding the reins of government with



firm but merciful hand has continued to the present time to preserve the respect and affection of his people. It is his habit to rise early in the morning, soon after daybreak, whether in the country or at the capital. After saying his prayers, he gives audience to his Ministers; they make their reports, and receive an expression of the royal will concerning the conduct of questions brought to his attention. Of course, on special occasions the Ministers have access to his Majesty at other hours of the day for the consideration of business; this often occurs towards evening. The present Shah gives minute attention to the affairs of state, directing even the details, more than do many sovereigns. This is by some regarded as unnecessary and perhaps detrimental to a broad treatment of state matters, while it also results injuriously in reducing the responsibility and therefore the usefulness of the heads of departments. But this has been more or less the habit of most Eastern sovereigns, and in the present case may be carried to an extreme because of the lack of confidence in the ability or integrity of those charged with the direction of affairs next to the Shah. As one result of this form of administration, it is far more common at the court of Persia than at European courts for diplomatic questions of importance to be referred to his Majesty in person by the Ministers representing foreign powers at his court. If it were possible to inaugurate such a system at the semi-Asiatic court of St. Petersburg, diplomatic questions with Russia would be more often settled satisfactorily, with less dissimulation and with results less uniformly in favor of that astute power.

Notwithstanding his close attention to affairs of state, Nasr-ed-Deen Shah finds leisure for relaxation and the cultivation of his tastes, which incline both towards literature and art. He speaks and reads French with considerable fluency. The leading foreign periodicals are read to him; he gives directions concerning the editing of the official gazettes, and keeps a daily journal

or record of events or objects that attract his attention. Besides the narratives of his journeys to Europe, he has published two illustrated volumes descriptive of journeys taken in Persia. He is also a poet, and to his other accomplishments adds a taste for drawing, some of his sketches being very clever. I remember on the occasion of an official interview with the late Minister of Foreign Affairs, that a royal rescript was brought to the Minister. When it was handed to him on a silver salver by the colored attendant, he arose and took it with both hands and touched it to his bowed forehead before opening it, saying to those around, who likewise arose, "A dispatch from our lord and sovereign, the Shah-in-Shah." After reading the document, the Minister pointed out to me a pen-and-ink sketch which his Majesty had drawn around the seal of the envelope with his own hand. "See," said the Minister to me; "this sketch by the Shah-in-Shah himself shows that his Majesty is in happy disposition to-day, and feels graciously towards me his slave."

In hours of leisure the Shah is fond of conversation, and devotes part of his evening to social relations with his favorite courtiers. His genial nature is shown by a remark he made to a cultivated gentleman of Teherân, whose elegant country-seat he was honoring with an afternoon visit. Turning to his host, as they were strolling through the grounds, his Majesty remarked, "How much I regret, when in the society of a gentleman so polished and intelligent, that I cannot lay aside for a while the burden of royal etiquette and converse with you with the freedom I should like!" But there is one evil resulting from these social qualities of Nasr-ed-Deen Shah,—he is liable to be unduly influenced by the unprincipled men who are able to amuse him in his hours of leisure. With the best intentions in the world, his administration is marred and the weal of the empire weakened at a very critical period by the influence at court of such unprincipled, fanatical, and reactionary characters

as the Emin Sultanêh, or such brilliant but unscrupulous and designing men as the Emîn Sultân, his cousin: the first represents the organized opposition to progress, and the second is one of a number of men in high authority who would suck the very life-blood of their country, if they could thereby gain wealth to lavish on costly palaces and pleasure-grounds. *Après nous le déluge* is the motto of too many in authority in Persia, and hence the greatest danger to which that country is now exposed; for, not satisfied to drain the revenues of their fatherland, they are also ready for northern gold to thwart in secret the best progressive plans of their sovereign. But Persia, alas! is not the only country that harbors such vipers in her bosom.

That his Majesty is conscious of the iniquity which characterizes many of his *entourage*, while seeing the difficulty of finding better men to fill their places, is evident in various ways. A good story is told of him, apropos of this fact, the truth of which I have no reason to question. On a certain summer afternoon, not so long ago, the Shah was reclining in a pavilion at his royal seat of Sultana-t-abâd. His courtiers were seated below him, engaged in a familiar conversation with their sovereign. In the course of the conversation the Shah remarked, "Why is it that Anurshirwân was called the Just? Am I not also just?" No one dared to reply: it was a severe question, unfair perhaps to put to them. Again the Shah inquired, "Can no one of all your number answer the King?" But silence reigned until it became oppressive, not to say perilous. At length the Hekîm-ul-Mamolêk, taking his life as it were in his hands, hesitatingly replied, —

"As I am your sacrifice, O King of kings, Anurshirwân was called the Just because he was just."

"And is not Nasr-ed-Deen Shah also just?" demanded the King with a frown.

But no reply came, except that the Hekîm-ul-Mamolêk shrugged his shoulders and opened the palms of his hands and lifted his eyebrows with a deprecating gesture. Then in wrath the Shah responded, —

“O ye unregenerate sons of burnt fathers! I know well that if Anurshirwân had been surrounded by a corrupt and disreputable *canaille* like you, he never could have obtained the title of Just.”

They all replied: “As we are your sacrifice, the Asylum of the Universe hath uttered the truth.”

It will be noticed that in the above conversation the Shah speaks of himself in the third person. This is according to usage in Persia, — contrary to that of European sovereigns, who generally use the first person plural.

Nasr-ed-Deen Shah, like many of his predecessors, is a great sportsman. It is probable that to his frequent resort to the chase he owes the good health which must have been severely threatened by so many years of government, as well as by the enjoyment of the peculiar domestic privileges of Eastern sovereigns. The monarchs of Persia were great hunters of old. The word “Paradise,” derived from the Sanskrit *Paradeso*, was first applied to the immense hunting-grounds reserved for Persian kings. Several, like Bahrâm, who lost his life in a morass while hunting the wild ass, have been noted for their achievements in the chase. In former ages it was the custom to hang out a crimson banner from a lofty tower in the centre of the capital when the monarch of Persia was about to start on a hunting expedition. But it is now the custom to fire a cannon at sunrise of the day on which his Majesty proposes to issue forth to the hunting-grounds, to pursue the tiger, the ibex, or the gazelle. Sometimes he merely goes for a day or two, but frequently these excursions last a week. An immense train of camels and sumpter mules precedes the royal cortège, bearing



the magnificent crimson tents and other paraphernalia essential to a royal excursion.<sup>1</sup> On these occasions, the Shah is also accompanied by an imposing body of attendants and several squadrons of cavalry. When he takes his long summer trips to a distance from the capital, the escort is much larger, and his favorite wives accompany him. During the journey to Meshêd three years ago, the royal train consisted of upwards of twenty thousand people, of whom six thousand were soldiers. There is one march across the desert of Khorassân where for two long stages there is no water, and the entire train was obliged to make this double stage without stopping. It was very trying, although done in the night.

One of the favorite resorts of the Shah is Sheristanêk, high up in the Elburz Mountains, north of Teherân. His Majesty has caused an elegant pavilion to be constructed there, nestling in a hollow of the mountains at an altitude of ten thousand feet. But the place is only reached with considerable difficulty, especially with ladies carried on litters. It is quite common for men and horses to be killed on some of these royal excursions to Sheristanêk. In that neighborhood the scenery, I have been told, is of extraordinary sublimity and beauty.

Nasr-ed-Deen Shah has the reputation of being a daring sportsman, who does not flinch before the panther and the tiger. A good story is told of an incident which happened on one of these excursions. A number of courtiers were grouped around the Shah, on the alert for game, when an immense tiger suddenly appeared uninvited upon the scene. All the courtiers fled panic-stricken except the Emin Doûlêh,

<sup>1</sup> The great use made of tents for ages in a country like Persia has given the Persian artisans great skill in the making of these canvas houses, which are often of large size, including several large apartments. Those of the Shah and his courtiers are lined with embroidered cashmere. It is common to use for linings a cloth stamped with picturesque designs representing hunting-scenes decoratively treated. Such tents are called "kalem-kâr." The external color is generally a dark blue, crimson being reserved for the Shah alone.

who remained by the Shah, who stood his ground, and with an unerring shot pierced the vitals of the tiger. After the danger was over and the courtiers came forth from their hiding-place, his Majesty good-naturedly rallied them on the cowardice which led them to desert their sovereign in a moment of peril; and he added, "Look at my good servant, the Emin Doülêh, who alone remained at his sovereign's side." But the Emin Doülêh, a sincere yet shrewd courtier, seeing that he would sooner or later feel the jealousy of his fellow-courtiers for the royal praise, replied: "As I am your sacrifice, O King of kings, I did not run away because I was so collapsed with fear that my knees declined to do their duty."

On these excursions his Majesty likes to dispense, so far as possible, with the burdensome etiquette of court life; and this is also now the tendency when he is at the capital. One of the Shah's favorite amusements is to have the Ministers or upper stewards of the royal household prepare his dinner for him. I have seen a photograph of a group of these high dignitaries engaged under a tent assorting the vegetables,—one hulling the beans, another preparing the potatoes!

But while in these excursions the Shah can find some freedom from a ceremonial which no habit can always make tolerable, he cannot well dispense with it altogether without compromising his dignity as well as power. There is, however, a very marked difference between the state ceremonies now required at Teherân and those which obtained at the court of Shah Abbass. While the ceremonial system yet observed there is still exceedingly irksome, a tendency exists to make it less humiliating to the high subjects of his Majesty, and more acceptable to the diplomatic representatives of foreign Powers. In no case is any Minister, whether Persian or foreign, obliged to abase himself in the manner reported in the press of the United States. The most that is required of them is to leave their outer shoes at the

door; and even this is not rigorously enforced, although it forms part of an article of the famous treaty of *Turkomanetchai*, drawn up between Persia and Russia. On entering the audience-room the Shah is saluted with a bow, which is repeated on arriving at the spot indicated by him for the audience. In an audience to a foreign diplomat, his Majesty stands, advancing or retiring and familiarly conversing, precisely as two gentlemen might converse, the chief point being that he always opens and closes the conversation. Every one also remains covered, according to oriental custom.

The master of ceremonies and other dignitaries who attend the diplomatic corps in proceeding to a royal audience wear superb togas of embroidered cashmere, and on reaching the gateway of the inner garden of the palace they exchange their usual black tiaras for white turbans, which are held against their coming by attendants in waiting. The diplomatic corps, when proceeding to a royal audience, go in carriages with a number of mounted outriders, the size of this cortége being dependent on the allowance granted by their respective Governments. On entering the enclosure of the Ark, the carriage is met by ten of the royal heralds in scarlet livery, who escort the Minister to the gate of the palace. On arriving there, the Minister proceeds to the reception-room of the Foreign Office, where he is received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and other prominent dignitaries, resplendent in robes of office blazing with decorations. Refreshments are served, and a pleasant informal chat succeeds, until it is announced that his Majesty is waiting. The Minister of Foreign Affairs immediately repairs by a private passage to the presence of the sovereign, and is seen standing a little below on the right of the Shah when the diplomatic corps enter the audience-hall by way of the gardens, and approach the "Asylum of the Universe."

The most imposing and remarkable ceremony of the year is

that which takes place at the No Rooz, or the opening of the Persian new year. The Persians, being now Mahometans, are reluctant to admit that this anniversary is continued from the customs of the Fire Worshippers, and allege that the No Rooz is really to celebrate the birth of the mother of the Prophet. But the anniversaries of the early Persians were suggested by astronomical phenomena, and there is no reason to question such origin in the case of the No Rooz, or New Day, which comes at the time of the spring solstice, and is precisely the period accepted by the followers of Zoroaster for the opening of the year. The festival lasts ten days, during which none but the most imperative work is done. Provisions are laid up in advance for the occasion, the bazaars being closed, and it is a period of universal feasting and rejoicing. Every one dons a new suit of clothes; tables loaded with refreshments are spread in every house, and visits are exchanged. The sound of music is heard in all quarters. On the last day of the festival every Persian walks abroad with his wife or wives; the gardens are everywhere thrown open to the people, and the streets are filled with gay but orderly throngs. This is the only time in the year when a Persian of the cities is seen promenading abroad with his family.

On the eve of No Rooz the common people are accustomed to kindle rows of bonfires and leap over them as a propitiatory ceremony. This sufficiently proves the origin of the festival, which fact is further confirmed by an imposing ceremony that occurs at the palace at the very beginning of the No Rooz. Only two or three Europeans have ever been permitted to see this ceremony, and they were in high employ under the Persian Government. The account I am able to give is from the lips of one of these gentlemen.

Shortly before the sun is to cross the line, be it day or night, the high officers of the court and government assemble in the



great audience-chamber, which is also the museum or receptacle of the crown jewels already described in a previous chapter. It is with treasures on either hand which recall the renown of Persia for so many ages that the Shah-in-Shah gives a solemn audience to his courtiers at the No Rooz. There is nothing on this occasion to suggest that there is any declension in the fortunes of an empire that still holds in her grasp the jewels of the Indies. The courtiers, in court costumes of the utmost magnificence, assemble before the arrival of the Shah and take their places in readiness, ranging themselves according to rank on each side of the hall, beginning at the peacock throne. First in order are the great mollâhs, or Mahometan prelates of the realm, who are seated in the Persian fashion,—that is, kneeling, and then sitting backward on their upturned heels. After the mollâhs follow the uncles of the Shah, then the Sedr Azem, or Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Naïb-e-Sultanêh, the last two facing each other. After these, in due order of rank, come the other Ministers of the Empire, the high generals of the army, and the head man, or administrative chief of the Khajâr tribe, to which the present dynasty belongs. All of these personages remain standing, except the mollâhs, and are so placed as to form a lane the entire length of the audience-hall, up which the Shah-in-Shah proceeds with stately steps and seats himself on the carpet of pearls before the peacock throne.

The chief of the Khajârs, attended by servants bearing trays of silver coin, now gives to all present in their order a share of coin, that they may have money in their hands as a good augury when the New Year begins. In the mean time, numerous salvers containing the fruits of earth and water, and trays piled with glittering heaps of new coin of Persia, both silver and gold intermingled, are ranged before the Shah by dignitaries in gorgeous livery; the Shah then burns incense on a small brazier. When the astrologers announce the moment of the sun's crossing

the line, the Shah takes up a magnificently bound Koran lying before him, presses it to his forehead, bosom, and lips, and then turning to the mollâhs, says with much fervor, *Mombarêk baw-shêd!* — “May it be propitious to you!” On this a mollâh arises, and with full, rich voice chants an invocation to the Deity. Each personage present now approaches the Shah in turn, and according to rank kneels before his sovereign and receives a handful or two of the new coin, the amount depending upon the favor in which he stands with the monarch. Each in turn then retires from the scene, until the Shah remains in his treasure-house alone.

Several hours after the close of this august ceremony his Majesty receives the diplomatic corps, who come to offer the congratulations of the season. Immediately this is over, he gives a general audience to the people in a pavilion situated in the outer garden of the palace. All the avenues leading to it, and the garden itself, are lined with royal guards. The crown of the Khajârs, an immense structure, massive with diamonds and pearls, is borne in advance on a cushion of crimson velvet and laid on the marble throne of the pavilion. This throne, contrary to Western notions, is a long platform with a lofty back and low sides of open stone-work, supported on four marble lions. With slow and dignified mien the Shah is now seen walking entirely unattended through the garden between the guards, his left hand resting on the hilt of a scimitar of priceless magnificence. Mounting by three steps, his Majesty seats himself, Persian fashion, on his knees at the farther end of the throne, and listens to a hymn of congratulation composed by the official bard of Persia. A prominent member of the Khajâr tribe, generally the Il Haneé, also offers the congratulations and aspirations of the people of Persia, standing at the foot of the throne. If the Shah is in gracious mood, he holds a pleasant conversation with him; and thus, as it were, conveys to the

people of Persia through him the royal content in his subjects, and the royal wishes and hopes for the great and ancient people of Persia, as they once more enter upon a new year.

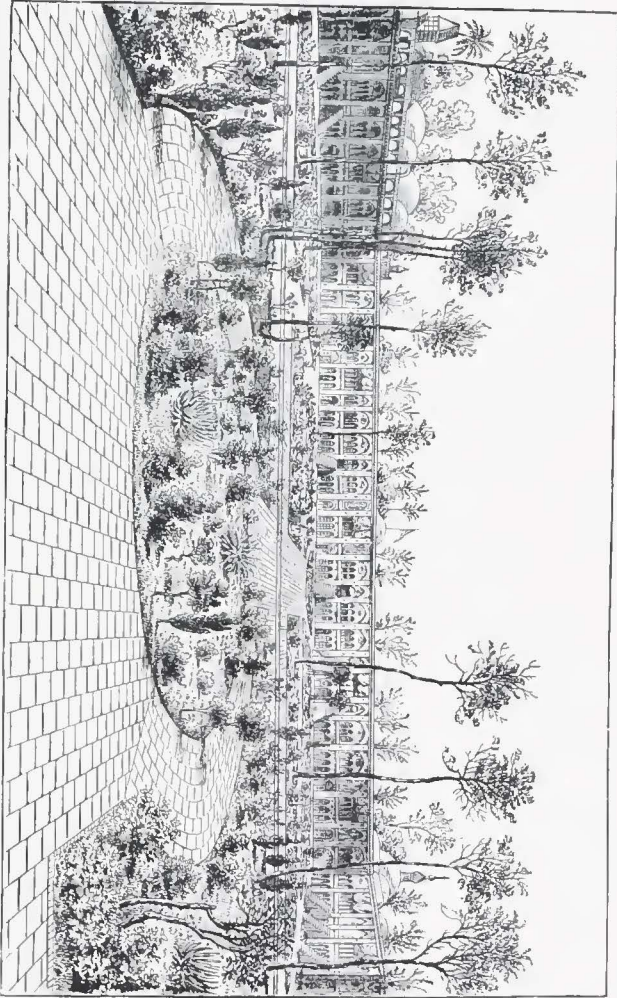
During the No Rooz, or as soon after as possible, occur the annual races, conducted under royal auspices. The Shah enters a number of horses himself. A handsome kiôsk, or pavilion, stands by the course, erected especially for these occasions. Here his Majesty presides, and the favorites of the royal Anderoon occupy alcoves in either wing, screened by lattices. The horses run at a terrific rate six times around the course, which is equivalent to a distance of nearly seven miles. It is said to have been accomplished in twenty-two minutes, which appears doubtful. In 1884, contrary to the usual result, a majority of the prizes were awarded to horses belonging to subjects. Only two prizes were secured by steeds from the royal stables. The Shah showed his displeasure by dismissing his mirahôr, or Grand Equerry, who, it was evident, had blundered either by entering horses of inferior bottom, or by not exercising sufficient tact as to how they were ridden to the stakes, or what horses were pitted against them. In former reigns this officer might have lost his head for such a mishap; but, as many Persians have remarked to me, the reigning Shah is greatly in advance of his predecessors in the matter of clemency.

During the festival season of the spring of 1885 a magnificent tent, lined with Rescht embroidery, was placed at the disposal of the diplomatic corps, who were received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. An elaborate cold breakfast, in European style, was served on the buffet. After the races followed a review of the garrison stationed at Teherân, who are chiefly instructed by Austrian and Russian officers. Between eight and nine thousand men of different organizations filed by, including artillery and irregulars. The general effect gave a favorable impression of the possible results of the adoption of modern tactics and drill in

Persia, although most of the regiments were inferior to those of Europe, not in *matériel*, but in movement and practice. The best display was made by the cavalry, uniformed like Cossacks and riding their wiry steeds like centaurs. The irregular cavalry were picturesquely dressed and armed in semi-oriental style, carrying long-barrelled muskets with a forked rest. A peculiarly Persian corps was the mounted artillery, composed of batteries of small swivel cannon attached to the backs of mules. It is the custom to employ camels also in this service, which in a country like that of Persia might, if properly served, prove effective. In one respect the parade excelled any I have seen; I refer to the large number of superb horses present. Another feature of the review was an immense elephant, gaily caparisoned, leading the van. The Persians have evidently not forgotten the time when the elephant formed an important auxiliary in their military service.

After the review, instead of entering his coach and returning to the palace as on previous occasions, the Shah proceeded on foot to the garden opposite to the royal pavilion. On his way he glanced towards the diplomatic corps, who were watching him, and waved to us to follow. At the gate of the garden he stopped to receive us, the ladies being introduced according to their precedence by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. His Majesty exchanged a few words with several, addressing the wives of the Russian and United States Ministers particularly, and then invited us to stroll with him through the garden. He was in excellent spirits, and looked very well in a rich military uniform surmounted with a beautiful fur-lined pelisse of cashmere. Chatting pleasantly with those nearest him in French, he led us to a small artificial lake, where a tent was spread for him. There he turned and pleasantly gave us our *congé*. This is the first time in history that a king of Persia has so far waived ceremony, and it forms an era in the record of the elaborate etiquette of that country. But it was one of many examples of the





ANDEROON OF THE ROYAL PALACE, TEHERÂN. (FROM A DRAWING BY A PERSIAN ARTIST.)



progressive and independent character of Nasr-ed-Deen Shah, who, as is well known, likes sometimes to put on a disguise and rove at will about his capital.

Nasr-ed-Deen Shah has, of course, availed himself of the privileges of oriental law and custom, and has had several wives and concubines. But in this regard he seems to have been more moderate than some of his predecessors. One of his favorite wives in former years was a peasant girl of the village of Tejrîsch. She was reported to be tall, well-formed, and possessed of features indicating sense and sensibility. Her rustic life seems to have heightened rather than impaired her charms. She showed both a knowledge of her fascinations and feminine tact to make the most of them, when she raised her veil on a certain day while the young king of Persia was pursuing the chase. The royal heart was smitten on the spot, and he sent messengers to ask the maiden from her parents. In such a case a request is equivalent to a command; but it is not likely that any peasant woman of Persia would decline such a proposal, even though life in the royal Anderoon, notwithstanding its luxury, seems very like imprisonment in a golden cage. On further acquaintance the Shah was so pleased with the peasant girl, that he promoted her from the condition of concubine to that of a favorite wife,—a position she had the address to hold until her death.

The present favorite is the Aneese-e-Doülêh. If not strictly handsome, she has, it is said, a very pleasant, amiable face, and is gifted with unusual tact and intelligence. The Shah is very fond of her, and her influence over him seems to be beneficial and permanent. On the announcement of the approaching departure of the first United States Minister to Persia from Teherân in 1885, the Aneese-e-Doülêh paid his wife the high compliment of inviting her and her daughter to an entertainment especially given in their honor at the palace. During the

afternoon his Majesty himself came into the apartment and entered into a pleasant and informal conversation with the American guests, in which he gave expression to his personal and official regard. The compliment was considered to indicate a very pleasant feeling towards the United States, as the attention was one which had been extended to the wife of no other diplomatist at Teherân for many years.

The Shah has several daughters who are married to prominent subjects. The honor is attended with some inconveniences. These wives of royal birth are reported to be sometimes exacting and imperious, and the husband is permitted to have no other wife. To compensate for this, it must be admitted that the daughters of the Shah are reputed to be women of intelligence, of strong affections, and devoted to their husbands, — a devotion which perhaps is not always equally reciprocated.

The eldest daughter, the Eft-e-Khâr-e-Doûlêh, is married to the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk. He is a young man of handsome and attractive presence, who inherited high rank and vast landed estates from his father, — who, by the way, was a man of taste, a patron of the arts, with a feeling for the beautiful akin to genius. He constructed one of the most magnificent country-seats in the world in the suburbs of Teherân, and collected some of the finest examples of the pictorial, glyptic, and caligraphic arts of ancient Persia. It is to this passion as a collector that he owed possession of the most valued manuscript in Persia, — a small but exquisite copy of the Koran, valued by Persian virtuosos as high as one hundred thousand dollars. During a game of Persian poker at the royal palace, one of the players lost heavily, and asked the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk to lend him six thousand tomâns, or ten thousand dollars. To this the other agreed, if he could have as security the aforesaid manuscript. With the recklessness of one who plays for desperate stakes, the borrower complied, and sent for the manuscript, which passed



into the hands of the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk solely as security, the prompt payment of the money being assured. On the morrow, accordingly, the six thousand tomâns were sent to the mansion of the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk with a request for the return of the priceless manuscript. Search was made for it high and low in vain, the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk at last asserting that further quest was useless, since in some inscrutable manner the book had become mislaid, perhaps stolen. After his death the inestimable and long-missing manuscript was found safely hidden among the other manuscripts which compose one of the finest oriental libraries in existence.

The son of this worthy, the present Moayer-ul-Mamolêk, is not behind his father in craft. Fortunately, the daughter of a king took a fancy to him. These royal ladies generally contrive to have an opportunity to see the man they propose to marry. Not satisfied with his good fortune, the young noble also hoped for some high office, his ambition perhaps being in excess of his ability. It is, however, unusual for the highest offices to be given to the sons-in-law of the Shah, probably in order not to over-stimulate their ambition or arouse the jealousy of their royal brothers-in-law, the Princes. In addition to this disappointment, the Moayer-ul-Mamolek met at the same time with a check in a way he least expected, although liable to happen at any oriental court. He received an intimation that the Shah, having considered the vast wealth of his son-in-law, deemed it proper under the circumstances that he should contribute a valuable offering to the royal treasury.

It has long been the custom in oriental lands for the sovereign to demand a heavy contribution in money from subjects who have attained unusual wealth and power. Sometimes, on some flimsy pretext, he may reduce their rank, or cause them to be executed, and then confiscate all their property; or he may be satisfied by large "presents" from time to time. For this reason partly,

houses in Persia are surrounded by high walls, while the gates are small and insignificant, in order to conceal the wealth within.

When the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk received this hint from the Shah he was struck with amazement and terror. He knew not but it was a signal to strip him of the greater part of his wealth, or perhaps a preliminary to degradation and ruin. Laboring under such apprehensions he felt that no time must be wasted in deliberation, and that he must act with celerity and secrecy. Doubtless he exaggerated the danger; for Nasr-ed-Deen Shah, being of a mild and merciful disposition, probably required nothing more than a sum of money such as custom allows an oriental despot to demand. But the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk drew his inferences from what had been too often the practice in the land of his birth, and acted accordingly. He did not dare to confide his plans even to the Princess, his wife. There was something masterly in the manner in which the young nobleman planned and executed his measures for avoiding the dilemma in which he was placed.

When his father died, it was found that he had left a share of his large treasures by will unassigned to any heir, directing that it should be buried with him in his tomb. The coffin was deposited in a mosque which was the tomb of a saint called an Imâm Zadêh, several days' journey from Teherân. This Imâm Zadêh was a resort for pilgrims, and a venerable mollâh, or priest, had charge of it. The Moayer-ul-Mamolêk informed the Princess, his wife, that he proposed to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of a saint, — such pilgrimages being greatly esteemed in Persia, adding as they do to a repute for piety, far more easily won in this way than by a genuine attempt to live a more holy life.

Bidding farewell to the Princess, who little thought how long it would be before she should see her husband again, and

selecting such tried attendants as could be trusted, the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk left Teherân. After proceeding some distance towards the shrine he had mentioned as the one that he intended to visit, he took a bridle-path that led in the opposite direction, and travelled hard until he reached the shrine where his father was buried. It was towards nightfall. An outrider was sent in advance to inform the old custodian that the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk was coming, and would lodge at his house that night. Thus is the traveller of rank in Persia wont to do when he seeks a lodging on his journey. The gray-bearded mollâh came forth from the gate to welcome the Prince, with low bows and many a honeyed phrase, as he alighted. *Hôsh amedeed!* — “Thou hast come God-sent!” — the elder exclaimed, gravely and fervently.

Overlooking the scene from the housetop was the fair and blooming daughter of the host. Perhaps, with a natural touch of coquetry, she allowed her veil to drop for a moment as the Prince looked up. At any rate, the sight of the young maiden suggested to him a means of assistance in the maturing of his plan, which may have been up to this time somewhat vaguely defined in his mind.

After the evening repast, the Prince gave the host and father of the damsel to understand that he would like to have her to wife. It is so common for Persian gentlemen high in rank, including the Shah himself, to select wives far lower in station than themselves, that there was nothing in the proposal to excite surprise, although it gave the old mollâh great pleasure to think that he was to be allied to a prince. Nor was he staggered on learning further that the would-be husband desired the marriage to take place without delay, for haste regarding an affair of such importance is also not uncommon in Persia. The preliminaries having all been arranged, a priest was sent for, who drew up and signed the marriage-

contracts.<sup>1</sup> And thus in a few brief hours the young country-girl, who had never before seen her husband, not only found but wedded him, — and he a prince, and son-in-law of a king.

When the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk was alone with his bride, he told her that, notwithstanding the suddenness of his attachment to her, his love was so intense that he desired to present her with an extraordinary token of his regard. In a word, it was his wish to bestow on her a diadem of rare value and beauty which had been in his family for generations. Unfortunately this prize was not in his possession, and the question was how he could recover and present it to her as a permanent token of love. It was included with the treasures hidden in the shrine of the saint, of which her father held the key, under solemn oath to deliver neither key nor treasures to a living soul.

The bride of an hour eagerly replied that if this were all the impediment that hindered possession of the gem, she could overcome it. The key of the shrine her father kept, according to Persian custom, under his pillow; and as he always slept soundly, she was confident of being able to secure and return it before he should awake at the call of morning prayer.

Barefooted she stole through the house over the soft Persian rugs, which served her a good turn by deadening the sound of her steps. If she had any compunctions of conscience in proceeding upon such a questionable errand, she probably reasoned that the Prince had a right to inherit his father's treasures, which were useless to any one where they were, and if he could not get them in one way he was entitled to obtain them in another. But it is not likely that she gave much attention to the ethics of the question. Proceeding with the utmost circumspection, she reached her father's bedside. Like all Persians, he was sleeping upon a mattress spread on the floor. This made

<sup>1</sup> This was, of course, a so-called temporary marriage, although strictly legal, — a form that seems permissible to sons-in-law of the Shah.



success more easy. Gradually moving her small hand under the pillow, the young woman at last found and withdrew the coveted key, and noiselessly returned to the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk.

The nobleman gave his bride a parting kiss, promising in a few brief moments to bring her the coveted gift. He proceeded at once to the Imâm Zadêh, where his servants were awaiting him with the horses. The key proved, indeed, an "open sesame" to vast treasures. They were, fortunately for his purpose, of compact size, — pearls, bracelets, rubies, diamonds, and embroideries of price, with a few select manuscripts such as always bring their weight in gold from the collector. It took only a short time to rifle the tomb of its riches and load them in saddle-bags on the horses; and then the word was, "To horse and away!" Softly the cavalcade stole through the dusky streets of the town. The bark of dogs, the low growl of the cur lifting half an ear to catch the muffled sounds of hoofs as he woke out of dreamless sleep, was not of much consequence in an oriental town where the dogs fight at all hours of the night, and therefore the inhabitants slept on, save the forsaken bride. When the Prince and his attendants reached the open, they put spurs to their steeds and flew over mountain and valley, and ere the gray of dawn broke on the mountain tops they had placed many farsâkhs<sup>1</sup> between themselves and the Imâm Zadêh. It argues well for the fidelity of the servants of the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk that he was able, with such treasures, to proceed unharmed over those lonely roads.

The bride waited long; such treachery was a new experience to her. Her hopes gradually passed to despair. When morning came, she realized that she had not only lost her husband, but incurred as well the dire indignation of her father. But while she was lamenting, the bridegroom was flying for his life towards the Caspian Sea. At Meschêd-i-Sâr the fugitives found

<sup>1</sup> A farsâkh is about four miles. Xenophon calls it "parasang."

a steamer bound to Bakû, in Russia. On board of this vessel they escaped to Europe, and travelled to Paris.

When the Princess at Teherân heard that her husband had fled to Europe, she wrote him the most appealing letters, urging his return, for she was devotedly attached to him. But he paid no attention to her entreaties. If he had deemed it prudent to escape from the clutches of the Shah before committing any overt act of disobedience, how much more important was it now that he should not trust himself again in the power of an absolute monarch whom he had deeply offended, both by refusing the offering demanded and by leaving the Empire without permission.

But the time came when the exiled nobleman found himself obliged to turn for relief to the royal wife whom he had left behind. The treasure he had taken with him was ample to sustain him in luxury at any European capital for a long time, if he had used it with prudence. But instead of this he squandered it amid the manifold dissipations of the gay capital of France, and it was not long before he found himself in need of funds. Then, at last, the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk wrote to the Princess for money, bemoaning his fate and describing his distress in moving terms. She did not delay to respond favorably to his appeal, and continued to send him remittances, until the Shah heard that she was exhausting her revenues in maintaining her husband abroad. He also learned — what, happily for her, she did not know — that the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk was wasting the money sent by his devoted wife in unprofitable ways, instead of living moderately and respectably. The Shah therefore forbade his daughter to send any further remittances to her husband. But as she was a favorite child, he yielded to her earnest entreaties, and gave his royal word that if the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk would return to Persia no harm should come to him. Finding that he could obtain no more money, the young noble-

man decided to risk the chances of a return, and arrived at Teherân in the spring of 1885, greatly to the joy of the Princess. Thus far the Shah has kept his promise, and will doubtless continue to do so unless further indiscretions should again bring the *gaillard* nobleman into peril. A nature like his does not easily learn from experience, and it would be difficult to predict what will be his course in the future.

Another daughter of the Shah is married to a Khajâr gentleman of high rank, who as Grand Master of Ceremonies enjoys the title of Zaheer-i-Doûlêh. He was a neighbor of the writer at Teherân, his residence being directly opposite the United States Legation. He is a young man of very amiable disposition, socially one of the most agreeable gentlemen in Persia; an admirable *raconteur*; and what is more, he is gifted with a sincerity of character which is not too common in the East.

Among other attentions, the Zaheer-i-Doûlêh twice invited the members of the United States Legation to dine at his house. On the first occasion the entertainment was given entirely after the Persian fashion. Of course, only gentlemen were present. The invited guests consisted of the United States Minister and his attachés, Assédooleh Khân, Persian Ambassador to St. Petersburg, *en congé*, and several relatives of the host. The entertainment began with music of delicate Persian instruments. The performers were selected from those who play before the Shah himself at the palace. The instruments played at this dinner were a zither made of inlaid wood, and a flat arrangement of silver wires of different lengths, touched by two slender spoon-shaped pieces of bone. The latter piece is called a *santoor*, and the strains are not unlike those of the piano, although naturally much feebler. The santoor has much sweetness, and is capable of considerable expression, although the zither or guitar appears to respond more delicately to the touch.

After an hour of music and chatting, flavored with the aromatic fumes of Shirâz tumbâk in kaliâns of silver set with turquoise, cordials were served, to which cigarettes were added. Dinner was then announced. While it is not uncommon for Persian gentlemen to sit at the table and furnish a *menu à la française* when entertaining European guests, yet when alone they still prefer the native custom of sitting on the floor with the meal spread before them on trays of copper or silver. The Shah himself adheres to a custom that is evidently a relic of the nomadic life of which the Oriental shows traces in many habits inherited from his ancestors of old. On this occasion an elegant repast was spread on the floor in the centre of the room. The dishes consisted chiefly of ragouts highly spiced and agreeably seasoned with rich sauces, pickled fruits and confections, and of course several varieties of pillaus and chillaus, or dishes of rice heaped in cone-shaped piles. By each guest was a loaf of the peculiar bread of Teherân. I say loaf, but it is really less thick than sole-leather, and the size of a large napkin. Its peculiar form enables one to break off bits and use them as spoons to take up choice morsels. I found the meal highly appetizing, and could easily have sat an hour longer at the entertainment, — although perhaps I am not an impartial judge, as I am naturally inclined to the oriental *cuisine*, because when properly prepared the dishes have a more decided character than ours.

On passing from the dining to the reception room we met servants in the anteroom bearing basins and towels and graceful ewers of brass containing rose-scented water, which was poured over our fingers. Coffee and kaliâns were now served, and with conversation and music several hours passed away agreeably.

Among the numerous stories and anecdotes related on this occasion, I recollect two or three which seemed to have a peculiarly oriental flavor. The Zaheer-i-Doiülêh, our host, who is a



*brave garçon*, related the following incident of his boyhood with much zest. He said that when he was living in Khorassân there came a winter of unusual severity, and the surface of a pool near the town was frozen over hard enough to slide on. Among his companions was a youth who was exceptionally superstitious. Each time he started to slide across the ice, he blew over his right and left shoulders and exclaimed, "Yah, Mohammed!" The boys asked him his motive for doing this. He replied, to keep off the *djins*, who might cause the ice to break and give him a ducking. The boys thereupon concerted to play him a trick. The next morning they cracked the ice in the centre and covered it with snow. They gave their victim the first chance to slide, and stood by to see the fun. Blowing over his shoulders as usual, the unsuspecting youth started off finely, and plumped into the water up to his chin. Scrambling out in great fury, he gave chase to his tormentors, crying, "Only let me catch the son of a burnt father who did this!" But they replied, laughing, "No son of a burnt father did this. It all happened because you did not blow hard enough over your shoulders!"

Another story of the evening is one which is widely current in Persia. It may have some mystical relation to the so-called solar myths about which Professors Max Müller, Wolf, and others have expended such floods of hypothetical ink. An archer came once on a time from Turkey to Persia, with a great renown for strength. He challenged all the champions of Persia to shoot an arrow farther than he. The Shah was greatly shaken in his mind lest the credit of the Empire should be imperilled on the question of archery. But there came a man from the south, who bade the Shah cease his apprehensions, for he declared himself able to outshoot the world. The day for the contest arrived. The Turkish archer was indeed a wonder, for he shot a shaft to a prodigious distance. But the Persian champion, being a scientific wag, put mercury on his arrow and aimed towards the sun.

As the whizzing shaft neared the glowing luminary, the mercury being volatile gave increased momentum to the arrow, which ceased not to speed forward until it reached the banks of the Gihoon. Another version of this story states that this contest really took place in order to settle the question of the boundary between Persia and Turân, and that the contestants stood on the summit of Demavend.

Another ingenious and highly characteristic story was told on this occasion, well illustrating the subtle imagination of the cultivated Persian. It is an allegory intended to typify the different effects produced on the mind and nerves by wine, opium, and hashish. Three men, each under the influence of one of these intoxicants, arrived after nightfall at the gate of a city. He who was under the effect of alcohol was furious when he found the gate closed, and vociferated, "Let us burst in the gate at once! I will do it with my sword!" The opium-eater said, "Nay, we will tarry here until sunrise; then the gate will be opened, and we can enter without discomfort." But the hashish eater murmured, with feeble voice, "Neither way is good; because we can steal through the keyhole, as we can make ourselves small."

This is a fitting place to allude to the custom of the Court of Persia of extending to foreign envoys the courtesies of what in diplomatic phraseology is called "the solemn entry." This ceremonial in former ages was in vogue at the courts of Europe as well as of Asia. Persia is one of the very few countries that now awards to a foreign envoy a reception intended in its origin to convey an impression of the importance of the diplomatic relations existing between great nations, thereby adding also to the security which must attach to the person of a Minister if he would properly execute the objects of his mission; especially as at any time, in case of strained relations or hostilities, he may find himself in an alien country far from home, and requiring all the protection which can be derived from a proper and customary

consideration of the dignity and representative character of his position. It is eminently proper that in a country like Persia a foreign envoy arriving at the frontier should be met by a delegate of the Court to which he is accredited, as he finds no hotels where he can lodge at the frontier and along most parts of the road, and must pursue the journey to the capital on horseback. It is the custom therefore for the Shah, on learning of the approaching arrival of a foreign envoy for the first time, to send an officer of rank to meet him. This personage has the title of *Melmendâr*, as we have already explained: it is his duty to provide every facility for the safe and agreeable transit of the Foreign Minister until he arrives in the presence of the Shah. It is also customary, in addition to all the other courtesies of the occasion, to place one of the numerous palaces of his Majesty at the disposal of the country's guest, in case there exists no dwelling already provided by his Government for a Legation. Such a building was offered to me on my arrival at Teherân, but as we had already received every courtesy from his Majesty which we could reasonably expect, I felt it to be more dignified to decline. It should be added that this grand reception awarded to a foreign envoy upon his entrance to the capital of Persia is customary only in the case of one who establishes a Legation, the ceremonies for his successors being more simple.

The gifts presented by the first United States Minister to the various servants of the Shah who contributed to his comfort on his arrival in Persia, which afforded so much innocent mirth to the youthful brains of some of the inexperienced reporters of the American Press, were merely in the nature of gratuities, such as any gentleman would give to the domestics of a host who had handsomely entertained him. But naturally such "tips" must be graduated at all times by the character of the entertainment and the rank of the host. If such hospitality is rendered officially,

it is only proper that the reciprocal gratuities should be borne by the person or Government in whose honor this hospitality is extended. In our own case I regret to say, that, owing to the impecunious state of the national treasury, we were only able to give a sum far below that given by the Légations of other countries supposed to be much less able to make liberal allowances for necessary official expenses than are the United States.

It must be evident that in a country punctilious as Persia, where familiarity between the sovereign and his subjects can be permitted only rarely and then with caution, a monarch must necessarily occupy a position of great loneliness. It is only in an indirect manner and approximately that he can learn the truth regarding the condition of things both in his own dominion and elsewhere. Even what he sees with his own eyes may not be correctly seen. For example, when he intends to travel through his dominions the roads are temporarily repaired, and he thus has no idea of what they are when he has not passed over them for years. All attempts at sociability with any one but his wives are, of course, impossible. Even when he visits one of his distinguished subjects, the Shah does not leave behind him the burdensome etiquette or the army of household servants of the palace. Nasr-ed-Deen Shah frequently honors some of his high officers by announcing some days beforehand that he proposes to dine with him at his residence. This is really a figure of speech, for none ever eat with the Shah except kings. Therefore when he makes a visit like this, he sends his cook and other servants in advance, who take possession of the house for the occasion and prepare an elegant repast for his Majesty. Notwithstanding this fact, however, the royal visit is attended with much expense to the host, who makes elaborate attempts to decorate his house and grounds. The prestige bestowed on the happy recipient of the royal favor amply compensates, however, for the time and money lavished on a visit from the Shah, who



on his part has an eye to business as well as pleasure in conferring such an honor upon a subject; for, as we shall see, he not only increases the fervor of that subject's allegiance, but with no expense to himself adds materially to the royal treasury.

When the Shah enters the salaamlík, or reception-room of the house, he is presented with a heap of gold coin on a silver salver, which varies according to the condition of the noble host, but is generally from fifteen hundred to two thousand dollars. If his Majesty is satisfied with the offering, he says aloud, turning to the crowd of grantees who surround him, "Look how our good servant loves his king!" The host himself presents every dish to the royal guest after it has been prepared by the servants of the palace and approved by the royal taster in his Majesty's presence. The repast over, the Shah is invited to view the gardens and visit the Anderoon of his host. The latter is one of the royal prerogatives: he can see and talk with every woman in Persia; and such a visit from the Shah gives joy to the Anderoon, while it causes mixed feelings on the part of the host. For if the Shah appears particularly pleased with any one of the ladies, it is the duty of her husband to offer to send her to the palace. If his Majesty accepts, the host perhaps loses a favorite wife or concubine; or, on the other hand, if she be fond of him, he obtains a friend at court who will not forget to use her influence in his behalf, and by procuring higher places for her former husband she compensates him for the loss of her society. This privilege has often been availed of by former kings of Persia; but Nasr-ed-Deen Shah is said to be usually content with the offering of money, the pleasure of an agreeable afternoon, and the presents which the great man is also obliged to pay to the attendants of the Shah on such an occasion.

## CHAPTER IX.

### SKETCH OF SEVERAL OF THE LEADING OFFICERS OF THE PERSIAN GOVERNMENT.

NEARLY connected with the court are the members of the Cabinet, or Royal Council. This body has been modelled in recent years somewhat on the plan of the Cabinet of a European power. At the same time it has some traits in its organization that are peculiarly oriental. The Prime Minister is called Sedr Azêm, and sometimes Super Salâr. But the office is not permanent; it is rather like that of Lieutenant-General in the army of the United States, which is an appointment to reward extraordinary services, or to meet some unusually exigent emergency. The present Sedr Azêm is a very distinguished character, who has ably served the Government for nearly sixty years. He is a man of imposing presence. After him come the Vizîr-i-Haredjêh, or Minister of Foreign Affairs. Equal to him in rank is the Mestofee-ul-Mamolêk, or Lord High Treasurer, who has recently been promoted to be Sedr Azêm as well. After these come the Minister of Commerce; the Minister of Arts and Sciences, who is also Superintendent of the Arsenal at the Capital; the Minister of Telegraphs and Mines; and the Minister of Finance, who has charge of the Mint, which he is reported to manage so shrewdly as to add very materially to his income thereby: some say it is done by depreciating the quality of the metal which passes through his hands. There is also the Sani-e-Doûlêh, or Minister of Printing. Among the other duties of this officer are the censorship of the press

(which is not very severe in Persia) and the editing of the official journals. These are two in number, published monthly and bi-monthly. A semi-official journal called the "ECHO de Persé," and published in the French language, was started in 1885. One of the Persian journals is illustrated; each number contains a portrait of some distinguished man and the illustration of some public building or of some hunting exploit of the Shah. Both the letterpress and illustrations are produced by lithography. In fact, every work published in Persia otherwise than by the calligraphic art is lithographed. The Persians are very nice in regard to the shape of the letters they use. In metal types they do not find the flowing grace produced by the reed pen; therefore every printed page is first written on paper by hand, and then photographed on the lithographic stone. The Sani-e-Doülêh, who has spent much time in Europe, speaks French with admirable fluency, and takes a larger and wider view of the relations of things than most Orientals. But this intellectual flexibility is superficial rather than profound; at heart he is a thorough Oriental, and his usefulness is impaired by a character that even at Teherân is not without reproach.

A very important member of the Royal Council is the Emîn-e-Doülêh. He is in charge of the secular affairs of the mollâhs, or clergy. He distributes their revenues and oversees all questions relating to their property. It is a curious circumstance that the present holder of this office, although superintending the affairs of the most fanatical body of men in the country, is himself one of Persia's most gentle, courteous, polished, and liberal-minded men, — a gentleman whom it is impossible to know without entertaining for him sincere respect and esteem.

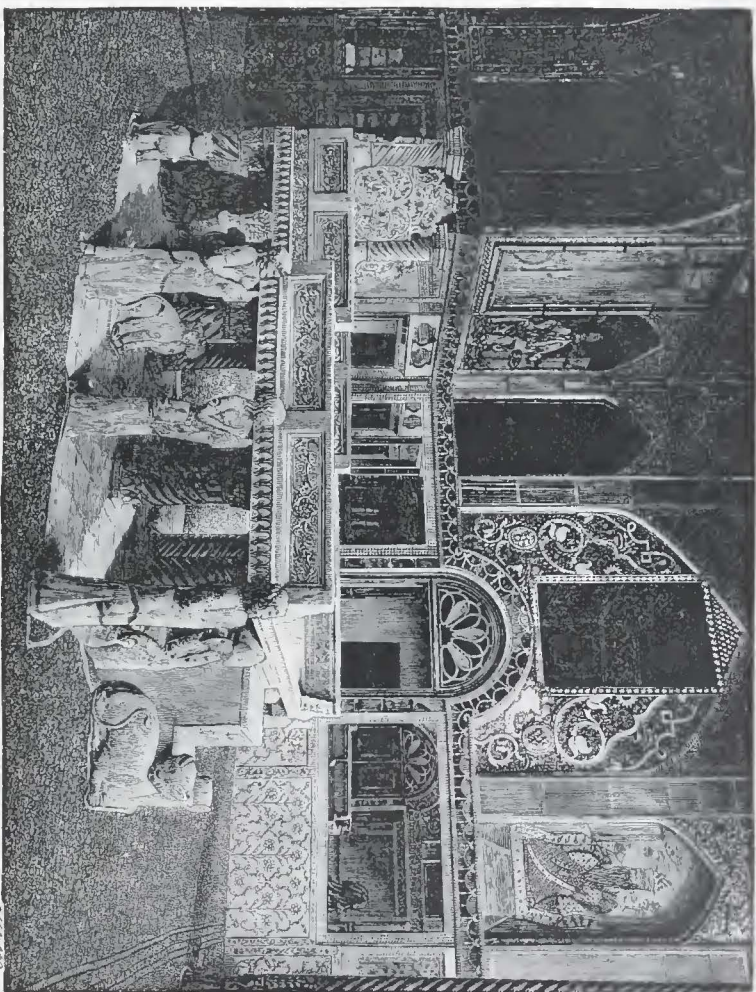
The position of Minister of Justice is apparently one of great importance; but in Persia this is practically a sinecure, being always filled by a layman, who as yet can have but little influence in the administration of the laws, because the *wef*, or secular

law, stands below the *shah*, or religious law, whose decisions are rendered by the clergy. But the establishment of such an office as a Ministry of Justice is a step in the right direction, and if its duties were rightly administered, it might lead gradually to increasing the power of the secular law, and to the abolition, or at least the weakening, of the theocratic system, which is at present the greatest obstacle to the emancipation of Persia from the bondage of the past.

Shortly before I left Persia, in June, 1885, the Mouchâr-i-Doûlêh, Yahia Khan, who for several years past had filled the position of Minister of Justice, resigned his post in disgust. It was rumored that this was in consequence of the frustration of his ambition to be promoted to the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs, when that office became vacant in the spring of 1884. He is reputed to be a partisan of Russia, which may be one reason why that place was at that time refused him. Rumors were afloat that he had received a large *douceur* in the shape of a loan from the Russian Government to tide him over the pecuniary difficulties in which he has been involved by the splendid establishment he maintains. I only give these rumors for what they are worth. My own relations with him were always exceedingly agreeable, and he is undoubtedly one of the most intelligent, kind-hearted, and courteous gentlemen at Teherân. His brother, the Vizîr-e-Laskêr, who is one of the most prominent generals of the Persian army, is a man possessed of many fine traits of character, of handsome and portly presence, and I think unaffectedly friendly to the United States citizens resident in Persia.

In the spring of 1884 the Mouchâr-i-Doûlêh gave a very handsome breakfast to the entire American colony at Teherân. The entertainment was held in a superb banqueting-hall of the residence he sometimes occupies on the outskirts of the capital. This splendid mansion, on which over one million dollars has been lavished, is used by him chiefly for state receptions;





MARBLE THRONE OF THE SHAH OF PERSIA.



but his private residence is in the heart of the old city, and is perhaps more interesting because more antique and Persian in its style, although not less sumptuous. The entertainment was served entirely in the European style, which is becoming very much the custom at present at Teherân in official circles. In the centre of the table was a small jet, which diffused spray scented with rose-water. Our urbane host gave the toasts in a graceful manner, and then invited us to stroll through the beautiful grounds. Thence he led us into a grotto-like hall under the palace. It was partly underground and open at each end, allowing for the passage of the breeze. It was finished throughout with different colored marbles, the ceiling being supported by a cluster of pillars crowned with gilded capitals; a marble basin in the centre was surrounded by numerous jets tossing their streams to a common centre. Coffee, pipes, sherbets, and ices were now served. The entire entertainment presented a delightful blending of European and Oriental luxury and splendor highly creditable to the taste of our accomplished host.

The successes of Yahia Khan, the *Mouchîr-i-Doûlêh*, have been gained in the usually quiet and unobtrusive walks of a civil profession. But when he was a young man occupying a subordinate position at the palace, he was engaged, in an hour of leisure, at a game of draughts with a fellow-officer. A hot dispute arose about the game, and Yahia Khan received a stab in his face, of which he carries the scar to this day. He rushed bleeding into the presence of the Shah and demanded vengeance. The Shah having adjudged the case decided in his favor, and ordered the man who had wounded him to immediate execution. This incident brought the young officer to the attention of the Shah, who gradually promoted him. Yahia Khan used his opportunity with such address that he eventually won the hand of the sister of the Shah, a most accomplished woman, who at the time was the

widow of the great Minister Mirza Taghy, the Emeer-i-Nizâm, whom the Shah had caused to be assassinated in the early part of his reign for alleged intrigues against the throne.

In addition to the members of the Cabinet, or Royal Council, there are several ministers of less importance, of whom it is unnecessary to make more than an allusion here. Of course the minister with whom I was brought most in contact was the Vizîr-e-Haredjêh, or Minister of Foreign Affairs. During the first year of my residence in Persia the office was filled by Mirza Seyed Khan. He was a man well advanced in years, who had for a long time been a favorite of his royal master. He was not a great man, neither was he a bad one. He combined in his character many of the qualities of a typical Persian gentleman. His firmness was tempered by courtesy, and his apparent weakness and vacillation, his slowness in acting, his hesitancy in deciding, and his double dealing were perhaps as much due to deliberate policy as to natural qualities of character. In a country situated like Persia at the present time, great caution is requisite neither to alienate lukewarm friends nor increase the malignity of foes. Persia is at the mercy of both, and he who conducts her relations with foreign powers must be deliberate, patient, persistent, and astute as the Prince of Darkness himself. The late Minister's habit of procrastinating action, which at times aroused the indignation of every foreign diplomat at Teherân in turn, was not wholly the result of temperament. I am convinced that Mirza Seyed Khan considered it the best policy for Persia to act on the principle of gaining time. After pursuing this course for a long period of years, it became a second nature to him, and he found it difficult to arrive at a firm and rapid decision, even when apparently no possible harm could have resulted from doing so. Towards the end of his life this habit of indecision, blended with truly oriental craft, provoked the Foreign Legations to such a degree that



some of them threatened to transact no further diplomatic business except directly with the Shah in person. But the sovereign was attached to the old Minister who had served him faithfully so long, and instead of deposing, allowed him to remain in office until his death, which occurred early in 1885, the duties of the Foreign Office being in the mean time conducted by the venerable and highly respected First Secretary, called the Sadik-ul-Mulk.

Mirza Seyed Khan was a man of small stature, who like all Persians dyed his hair and beard, — which at his age was not becoming, for such freshness of color was entirely out of harmony with his pinched features and sallow complexion. He had a keen eye, full of intelligence and kindness. As his name “Seyed” indicated, he was a descendant of the Prophet, and both by tastes and breeding was a scholar deeply versed in oriental lore and literature. It was very pleasant, after a long and perhaps vexatious discussion on affairs of state, to be able to terminate the interview with a half hour’s talk on oriental literature and philosophy, in which he was ever ready to join. At once the lines of his face would soften, the hard introspective look would pass from his eye, and he would enter into an enthusiastic conversation about his favorite authors, while the obsequious domestics repeatedly brought us tea and pipes.

An official call on the Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs is a very different affair from such a visit at any European court, or at the offices of the Department of State at Washington. The visit is announced beforehand. Whether it be made at the Foreign Office or at the private residence of the Minister, on arriving there one is received by a number of servants, who conduct the foreign diplomat to the presence of the Minister. He is found, not seated formally at a table, with clerks and secretaries at other tables, and the view from the windows

screened by gloomy walls of brick and stone. But one approaches the reception apartment through a spacious court shaded by lofty chenârs, and graced with lovely parterres whose luxurious wilderness of roses, loading the air with perfume, is reflected in vast basins of crystalline water from the mountains. A group of retainers is gathered at the entrance, who rise respectfully as the visitor approaches, while the military guard presents arms. In the antechamber through which one passes, the Pishketmêt, or Purveyor of Refreshments, and his assistants are seen with the tea-urn, ever ready to serve the refreshments customary on the arrival of a visitor. As the Foreign Envoy enters the apartment, the Minister of Foreign Affairs comes to the door and extends to him a cordial welcome. He is found surrounded by servants seated upon their heels upon the floor; each one has by his side an ink-horn, and when he would write at the dictation of the Minister, draws a roll of paper from his bosom. He writes holding the paper in his left hand; in consequence, the lines slant across the page. Persian official documents rarely exceed one side of a page, both the writing and the business expressions being concise, which is one reason why foreigners find such difficulty in clearly apprehending their purport. If the document exceeds the length of a page, it is carried around the margin in shorter lines. When the document is completed, the Minister affixes, not his signature but his seal, inked and pressed on the paper. This custom is universal in Persia; the seal is renewed every year and a date engraved upon it. To counterfeit the seal of any individual, whether private or public, renders the offender liable to punishment by death.

As soon as the two ministers are seated, before a word is said, they look towards each other and respectfully bow. The customary compliments then follow, — the Minister of Foreign Affairs saying, *Hosh amedîd*; that is, “You have come

God-sent." If he happens to be a little under the weather, he replies to the question as to his health, "It is true that I have not been very well; but now, thanks to Allah, since you have graced my roof with your presence, my health is restored." A servant now places a small table between the two ministers, and sherbet or tea is served, according to the season. This is followed by pipes and cigars, and then the serious business of the interview begins. From time to time during the conversation these refreshments are renewed. However earnest may be the discussion, the Minister of Foreign Affairs never shows any signs of temper, but throughout the interview preserves the imperturbable dignity and lofty courtesy of the man of affairs and the true gentleman. It is said that on one occasion a Russian Minister formerly stationed at Teherân became very much exasperated by his inability to alter the resolution of Mirza Seyed Khan; he paced up and down the apartment rapidly, and brandished his cane so violently that it flew out of his hand and hit the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the leg. With unaltered demeanor, Mirza Seyed Khan took up the stick and handed it to the Russian Minister, saying in a quiet tone, "I must beg your Excellency to retire."

However earnest and important the conversation, the visitor cannot avoid noticing, on such an occasion, the environment of this scene. The apartment is lavishly decorated with richly carved woods, and the ceilings and cornices of stucco work are moulded in many lovely and elaborate designs. The *tachitchés*, or niches, common on the walls of Persian houses, are ornamented with very beautiful honeycomb work, tinted and gilded; the casements are filled with cathedral-like designs in stained glass, and the sashes of the broad windows being raised, the senses are saluted by the fragrance of lilies and roses, the murmur of the breeze in the tree-tops, the plaintive cooing of the turtle-doves, and the warble of nightingales.

When affairs of state are discussed amid such poetic surroundings, one ceases to wonder that the problems of oriental mathematics are couched in the phraseology and metaphors of a Hafiz.

As we have said, Mirza Seyed Khan was a descendant of the Prophet. This circumstance, together with the fact that he had dived deep into Arabic literature, made him conservative and fanatical. But while this did not in the least affect the natural amiability and courtesy of his manners, the political effect was prejudicial to the progress of his country; and in his later days one never was sure that a measure which he had promised to execute at the instance of a Foreign Legation might not be countermanded by him in secret. Like most Persians, he grew avaricious in his old age; but I must state here again, that the peculiar financial system of Persia, and the display required of all in the Government employ directly tends to promote avarice. Notwithstanding his faults, the genial character of Mirza Seyed Khan endeared him to the Shah, and tended to mollify the contempt into which he was rapidly falling with the people; for on demanding a present or bribe, if the applicant's means did not equal the expectations of the Minister, he accepted what was offered, instead of grinding more out of him, like other Persians, saying "*Inshallah*, — God willing, — you will have more for me next time."

Like many Persians, Mirza Seyed Khan was accustomed to hold a rosary in his hand while transacting business, and was guided in his decisions by the way the beads dropped into his fingers. Naturally, but perhaps unconsciously, they often combined in accordance with his preconceived wishes or intentions. The last time I saw him he was very feeble, and was seated before an open wood-fire. An ample cashmere cloak, lined with fur, was brought in and thrown over his lap. On leaving him I asked him not to rise, as he seemed so ill. He looked very grateful, and shook my hand warmly, gazing



long and keenly into my face as if to take a last farewell. When he became so low that he could eat nothing, a sheet of sangîâk, or native bread, was laid under his pillow, by order of the native physician, with the hope of stimulating an appetite! But neither sangîâk nor doctors could avail, and the old Minister, after nearly forty years of service, reluctantly abandoned the seal of his office and passed from the audience-halls of an earthly King of kings to the tribunal of the Ruler of the Universe.

Before leaving Mirza Seyed Khan, it is *à propos* to mention an incident characteristic of his policy in his later days. Six months before his death, important negotiations were going on between the Foreign Office and the United States Legation for the punishment of the offenders who were infringing the treaty and persecuting the American citizens resident at Hammadan.<sup>1</sup> The Governor of Hammadan was the brother of the Shah, — a man of little principle and of crafty disposition, who was undoubtedly making money out of the people at whose instigation he permitted these abuses. It is not unlikely that Mirza Seyed Khan shared the profits with him. At any rate he was in a dilemma between granting our strenuous demands for redress and offending a man of power like the brother of the Shah. After giving orders repeatedly in our favor and secretly countermanding them, he finally found himself in such a straitened position that he decided to cut the gordian knot by leaving the city. Entering his carriage one morning, ostensibly to

<sup>1</sup> One of the methods adopted was to force artisans and traders to give written *iltisâmes*, or promises, that they would neither work for nor sell to the American citizens, — the intention being to force our citizens to leave the city. It was a species of "boycotting," and was instigated by Armenians and Jews, who bribed the governor and his myrmidons to act in their favor, — clearly against rights accorded to us by the Treaty, as well as against the international courtesy which is followed by civilized nations. These transactions remind us, however, that the conduct of the United States towards the Chinese has been such as to make it rather absurd for our Government to insist upon its treaty rights in Asia, whether in China or Persia.

proceed to the Foreign Office as usual, he gave orders to the driver to take him instead to Koom, a hundred miles off, giving out that it was his purpose to offer prayers at the shrines of the saints who are buried in that city. On the following day news arrived at the capital that the Minister had been attacked on the road by a band of robbers, and in the *mêlée* had lost his seal of office. I should state here, that on leaving the city he had sent me word that he would forward to me from Koom the order he had promised on a previous day for the punishment of the offenders at Hammadan. The loss of his seal of office by the above accident prevented the wily Minister from sending me this order, and I was obliged to have recourse for it from the Sadîk-ul-Mulk, or First Secretary of the Foreign Office, who was acting in the absence of the Minister. By this ruse, Mirza Seyed Khan shifted the responsibility of giving an obnoxious order on to the shoulders of another. All Teherân laughed at the device of robbery, which had evidently been planned as a means for helping the Minister out of his dilemma.

After the death of Mirza Seyed Khan, his son came very near losing his life through his awkwardness in regard to etiquette. The Zil-î-Sultân, the eldest son of the Shah, and Governor of Ispahân, while on a visit at Teherân, expressed a wish to go to the Foreign Office and inspect its arrangements. The son of Mirza Seyed Khan, who was an under-secretary at the Foreign Office, was instructed to have everything put in order in preparation for the visit of the Prince; and when all was in readiness, to give him information of the facts, and ask him to name the hour when he would come. The young man, either inflated by the responsibilities devolved upon him, or through sheer stupidity, in due time sent word to the Prince that everything was ready, instead of going himself in person and humbly presenting himself to the Prince, asking him to appoint the

hour when his Royal Highness would grace the halls of the Foreign Office. On receiving the message of this under-secretary, the Zil-i-Sultân visibly swelled with rage, and roared, "Who is this fellow, this son of a burnt father, that dares send me a message that everything is ready? Bring me the head of this dog!" With the greatest difficulty the wrath of the Prince was appeased and the life of the young man saved by the interposition of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mahmoud Khan; but the foolhardy young secretary was fain to go and kneel at the foot of the Prince, and abase himself with every humiliating expression in which the Persian language is so rich.

On the death of Mirza Seyed Khan, speculation was rife for some weeks as to whom the Shah would name to succeed the old Minister. To the surprise of every one, the person selected was the Nasr-ul-Mulk, Mahmoud Khan. As Governor of Kermanshâh for a number of years he had been comparatively forgotten at the capital, and hence the popular surprise at his appointment. It was largely due to the influence of the Zil-i-Sultân, and nothing has occurred up to this time to bring in question the wisdom of the choice. The Nasr-ul-Mulk was for a number of years ambassador at the Court of St. James, and is familiar with European customs and character. His English sympathies are indicated by the fact that he caused his grandson to be educated at Oxford University. Although age and climate have produced a certain natural indolence in his movements, he is a man of far more decided and energetic disposition than his predecessor. He possesses a firm will and a certain brusqueness of manner that has a rather tonic effect on the Foreign Office at Teherân, and has tended to brace up the Foreign Legations, who in their relations with the Foreign Office have been made to feel what they were in danger of forgetting, — that Persia is yet a power inspired by self-respect, and demanding respect from those who treat with her. The

effect of this course was soon apparent at the Russian Legation. Accustomed alternately to browbeat and cajole Mirza Seyed Khan, and to use him at will for carrying out the designs of Russia, — as witness the disgraceful treaty of 1884, — the Russian Minister found the altered manner of the reception of his demands at the Foreign Office almost as vigorous as a slap in his face. It was amusing, at the time of the recent strained relations in Afghanistan, to see the long faces with which the Russian Minister and his first dragoman emerged from the Foreign Office after an interview with the Nasr-ul-Mulk.

Like all prominent Persians, the Nasr-ul-Mulk has large landed possessions, both inherited and acquired. These properties include several villages. He has an elegant mansion at Teherân and a very agreeable country-seat in the suburban village of Seâdabad. His long residence abroad gave him a taste for European customs, and both these residences are modelled and furnished somewhat after European styles. Unlike Mirza Seyed Khan, he often entertains the Diplomatic Corps at elegant breakfasts and dinners prepared by a *chef* brought from Paris. In summer, these diplomatic breakfasts are given under a beautiful Persian tent in his garden. This is a style of entertainment quite common in Persia, and might well be adopted by us during the summer-time, when one can make a special arrangement with the clerk of the weather to postpone any northeast storm that may be lurking in the neighborhood.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most prominent members of the present Government of Persia is the Mohper-ed-Doûleh. He has great influence with the Shah, who has bestowed on him the positions of Minister of Mines and Telegraphs, and also the Portfolio of Commerce, both of which he holds now, besides being recently sent to Berlin to establish diplomatic relations between Germany and

<sup>1</sup> Since the foregoing paragraphs were penned, I have learned that the Nasr-ul-Mulk has at last been superseded as Minister of Foreign Affairs by Yahia Khan.



Persia. The secret of his power it is not quite easy to explain, for he is a man of very few words, somewhat haughty in demeanor, and so careful of expressing an opinion as to produce the impression that he has no opinions to express. But it is probably these very qualities that aid his influence with his sovereign. He approaches that august ruler with less of the fawning speech and manner characteristic of oriental courtiers, whose hollowness the Shah readily perceives. This seems to indicate sincerity. He also has some executive ability, and his views are decidedly progressive. The latter fact probably has great weight with the Shah, who is himself inclined to introduce the use of modern inventions and discoveries into his dominion, but finds himself hampered in his purposes by the opposition of the mollâhs and the intrigues of courtiers in Russian pay.

Another strong character who enjoys the confidence of the Shah is Mirza Aboul Vahâd Khan, the Assefêt-ed-Doïlêh, or Governor of the Province of Khorassân. Before promotion to his present post this dignitary was Minister of Commerce. The Shah showed his wisdom in appointing him to this important frontier province, for it is there that Russia is at present most seriously menacing Persia; and Russia has no enemy more bitter than the Assefêt-ed-Doïlêh. At the time of the strained relations resulting from Russia's recent movements on Herât, the Governor issued the most stringent orders against trading over the northeastern frontier, aware that at that time Russia was endeavoring, through contact with Persian traders, to seduce the people of Khorassân from their allegiance to the Shah. Several traders who ventured to disobey these orders were beheaded. The Assefêt-ed-Doïlêh is a short, thick-set man of decided although agreeable manners. When at Teherân he lives in sumptuous style. In his sentiments he is a strong Mahometan, slow to accept foreign ideas, and is by some considered a fanatic. I am inclined to think, however, that while

he is naturally a conservative, self-interest enters partly into his plan of action. But self-interest certainly does not always hold control over his tongue, for he is a man of high spirit and irascible temper, and has repeatedly allowed his feelings to get the better of his discretion even in the presence of the Shah himself, who to preserve the dignity essential to his power was obliged on one occasion to order the rash Minister to immediate execution, and he was saved only by the earnest solicitation of the Prime Minister. I must admit that the breezy, straightforward manner of the Assefêt-ed-Doülêh was rather agreeable to me as a contrast to the honeyed speech of which one hears so much at Teherân.

They tell a good story, which well illustrates the rough repartee in which the ignorant Persian is almost as quick as an Irish peasant. The Assefêt-ed-Doülêh, when he was Nasir-i-Doülêh, was annoyed by a donkey-driver, who not only made no effort to turn his asses out of the road to allow the Ministers' equipage to pass, but resented the attempts to drive him out of the way.

"What business have you, who are but a driver of asses, to fill up the road and stop my passage!" cried the Nasir-i-Doülêh.

"I have as much right to the road, being a man driving asses, as you have, who being an ass art driving men!" bluntly retorted the ass-driver.

The Nasir-i-Doülêh was so much pleased with the impudence and wit of the fellow, that he bade his outriders to leave him unmolested.

## CHAPTER X.

### MOUNTAINEERING IN PERSIA.

IT was pleasant enough at Serassiâb. The porch, or open veranda, where the busy days were so delightfully passed, was musical with the sound of falling water which poured into a tank encircled by a row of graceful pillars. At the end of a dense avenue of plane-trees an open pavilion could be seen, supported by columns and walls faced with glazed bricks colored turquoise-blue, orange-yellow, and black.

But the object of this chapter is to give an account of a little trip among the Elburz Mountains after health and trout. A branch of this range, called the Shimrân, arose behind our house at Serassiâb to an altitude of thirteen thousand feet. In our evening rides we could also see the snowy cone of Demavênd towering above the nearer range to a far greater height, still rosy in the glow of departing day when all the nearer landscape had put on the sober mantle of twilight.

The Lar — the objective point of our journey — is perhaps forty-five miles from Serassiâb. It was essential, therefore, that we should take with us tents, bedding, crockery, and sufficient animals to carry ourselves, the servants, and the outfit to so considerable a journey. This required much talking and an occasional use of the whip when the insolence of the *charvadârs*, or muleteers, interfered with the clinching of a bargain. After several days of preparation, all seemed ready for the start. One curious circumstance about the journey, however, was the fact that we were obliged to proceed mostly by night, because the

intolerable heat which prevails in Persia during the greater part of the year makes it impossible to travel in the middle of the day. Our departure was therefore so timed that we could have the benefit of the full moon.

Once on the road, and winding through narrow lanes at a moderate walk, we were able to observe what an imposing procession we made. At the head rode the *giliodâr*, or equerry, mounted on a white Shirâzee Arab stallion. Two gentlemen followed, and next to them came several ladies on donkeys. The *tachtravân* was next in order, carrying the invalid of the party. This is a curious vehicle, peculiar to Persia and Turkey. It is a covered litter borne between two mules, and contains sliding doors and windows. It is rendered reasonably comfortable by mattresses on which a person can lie at full length. The *tachtravân* of the wealthy is sometimes handsomely decorated, and mention is made of kings of Persia using it many centuries ago. But generally this conveyance is more heavily constructed than is necessary, owing to the difficulty of finding wood which is at once light and strong in Persia. The march of a *tachtravân* is necessarily tediously slow, but it is announced for a long distance by the strings of jangling bells carried by the gayly decorated mules, which do not, however, seem to appreciate the wealth and weight of ornament lavished upon them. On level roads the *tachtravân* is a real luxury; but when there is a steep ascent or descent combined with bad roads, this form of locomotion is not only very trying to the mules, but is also a severe strain on the rider, both on account of the exertion requisite in preserving his position and the nervous strain caused by a constant apprehension of being hurled over a precipice.

At the head of the leading mule marched a stately Arab, — Abdullah Ibn Hassân. His gait was that of a prince. He was six feet in height, sparely built and perfectly erect. A



camel's-hair tunic reached to the ankles. His head was muffled with a striped mantle bound around the forehead with a white cord. His swarthy features were haggard but handsome, and the dark orbs which flashed from under cavernous brows were marked by a proud and romantic melancholy, deepening into



A VILLAGE SANTON.

a glow of injured pride tinged with sadness when he was refused a backsheesh, as if he would reproach you for having disappointed the confidence he had reposed in your elevated generosity. What a standard is to an army was this son of the desert to our humble train. He gave to it such a bearing that he seemed to be the chief person in it, instead of a poor mule-driver earning twenty cents a day traversing the wastes

of an ancient land, — a mule-driver by descent, and the father of mule-drivers of the future. In looking at Abdallah Ibn Hassân, I was led by a whimsical turn of the mind to think of La Fotheringay, in Thackeray's "Pendennis." Did that great reader of human nature realize when he delineated her character what a type she is of a numerous class, who are so richly endowed with lofty mien and aspect that until they open their mouths and betray themselves they pass for something far higher than they are.

Our sumpter mules had already been sent on several hours in advance, in order that the tents and supper might be ready for our arrival at the proposed camping-ground. Our path led us at first through narrow lanes of Tejrîsch and the adjoining village of Dezeshoob, and gave occasion to a considerable disturbance among the curs of those villages. Our passing also brought on our heads numerous remarks — not always complimentary, as we were foreigners and Christians — from the idlers smoking under the trees at the wayside places of refreshment. We were also saluted by the clamor of mingled blessings and curses from the professional beggars seated by the roadside, among whom must be included the filthy and half-idiotic santons, who in a disgusting condition of nudity and dirt depend upon the benevolence of the faithful for alms. They build a low hovel of mud under a wide-spreading tree, and pass their unprofitable lives in what they are pleased to consider service to God. Owing to their alleged sanctity, one cannot always treat these lazy fellows as they deserve; namely, with a sound thrashing for their impudence.

Emerging from Dezeshoob, we soon came to the superb country residence of the Naïb-e-Sultanêh, third son of the Shah, and Minister of War. The grounds are arranged in terraces, with pools and spouting fountains on each terrace, surrounded by shrubbery and lofty trees laid out with a pleasingly artistic

air of negligence. After leaving the shaded avenues surrounding these elegant grounds, our train moved slowly over a treeless plain, which gradually ascended until the road entered the mountains. At nightfall we found ourselves in a pass noted for brigandage; and although the road has for some time been comparatively free from danger, and we had a military escort with us, it was deemed prudent for the party to close up its ranks, as stragglers might be attacked in the dark. The moon came to our assistance early, and was bright and welcome indeed when we reached the summit at nine. We found the ridge so abrupt that we passed at once from the ascent to the descent; and here the greatest care was required to reach the plain without accident. The road for some distance followed the edge of an excessively steep mountain, which divided the gorge in twain like a curtain. To make room for the road the sharp edge of this elevation had been cut down. In many places we could look on either hand into a black ravine far below, shrouded in deep and seemingly fathomless gloom, untouched by the moon, which fortunately lighted up the hazardous path we were following. The lower half of the descent was very trying, as the road was there composed of loose shingle, and, besides being uncomfortably steep, often branched off in various directions. A party which had preceded us on a previous night lost their way in this place, and did not find it again until daylight. It was also with great difficulty that the mules were able to turn the abrupt corners of a precipitous, zigzag road without accident to the *tachtravân*.

Having at last accomplished the descent without mishap, we entered on a narrow plain, and soon reached a wayside resting-place with the usual *chenâr*, or plane-tree, which marks such spots in Persia. Under the enormous spreading shade of this tree were two or three booths offering bread, fruits, and tea to travellers; a fountain adjoining furnished us a grateful



draught. On leaving this place we came to a deep rushing torrent, called the Jarjé Rood. Here were some remarkable cliffs springing directly from the stream. They were shaped like a stupendous fortress with bomb-proof casements. Several caves in the sides suggested embrasures for cannon.

We crossed the river on a massive stone-bridge supported by arches. In the rainy season the stream is often much wider than we found it, and overflows its banks. It was to this circumstance that the late Emîn-e-Sultân, one of the most prominent men in Persia, owed his title and the origin of his good fortune. The Shah often comes to this spot to hunt, being a skilful and enthusiastic follower of the chase. In a garden near the river he has built a pretty pavilion, and usually takes a number of his wives with him. When the retinue is large, the ladies live in tents. On one of these occasions the river, evidently desirous to show its independence of the royal authority, took a whim to overflow the banks and give the Shah and his attendants a good wetting. They were aroused from their sleep by the sound of rushing water, and found the river rapidly rising around their couches. In wild terror the royal wives fled to a safer spot, leaving everything behind them, including jewelry to a large amount. One of the lower officers of the court, aware of the loss and with an eye to his own profit, ordered his servants, after the subsidence of the waters, to search high and low for the lost treasures. Their efforts were crowned with success, and the officer caused them to be restored to the royal owners. The Shah was so gratified with the enterprise and zeal shown on this occasion by his subject, that he named him Emîn-e-Sultân, and eventually promoted him to the charge of the mint and other offices of great importance.

A short steep ascent from the bridge along the wall-like face of the lofty banks brought us to a noble plain, so white in the light of the full moon that it looked like a snow-land in the isle



of dreams. Across the plain we now discovered two men approaching us at a tearing gallop. They reined up suddenly on reaching our train, and proved to be two of our servants who were on the lookout for us. After giving us directions as to where to find our tents, they returned to the camp at full speed, to order hot tea to be prepared ready for our arrival. Another weary half-hour followed ere our slow-moving train reached the massive shade of the gigantic plane-tree under which the tents had been spread, by the side of a pool and a brook which emptied into it. It was a most picturesque scene as we alighted, the white tents looming mysteriously in the gloom, lanterns moving hither and thither and flashing in the water, dusky figures grouped around the fire where our supper was cooking, and the broad moon above in the cloudless heaven, braiding silver spangles with the shadows.

The following morning being Sunday, we abandoned ourselves without reserve to the attractions of our camp, happy in the consciousness that we should not have to leave it until the subsequent day. To enjoy one's self by indulging in the luxury of absolute indolence, entirely free from *arrière pensée*, is actually a task rather than a pleasure for most Americans. But one soon learns in the Orient that the only way to obtain the full benefit of rest, or entirely to appreciate the opulent attractions of Nature, is to lay aside without reserve for the time the business and the burdens of life. Then and then only can one understand that there is enormous gratification in the simple consciousness of existence.

Our camp made quite an imposing appearance, consisting as it did of several large sleeping tents and a number of smaller ones for the soldiers and servants. We took our meals off a camp-table spread under the great *chenâr*. The tree was probably one thousand years old, and measured thirty feet in circumference several feet from the ground. A few feet higher the

gnarled trunk divided into several large branches, which towered like the columns of a temple. This idea was intensified by the smooth gray bark that incased and gave them the appearance of hewn stone. Besides this patriarch of the plain, a beautiful grove of willows shaded our encampment. This spot is a favorite resort for the Shah, who comes here to hunt the panthers and ibexes that are to be found in the neighborhood.

I should mention that we were on the edge of the village of Gelandevêk, at the head of a plain inclosed by mountains. This plain is called Hassârdaré, or plain of a thousand valleys, because it is so undulating as to produce the effect of numerous separate plains, which again in turn wind into the gorges of the mountains. The camp was at the entrance of one of these gorges, which in this case was a narrow winding ravine scooped out of a ridge whose castellated peaks towered several thousand feet higher. At sunset this mountain was arrayed in a superb robe of purple. In a clearing between the wood and the village extended an open field yielding melons and vegetables. In the evening the lads of the village sported there in a manner very like that of boys in Christian lands. The tall gardener, whose beard was curiously dyed an orange-red with henna, also came down at that hour with his wife and daughter to gather melons. The women seemed to have hard work of it to keep their faces concealed with a loose mantle, and at the same time to pluck the fruit. They were far less anxious about revealing their persons than their faces.

On the following day the gardener appeared at my tent door with a most attractive dish of honey in the comb. He offered it as a present, but we knew perfectly well what he meant by this. As we have already explained, it is a custom and privilege of the lower classes in Persia to bring what they call presents to those above them, and to expect a corresponding pecuniary present in return. When this privilege is not abused

by being exercised too often, it is usual to accept the present. But the custom is sometimes annoying, and I always reserved to myself the privilege of declining the offering. In this case the honey was too tempting and the demeanor of the man too respectful to admit of refusal, and he went away happy with a sum twice the value of the honey, and equal to the profits of several days' labor in Persia.

A while after this episode a troop of veiled women, stately in the long mantle which muffled them from head to foot, visited the camp. They had learned that a physician was one of our party, and desired to consult him. Improvising a medical office at once under a tree, the doctor sat on one of the roots and proceeded to feel pulses and examine tongues. The faces of his patients he could not see. It was a novel sight to observe this group of ignorant peasant women, in parti-colored garb, seated in a circle before the doctor on the grass, giving him an account of their ailments. The traveller in the East is often requested to prescribe for the sick, be he actually a physician or no. I have been repeatedly requested to serve in this capacity, and sincerely hope that the list of mortality in non-Christian lands has not been thereby increased. Luckily, neither coroner nor municipal records exist in the happy Orient. The physician, however, labors under a peculiar disadvantage in Persian practice, even if his qualifications are not too carefully examined; for, as I have indicated above, he is not permitted to see the face of his female patient, and is thus deprived of one of the most important points in forming a diagnosis. The native doctors require no other diploma to enter on the profession of medicine than a supply of infinite assurance. They are generally itinerants who go from village to village, and announce their profession on arriving. Extraordinary remedies are given. Having prescribed, the physician decamps before the results become perceptible, aware that a common sequence is death. Fortunately for the

practitioners, this result is generally quietly accepted as the fiat of Kismêt, or Destiny.

The question which came up for our consideration on Monday was the selection of the best route for us to take over the tremendous ridge that rose between us and the Lar. Having an invalid in a tachtravân to take with us, the problem was much more serious than that of deciding which of various comfortable routes one might select to go from Boston to New York; for there are many roads in Persia over which it is impossible to take a tachtravân. We had intended to go by the route of Lavassân, in two stages. But hearing that the road over the Aftcha Pass was practicable, and could be made in one stage, we found ourselves in a dilemma. Nothing is more difficult than to obtain precise and correct information about routes and distances in oriental countries. In order to settle the question, we sent for the head-men or elders of the village, who came to the camp and gave respectful attention to our inquiries, seated under the great plane-tree and smoking with much dignity. They assured us that the route over the Aftcha Pass was every way the most desirable. They pronounced the road to be good, and the distance, they affirmed, could be accomplished in eight hours. The former statement proved measurably true, while the latter we unfortunately found on trial to be correct only for horsemen excellently mounted and going at a gallop over many parts of the route, which was manifestly out of the question with such a train as ours.

After the departure of these worthies, we ordered the tents to be struck and the sumpter-mules to be loaded and proceed in advance to prepare our next camp for us. The loading of so many impedimenta on some forty mules — my own share of the number amounting to sixteen — was a task of several hours; but by one p. m. the loads were all started. After a comfortable siesta under the trees and a right jolly meal, we also got the



passenger-train under way at half-past four P. M., — the very earliest hour we dared to start, owing to the intensity of the heat before sunset; but we had many hours of the hardest mountain travel in Persia before us, and were anxious to reach our cots before one A. M. When one considers that in our party were included an invalid and two infants with their nurses, two small boys under five, and a half-dozen spinsters ranging from six to fifteen years, and some twenty-five animals loaded with passengers of various ages, the arduousness of the undertaking can be better appreciated, especially if to this be added the fact



OLD BRIDGE AT GELANDEVÊK.

that we were to wind along the edge of tremendous precipices over a pass thirteen thousand feet above the sea. I should add, that the nurses and babies were carried in *kajerêhs*, which are basket-like frames slung on either side of a mule, and sheltered by a curtain. The peculiar advantage of the *kajerêh* on a narrow cliff-road lies in the probability that if it hits the side of a rock, the mule will be thrown off his balance and land with his load at the bottom of a ravine.

Our road lay for a couple of miles over the plain of Hassârdarê, crossing several streams that were nearly dry. One of them was spanned by a picturesque but dilapidated bridge with a single arch. I subjoin a sketch of it, as it is a characteristic example of the Persian mode of bridge-building. Some of the timbers employed for a staging during its construction are still to be seen there. It is a curious habit of the Persians to leave

parts of the scaffold timbers obtruding, even in elaborate structures; for what reason it is difficult to tell.

Gradually ascending, we entered and passed through the village of Kardân, and came to a waterfall at the left of two bridges. The old one was a narrow and ticklish structure, without a parapet and wide enough for only one horse. Happily our train was not obliged to risk this perilous passage, for a handsome new bridge of hewn stone, broad and parapeted, had recently been constructed by the side of the old one.

From this place the road rapidly ascended, passing along the edge of a ridge and looking on either hand over a landscape of the most magnificent description. On the lovely slopes and glens below, half veiled in the creeping shadows of the late afternoon or smitten by the long shafts of the setting sun, tilled fields, gardens, and picturesque villages were clustered in agreeable variety. Ever and anon, too, between the foliage one caught the magical gleam of a mountain stream dashing down over crags and precipices. Above, and on either hand, sublime peaks lifted their pinnacles golden in the radiance of a cloudless sunset. Those travellers who speak in light terms of the scenery of Persia are either unobservant of what they might see or wedded to a special type of landscape; what is more likely, they have never been over the Aftcha Pass.

The road here was excellent, and showed real engineering skill. Two hours' ride brought us to the village of Aftcha, which, like many villages of Persia, is an appanage of one of the men in power. His country residence may be seen prominently situated on one side of the ravine, at the bottom of which rests the village in a picturesque confusion of peasants' houses grouped amid the foliage in a most irregular but attractive manner. The steep, narrow entrance to the village was blocked by a drove of loaded donkeys as we approached. It was a characteristic incident of Persian travel when our giliodâr dashed headlong

into this clumsy throng, thrashing heartily from side to side, hitting both men and animals with no trifling blows of his whip, and driving them back in a side lane to make room for our train. As we clattered noisily through the tortuous streets of the village, every one came forth to gaze on such an unwonted scene. It was no small matter to force the *tachtravân* through the narrow lanes, around abrupt corners. The difficulty experienced here was a foretaste of the obstacles that we were to encounter higher up the mountain.

The village of Aftcha may be considered typical. Persian villages are divisible into two classes, — those of the plains, treeless and surrounded by a high quadrangular wall of sun-dried bricks to protect them against the inroads of *Turkomâns* and *Kurds*; and those distinguished for their watercourses and trees in ravines or lofty mountains, where springs and torrents encourage the growth of plane, mulberry, and poplar trees and orchards, and allow irrigating channels for the nourishment of vegetable plantations. Nothing can exceed the aridity of the vast plains of this ancient land; while on the other hand nothing can surpass the rank luxuriance of the verdure of its mountain villages, through which the roaring torrents dash all the year round.

Aftcha is one of these. As we emerged from its lanes and opened the upper side of the hamlet, we heard the roaring of a cataract tumbling over a precipice, and endowing the village to which it gave a name with rural comfort and beauty. In a small field on the right reapers were cutting the wheat with sickles, or gathering fruits in baskets and mantles. After crossing the torrent over an arched, parapeted bridge of colored bricks, we began to climb the mountain in earnest. We could see the road above us very distinctly, — a serpentine line following the zigzag crest of an ascending spur, which led to the entrance of the pass. The sun was now below the mountains, but

the twilight lingered for some time, and we made good headway before it was actually too dark to proceed with safety. On returning over the same road in broad daylight, I confess there were parts where the precipices on either hand gave one a giddy suggestion of danger, especially with a skittish horse or a tachtravân.

Fortunately, when the darkness fairly set in, rendered doubly intense by the lofty mountain walls on either hand, we came to a small level nook, where it was deemed best to cry a halt and wait for the rising of the moon. Every one dismounted, and the animals were detailed in groups to several of the attendants. Several large bowlders were scattered over this mimic plateau, and in a few moments our party had found a shelter from the night-wind under these rocks. Lanterns and the fitful gleam of a fire soon shed a flickering radiance over the moving figures, while at the same time they added extraordinary mystery to the opaque background of mountains that seemed to spring up abruptly only a few yards from us. In the mean time the ever-present samovâr was busy heating water, and we found a capital cup of Russian tea refreshing indeed. To this we added cold boiled eggs and some sandjiâk, or unleavened bread. Two of the horses now took it into their heads to kick up their heels, and make a bold strike for liberty, dashing away towards Aftcha. This might have proved a serious incident, for they were both spirited animals, and it is no easy matter the catching of runaway horses in such a place and at such an hour. Spectre-like they flew down the road, one white as snow, the other black as night, but both a shadowy gray in the gloom. A dozen men at once started in pursuit, while my hostler, springing on a quick horse, spurred after the fugitives. The flying bridles probably impeded their steps, for in a few minutes they were caught and brought back. But on remounting my black Afghan, I found his ambition for a night adventure was not quite over.



After resting an hour, we began to see the light of the moon touching the peaks on the left side of the gorge and gradually creeping down the mountain-side, which changed from a black form to the appearance of a white mist. Then, with lanterns carried by the outriders both in front and rear of the procession in order to indicate the road and prevent straggling, we recommenced our journey. The giliodâr received strict orders to keep a careful lookout; on the appearance of a sign that any one was falling behind, the head of the column was to be stopped and a messenger sent to ascertain the difficulty and dress up the line again. Of course we travelled single file, and this made it important that we should keep together; for the climb before us was full of danger, and if any accident should happen to some one in the rear of the column it might be some time before he would be missed, unless we exercised unusual vigilance.

Next to the giliodâr followed the tachtravân, with a footman on each side to steady it in rough places. Immediately behind rode two gentlemen, ready to spring off their horses any instant the tachtravân should be in danger of slipping over a precipice. After them followed a miscellaneous train of horses and donkeys, with kajevehs and ladies and children; lastly, came several attendants and the escort of soldiers.

The moon long delayed bestowing the advantage of her rays on our devious path. The farther we entered into the heart of the mountains, the darker it became; for the mountain between us and the moon, although the sky above it was glowing as with a white fire, arose as we approached it and tantalized us with the constant hope of seeing the moon, while it persistently screened it from our view, and thereby increased the gloom which enveloped the hazardous cliff-road up which we were slowly climbing. Every one was carefully watching his own animal, lest a false step in the dark should hurl him into the gorge below, when a sharp cry rang from the rear of the

train, which was still on the zigzag below. At once a halt was called, and a messenger was sent to find out the cause of the outcry. It was discovered that a loaded mule with a servant on his back had fallen over the edge of the road and rolled down. The man fortunately saved himself as the animal went over, but the mule was recovered somewhat the worse for wear, although able to continue the climb. Mules, like cats, are hard to kill.

Again the long procession began to wend its slow way upward over a terrific piece of road, which often consisted of smooth rocks confusedly thrown together. On looking at that part of the road afterwards by daylight, I was astonished that we escaped without serious accident. Many of the party now found it preferable to dismount and climb on foot, until the moon finally burst over the ridge with a light scarcely dimmer than that of day. But once again came the cry of distress from the hollow below. This time another mule had fallen over, with damage to its load; but it had caught on a ledge and escaped with only some severe bruises.

But if the moonlight enabled us to see our way better, it also revealed to us more clearly the depths of the yawning gulf on our right, enveloped in mysterious gloom. The road, although a very good one in the main for a Persian mountain-road, was of the most desperate character in places, while the short zigzags and sharp angles of a path along one side of a steep gorge made it excessively difficult to carry the *tachtravân* and *kajevêh*s without accident. Many a time those riding near to the former leaped off their horses and rushed to the rescue, when those who were steadying the *tachtravân* found their strength insufficient to prevent the mules from slipping over the cliff or capsizing the heavy and cumbrous vehicle. For the mules the labor was terrible, and I expected momentarily to see one of them give out. At one point of imminent peril there were eight men tugging at

the mules and the tachtravân to force them safely around a sharp angle in the road.

In the mean time the hours were slipping by, and the time set for arriving at our camp had passed; but it was, notwithstanding, painfully evident that scarce half our arduous task was yet accomplished.



THE TACHTRAVÂN IN THE APTCHA PASS.

Finally, at two in the morning, we scaled the Aftelia Pass and stood on the summit of the ridge, thirteen thousand feet above the level of the sea. We had safely accomplished a feat never before undertaken on that road. For the first time a tachtravân had scaled this Pass, and an American lady was the first woman who had ventured on the undertaking.



From the sharp ridge on which we halted a few moments we looked down into the great volcanic valley of the Lar, twenty-five hundred feet below, and discerned at the farther side the shadowy form of the stupendous cone of Demavênd. Although yet thirty miles from us, it soared far above our position, and its snows gleamed in the light of the moon like a mighty phantom hovering in the heavens.

As it was two hours yet before dawn, and all were weary and hungry, it seemed proper that we should now dismount and find the rest we so much needed. But this was a pleasure to be deferred for several weary hours, for we had still to pick our way down the other side of the ridge, and travel miles and miles across the plain to the spot where our servants had been directed to pitch the tents. The descending road, although following a zig-zag course, was on the whole less difficult than the one we had just ascended; and by four in the morning the entire party were fairly on the plain and passing the camps of nomads, whose fierce watch-dogs gave us a boisterous greeting. I may say here, that one of the greatest obstacles encountered in climbing the Afcha Pass were the large trains of mules and donkeys carrying rice and coal to Teherân and the south of Persia. These stubborn animals are no respecters of persons: nor can more be said of their uncouth drivers. Whenever one of these trains came in sight, our giliodâr and attendants had their hands full forcing the unruly animals to keep on the outside of the road.

At last dawn began to break on the heights of Demavênd, which now towered above us mightier than ever. "Where can the tents be?" "I wonder if we shall ever get there!" were the exclamations constantly uttered by the ladies and children, who were half dead from exhaustion. Around us on every side were the rock-turreted walls of the great mountains inclosing the winding plain. But as dawn deepened into daylight we looked in



vain for a glimpse of the longed-for camp. We were fording a rapid stream when a horseman appeared over a knoll galloping towards us at full speed. It proved to be one of my servants, coming to guide us. Here at last was a ray of hope; every heart brightened, and all were cheered by the good news that the camp was only "half a *farsâkh*," or two miles, distant. The snow on the top of Demavênd blushed into a warm roseate hue as the sunlight burst into the broad effulgence of day. Yet on and on we journeyed without rest, stared at here and there by the flocks of mares and their foals pasturing in the meadows, or by the tawny, unkempt nomad children who romped quite naked before the black tents. The two miles had been more than accomplished over the devious road which led us across one of the most desolate and extraordinary landscapes on the globe, before it dawned on us that the "half a *farsâkh*" was a mere vague statement of the distance to the camp. No tents were in sight, although we now entered on a portion of the valley enlarging into a plain three or four miles wide. The horses and mules began to show signs of exhaustion; one of the mules carrying *kajevêhs* came down on his knees on level ground and threw a child out on the turf, face foremost. But now another messenger, who had been sent ahead to reconnoitre, returned to assure us that he had found the camp just around the foot of a high mountain directly before us, which concealed Demavênd. Fording the rapid current of the Lar River and skirting this mountain, we at last came to a turn where the camp appeared, yet a mile away, and the tremendous dome of Demavênd springing ten thousand feet abruptly above the plain, apparently close at hand, but actually nearly fifteen miles distant.

It was well past eight o'clock when we at last reached our tents in the valley of the Lar, and dismounted, sixteen hours after we had started from Gelandevêk.

The first word that ran unanimously through the camp was,

"Tea!" Fortified by several draughts of the best refreshment for the weary yet discovered since the time of Adam, we resolved ourselves into a committee of the whole, to visit the land of Nod. "Blessings on him who invented sleep!" ejaculated Sancho Panza, and the sentiment found hearty response in every bosom that memorable morning when we reached the valley of the Lar.

On returning to ourselves again, after a nap of long duration, we all once more with one accord cried, "Breakfast!" The universal longing found expression by a vigorous clapping of hands. This is a novel way, you may say, to express a sentiment of hunger. I should explain that this is a method of summoning servants in the East. When the servants raised the door of the tent they knew what we wanted, and said, *Bally, bally, hazûr est*, — which is to say, "Yes, it is ready." Having satisfied the wants of "our lower nature," as pietists and philosophers would say (rather hastily, as it would seem, considering how dependent the brain is on the stomach), we were in a proper condition to take a survey of the situation. The camp, we found, was planted about the centre of a rolling plain several miles long and about two miles wide, completely hemmed in by rocky mountains, absolutely bare, but lovely in their very savageness, painted as they were by the various gray or ruddy hues peculiar to volcanic formations. About a thousand feet above the plain was a large patch of snow. At the south-western end the mountains separated, making a passage for the river. At the opposite end, also, the plain widened and gave into it a larger valley meeting it at right angles. But across the entrance stood a mighty eminence crowned by Nature with rocks resembling a feudal castle; and beyond and far above soared the great mountain of Persia, — Demavênd, the majestic and sublime, the peer of the noblest kings of the mountain world. The plain we were on was ten thousand nine hun-

dred feet above the sea, and Demavênd rose ten thousand feet higher. No vegetation was visible on the deeply seamed slopes of its cone; but the summit was crowned with eternal snow, which extended down several thousand feet, mostly in the clefts of the deep ravines and precipices. I found by measurement that the slope of the cone has an average inclination of thirty-six degrees, — which is remarkable when one considers the extent of the slope, or compares it with some of the steepest of the world's volcanic peaks.

The valley of the Lar, although destitute of any sign of shrub or tree, is yet full of interest to the lover of Nature. The river Lar winds along the centre of the valley. This is a stream fifty to one hundred yards wide; the current is somewhat turbid, and rushes with great rapidity. The low banks rise gradually on either hand towards the mountains. These undulating slopes were dotted with black goat's-hair tents of the nomads, or with moving patches, which as they approached were resolved into large flocks of goats. Herds of mares were also frequently seen, accompanied by their colts, browsing on the short herbage, and wandering at will over this fenceless valley of desolation. These mares belonged to the Shah, and I was told that fully two thousand are annually kept at the Lar, breeding horses for the cavalry of Persia.

The Lar Valley is in reality the bed of an enormous crater. At some remote period volcanic peaks have been upheaved above its crust, which have divided its surface into the chain of narrow and winding valleys that form the present great valley of the Lar. Demavênd, the monarch of this elevated solitude, is of course a volcano, although it has been quiet for many ages. But the sulphur constantly forming at the top, together with the vapor and the extreme heat just below the surface, indicate that although there is no record of any eruption of Demavênd, it is still by no means dormant. The



presence of this great scene of volcanic action on the borders of the Caspian Sea appears to be consistent with the now well-known law that volcanoes are usually found near the sea.

For the members of Alpine clubs Demavênd offers attractions well worth considering. Here is a peak a mile higher than Mont Blanc, which can be ascended with comparative ease by



MOUNT DEMAVÊND FROM THE CAMP IN THE LAR VALLEY.

any one of strong legs and sound lungs and heart. The time is coming when Mount Demavênd will be far more widely known and appreciated than it is now. In Persia, of course, this grand old peak has been a wonder sung in the legends and poetry of the country from the earliest ages. It was the haunt of the Deev Sefeed, or White Demon, vanquished by Rustém. Among its tremendous cliffs was perched the vast eyrie of the Simurgh, the magic bird which nourished Zal, the son of Salâm, when



exposed to destruction by his father on account of his light hair; blue eyes and light hair not being considered of good omen in Persia. These and numerous other legends associated with Mount Demavênd are doubtless based on historic events shrouded in the dawn of history.

Our camp was pitched on the brow of a low plateau overlooking the river Lar. The party divided itself into three sections. My own camp included seven tents, with those for the servants. Our sleeping-tent was pitched on the edge of one of the numerous musical brooks that contribute to feed the deep flood of the Lar. A curious feature attending the supply of water in the valley are numerous boiling springs. The bubbling action to which they are subject is intermittent, occurring every few minutes. Where our camp lay, forty of these springs were clustered within the space of a third of a mile; whence the spot is called *Shehel Chesmé*, or "Forty Springs." Besides this group of forty springs, I may mention, among other interesting objects in the Lar Valley, the Whitewater River, which enters the Lar a milk-white stream tinged with a faint suggestion of green. Near its source is found the Devil's Mill. It is externally represented by a large ferruginous rock, with two apertures a few feet apart. On standing near the rock one hears a deep, perpetual, and mysterious roar far down in the bowels of the earth, as if demons were engaged in forging weapons for another war against the race of man. Naturally no one has ever ventured down to see the mighty works going on below, nor ever will in all probability; for a mephitic gas of deadly potency exhales from the openings in the rock, that causes instant death to every living thing that breathes it. Around the rock there is ever a score or two of birds which have fallen dead on inhaling the air, and when I was there a bear was lying at the entrance stark and stiff.

I followed the course of the Lar River to where it rushes

roaring out of a Tartarean gorge at Peloure, and is joined by several other streams. After the junction the Lar is called the Harhaz, and becomes one of the most important streams in Persia. I have seen no river scenery elsewhere much grander than is the gorge of the Harhaz. The river rushes deep and strong at the bottom of a narrow abyss which it has cloven for itself in the long course of ages. Hundreds, and in some places thousands, of feet above rise the wall-like precipices. Here and there far up on the green shelves are clumps of dense verdure and picturesque hamlets reached by winding and dizzy paths.

An interesting feature of the Lar Valley is also found in the *Iliots* who resort thither in summer with their flocks. *Iliot*, or more properly, *Iliyât*, is the name applied to the numerous nomadic tribes of Persia, who to the number of nearly a million, under different names and in distinct clans, roam over the wilds with numerous flocks and herds. The *Iliyâts* of the Lar informed me that wandering as they may appear, they are yet guided by invariable laws and habits. When the Lar Valley is covered to the depth of many feet with a dense mass of snow, these shepherds resort to the fertile district of Veramin, southeast of Teherân. When summer comes once more, they scale the wild passes that surround Demavênd, and deploy their flocks over the volcanic valley to nibble the scanty herbage. But there is nothing random in this movement. By a sort of unwritten law each family and sept recognizes the rights of the others; and thus from year to year, each without interference pitches its black goat's-hair tent in the same place. Every night the flocks are counted, and each month the tax-collector comes round and gathers in the monthly levy of four shahis (or three cents) on every sheep.

It may seem strange that in such a lonely spot, where notwithstanding the presence of herdsmen and herds one was almost

oppressed by the savage sublimity of the landscape which inclosed us from the world and forced us to study the stars, and in a spot so elevated and so difficult of access, one should come to fish for trout, and, what is more, find them in abundance. But such indeed is the case. The river Lar is famed for its speckled trout; and we encamped on its banks well provided with the best rods and flies the English market could afford. We found the trout fickle enough, as elsewhere, and could never tell when or where to find them, — some days “coy and hard to please,” and other days so abundant that magnificent strings of fish, averaging upwards of half a pound each, adorned the tent-poles, or graced the board around which we were gathered with appetites whetted by the keen mountain air. We soon discovered that a trait peculiar to these Persian trout was an indifference amounting to contempt for the daintiest flies we coaxingly threw in their way. I concluded the cause of this phenomenon lay partly in the scarcity of flying insects in that altitude. But when we baited our hooks with young grasshoppers or frogs, we discovered the gastronomic weakness of these epicures of the Lar.

After all, however, trouting at the Lar appeared secondary to the magnificent aspects of Nature which constantly arrested the attention wherever one might be. The form of the great mountain pyramid was ever present, varying in appearance with every change of the atmosphere, and yet dominating over all other objects and haunting the imagination like the presence of a spirit. Sometimes, flooded with the glory of morning and dimmed by the haze of golden light, it retired to a vast distance. Then it would advance until it appeared to be but three or four miles away, disclosing a clear, sharp outline and the various ruddy tints of the manifold rocks and abysses that seamed its tremendous slopes. Or, anon, the storm-clouds tossed across its bosom like ocean surges, and the crest alone was visible, as if suspended from the zenith.

But the hour above all others to realize the impressive grandeur of this awful peak was towards evening, seated in the tent-door when the flocks were wending homeward to their fold among the rocks, where the black-eyed daughter of a race of nomads was waiting for their return. When the valley of



A YOUNG MOLLÂH.

the Lar and the mountains which inclosed it were gray in the creeping gloom of twilight, the summit of Demavênd was lit by the roseate reflection of the vanished sun, and glowed like a star in the firmament. At night, when all was dark and no sound broke the silence of the sleeping world except the low sound of the brook, no effect of Nature ever impressed me more deeply than the presence of the great mountain, like a vast shadow thrown up against the stars.



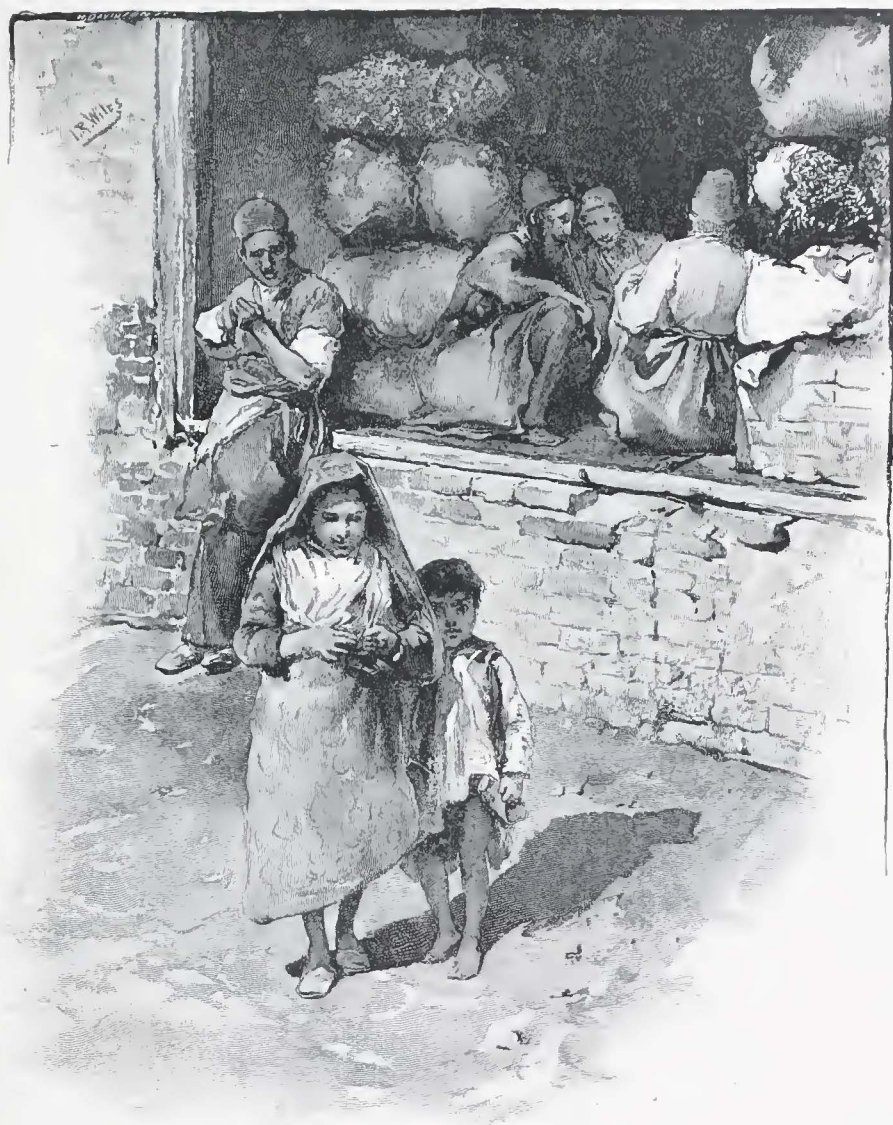
One fact at the Lar reminded us vividly of America. This was the weather. One may well say that in the greater part of Persia there is very little weather. For nine months of the year the skies are serene,—a cloudless azure by day, and at night a purple veil spangled with countless gems. Towards noon a breeze from the plains sways the tree-tops, and at night the cool zephyrs from snow-capped mountains flutter the tops of the slumbering groves. When at last the leaves fall in November, and a spasmodic attempt at winter comes, the bright gleams of sunshine often intervening seem like a protest against such an intrusion upon a settled order of things, and the early spring restores the equilibrium of an atmosphere which has been only temporarily disturbed.

It was therefore with surprise that after enjoying for some months an almost entire absence of weather, we found in the valley of the Lar an abundance of this material. The altitude of the valley, its peculiar form, and the near presence of a lofty peak were sufficient conditions to produce a state of things that went even beyond the preparations we had made to meet it. After we had been there several days the sky began to be obscured with clouds. At once the air became chilly; then the rain began falling, and every afternoon thereafter a heavy thunder-storm came up, grandly rolling through the gorges, but seriously interfering with trout-fishing, and, what was worse, soaking the tents and making them too damp to occupy with safety. On Demavênd the rain changed to snow, and the slopes of the peak were each evening whiter, although the heat of midday carried away much of the snow of the preceding day. Several times the mercury fell from eighty-six degrees at noon to forty-five degrees at night. One after another of our party was attacked with chills, and the horses, accustomed to life on the warmer plains, showed indications of exhaustion.

We decided to return without delay. The tents were struck after breakfast, and the sumpter-mules sent in advance. At that time the heat was intense, and some of our number suffered, with only the shelter of an umbrella to protect them from the sun-rays pouring into the valley, untempered by a breeze. But when at noon the rest of us mounted, we had to do so hurriedly, for a storm was thundering in the gorges, which overtook us before we were fairly out of the valley. Our camp that night was pitched on a green shelf hidden in the heart of the mountain that we had to climb to reach the Aftcha Pass. We arrived there at twilight. The horses were tethered by the side of a brook at the bottom of the ravine. The new moon hung over the dark edge of the mountain, and the fires before the tents added a superb effect to one of those hours that live long in the memory. But after despatching a warm meal we were obliged to seek our cots, for word had been given for the tents to be struck at three.

Defiling slowly up the zigzag road, we reached the summit of the range an hour after sunrise. There we rested, and turned back to take a farewell look at Demavênd from that magnificent point of vantage. A universal acclain of enthusiasm burst from the lips of all. Vertically below us lay the winding valley of the Lar, like the bed of a mighty river; beyond it the ridges rolled away in endless succession, like waves of the sea. A bank of cloud closed in the receding horizon, and lo! far above it, and far above where we stood, rose the summit of Demavênd, majestic and alone. We were satisfied; that view compensated for all the toils and fatigues we had endured. "Let us go!" said one with a sigh; the exquisite sense of pleasure is sometimes allied to pain.

The descent from the Aftcha Pass was much more rapid than the night ascent had been; but although we now had daylight in our favor, the difficulties scarcely seemed less, for the weary



PEOPLE OF AFTCHA.





animals often slipped or stumbled, and to be hurled over the precipices was not a pleasing prospect. Indeed, in some rugged places we were fain to dismount and trust to our feet. For the tachtravân the descent was attended with enormous difficulty, as the weight constantly tended to impel the poor patient mules over the edge of the road; and several narrow escapes did not add to our sense of security. But finally, after several hours of this sort of work, we came to a more level spot. The tall Arab charvadâr here began to pick up small stones and toss them back towards the other muleteers. "Why do you do that?" I inquired. "Because, praise be to God the Preserver! we have at last got over the worst of the road, and now it will be easy going."

Happily his statement proved true, and before long we were again meandering through the winding, leafy lanes of Aftcha. A halt was cried at the shops of the village. These shops were open to the road and facing the orchards along the stream that dashed musically through the place. What attracted us was the fruit, which for the first time in the season we found both good and abundant. In a few moments every one of our party was busily occupied in discussing the delicious grapes and melons which were liberally handed around. It was a curious spectacle, — this little group of Americans on horseback or in litters and kajevêhs, huddled together in a narrow lane of a hamlet in the heart of this distant land, eating fruit with keen zest; while the neighboring roofs, walls, and doorways were thronged with a picturesque assemblage of peasants, — men, women, and children, — gazing with eager eyes at so unexpected a sight. But although the curiosity of these simple people was so great that many a pretty young girl occasionally lowered her veil an instant to get a better view of the strangers, and the bare-legged urchins crept fearlessly among the horses to obtain more certain information concerning these queer foreigners, and the black-

smith forgot to raise his hammer, and the baker, lost in mute surprise, neglected the dough ready to be thrust in the heated oven, politeness reigned over the scene, and not a word was said to disturb our content. On the contrary, several individuals offered to bring us water, or volunteered information about the attractions of this lovely hamlet nestling in a hollow of the mountains and garmented in almost perennial verdure. It is on such occasions that one realizes how very handsome is the race which inhabits Persia. Nowhere are children to be found whose cheeks are more rich in bloom, or whose eyes are kindled with a brighter glow. Large-eyed they are, well formed, in their type of beauty akin to the Greeks and the Spaniards. Nor does squalor or poverty rob the Persians of their native grace.

It was with a considerable sense of relief that we at last arrived at Gelandevêk and found the tents ready for us, by the side of the old plane-tree. There we remained for several days, enjoying the grateful shelter afforded by this venerable tree, under which it is quite possible Marco Polo encamped when passing through Persia eight hundred years ago. Among other facts which he records of this country, is the statement that Persia was in his time celebrated as the land of plane-trees. It was in fact the country called by Polo the "*Arbre Sec*," referring to the plane-tree, which was considered by the early church to be the tree that became dry at the bidding of our Lord.<sup>1</sup>

The tent we occupied was worthy of notice. It formerly belonged to a Persian general, who used it when accompany-

<sup>1</sup> So generally was this the case a thousand years ago that Persia was often spoken of simply as the "*Arbre Sec*" or the "*Arbre Sol*." Marco Polo says: "To the *Arbre Sec*, I mean the land so called." Again he says, "Cassius being so far away as the *Arbre Sec*." And he speaks of Persia, or the eastern part called Khorassân, as the *Arbre Sol*. *Arbre Sec* and *Arbre Sol*, it is now well known, were names given at an early period to the plane-tree, on account of the legends and superstitions which clustered around this solitary and majestic denizen of the arid wastes of eastern Persia. Christians, Magians, and Mahometans alike agreed in giving a legendary importance to the plane-tree. The Christians called it *Arbre Sec* because the dry tree of the New Testament cursed by the

ing the Shah or the army in the field. It was of a pattern peculiar to Persia, where it has been the custom for the Court to spend the summer in tents. Consequently, the making of tents has been carried to great perfection in Persia, and has given good scope to the decorative talents of the native artists. My tent was of the sort called *kalemkâr*, the designs of the interior and the colors being applied or stamped by hand. Nothing could exceed the beauty of the intricate designs which completely covered the interior of this tent. Each panel had in the centre an agreeable representation of the conventional figure of a cypress, or tree of life, which we are in the habit of calling the palm-leaf pattern when we see it on Cashmere shawls. But this is an error; it is the cypress that is intended in this design. Around this figure were wreaths of flowers, interwoven with birds-of-paradise, and at the base of the picture were grotesque elephants pursued by hunters brandishing scimitars. Over the junction of the panels was a pair

Saviour was a sycamore yielding no fruit, like all of the genus. The Magians, or Guebres, esteemed the chenâr one of the chief trees of Paradise. The Mahometans call it to this day *dirâcht-i-fazl*, "the tree of excellence."

There seems to have been a chenâr of extraordinary antiquity at Damghân: Persian history locates the decisive battle between Alexander and Darius near that tree. And the Shah Naméh, or Book of Kings, the great epic poem of Persia, gives a mystical account of an interview held by Alexander the Great with the *Arbre Sec* in the north of Persia. This particular tree represented, it seems, two individuals.—a male and a female. The former from its upper branches gave forth a voice during the day, and the latter by night. From this remarkable source Alexander learned of the approaching termination of his career. Herodotus, in turn, speaks of a venerable chenâr in the centre of Asia Minor which was decorated by Xerxes with precious ornaments of gold, when he was on his march to Greece.

It is evident that the character of the chenâr tree made a great impression on the Oriental mind at an early age. Its enormous size, the smooth, gray, columnar branches springing from the vast rugged trunk, the gratefulness of its shade in a dry and thirsty land, and the enormous age to which it attains, undoubtedly contributed to make the plane-tree, after the cypress, the most remarkable growth of Asiatic vegetation out of India. But the feature of the chenâr that probably produced the most vivid impression is the fact that it seems to grow in the midst of arid solitudes destitute of water, rain, or dew, as if it drew its sustenance from the sun alone. It is true that it often reaches a great size by the side of pleasing watercourses, but does not seem to be dependent on humidity for the attainment of its magnificent verdure and enormous dimensions.



of exquisitely comical lions of the most ferocious aspect, bearing naked swords in their right paws. This is but a feeble description of the graceful and fertile fancy displayed in this intricate and lovely system of decoration. As in all oriental decoration, the individuality of the artist was apparent in a score of repeti-



OLD PLANE-TREE AT GELANDEVÊK.

tions; for while repeating the same general plan in each panel, the artist allowed himself to vary the arrangement of color in several places.

Another charm of our life at Gelandevêk was the arrival of our mails twice a week, brought by courier from Teherân. The capital seemed far away, and yet a swift rider from it could reach our camp in six or seven hours. Letters from our distant home in America had a peculiar charm when read in that quiet scene of rural seclusion, thirty-five to forty days after they had received the stamp of the United States at New York.



## CHAPTER XI.

### A GLANCE AT THE ARTS OF PERSIA.

EVERY school-boy has heard of Persepolis. Few of the great works of the ages have been more copiously described and illustrated than the famous *Chehel Minâr*, or "Forty Pillars," as the Persians call Persepolis; or more often *Tacht-i-Djemsheed*, that is, the "Palace of Djemsheed." It is therefore the more extraordinary that so little is known outside a small circle of specialists concerning the numerous and widely diverse examples of the general love for the beautiful which is demonstrated by the history of the progress of the arts in Persia. The present is perhaps a favorable time to glance at Persian art as it is in a transition state, passing, as it has often done already, from one form of expression to another.

One of the most peculiar features of contemporary Persian art is the evidence it affords that it is coming under European influences. This is not the first time that foreign, and especially occidental, art has directed the development of Persian art; but it is interesting to be able to note from a contemporary point of view the agencies at work in producing such results. There are two methods open for treating such a subject. One is simply to give a running statement of actual facts, as in a catalogue, leaving the reader to form his own conclusions. The other — and to the writer, at least, by far the more fascinating method — is to seek, in however an imperfect way, to trace the various influences to which a national art owes its existence, and to note the keys of national sentiment as they are touched by the hand

of Time, evoking lovely and varied harmonies of expression. As regards Persian art, it is especially true that while endeavoring to follow its present direction, one is so constantly reminded of its past achievements that he cannot well comprehend the present without having also some intelligent perception of its growth in preceding ages. Although it is likewise true, as Mrs. Browning has beautifully observed, that —

“ Every age,  
Through being beheld too close, is ill discerned  
By those who have not lived past it ; ”

yet it may be equally the case in art as well as in poesy, as she further observes, that —

“ Poets should  
Exert a double vision ; should have eyes  
To see near things as comprehensively  
As if afar they took their point of sight,  
And distant things as intimately deep  
As if they touched them. Let us strive for this.”

A characteristic which until recently has been universal to the art of Persia, is its essentially decorative and therefore practical tendency ; hence, also, its spontaneity and its thorough harmony with the acknowledged canons of æsthetic development. Persian art has been essentially industrial art. The Persian artist has displayed his genius and taste in adapting his practice to the materials at hand, and to the influences of his age and clime combined with utility, — much if not all the arts of that historic race being eminently constructive, as may be said when both builder and architect act in concert in designing a handsome building. By ever adhering to the practice of rendering his work subordinate to this principle, the Persian artist has been not only true to his instincts, but has given a vitality and endurance to his work which make it indeed national, and therefore immortal.

They who are wedded to the theory that easel paintings and sculptures, independent of decorative aim, are necessarily the highest form and end of æsthetic expression, would probably relegate the greater part of the art of Persia to an inferior position. None the less the fact remains, that no people was ever more permeated by the true art spirit than the Persians. Grant, if you please, that it is not of the highest order, — as I am inclined to admit, — and yet one may conscientiously ascribe to Persia a very high position among the races that have contributed most to the progress of the arts. The long-continued existence of Persia as an integral people, exhibiting for twenty-five hundred years an almost unbroken career of national and intellectual activity, is almost without a parallel in the history of the arts. The arts of Egypt, Assyria, and Greece culminated long ages ago; so also have those of the Saracen and of many another nation since. But the artistic life of Persia is still active; and it would be a mistake to assume that the present decline of some of the most important branches of Persian art indicates anything more than that it is passing through one of the numerous periods of transition, in which her artists and artisans have seemed to rest while gathering inspiration for a new departure after the pursuit of the ideal.

Consider, for example, the far from dormant genius still displayed at this very time in the practice of architecture in Persia. It was in architecture that she acquired her first triumphs, and her hand has not yet lost its cunning. An interesting and important feature of Persian architecture has always been and still continues to be, with some recent exceptions, its entire adaptability to existing conditions. In the south, where good stone and marble are easily procurable, they entered largely into construction. In the Caspian provinces, where wood is abundant, it is the chief building material, — the roofs being made of wood covered with tiles, and the house decorated

with wooden piazzas such as one might look for in vain elsewhere in Persia. The beams, lintels, and eaves are quaintly, sometimes elegantly, carved and tinted with brilliant hues. The climate also suggests windows of such form, that on being thrown open they leave almost the entire side of an apartment clear to the unobstructed passage of the breeze. This naturally affords a rare opportunity for artistic effects, which has been successfully seized by the Persian architects. It may be affirmed that nowhere have the artistic possibilities offered by the decoration of mullions and casements been more admirably availed of than in Persia. Everywhere one finds himself amazed at the beauty of the designs represented in the windows of Persian houses, facing fountains and gay parterres. Often the effect from within is heightened by the addition of stained glass, rivaling in result the splendor of rose-windows in Gothic cathedrals. It is quite common to see humble dwellings in an obscure hamlet possessing as their sole merit a broad window, with a casement of form and decoration to fill an artist with delight.

Although coming into prominence only since the beginning of this century, Teherân is not a new city, and possesses some old dwellings which offer bits of great beauty to the connoisseur. Owing to the scarcity and expense of wood at the capital, the building materials used in that city and environs are with scarcely an exception sun-burned bricks and *cargêl*, or mud, toughened with straw. The better class of buildings are reinforced at the angles with kiln-burned bricks. One would hardly imagine that out of such prosaic materials the artist could evolve forms of beauty; but the fact that he has done so is a strong additional proof of the innate and universal taste existing in Persia for artistic decoration. By the aid of *gatch*, or plaster-of-Paris, the artisan of Teherân often transforms these mud structures into dreams of loveliness. In the Babylonian provinces of Persia during the Sassanid period, the



same materials were employed. Nor let it be hastily assumed that the skill exhibited in planning or decorating a Teherân house is confined to a few privileged architects, and displayed only on the houses of the wealthy. The arrangement and decoration of the humblest dwellings reveal the skill and refined taste of the simple mechanics employed in its construction. The open porches are supported by slender pillars; these are made of crooked, roughly-trimmed branches of trees. But the plasterer comes and overlays these rude posts with gatch; and measuring with his eye alone, he shapes the gatch into a light and graceful spiral or fluted shaft, crowned by a harmonious capital. It is an interesting fact that the flat-sided, inverted capital most common now in Persia, although variously modified and elaborated, is in its general outline similar to the capitals of the Achaemenid period, although very few Persian architects of our time are probably aware how closely they are following in the footsteps of their ancestors.

The skill of the Persian architect is once more apparent in the method taken to avoid the appearance of weakness or disproportion suggested by roofs of enormous weight supported by slender shafts. Massive piers are therefore alternated with the pillars, or placed at the corners of the colonnades. The result is a singularly effective combination of lightness and strength, grace and repose. Sometimes the effect is increased by the continuation of the capitals into delicate arches, that relieve the otherwise heavy horizontal sky-line of the roof. The consummate skill of the Persian architect is also exemplified in the involved arrangement of arches, by which he obtains great strength with exquisite optical effects.

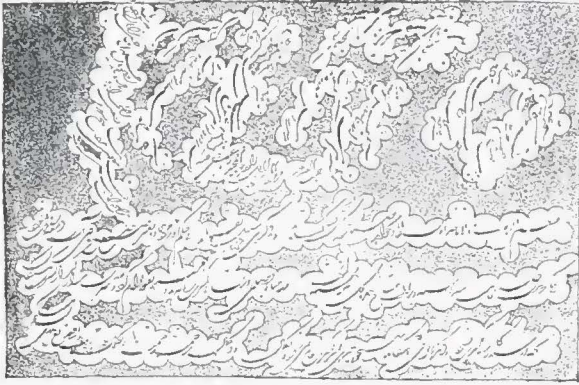
What a wealth of decoration is sometimes lavished on the elegant dwellings of Teherân may be gathered from the view of a portico of the superb country-seat called the Bagh Ferdôse, or Garden of Paradise given on a previous page. It belongs to

the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk, and during his exile has unfortunately been left in an incomplete condition. The entire interior of this stately establishment is consistently carried out on this sumptuous scale, completely bewildering the eye with the opulent fancy and marvellous handiwork displayed. It will be perceived that the scheme of decoration at the Bagh Ferdôse is semi-European, or classic, a sort of bastard Renaissance, — as if an architect of old had for once cut loose from the severe canons of his art, and given the reins to a fancy intoxicated by the freedom it had usurped. This indicates the transition through which Persian art is passing. At the same time it must be admitted that this luxuriant system of decoration is allied to the marvellous beauty of the façade of Machita, constructed during the Sassanid period.

The residence of the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk in the capital is still more foreign in its character, — the façade, although always of gatchi, being altogether of a florid Renaissance type. There is a tendency now becoming apparent among the better class of new buildings rising at Teherân to imitate European ideas; but the imitation is generally far from slavish, being rather an adaptation or assimilation. So long as the tendency proceeds no further than this, no harm can come of it. But it would be a great mistake here, as it is elsewhere, to make absolute imitations of foreign styles; for by so doing the first principle of architecture — adaptation to climate and social conditions — would be ignored. The inclination to borrow art-ideas from abroad has been a characteristic of Persian artists in all ages and in almost every form of the national art, as will appear in the sequel, but never to such a degree as to overcome the contrary tendency to stamp whatever they do with an individuality of their own.

One of the most remarkable features of the Bagh Ferdôse is the wonderful grotto-like hall on the first floor. The apartment

is about sixty feet long by forty feet wide, and carpeted by a single piece of felt made especially for it at Yezd. I may add, that it is common for wealthy Persians to order carpets made in one piece to fit even their largest apartments. I have seen a *namâd*, or felt carpet, eighty feet long and fifty feet wide, without a seam. The name of the maker is woven into it, — as the painter puts his name on his painting. The great weight and bulk of these felt carpets forbid their exportation. Indeed, the chief item of expense connected with them is the cost of trans-



OLD NASCH WRITING. (REDUCED ONE-HALF.)

portation from Yezd and Ispahân, where they are made, to the residence of the purchaser. But nothing in the way of a carpet can be so luxurious and suggestive of comfort as a Persian *namâd* an inch thick.

In entire contrast to the general Renaissance-like scheme of decoration exhibited in the Bagh Ferdôse, may properly be considered the hall of which we have just spoken. Ordinary Persian *gatch*-decoration is called *gatch pourcee*; but that presented in the ceiling of this apartment is designated as *mokarness*. Those familiar with architecture will recognize this honeycomb-like pattern for filling arches as especially Saracenic. Brilliantly colored and gilded, it forms one of the

most striking attractions of the Alhambra and other celebrated oriental monuments. Few are aware that this beautiful style owes its origin to the Persians, from whom it was borrowed, like several other important features appropriated by artistic nations. The principle of the arch, so thoroughly understood in Persia at this time, was apprehended and practised in Iran before the Parthenon and the Colosseum challenged the admiration of the world.

Of the taste and skill displayed by the artisans who can devise and construct such a building there can be no question. But one is still more astonished when he learns that these patient idealists are aided by little or no scientific study, but are guided entirely by natural instincts supplemented by practice. One may see a workman carefully moulding an intricate design out of a mass of plaster without any pattern to guide him, often with neither rule nor compass, and using only a slight shaping-tool of wood; and if he be questioned as to who were his instructors, and what principles he follows in reaching such exquisite results, he will reply that he had no systematic instruction, and gives himself little trouble about art principles: he grew up to the business, and produces such designs because he feels inspired to create them. It is true that Shah Abbass<sup>1</sup> established art institutions under Government patronage, to which artisans were only admitted after satisfactory proof of ability. His immediate successors continued to foster the culture of the arts in like manner. It is reasonable to believe that Darius and Anurshirwan, the greatest monarchs of the Achaemenid and Sassanid dynasties, also encouraged the arts of Persia by a patronage as liberal if not exactly identical in method. Manee, the founder of the Manichaean sect, brought home hints of Chinese art when he returned to Persia from his exile; and there are traditions as well as internal evidence that

<sup>1</sup> This name is pronounced as if spelled *Abbauss*.



Amurshirwân and Chosroes Parveez invited Byzantine sculptors to Persia, and it is well known that the revival of a high order of decorated pottery in Persia, under the name of *Kashee*, owes its existence to the skilled Chinese artisans brought to Ispahân and Kashan by Shah Abbass I. Hulagn is also said to have brought artisans from China three centuries earlier. The Persians recast the art ideas they borrowed, and stamped them with the mark of their own native genius.

Doubtless each of these periods of artistic renaissance has had its influence in perpetuating the art-instinct in a race naturally imbued with æsthetic feeling; but it is quite certain that several centuries have now elapsed without any public and systematic methods of art instruction being applied in Persia. Notwithstanding this, the national love of the beautiful as displayed by the practice of the arts seems no less pronounced in that country than formerly, although in some directions showing either signs of decline or of transition to new forms of expression. A few names of living architects seem, however, to be prominent above the average, — such as Ustâd (or Master) Housseïn, the designer of Bagh Ferdôse; and Ustâd Alee, the architect of the Ark, or royal palace.

One of the most beautiful arts of Persia, of comparatively recent origin it is true, is the form of *gatch pourree* called *ainâh karree*. The gatch ceiling and wall are moulded into the most intricate forms with daring confidence. While the plaster is yet soft, the surfaces, or facets, are inlaid with an incrustation of minute mirrors of every form and often of very small size. The amount of toil, patience, and skill requisite to inlay a large apartment in this magnificent style is almost incalculable. It is needless to add that the effect is one of bewildering splendor, as if the light were flashed from the polished facets of millions of gems. Although the materials employed are comparatively inexpensive, the immense labor required to complete such an

apartment naturally renders this a costly style of decoration. The Persian Department at the last Paris Exposition was embellished with a room ornamented with this sort of mirror-work. Several apartments of the palace and many of the mansions of the wealthy at Teherân are thus decorated. Among the finest examples I have seen of it are the parlor in the summer-house of the Shah at Doshân Tepê, and a superb *salon* of the residence now occupied by the Minister of Justice; it was erected by the celebrated Super Salâr, or Premier, who died in 1882. Although of moderate dimensions, about sixty feet by fifty feet, the apartment is so well proportioned that it easily appears much larger. One side of the room is devoted to an immense double window, with casements carved with intricate geometric patterns, partly filled with stained glass. The vaulted ceilings are incrustated with mosaic of *ainâh karree*. But one of the most thoroughly characteristic rooms of this sort is in the fine old house erected over a hundred years ago, belonging to the family of the late Sedr Azem, and built by his ancestors. It is surprising that while searching the past and present, and almost the future, for designs rare and dazzling enough to whet the pampered appetite of New York millionnaires, our architects have not yet borrowed from Persia a style of decoration whose splendor eclipses all their previous efforts.

Tiles! methinks I hear the tile devotee say, "But what about tiles? Are there any tiles in Persia?" Well, then, to speak frankly, it must be stated that what the Persian artist does not know, or did not know in former times, about tiles is scarcely worth the mention. The tiles now made in Persia are of a far more common order than were those of former ages. This fact however does not obscure the great interest attaching to the present use of decorative tiles in Persian art. The absence of good marble in the vicinity of Teherân, or the cost of working it, causes a great demand for the incrustation of

floors and walls with elegant colored patterns, composed of glazed tiles of various degrees of excellence and of endless variety of design.

The interior of the baths is often covered with tiles; the effect of glistening walls and roofs in the demi-twilight of these vaulted rooms is artistic and beautiful. The exteriors of the domes of the mosques and minarets and city gates are also overlaid with glazed tiles, producing at the proper distance fine chromatic effects, which tell in a magical way against the intense azure of the cloudless skies of this semi-tropical clime. When smitten by the full rays of the setting sun they flash like gold. In this connection one naturally calls to mind the face-bricks glazed like tiles, which form one of the most common means of decoration in Persia, and especially at Teherân. In skilful hands they adapt themselves readily to many forms of constructional decoration, and might with great propriety be introduced into the facing of gate-ways or even entire façades in the United States, where it is becoming the fashion to employ a variety of colors in architectural decoration. Unlike the American decorator, however, the Persian artist generally understands the importance of combining these bricks in such a manner as to produce broad designs effective at a proper distance, instead of suffering them to be dwarfed and practically made useless by a mincing scrupulosity in the rendering of minute details that are entirely lost sight of at a short distance.

But the subject of Persian tiles is one of vast extent, as every collector well knows; and the success still achieved by the Persian artisans of to-day makes one marvel what must have been the beauty of their tile decorations in former ages, and question how a people who still retain so much taste and skill in this very art of colors and glazes should have so soon forgotten the secrets of the superior Ceramic art of their ancestors only a few centuries dead.

In considering the old tile-work of Persia, and indeed the greater part of its art development during the last dozen centuries, one cannot avoid observing three or four prime influences, which, although apparently having little relation with the pursuit of the fine arts, have nevertheless exerted a powerful influence in directing the art progress of Persia since the fall of the Sassanides. These influences are the conversion of the country to the doctrines of Mahomet; the consolidation of the legends of Persia into a popular form by Firdôusee in his great national epic of the *Shah Namêh*, thus reviving the interest in subjects which formerly attracted general attention, and stimulating the fancy of the people at a time when the arts were entering on a new phase of expression; the induction into power of the Sefavean dynasty; and the importation of Chinese and Indian artisans into Persia. Numerous minor influences may also be traced, giving direction to the former artistic instincts of the people, but these seem to be the most important.

The acceptance of the faith of the Prophet brought with it the Arabic language, which has since that time entered largely into the literature and language of the cultivated classes of Persia, exactly as Latin has modified the Anglo-Saxon. Indeed, one might venture to assert that the change in the former case has been even greater than in the latter, for the Latin-English of the Johnsonian period has given English forms to Latin words; whereas a multitude of Arabic words have been incorporated into the Persian language without undergoing any change whatever. But in nothing is the influence of the Saracenic invasion more evident, than in the results following the adoption of the Arabic character. Never was there a greater revolution than that effected over half the known world in less than a century by a horde of enthusiastic nomads. The Christian who has never lived in the East but little apprehends how complete was the transformation which attended the overwhelming conquests of

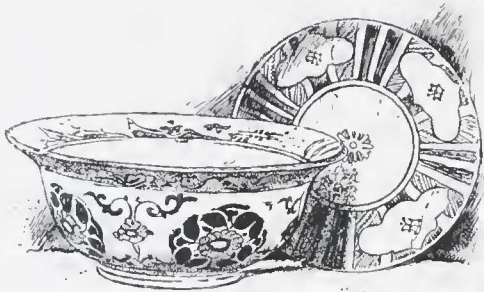


the followers of Mahomet. History affords no parallel to the career of the Saracens; they not only overthrew empires hoary with age, but they actually changed the institutions, the beliefs, the very character of the people to such a degree that when the Saracenic yoke was thrown off, the people still remained Saracens at heart. The history of religious enthusiasm may be searched in vain for any events equal to this.

With the acceptance of Islamism, the Persian artist renounced for a time the delineation of the human figure; but with the acceptance of the Arabic character, he found new scope for his exuberant fancy. The Saracens also introduced into Persia and the regions beyond a turn for mathematics, which it may be justly inferred was one cause of the origin of the intricate geometric designs in which Mahometan art has been so successful that the word *Arabesque* has become one of the most prominent terms in the nomenclature of decorative art. We may add here, that the astronomical triumphs achieved by Omar Khayyâm and his colleagues under Alp Arslân, indicate incidentally the manner in which the astronomer and the artist of those days learned to associate their separate pursuits. Lying before me as I write is a brass astrolabe nearly one thousand years old. It is an exquisite piece of work; not content with carefully designating the scientific lines, the maker of this wonderful instrument has so shaped and decorated it with loving interest in his work as to make of it a complete triumph of art. In a similar spirit the florid fancy of the Hindu formulated arithmetic problems in poetic verse.

The religious fervor of the people made it a natural task to erect numerous tombs and shrines of prayer over the length and breadth of the land. To make of these mere receptacles for people living or dead, without comeliness or attraction, — after the fashion of our good old ancestors, who perched cheap, square meeting-houses on the bleak hills of New England, —

was altogether foreign to the genius of the Persians. Like most imaginative races, their religious fervor demanded outward and ocular demonstration in agreeable art-forms. The result was a school of architecture and decoration Saracenic in some of its features, but unmistakably native in its general direction. The lofty conical dome of Persian architecture is Indian in shape, or more properly Aryan. It would be a mistake to attribute all the resemblances which Persian art bears to that of the East Indies to bald imitation, although doubtless this explanation



OLD KASHEE WARE.

might apply in some cases. The Aryan stock of each race, closely allied as they are ethnically and geographically, is sufficient to account for a frequent resemblance in thought and expression. The Persian artist found a congenial source of decorative inspiration in the pithy precepts of the Koran and

the singularly suggestive and pictorial forms of the Arabic letters. His quick fancy discerned the opportunities they suggested; his new interest in mathematical pursuits and his native love for flowers, aided by a feeling for color, added to his decorative resources, while the scarcity of wood and the abundance of various clays suggested the employment of the kiln as the means for giving the final strokes to the results of his artistic aims. Hence a school of keramic decoration was very naturally evolved, which, it is no rash assertion to say, has never been surpassed nor even equalled, at least in the direction of glazed tiles. A multitude of shrines and tombs still exist to testify to the splendor of this phase of Persian art: but, alas! how many

of them have been spoiled, not only by the ravages of war and of time, but also of avarice, which has stealthily stripped many of them of some of their noblest decorations, to enrich the museums and private collections of Europe! One of the finest interiors of this sort was the celebrated mosque at Sultanih, of which only a mere crumbling shell remains. Of course the superb facing of tiles which it contained long since disappeared. The greed which has stimulated this spoliation of some of the grandest monuments of Persia may be appreciated from the fact that death would attend detection. But the enormous prices paid by collectors for these prizes has often stimulated the thief to dare the vigilance of the authorities.

The celebrated tomb of the Imâm Rezâh, at Meshed, is another remarkable example of the success achieved by the Persians in keramic art. Of course no Christian has seen anything but the exterior of this shrine, and that from a distance, except one or two who have entered in disguise at imminent risk of their lives. The effect is said to be one of matchless chromatic splendor, — a combination of gold and iridescent hues playing around the azure letters, which in high relief reproduce the entire Koran. There is also in this place an enormous reflêt tile, described by those who have seen it as quite the finest relic of old art now existing in Persia, as well as the largest tile known in that country. It is represented as being over six feet long and four feet broad. When one considers that five hundred dollars is not an uncommon price to be paid for some of the Persian reflêts, he can imagine what must be the antiquarian and pecuniary value of this unique example. Of the many varieties of tiles which were produced at the two best periods of the art, the most interesting are those called *reflêts*, because of their iridescent glaze.

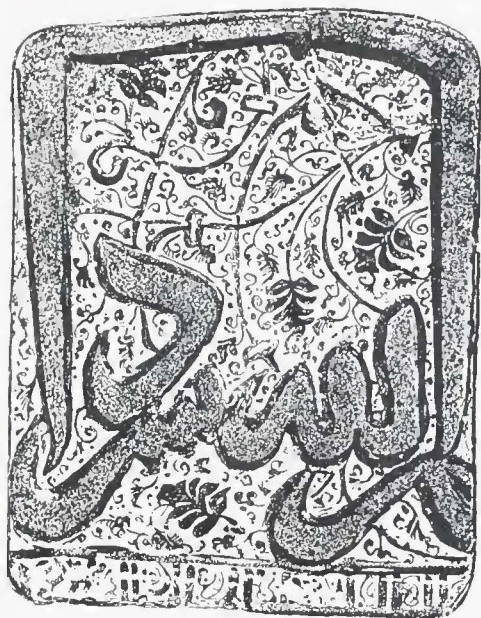
A playful fancy has interwoven vines and flowers among the lovely combinations of the calligraphic art, which in the best examples are also in relief. The graceful letters spreading across the entire width of the tile are generally of a magnificent ultramarine blue, on a delicate cream or buff ground, while the vines and flowers are of variegated but harmonious tints interlaced with gold. The entire surface gleams with a massive polish or glaze, which in a broad front light gives the effect of polished marble; while a glancing side-light reveals the mysterious opalescent flame of the many-colored tints, flashing out as from the depths of the sea, and flickering with a weird and fascinating splendor. The secret of compounding those intense blues and this iridescent glaze has become one of the lost arts, buried with the millions whose genius has illustrated the historic pages of Persia; there seems to be a tradition, however, that gold entered into the composition of these glazes. Perhaps if the Persians of to-day knew the secret they might yet not know how to make it of avail, for it takes genius to use the weapons of genius. David with a sling may accomplish more than Saul with weapons of steel inlaid with marquetry of gold. The finest art of Persia — between the battle of Nehavend and the rise of the Sefaveans — was exhibited in these tiles, of which the distinguishing features were the iridescent glaze and the arabesque designs. Noble as are the forms of many of the buildings of that period, they yet owed their chief beauty to the keramic decorations which veneered their walls of mud and brick. Besides the iridescent tiles there were many other varieties employed, — too many, in fact, to describe in a cursory survey like this. It should be carefully noted that the relative antiquity of these tiles is indicated by the form of the characters; those with Cufic letters invariably take precedence for age in Persian keramics of the Mahometan era. Fragments discovered on the site of Rheï, or Rhages, suggest that the art of making this iridescent



glaze dates back in all likelihood to the Sassanid dynasty, or to very soon after that period.

The reflêt tiles in which a copper tint is prominent may be considered as generally coming from Nathenz; also those with a rich raised figure, or design, suggesting the conventional fleur-de-lis pattern. These tiles

have dashes of pale green, and also letters in blue for the most part; but all of them are distinguished by a splendor of iridescence never surpassed in the history of ceramic art. The tiles, which are star-shaped, with a flat surface very nobly and variously decorated, and with a border of black Arabic lettering on a whitish ground, are from the old mosque at Veramîn, which is supposed by some to be the



REFLET TILE, OVER 450 YEARS OLD.

ancient Arcesia. The octagonal tiles having in the centre a deep star-intaglio are also from Veramîn. The tiles of which a superb, non-iridescent, lapis-lazuli blue is a marked feature are chiefly from the old palaces of Ispahân. It is a singular and important fact, that almost every city or building where the magnificent tiles of Persia abounded are each of different character. This fact is very interesting, because it proves that the artists of Persia were no slavish imitators; and it also suggests the wealth of artistic invention which formerly characterized the progress of the ceramic arts of that country.

The peculiar character which the Persians adopted from the Arabs led also to the development of calligraphy to a point where it actually became one of the fine arts. Combined with the art of illumination, which is still practised with extraordinary ability and artistic feeling at this very time in Teherân, results were reached that arouse the enthusiasm of the Persians even at this day, when the printing-press is invading the province of the scribe and rapidly relegating illuminated manuscripts to the past,—an art nevermore to be revived, probably, while the art of printing exists. It must be confessed that only one who is an adept in the Arabic character can fully appreciate the skill and feeling displayed in the masterpieces of Persian calligraphic art; but he must be dull indeed who does not see in some of these examples the expression of a fine artistic sense.

It is a significant fact, that, while the names of many of the leading artists of Persia are forgotten, the fame of a Mir or of a Dervîsh, or of other celebrated calligraphists, is cherished like that of a Veronese or a Rembrandt. The specimens of their work still extant are very highly prized, and he who is so happy as to possess such autographs causes them to be carefully mounted on illuminated pages and elegantly bound in such manner as to escape destruction. Notwithstanding that numerous printing-presses now exist in Persia for printing books and periodicals by lithographic processes, the art of calligraphy is still cultivated, as I have already observed, and its followers are held in much esteem. The most celebrated living calligraphist of Persia is Mirza Gholâm Rezâh, who lives at Teherân. His is a refined and thoughtful character; for he is not only a calligraphist, but likewise a poet and philosopher of wide repute. He has many disciples of what, to apply an old term in a new form, may be truly called a “gentle craft,” especially among persons of taste in the cultivated circles of Persian society. The magnificent terrestrial globe in the royal treasury,

composed entirely of gold, diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and turquoise, was executed under the direction of Mirza Gholâm Rezâh.

In this connection it is not inappropriate to specify the five chief forms of calligraphy practised in Persia since the Saracenic conquest, given in the order of their introduction. First is the Cufee, or Cufic character, angular, and representing straight rather than curved lines. It holds the same relation to the contemporary character that the old English lettering does to the modern English characters. Next comes the Nasch (the final *h* being guttural): this is curved, but with a tendency to perpendicular rather than horizontal lines. These two characters are the most common on old Persian tiles, and the latter is the character chiefly used at present in manuscripts and printing. The Nas-talîgh is likewise used in manuscripts, and also the Reilancee. The Shiekestêh, the most recent character used in Persia, is more horizontal or running in form, and is ordinarily used for letters and accounts.

It is worthy of note that the absence of designs representing the human form, either in the flat or the round, is a marked characteristic of the ante-Sefavean period just described.

Sultân Alee, of Meshed, was a calligraphist of renown who lived in the fifteenth century. His greatest pupil was Mir Amâr, called the great Mir, who is considered to have been the most remarkable calligraphist of Persia. He was a native of the province of Glûlân. Shah Abbass the First heard of the fame of this wielder of the pen, and the royal patron of arts and letters was moved by the desire to add one more to the cluster of brilliant lights which adorned his court. Messengers were sent to invite Mir to Ispahân. An invitation by Shah Abbass was equivalent to a command. With reluctance the great calligraphist abandoned his luxurious seclusion on the shores of the Caspian. A litter and cortége of servants had been sent to escort him with



honor to the royal presence. On his arrival at the capital he was graciously received: a residence, a revenue, and a corps of servants were assigned to him, and the Shah commanded him to prepare a copy of the Shah Namêh. The calligraphist accepted the task, but probably with secret reluctance, for he doubtless considered that it involved the devotion of many years of his life to what seemed a long drudgery. It may not



EXAMPLE OF WRITING BY  
A'MIR. (REDUCED ONE-  
HALF.)

be generally known that few of the large oriental manuscripts are the work of the most celebrated scribes; they are for the most part from the pens of pupils or disciples of those masters. The masters themselves, with true artistic feeling, preferred to give vent to the calligraphic inspiration by the inscription of short poems or extracts from the holy books, according as the spirit moved them. This practice was also the one best suited to the spread of their fame. The preparation of a great volume might consume years, and when completed would be visible only to a few: while during the same period the calligraphic artist could execute many shorter examples of his art which would be eagerly seized by many, and thus carry prized examples of his genius to all parts of the country.

Mir set about his task probably with a definite purpose to accomplish it. But it proved uncongenial, as might have been expected of one of his type of mind. Surrounded by a court of admirers of his own, the artist, when the writing mood was on him, turned off short screeds which three centuries after his death are set in gold and sold for great prices. From time to time, Shah Abbass inquired of Mir concerning the progress he was making in the manuscript of the great poem of the chronicle



of the kings of Persia ; to all which inquiries the calligraphist gave evasive replies.

Several years having at last elapsed, without any satisfactory evidence that the artist who was enjoying the royal bounty was accomplishing the task assigned, the sovereign peremptorily ordered Mir to produce whatever part of the Shah Namêh he had actually written. The calligraphist, unable any longer to avoid discovery, complied. But when Shah Abbass saw that only a few sheets had been written after so many years of waiting, he tore them in fragments with his own royal hands ; then, nervously plucking the long mustaches for which he was famous, the justly indignant sovereign ordered the executioners to do their work, and in a moment the great Mir was no more. Although the penalty for the indolent procrastination of this child of genius was somewhat rude, and in a later age would have resulted in a simple deprivation of office and emoluments, yet it must be admitted that Shah Abbass was justified in his wrath. Few had thus dared to brave the authority of a monarch who was at once a patron of intellectual culture and a cruel tyrant.

These facts in the life of Mir were related to me by Mirza Gholâm Rezâh, who vouched for their correctness.

The art of making book-covers is one that may be appropriately mentioned in connection with the description of the calligraphic art. Like all the æsthetic industries of Persia, the first charm of this art lies in its individuality. One who is the happy possessor of such a cover may rest quietly on his pillow and dream pleasant fancies, assured that he has a unique example of one of the most beautiful of all the decorative arts of the East, while the enormous labor involved in many of these covers makes it unlikely that any attempt will be made to reproduce them. These old covers are of two kinds. The first and rarest are those in which the design is entirely of leather. The leather formerly produced in Persia has never been surpassed in

gloss and texture. It may not be generally known that what is called Russia leather was first manufactured in Persia, whence the fabric was carried to Russia. The preparation of this leather was formerly carried to such perfection in Persia that various legends are attached to the subject, — of which one is to the effect that the tanners achieved their success by taking the hides to the summit of Mount Elvend, where the lightnings of heaven imparted a special virtue to the texture.

The general character of book-covers made from this leather consists sometimes in overlaying the most delicate and intricate designs made of split leather, one over the other, each being distinguished either by retaining the natural color, or in being gilded or stained of different vivid tints. Often, also, the design of the cover is stamped and beautified with various shades of gold. The stamping was sometimes done with engraved plates of metal; but, singular as it may seem, it was usually produced by designs actually cut into sole leather of very fine quality, and attached to a block of wood. The leather to be stamped was thoroughly moistened, and the stamp was pressed down by heavy weights and left in position for days, until the under leather had, as it were, grown to the desired design. No patterns more elaborate or beautiful than those of Persia have ever been seen in the art of book-covers.

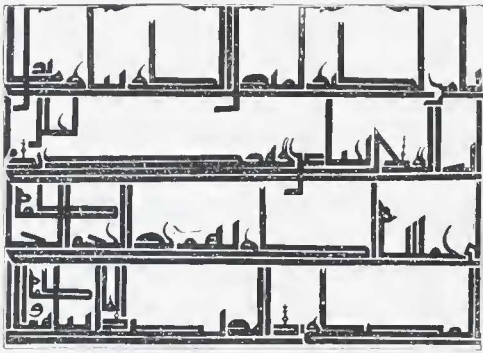
The other style of Persian book-covers was made of papier-maché, in which the design, usually a hunting-scene, is often partially in relief, but always superbly colored, — occasionally in such manner that the design retires or reappears according to the light in which it is held. Very fine covers of this sort have been made quite recently. The flat illuminated cover is also made now.

But while the faithful disciples of the Prophet, following as they supposed the precepts of the Koran in abstaining from such art, were finding a vent for their æsthetic aspirations in

ingenious and beautiful arabesques, a new intellectual influence was looming up, which was destined eventually to prove a powerful agency in the shaping of the Persian art of subsequent ages. I refer to Firdôusee, the great epic poet of Persia. Under the patronage of Mahmood of Ghizné, who however treated the poet very shabbily at the end, Firdôusee gathered together the historic legends of Persia in a national epic called the *Shah Namêh*, or "Book of Kings." This magnificent poem cannot, of course, be accepted as more than partially historical, the poet having in the details indulged in the usual license allowed to his craft. But it gives beautiful, and often pathetic and sublime, versions of the legends into which the imaginative Persians had crystallized the prominent events of their history until the Sassanid epoch; and thus the *Shah Namêh* became for Persia what the *Iliad* was to Greece. It is due to this epic that the name of Rustêm, the national hero, is still a household word in Persia. The figure of Rustêm in battle is over the city gates of Teherân, and it reappears in myriad fantastic designs in the metal and plastic work of that country. Every child in Persia knows the story of Zal, of Isfendiar, and of Kei Khosrû. Such is the vivifying power of genius!

But fully to bring the poetry of Firdôusee into harmonious association with the arts of Persia, it was necessary that his counterpart should appear, who would give a fresh impulse to the artistic instincts and yearnings of the great people of Irân. He seemed long in coming; but he came at last, with the intellectual grasp and the administrative power requisite to give rise to a great revival of the arts. It was the renowned Shah Abbass the Great, of whom we have just spoken in connection with the great Mir. Never has a monarch done more to beautify his capital, to foster the arts, and to develop the taste of his people. Those who have studied the plates in the magnificent work of Chardin, who visited Persia in the reign succeeding

that of Shah Abbass, may form some notion of the opulence and magnificence which made Ispahân more than the rival of Bagdad, and rendered its name proverbial for splendor. Notwithstanding the siege and sack of Ispahân by the terrible invader Mahmood the Afghan, in the early part of the last century, it still retains enough of beauty to dazzle the visitor, and to fill him with regret that the demon of destruction should have power to work such ruthless and apparently wanton ravages.



OLD CUFIC WRITING. (REDUCED TWO-THIRDS.)

Never was patron of the arts more welcome than Shah Abbass. The people of Persia, especially they of the central province of Irân, are of a gay, fickle, mercurial, and imaginative character, loving change, moved by a sensuous love of the beautiful, and impatient of aught that tends to curb their *gaillard* temperament. Many of them rebel against the severe inculcations of the Koran which forbid wine and spirits, and are said to indulge secretly in the use of intoxicating liquors. In like manner, to such a people the time came when license had to be allowed for a wider range of artistic expression. The rise of the Sefavean dynasty offered the long-expected occasion for such a vent to the national sentiment. This is not the place to enter into a discussion of sectarian beliefs, which is referred to another chapter; suffice it to say, that up to this period the Persians had generally been Sunnees: but Shah Ismaël, the founder of the new dynasty, was a Sufee, a descendant of Alee, the son-in-law of Mahomet, and a devoted Sheäh. His accession to the throne resulted in the



rapid conversion of all Persia to Sheäh doctrines. With these doctrines came greater rigidity of belief in certain directions, but also greater liberality in others, which permitted a larger scope to the artist's abilities. The result was almost immediately apparent, in the most important revival of art which Persia had seen since the dazzling splendor of the reign of Khosrû (or Chosroes) Parveez.

Both of these monarchs distinguished themselves in war, and achieved great military renown; but each will be longest remembered for his administration of civil affairs and the encouragement he extended to the arts of peace. Fortunately for the reign of Shah Abbass and his immediate successors, the period of their glory was comparatively so recent that numerous examples of the art of their time have come down to our day. The character and number of the artistic treasures of that palmy period are sufficiently numerous and various to be classified with a system that gives a clear idea of the subject. While Ispahân was the centre of the art activity of Persia in Shah Abbass' reign, it would be a mistake to overlook the fact that the general thrift and prosperity of the Empire naturally caused the practice of the industrial arts to be wide-spread, and many places became prominent at that period for the production of special objects displaying a high order of skill and æsthetic talent. Shirâz, Kermân, Koom, Meshed, Yezd, Zenjân, and Kermanshah were among the capitals of prosperous districts that then acquired a repute, which they retain to this day, for the production of articles of great artistic merit. As one considers the immense variety of objects beautified by the cunning artificers or poetic artists of that period, he is amazed at the opulence of the fancy which then found expression. It seems as if, instead of a people of vast antiquity pursuing its ordinary course, a nation overflowing with the ardency and irrepressible energy of youth entered the arena

at that period, yearning to find a vent for its superabundant spirits.

One is at loss to know where to begin in describing the results of this Periclean age of Persian art, or to mark what were the most characteristic of the numerous forms of expression it sought. The ceramic art of that time is of decided importance, and undoubtedly received a great impulse from the Chinese artisans then invited to Persia. The secret of making *reflêt* pottery, if it had been forgotten, was then rediscovered, and continued in full efflorescence until the disastrous invasion of Mahmood the Afghan, when the secret was lost, perhaps forever. But in addition to the *reflêt* tiles, a new ware was produced by the Chinese artisans, which was excellently imitated by their Persian pupils. This ware was called *Kashee*, because the potteries were established at Kashan. Admirable fayence of prevailing black or blue-black tints was produced by these Chinese artisans, who at the outset represented on many of these *Kashee* dishes the lightness of touch and the few suggestive strokes characteristic of blue China-ware, interwoven with quaint bits of landscape and inimitable floral patterns in a conventional but thoroughly decorative style. A Chinese monogram was on the reverse side of these wares. But soon the Persian genius for ceramic art awoke once more under these new influences, and the designs of the Chinese artisan were modified by Persian ideas, the joint result being a ware entirely distinct and sufficiently native and national. What could be more original or fancifully fantastic than a *kaliân*, representing long-winged, swan-necked birds, diving in graceful confusion amid the tangled meshes of interlacing boughs, waving hither and thither like the plume-like algae slumberously swaying with the flow and reflux of a summer-going tide? What could be more singular and mysterious than a group of dragons, sweeping their lithe scaly forms in

marvellous azure convolutions over the broad surface of a plaque ?

When the resemblance between Chinese and Kashee work is such that it is difficult to decide between them, the test is found in the greater lightness of the latter and the softer quality of the material employed in the Persian ware. The Kashee can be cut or scraped by sharp steel, while the Chinese blue-ware is hard as flint. Good examples of Kashee fayence are becoming rare, and should not be confounded with the cheaper Persian blue-ware made in recent years.

Another ware of great value, and exceedingly rare and precious, is the white porcelain made at an earlier period than that of Shah Abbass by Persian artisans. It is a translucent milk-white, and is invariably ribbed, or fluted, with delicate mouldings. The translucent effect was reached partly by shaping the inner and outer shells over a mould of wax, which on melting left a hollow space between. The glaze is hard and pearl-like. Most of the examples of this ware have been picked up by collectors, and can hardly be considered longer as objects of general sale, so rare have they become. At long intervals a choice bit is brought around by a *dellâl*, or itinerant merchant, as if it were a diamond of price.

The Sefavean monarchs found it entirely in accord with the new creed they induced their people to accept, to redecorate the sacred tombs after a style in harmony with the *Sheäh* interpretations of the Koran, and hence a species of *reflêt* was introduced resembling the iridescent tiles of earlier times, but generally of more fanciful shapes and with a greater variety of tints. Some antiquarians have been inclined to think that the iridescence of this glaze is the result of chemical changes produced by time, as probably was the case with the glass lachrymatories found in ancient Greek tombs. But there is no question that it would be a mistake to assume the same fact regarding the *reflêt*

glass of Persia. The Persian traditions on this subject are too strongly in favor of the theory that this iridescence was intentionally produced by skilful artisans, imbued with a high sense of the beautiful and endowed with ample skill to carry out their elegant conceptions. It is further recorded by both Persian history and tradition that among those who were massacred by Mahmood the Afghan, at Ispahân, were the designers of reflêt tiles and other keramic wares, because they had created works offensive to the Sunnee sect of which he was a fanatical devotee. Hence, the secret of making reflêt glazes and certain brilliant colors on pottery was lost at that time. Whether this is the true reason or not, the fact remains that the secret of producing the highest types of Persian keramic art died out over one hundred and fifty years ago. Another argument in favor of this theory concerning the iridescent glazes exists in the circumstance that many of these reflêts have been so situated that the conditions which may have caused the chemical changes in the glass of Cyprus and Phœnicia fail in the present case.

But however produced, the reflêts of the time of Shah Abbass the First are exquisitely beautiful. Tiles painted with blue and green designs on an umber or dark-purple ground assume, when turned to the light, the most superb rose, purple, and golden hues, flashing forth with a splendor never surpassed by the chromatic blazonry of the finest mediæval stained glass of Europe, and having a depth of effect that gives the impression that the entire tile is iridescent throughout. These tiles are often of the geometric six-pointed star-shape, with a white border running around the outer margin. On this white ground are inscribed pious phrases from the Koran. It is well to observe here that the character of the lettering on Persian tiles or other works invariably settles its approximate age, unless, indeed, certain unmistakable signs show it to be merely a modern imitation of the antique. Tiles bearing inscriptions in the Cufic character



antedate the Sefavean age, and are generally far earlier; while no works having the later Arabic character are of earlier origin than the twelfth century, A. D., and are generally of or later than the Sefavean age. Attempts have recently been made to imitate the tiles of the best periods of Persian art; but a test of the age of Persian tiles is found in their relative hardness. The ancient tiles were either baked much harder than the keramic ware now made in Persia, or they have been hardened by time; at any rate, the back of an old Persian tile does not yield to the pressure of the finger-nail, while the recent tiles can be easily scratched.

It is to the magnificent patronage of the Sefavean dynasty that Persia is also indebted for the pictured tiles that encrusted the walls of the enchanting palaces and pavilions of Ispahân, and which yet, after the repeated ravages of ruthless invaders, preserve to that storied capital traces of their former glory. These tiles were divided into two classes. The first belongs rather to the order of mosaic. Aside from the intrinsic and effective beauty of the designs, this mosaic is remarkable for two special features. I refer to the imperishable loveliness and vividness of the colors, especially the deep lapis-lazuli blue, which it is universally agreed it is impossible to produce to-day in Persia. The other feature of these mosaics is the fact that they are composed of thin pieces of glazed brick or tile made specially for each part of a design, and afterwards fitted together on the bed of plaster, instead of being composed of bits of tinted stone or marble or glass, like Greek, Roman, and Italian mosaic. Considering the extraordinary beauty of these mosaics of Ispahân and the material of which they are composed, it is remarkable that so little attention has been called to them. This style of mosaic has proved to be very durable, and might well be imitated by some of the clever American artisans who are doing so much at present to decorate American domestic and civic

architecture, even though they might fail absolutely to reproduce the wonderful blue of the Persian mosaics.

The other class of pictorial keramic designs referred to above was more distinctively tile-decoration; and here the imagination of the Persian artist found ample scope. His love of color led to the employment of hues of a quality never since used in Persia. Not only the blues, but several tints of red and brown, are peculiar to the Abbassid period. I have seen some of these tile-paintings done in seven colors, of which four at least are compounded after receipts that have been lost for over a century. Often these designs are not confined to one tile, but are so extended that they spread over twenty to forty square tiles surrounded by an elegant border, suggesting a running tracery of vines and flowers. In two or three instances, as in the accompanying cut taken from one brought by the writer to America, they represent garden scenes and groups of gracefully-designed maidens plucking fruit or playing on the lute. These scenes sometimes bear unmistakable evidence of Chinese inspiration, especially in the types of feminine beauty. This is attributable to Man-oo-Har, the chief artist brought from China by Shah Abbass, or to his disciples. In other cases these and other designs of the period suggest the refined, delicately drawn and carefully detailed style of India; and it may be safely assumed that they owe their origin to the instructions of Hassam-i-Dekkân, the celebrated artist invited by Shah Abbass to transfer his talents from the East Indies to the new capital of the rising Sefavean dynasty.

At other times the Persian artists gave free rein to a fancy inspired by the magnificent strophes of Firdôusee and imbued with a natural pride in the exploits of the early heroes, who had elevated Irân to such a pinnacle of renown and power. The tiles were then emblazoned with fanciful, grotesque designs in relief and highly colored, representing Rustêm overcoming his

enemies in battle. A favorite design, which frequently reappears with variations, is Rustêm engaged in deadly combat with the Div Sefeed, or the White Demon of Mount Demavênd. The Div Sefeed, as represented in these alto-relievos and tile-paintings by the fertile fancy of the Persian artist, exhibits many of the traditional traits of demons elsewhere; and it is a comfort to know that such a horned and outlandish monster finally succumbed to the terrible blade of Rustêm, when, mounted on his famous steed Ruksh, he charged on this northern enemy of Irân. Rustêm and the Div Sefeed play a part in the legends of Persia similar to that ascribed to Saint George and the Dragon in the history of England. But it must not be forgotten that the re-



OLD MURAL PAINTING OF TILES FROM PALACE OF SHAH ABBASS.

vival of this and numerous other legends in the decorative art of Persia is directly due to the profound impression made on the national character by the Shah Namêh of Firdôisee. It is a singular fact, however, — a fact which has scarcely attracted the



attention of foreign students of Persian literature and history, — that there is actually a tribe existing to this day among the Elburz Mountains, or the fastnesses of ancient Hyrcania, which still bears the name of Div Sefeed. Intelligent Persians consider these Div Sefeeds to be the remnants of a redoubtable race of barbarians who were overcome by Rustêm, and that the name was given them owing to their ferocious and indomitable character. It is not often that a national legend dating back thirty or forty centuries can be so satisfactorily traced to actual occurrences.

The art in metals had been carried to a high degree of excellence in the ages preceding the Sefavean period. If no other cause for this had existed than the general pursuit of arms, the manufacture of weapons of war would alone have naturally suggested to an ingenious, refined, and warlike race the production of finely tempered and elegantly decorated weapons. The ewers and basins and other articles of domestic use, as well as the ornaments worn by the women, would also suggest a large variety of objects on which the cunning artificer could display the resources of his fancy and skill. Relics of the handiwork of the early and middle period of the Mahometan era are not wanting which show the correctness of these surmises, as also manuscripts and earthenware, both more perishable than the metal work. But these examples are now unfortunately rare, and it is to the Sefavean age that the collector must turn for the most abundant and magnificent evidences of the success reached by Persia in the metallic arts. The metals selected for developing the native talent were iron, steel, gold, silver, copper, and brass.

Ispahân was the centre of this pursuit, as it continues to be to the present day, although several cities entered into close competition in the working of special metals. The cities of the province of Khorassân — such as Meshed, Astrabâd, and Damghân — vied with the capital in the production of steel blades



but little, if at all, inferior to those of Damascus. The steel of the best period of Persian art is possibly a trifle less ductile than that of Damascus, but the Damascening or wavy surface resembling watered silk is similar in each, and was probably reached by the same methods. This effect is still quite successfully imitated at Ispahân; although it is now frequently produced by acids on the surface alone, while the temper of the metal is naturally far inferior. These blades are formed both into scimitars and daggers of many shapes. Some Persian scimitars are still to be found with the thin end of the blade divided into a double point.

The inlaying of helmets, shields, breastplates, and swords with silver and gold used to be carried to great perfection; and it must be admitted that this art is not yet forgotten in Persia. Two processes were and are still followed. One process is called *zerneshân*, and also *telakoob* and *nograkooob*, according as the inlay is of gold or silver. It consists of engraving a design on the steel with a fine graving-tool, slightly under-cutting the surface; a fine gold or silver wire is hammered into the groove, the result being practically imperishable. Another form of *zerneshân* employed is to cut the surface with transverse lines, somewhat like the cross-hatching of wood-engraving; the gold or silver are beaten in, and the surface is smoothened. Superb were the helmets and shields which were decorated in this manner for the warriors who won the victories of the Sefaveans and their mighty successor, Nadir Shah. As they rushed to the charge, the sun (at one time the Persian symbol of the deity, and now represented in the emblazoned arms of the country) shot his radiant gleam on passages of the Koran, or on representations of Jemsheed and Zal and Rustêm inlaid in burnished silver and gold on the bucklers and helms of serried hosts, while in the midst of these resplendent designs the armor of princes flashed back the warlike lustre of the ruby and the

haughty splendor of priceless diamonds. This is no idle imaginary picture; one has but to see the armor of those times which has survived the wrecks of ages, to learn that it is difficult to exaggerate the magnificent appearance of the armies of those days, when led to battle by princes and kings, and attended by the chosen body of Royal Guards called Gholâms, or slaves of the throne. A hundred years have scarcely elapsed since burnished shields and helmets and coats of chain-mail were laid aside in Persia for the less cumbersome, but also far less interesting, military accoutrements of Europe.

The manufacture of gun-barrels was also at one time carried to a high point of excellence at Ispahân. Two makers were especially famous, — Hassân and Hadgi Mehmêt. The work of each bears the name of its maker. Those of Hassân are the more elaborate; but those of Hadgi Mehmêt were superior in texture.

Still another method for combining the precious metals with iron and steel, is by overlaying them in a thin coat scarcely more solid than gold-leaf. The effect is very pleasing; but, as may easily be imagined, it is far less durable than that produced by the telakoob or nograkoob method. While still quite capable of working by *zerneshân*, the metal workers of Persia prefer at the present day to produce the latter sort of work than the far more valuable Damascening process described above, except when working on special commissions; and most of the very beautiful imitations of the ancient work which they now produce at Ispahân for the foreign market are therefore of this inferior sort. The entire surface of the elegant blades, vases, ewers, and helmets or bucklers is covered with a varnish of which two parts are said to be alumn and shellac, although the secret of the compound is difficult of discovery. This varnish unites the entire surface like a scumbling, and gives the effect of a high polish; at the same time it

communicates a delicate buff tint to the iron, resembling but not equalling the color of steel. There is no question that some of the works produced by this process are very elegant, and answer thoroughly well the purpose of simple decoration, for which all these modern examples are alone intended. But it would be a mistake to turn these objects into use; for use would soon reveal their specious character, and make them worthless except as old iron: unlike the old metal work of Persia they are intended wholly for ornament. But if one may judge from the number and real costliness and extreme beauty of some of these modern imitations, the demand for them abroad must be steadily on the increase. For those who cannot find or cannot afford antique examples of the fine Persian metal work of former ages, it may be granted that these comparatively inexpensive imitations offer a tolerable substitute.

The Persian artists in metal also acquired great excellence in the handling of articles in brass-work, a pursuit which they have not yet forgotten, although the old Persian work is far superior to what is produced now at Ispahân. This, I am convinced, is due less to lack of ability than to the fact that the demand for the best brass-work has practically ceased in Persia; while a more showy style, or a cheap imitation of the antique, seems to meet a ready demand abroad. So long as such continues to be the case, little improvement can be expected in the quality of the supply. There seems to be slight evidence that the manufacture of articles in bronze ever became popular in Persia; but from early ages brass has been a favorite metal with Persian artists. Although understanding how to fuse metals and cast them (as in the case of cannon), the metal arts of Persia have generally consisted of hammered ware, or of designs chiselled or engraved, alike in iron, brass, silver, and gold. The *kaliân* has been one of the favorite objects on which these artisans of old were wont to lavish exquisite beauty and

endless variety of design. The variety of the decorations offered by the kaliâns of Persia exceeds belief. Each one has an individuality of its own. A string of verse from Hafiz or Saadee, or apothegms from the Koran, surround the shining metal like a border of pearls, and inclose hunting-scenes, or fantastic groups of dancing-girls, or floral arabesques carved with unerring skill by the graver's tool, and interwoven with a thread of silver or set with turquoise. I have seen a kaliân completely faced with turquoise of uniform tint. Nothing could give a better notion of the excellence of Persian decorative art than a collection of kaliâns. The chief difference between the old and the modern carved work partly consists in the far greater depth and clearness of the lines in the former. The lettering is generally of admirable quality, which is in harmony with the rare ability exhibited by the Persians to the present time in the cutting of seals.

It would be impossible to surpass the extraordinary beauty of some of the carved iron-work formerly produced in Persia; and her workmen of the present day have apparently abandoned the task as hopeless. The best Persian work in iron is therefore costly, and becoming more and more rare. But a good degree of excellence is still exhibited in the manufacture of brass and silver objects, which are extensively produced at Ispahân and Zenjân, and in a less degree at Teherân. The most important articles now made in brass, or cut out of thin plate or rolled brass, consist sometimes of direct imitations of the antique. But generally the work is after designs of comparatively recent date, which bear a resemblance to the antique on account of the dazzling profusion of intricate and ingenious patterns engraved on the surface with more or less skill, and suggesting episodes from the Shah Namêh,—pageants of royalty, or scenes of domestic life. One of the favorite and most successful labors of these artists in brass is open perforated work, or *ajour*.



Carefully examined, the modern articles of brass carvings often indicate rude or careless workmanship, quite inferior to that formerly executed in Persia. But on the other hand it would be useless to deny that some of this work, especially the brass trays inlaid with silver, are often well made: while the designs are generally exceedingly beautiful, and quite meet the decorative purposes for which they were created. And at this point we discover an almost invariable characteristic of the decorative art of our day, and particularly of the United States. Unlike the creation of former Persian art, these brass objects are now made chiefly, if not exclusively, for decoration, the question of utility having little to do with their design. For this reason, also, they appeal largely to the foreign buyer, and are being manufactured more and more for export abroad. For those who desire to adorn their houses with beautiful metal-work at a moderate cost, nothing could be more opportune than the present brass bric-à-brac of Persia. The low cost of labor in that country enables one to buy pleasing ornaments which are cheap and unique, the Persian artisan still preferring to invent than to duplicate. Doubtless, with our convenience of manufacturing by steam machinery, we shall soon have firms in America turning out imitations of Persian patterns by the thousand, all exactly resembling each other of course. But until that time, the American buyer of taste might do worse than to decorate his rooms with the Persian brass ornaments which are now beginning to find their way into the United States. Happy is he who, in buying such articles, stumbles on a bit of genuine old Persian carving in brass. He then, indeed, has the treasure of *æs perennius*, which will increase in value from age to age.

The artisans of Persia have also wrought to excellent effect in copper. This may be due to the fact that this metal has

been employed for culinary purposes, and the native love of beauty did not disdain to decorate even the humble vessels of the kitchen with engraved designs. The facility for making these articles suggested many other objects susceptible of far more beauty of form and decoration; and hence a whole school of art in copper, not only very interesting, but also affording the collector numerous artistic objects, which, while comparatively inexpensive, are often possessed of exquisite beauty. Although many of the finest copper vases, bowls, and salvers are centuries old, this art is by no means abandoned, the Persian artificers still displaying a good degree of skill in decorating copper. It is the usage to whiten all these copper objects, while the engraved design is made prominent on the white silvery ground by being blackened. It is a little singular that so ingenious a people, and one at the same time so familiar with the possibilities of copper designing, should never have discovered copper-plate engraving and etching, especially as they have long had a knowledge of the value of acids for biting metals. Another beautiful object I have seen made of copper has a conical cover, surmounted by a knob shaped like a pineapple. As on many of the best examples of metal-work found here, the name of the artist who executed it is prominently engraved upon it. In many cases the date is also given. Not only the outside but the inside of this bowl is profusely decorated with designs, those on the exterior representing hunting-scenes, and those on the interior giving vivid representations of dancing-girls.

The Persians seem to have been less successful, or at least to have made less effort, in the engraving of the precious metals than of the baser. And yet I say this with some hesitation when I consider some of the bracelets and belt ornaments I have seen, which are certainly exceedingly effective. But it is perhaps their success in brass and iron — metals apparently so

much more difficult to engrave — that makes the results in gold and silver relatively less original and remarkable; certainly the chasing of steel by the artisans of Persia has never been surpassed. The most interesting achievements of the Persians in the precious metals have been in the art of filigree, or filigrane. The art is still pursued with extraordinary results at Zenjân. The fairy-like work executed by the artists of that city has never been exceeded by the best filigree work of Damascus or Florence. Perhaps one reason why the Persians have not developed a great art in the production of other articles of gold has been because they use little or no alloy, professing to despise as base and beneath the name of gold the metal alloyed with silver or copper employed by European and American jewellers, even though it be eighteen carats fine.

The Persians have shown the most skill in working the precious metals in combination with enamel, which they call *minâr*. It is difficult to ascertain when this beautiful art first began to be practised in Persia; but from a comparative examination of many of these enamels, I am inclined to think the art was not introduced into that country before 1560, and possibly at a later date. This may be inferred in part from the fact that it is still one of the principal arts now in vogue at Ispahân. Another curious method of judging of the age of a Persian enamel in the absence of a given date, — as it is also a means of judging of the age of several other Persian arts, — is from the costumes which appear in the designs. When not representing warriors in mailed armor and battle-scenes from the old legends, the Persian artists have found a vent for their fancy in designing scenes from actual life, exactly reproducing the costumes of the period. As the Persians, contrary to the general notion about them, are inclined to variety and change, the numerous details of dress, especially the garb worn at home, have passed through frequent modifications. Hence it is often quite easy for one familiar with

the various costumes of Persia to fix the date of many of her enamels and designs.

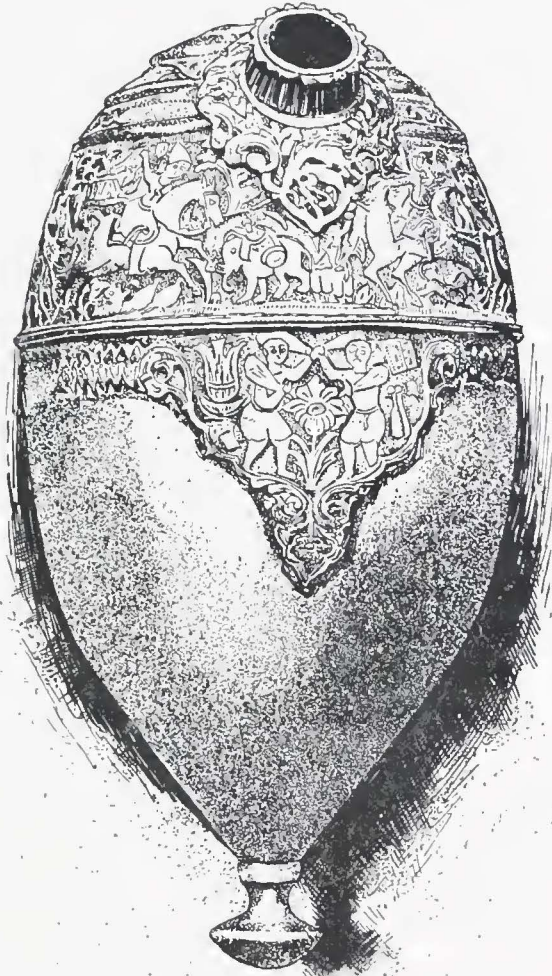
Persian enamel has sometimes been made directly on a surface of silver or gold, but more generally on copper. Often the enamel and the gold are blended together in intricate and exquisite designs on the copper, — a common scheme of color being an intense *bleu de roi* of enamel interlaced with wreaths of flowers of gold or silver. One of the most beautiful kaliâns I have seen represents the conventional cypress or palm-leaf design so common in oriental textile fabrics, wrought on a field of blue in minute raised stars of gold resembling a cluster of snow crystals. The accompanying design is taken from a superb kaliân of chiselled brass belonging to the Sefavean period. One of the richest and most characteristic kaliâns I have seen is about one hundred and thirty years old and the size of an ostrich egg. It is made of a shell of sheet copper, over which is a design of wrought silver. The flowers and medallions containing portraits are of enamel of the utmost delicacy of design and richness of color, surrounded by designs carved of silver and gold.

But it would be a mistake to suppose the rich ultramarine blue to be the chief color successfully produced in these Persian enamels, for there seems to be hardly a limit to the chromatic splendor which these enamels exhibit. The most prominent and most common blemish is in the tendency towards too vivid a crimson in rendering the carnation of flesh. This, however, may proceed from imperfect firing. Three of the most noted artists in enamel whom Persia has produced were Agâ Mehmêt Hassân, Agâ Mehmêt Amîn, and Agâ Mehmêt Alee.<sup>1</sup> A tea-service of gold overlaid with enamel, which is in the palace at Teherân, — one of the most brilliant works in this art ever produced, whether in Persia or Europe, — was executed by Agâ

<sup>1</sup> *Agâ* is a title equivalent to the French word "sieur" and our term "Esquire."



Mehmêt Hassân. The finest enamels of Persia have been made and are yet produced at Behbahân, near Shirâz.



OLD KALIÂN OF CHISELLED BRASS.

Of cloisonnée work, strictly speaking, it can hardly be said that any is to be found in Persia of native production; but of silver or gold utensils, sometimes repoussé and sometimes made

after the style called *champ levé*, there are still some fine old examples, which, however, are becoming rarer every year. In the latter style a pattern of vines and flowers of gold or silver is produced by removing the metal between the parts of the pattern, leaving a raised design. The parts thus left depressed are then filled with light and dark turquoise-blue and chocolate-brown; sometimes, also, other tints are introduced. Another method of arriving at a similar result common with Persian artists in metal and enamel, and still practised at Ispahân, is to make the object in *repoussé* work and fill the depressions with enamel. I have seen instances in which both *repoussé* and *champ levé* are exhibited in the same article. The *repoussé* is sometimes produced by hammering in the usual manner, and sometimes by beating the rolled silver or gold over a raised pattern of steel.

It is a little singular that while so successful in engraving steel, brass, and the precious metals, the Persians have made so little advance in the sculpture of marble. It is true that Persepolis shows abundant evidence of the great capacity of Persian genius for sculpture in early periods, — a talent revived under the Sassanidæ, as evidenced by the vast and magnificent sculptures of the Rock of Behistoon near Kermanshâh. Rock sculptures of perhaps less merit, but similarly ambitious in design and extent, have also been executed under the orders of Feth Alee Shah and Nasr-ed-Deen Shah in this century, near Teherân and Firoozkooh, while the numerous public works of Shah Abbass the First point in a similar direction. But it must be admitted that since the time of the Mahometan conquest Persian art has been more distinguished for its keramic achievements than for its sculpture.

In wood-carving, on the other hand, the Persians have shown and continue to show great skill and considerable taste. This is the more remarkable on account of their very poor means for

working in wood, and the indifferent results generally reached by Persian carpenters and cabinet-makers. For the same reason, also, one is astonished at the marvellous ingenuity, skill, and taste developed by the art of inlaid work, or mosaic on wood. It would be impossible to exceed the results achieved by the Persian artisans, especially those of Shirâz, in this beautiful and difficult art, which, after what I have seen, I can hardly hesitate to consider as *par excellence* a Persian art. No object seems too singular and difficult in shape to be attempted by these clever artificers; and the amount of surface covered with minute designs in mosaic is equally remarkable. Chairs, tables, sofas, boxes, violins and guitars, canes, picture-frames, — almost every conceivable object, in fact, which is made of wood, — may be found overlaid with an exquisite casing of inlaid work, so minute sometimes that thirty-five to forty pieces may be counted in the space of an eighth of a square inch. Sometimes, especially in the old inlaid work of Persia, the mosaic is even more delicate. I have counted four hundred and twenty-eight distinct pieces in a square inch on a violin which is completely overlaid in this exquisite detail of intricate geometric designs in mosaic. The microscopic bits of polished brass give it a shimmer suggesting the tremulous play of light on the surface of a smooth sea. But what is evident even in the most labored mosaic of Persia, as in all its art industries excepting sometimes in the more recent designs, is the fact that the artistic sense which has an eye to the general effect is never lost; and thus, while the details are often so minute as almost to require a magnifying glass, there is a certain breadth of design preserved which renders the object agreeable and artistically effective viewed at almost any distance.

It may be inquired what has Persia accomplished in what are strictly called the arts of design, including the employment of color, whether in the so-called industrial arts or in works exe-

executed for their own sake, such as portrait-painting, landscape or figure compositions, which form by far the most important and original department of European art dating from the opening of the Renaissance? To this it may be replied that a vast field opens up before us when we enter on this branch of Persian art, but that it dates its origin about the beginning of the Sefavéan dynasty. One who really desires to consider every form of a nation's art-expression and thought in an inquiring and respectful spirit must divest himself of all his prejudices in favor of European pictorial art, before approaching the subject of the arts of design in Persia. Vast studios invested with vague depths of picturesque gloom, decorated with sumptuous and costly draperies and bric-à-brac for which every clime and every age has been ransacked, and where the artist in the æsthetic garb he has evolved for himself in harmony with his surroundings is himself a wonderful creation of art; life schools, where the palpitating curves of the human form divine are studied by eager crowds of art enthusiasts; colossal canvases on which historic and allegorical compositions on a grandiose scale startle the eye and bid loudly for the popular applause; imposing galleries hung with paintings by the thousand, smitten by the glare of chandeliers, and gazed at by the beauty and intellect of lordly capitals, — none of these things let the art student associate with the pursuit of the arts of design in Persia. Let him rather picture to himself humble artists clad in white or green turbans and flowing tunics, seated on their heels upon a rug in an open booth by the bustling wayside, or under a spreading *chenâr* in the market-place. If such an artist is prosperous and honored with the favor of the Great, which in Persia is equivalent to the smile of God, then he is content, for he can go on through life laboring cheerfully at his chosen pursuit. Around him on their knees are seated his *chagirds*, or assistants, who aid him in his labors, and also incidentally learn to start in turn as independent



artists. He makes his own colors after receipts learned from his father or his master, and devises varnishes of his own, which add a deliciously mellow effect to the delicate designs over which he devotes such patient and loving toil. He does not live in dread of art-critics who for private gain will hold him writhing on their quills before the public in the daily prints, and make sport of the truest emotions of his nature as if he were a condemned criminal. His customers are his only critics. When they approach his booth, he courteously invites them to examine his productions with a "bismillah" and the offer of a pipe and a cup of tea; or, with his works carefully wrapped up and borne by a chagird, he goes forth, and exhibits them at the house of purchasers who send for him. His ambition is gratified when he can stroll at eventide with dignified mien to the tea-house or the public gardens, counting his beads, repeating verses from the Koran or Hafiz, and in restful mood devising new designs for the morrow. Whether he sells his paintings or finds them a drug on his hands he is resigned, for it is the will of Allah, "to whom be praise."

Such is the life and career of the artist of Persia. It is not that of a Rubens or a Millais; his honors are more tranquilly bestowed, and enjoyed with less of the fever of life, than in the western world; but he has that chiefest of this world's successes, — the privilege of spending his years in the untrammelled pursuit for which he is by nature best fitted. One day an artist of Teherân came to do a little task of gilding for me. He was a tall, portly, handsome man, with a raven-colored beard. His black eyes were thoughtful and pleasant, with a far-away look, as if he were living in a world of dreams. He said he was a pupil of Agâ, or A' Najeff, a famous artist who lived during the two previous reigns. I remarked to him that he was giving more attention to his work than had been stipulated for the money agreed upon. He grandly replied, "I

do not work for money alone; I work because I love my profession." Such an admission from a Persian, I must confess, was so extraordinary that it gave me a new respect for the pursuit of art. On being further questioned, he frankly and modestly stated that while he loved his art he was unable to equal the genius of his master A' Najeffi, for whom he expressed great respect, while going on to say that he in turn was inferior to his master A' Zadêk; while in some points they were all unable to rival the great artists who induced a revival of Persian art in the first reigns of the Sefavean dynasty.

At another time one of the best illuminators in Teherân sent word that he should be pleased to show me some of his works, if I would name the day. He was a gray-bearded man in flowing tunic and white turban. Asked to be seated, he and his chagird subsided on their knees and proceeded to untie cloths in which he had brought his wares. They included boxes, fans, book-covers, and illuminated pages or manuscripts; the designs were of the most exquisite character, and so varied as to indicate apparently an inexhaustible fancy. The general idea of each was breadth in style, with the effect centralized instead of scattered; and yet the details were to the last degree minute, and wrought with the utmost conscientiousness. The feature which would perhaps most impress one with his work was the harmonious blending of colors, which were often so brilliant that the slightest lack of tone or fault of unity would have jarred like a discord in a sonata, and shown on what a dangerous scale of color this daring artist ventured to touch. Impressed as I was by the beauty of his work, I was yet more impressed by the quiet dignity of his bearing, which seemed to announce the high esteem in which he held his calling. He told me that he ground and mixed his own colors, and made his varnishes himself. His chagirds put on the priming, and some-

times laid in the pattern after his suggestion; but he always gave the finishing touches. Except in illuminating, he employed oil colors, even in designs so minute as scarcely to be appreciated without the magnifying glass. Notwithstanding the careful detail involved in all the designs of Mirza Mohamet Tagh , he is a rapid worker, and executes a prodigious amount of nearly uniform merit.

As before observed, the graphic or pictorial arts of Persia seem to be of comparatively recent date. Few if any signs exist of pictorial art in that country before the time of Shah Abbass the Great. If these arts were practised before that period, no record or well authenticated examples of the fact have survived to our day. The evidence that pictorial art had made progress in India before the time of Shah Abbass is, however, strong presumptive evidence that those arts were not then altogether unknown also in Persia.

Portrait-painting as a special branch of art has never acquired prominence in Persia; but it would be a mistake to deny that for two hundred years considerable talent has been displayed by numerous painters in Persia in an art which is so highly esteemed elsewhere, and which would seem to be almost the first that would demand attention among a civilized community inspired by taste and sentiment. One of the first impulses of the human heart, one of the last to warm the expiring soul, is a desire to be remembered after death; next to that is a yearning for something to remind us of those we love or esteem. So long as these sentiments exist, one would suppose that portrait-painting would be an art to receive a warm welcome and meet abundant patronage in every civilized community. But it does not seem to have been much practised in ancient Greece and Rome; and it is therefore not singular that portrait-painting has also failed to acquire a prominent position in the arts of Asiatic nations, where the seclusion

of women and the privacy of domestic life are actually opposed to the representation, in this manner, of the fairest half of the human race. In India as well as in Persia it has been common to portray scenes in which women play an important part, but in each case where there is evidence that the artist had drawn his studies from actual life he has been obliged to depend upon women of loose character for his subjects; and thus what por-



BRONZE CAST OF OLD PERSIAN TILE, REPRESENTING  
RUSTÉM AND THE DEEVES.

traits exist in Persia, and generally also in India, are confined entirely to the masculine sex. The comeliness of Persian youth is so feminine, that some of these portraits of princes might easily be mistaken for likenesses of women, especially as the costume is jewelled and embroidered to a degree that we are accustomed to associate with female attire. Some of the old Persian portraits which have come down to us from the time of the Sefaveans, and for a century later, are very



interesting as preserving the costumes of those times; frequently also they give evidence of being striking likenesses. But it is rarely that they show much attempt at composition. The utmost conscientiousness is displayed in the reproduction of the details of costume, the massive and elaborate jewelry and embroidery being rendered with marvellous fidelity; but the figure, especially the hands, are painted without a full appreciation of the character possessed by the human form divine, and the general effect is lacking in force: in this respect they are decidedly inferior to the richly suggestive and mellow portraits of such artists as Rembrandt or Velasquez. But I have seen the portrait of a young prince painted on glass, two thirds life-size, that was superb in color and full of poetic expression. The color was laid on with impressionist daring, and seemed altogether crude as viewed on the reverse surface of the glass; but when the painting was observed from the other side of the glass it was delicious in tone, harmonious in color, and broad in style, while yet the details of the jewelled tiara were represented with sufficient minuteness, and with the touch of a master. It is not a little singular that the names of most of the artists who have done so much to illustrate the artistic genius of Persia are quite forgotten: their works are also treated with surprising neglect. Now and then one comes across a canvas containing the portrait of some prince long dead; it is brought for sale by a *dellâl*, or travelling merchant, and most probably is in a deplorable condition, the canvas torn, and the paint breaking off in flakes.

The art of portrait-painting in Persia seemed to take a fresh start in the reign of the good Kerîm Khan of blessed memory. Agâ Sadek, one of the most noted artists of modern Persia, lived in that and the subsequent reign; and from some of his studies which are still extant he appears to have devoted some attention to painting from the life. His pupil Mehmet Hassân Khan

executed the very interesting series of life-size portraits in the palace of Negaristân, representing Feth Alee Shah and his numerous sons, together with the foreign envoys and prominent courtiers at the court of that distinguished monarch. These portraits were made by a man of undoubted genius, who wanted but little to be one of the great portrait-painters of his time. As it is, the absence of a true feeling for perspective, which most Persian artists share with Asiatic painters in general, and but a slight perception of the value of *chiaro-oscuro*, necessarily relegates this valuable series of portraits to a secondary rank. Aboul Hassân Khan, the son of the above painter, now resides at Teherân, where he occupies an honorary position at the court, with the title of Sami'ê ul Mulk. He has inherited his father's talents, and has recently produced several excellent portraits of distinguished Persian gentlemen. He shows more grasp than the former in representing character, — a portrait of the venerable Sedr Azêm, or Premier of the Kingdom, being in this respect quite remarkable. His management of colors is also harmonious and correct. Wherein he fails is in a somewhat timid handling of pigments, the result being a certain dryness that leaves the impression of labor, and as it were "smells of the lamp." There are several portrait-painters now at Teherân of respectable natural talents. With a proper course of instruction and reasonable opportunities for competition and encouragement, such as are obtained in Europe, it would not be difficult to develop in that city a school of portrait-painters rivalling those of London and Paris. As it is, the prospect of such a result in the immediate future is not very encouraging, although a rather perfunctory school of art is maintained at the National University under Government auspices.

But the pictorial art of Persia, like its other arts, found expression in the form of an industrial art. In this direction it has assumed importance. We read in Scripture of ink-horns as far

back as the time of Ezekiel. The familiar way in which mention is made of these objects indicates that at least three thousand years ago the ink-horn was already as indispensable an article of civilization as the scribe who carried it in his belt. Four articles of stationery were essential at that time in oriental countries, as they continue to be required in the East at the present day. The Greeks and the Romans wrote on tablets with the stylus,—hence the word “style.” But Asiatics either engraved on stone, or employed parchment and a pen made of a special kind of reed, the size of a pencil, resembling in color and polish malacca stick. This sort of pen suggested a black, glossy ink, thickened with a bunch of linen thread in order to prevent too rapid flow; this ink is in use in Persia at the present time. It is more easily effaced than European ink; hence the facility of making palimpsests out of oriental manuscripts. The ink was carried in a small, oblong metallic case, closed with a minute lid, which in turn was enclosed in a long case containing the pens. This case was called an ink-horn. To these were invariably added a seal, on which was engraved the name of the scribe or of the person for whom the document was written. The seal had a little ink rubbed on the surface with the finger, and was then applied to the paper or parchment on a spot that had first been slightly moistened. This apparatus continues with scarcely a change, at the present time, from the Mediterranean to the Indies. The cutting of seals is therefore one of the most important of the minor arts of the East, and especially of Persia. It may be doubted whether in all Europe a lapidary can be found equal, in this exquisite art, to the Nagôsh Bashee, or chief of engravers of Teherân. The graceful Arabic character lends itself to the production of the most beautiful work of this sort, being frequently interwoven with delicate floral tracery. It is still very common to find seals cut in the Cufic character, or containing emblematic devices. The skill developed in the art of seal-cutting in Persia

has led to the engraving of passages from the Koran or apothegms from the poets on the face of agates and turquoises. Mounted in silver or gold, they are worn by the women on their arms both for decoration and as charms. Every one in Persia, from the humblest mule driver to the Shah himself, is provided with his signet ring or seal, without the impression of which no document can be accepted as authentic.

It may be readily perceived that the ink-horn is an important, in fact an indispensable, article in Persia. Every great man is attended by a secretary, who carries in his belt an ink-horn. Being ordered to write something, he drops on his knees and takes out a roll of paper and the inevitable ink-horn. He has no other desk than his left hand, which holds the paper. He writes from right to left diagonally across the page, leaving a wide margin. If the document is not completed when the bottom of the page is reached, the writing is continued in the margin in short lines at right angles, running around the page like a border. Even the most important official documents and books of price are written in this manner, which allows of considerable beauty if the scribe is an adept, and if he varies the style of handwriting as he follows the margin round.

In Turkey and Persia the ink-horn is called *kalemdân*, or reed-holder. In the former country it is invariably made of brass, being a flat, oblong box, not unlike a spectacle-case, and like that opening at the top; but the Persian *kalemdâns* are different in shape and altogether unlike in material. They are always made in the form of an even-sided oblong box with slightly convex top, from eight to twelve inches in length and about two inches, more or less, in width. One end pulls open and discloses a drawer extending the entire length, which contains the brass ink-holder and pens. The material is papier-maché, sometimes, although rarely, lined with leather.

In the *kalemdân* the best pictorial artists of Persia have



found a worthy medium for expressing the love of the beautiful which is innate in every oriental nature. To the Persian artisan one may indeed apply the well-known sentence in the epitaph of Oliver Goldsmith, "*nil tetigit quid non ornavit.*" To study a collection of Persian *kalemdâns* is like reading the odes of Horace or Hafiz. Here we generally find the lighter side of life and nature depicted in color and designs corresponding to the gaillard strains of the poet's lyre, — not the reckless and despairing music of Omâr Khayâm, which leads the soul to lose itself in the vague and hopeless mazes of the problems of destiny, but rather the blithesome chords which draw the heart to the observation of sunny skies and green fields and nibbling flocks, or the pursuit of the antelope over grassy plains, or the delights of love in gay pavilions by running streams, on a sod cushioned with flowers, where the glittern and the nightingale blend their tender melodies with the lover's song. One enters here on the Arcady of Sidney, or rambles through the Forest of Ardennes with Jacques and Rosalind.

Why does one, in enjoying these lovely productions of the old artists of Persia who thus delineated life in her palmy days, stop to grumble that the drawing is sometimes rude and the perspective askew, and that the trees are of the sort which made Ruskin hurl his ink-pot in whimsical wrath at the luckless landscape artists of the Renaissance? It is not criticism that is required here, but appreciation. Did not Shakspeare make Bohemia a sea-board country? Did not all our old dramatists disregard, not once but scores of times, the unities and the laws of versification? Has "*Venice Preserved*" less power to bring tears because filled with affectations or lines too long for blank verse? There are cases in which criticism becomes hyper-criticism, and when censure but reveals the narrowness of the critic's intellectual scope.

These kalem-dâns of Persia, and the mirrors and boxes painted in the same style, transport the fancy back to the splendor and the delights of a great empire in a happy period. If we study that age in the true spirit, we are transported back to it once more, and gain another and an earnest glance at the better thoughts and the real character of a remarkable epoch in the history of civilization. But if we are still inclined to consider these kalem-dâns and mirrors by the strict canons of art, even then we are forced to admit that in spite of their undoubted defects they possess certain great qualities, which raise the artists who painted them to a high rank among those who have achieved success as colorists and have aided to develop the humanitarian side of art. We owe to them a collection of types of life and character not less interesting as such than the genre paintings of the Dutch school. By them we are often admitted to a glimpse of the interior of the oriental domestic life, which is so inaccessible to the foreigner; and we find withal that these pictures, so interesting to the student of the various phases of humanity, are also glowing with sunny colors, harmoniously blended in effects which charm every eye that is susceptible to the subtle music of chromatic tones.

It would indeed be impossible to surpass the tone that pervades these delightful bits of life concentrated in the space of a few square inches. I am willing to grant that to those who are accustomed to admire only immense canvases and pigments loaded an inch thick, the pictorial art of these Persian mirrors and kalem-dâns are mere "trifles light as air." But they who can see beauty in the delicate touches of the finest miniature-painting, or concede merit to a Malbone or a Meissonier, may find a rational satisfaction in some of the exquisite work that has been lovingly lavished upon this great school of Persian miniature-painting. As observed above, I concede

without argument that the perspective and anatomical drawing and the scenery of this school are not strong points; but on the other hand it must be allowed that these are by no means all the requisite qualities essential to a meritorious school of art, and that a number of great European artists may be mentioned who have been lamentably deficient in these respects.

The effect of these compositions is broad, and yet the workmanship is sometimes so minute that a magnifying-glass is necessary fully to appreciate the patient and loving toil which the master has bestowed upon it. What in a large canvas might seem to resemble the vapid minuteness of Denner ceases to appear such in a surface ten inches by two, on which sometimes fifty to one hundred figures are grouped. I have seen a *kalemdân* on which were three hundred figures. I have before me another *kalemdân* ten inches long and one and three fourths wide, representing a battle-scene between Persians and Turks, mounted and in the armor of two centuries ago. It includes fifty-six distinct figures, of which eighteen are in the foreground. The beauty of this extraordinary composition would make it creditable to any living artist. The vivacity of the scene, the infinite variety of action displayed, the rush, the terror, the pomp, and the circumstance of war are all there. Lost in admiration at the versatile fancy of the artist, it is not until one has several times examined this *kalemdân* that he appreciates the excessive minuteness of the work and recognizes the toil it must have cost. This painting is by Mirza Achmêt, now honorary head of the artists who are under the patronage of the Prince Zil-i-Sultan, Governor of Ispahân.

I have seen an older painting on a mirror-case about nine inches long and six wide, representing the great Nadir Shah in battle, in the early part of the last century. Time has mellowed its colors and given them the rich tone to which we are accustomed in the works of Wouvermans. In the central

foreground, on a proud white horse, we see the great conqueror in the military splendor of an oriental soldier and king. Behind him are grouped his princes and generals; the ground is heaped with the corpses of the slain and the carcasses of horses, depicted with terrible realism; in the middle distance a squadron of cavalry is beating down the enemy, and in the background is a park of artillery, at that time comparatively a new thing in Persia. But after the majestic figure of the Shah and his noble charger, the most remarkable object in this composition is a group of three prisoners, bound and kneeling before the sovereign beseeching for their lives. The varied expression of their faces and the pathos of their condition are admirably rendered. Behind them stands the mailed executioner with drawn sword and stolid countenance, holding them with a rope to which their pinioned arms are attached. The history of oriental warfare inclines one to fear that they sued in vain for their lives from a conqueror who slew one hundred thousand people in Delhi between sunrise and sunset. Bating certain peculiarly oriental inaccuracies of drawing, this painting is so realistic and vivid that one cannot avoid the conclusion that it represents a scene from actual life, in which the artist himself had been a participant. But who painted this picture can only be conjectured, as unlike many of these artists of mirrors and kalem-dâns he neglected to add his signature; it is surmised however by connoisseurs to have been A' Zadek. The most celebrated battle-painter of Persia was Alee Koolé Beg, who lived in the time of the first Shah Abbass.

In the time of Nadir Shah flourished Abah Ger and Agâ Mehmêd Housseïn, both justly noted for their flower-paintings. They have had many imitators, but none have proved to be their equals. Their works are generally found on the lids and backs of the cases containing hand-mirrors, and are often very cleverly executed and highly attractive. They show conclusively that in



this branch of art, at least, the Persian artists drew and painted from Nature; in other still-life paintings they have shown less aptitude. The exquisite arrangements of roses and lilies are generally on a gold ground, which gives them exceeding brilliancy. Combined with them one commonly finds the nightingale, painted with the utmost delicacy. It will be remembered that the oriental poets have found some subtle harmony in the association of nightingales and roses. Doubtless it was suggested by the fact that this melodious bird builds its nest in the rose-bush. An unpoetical Persian assured me, however, that the association is due to the thorny character of the rose, which prevents the serpent from climbing the stem and devouring the eggs of the nightingale. I am unable to decide so nice a question, but having related the poetry and the prose of the matter, leave it to the reader to settle according to his own taste.



OLD PERSIAN MIRROR-CASE — EXTERIOR.

One of the most remarkable and unaccountable features of Persian mirror-painting is the school of sacred subjects which found scope in the decoration of hand-mirrors. It was in its prime in the time of Agâ Najefî, who flourished as a miniature-painter in the reign of Kerâm Khan and the early reigns of the present dynasty. The whole art of figure-painting being proscribed by the inculcations of the Prophet himself, one can hardly

imagine that it would be possible for paintings to be produced by a Mahometan people that would actually give representations of the Prophet himself and of distinguished Mahometan martyrs and saints. It is true that only within a recent period was so daring an innovation attempted, and the origin of these sacred compositions is probably traceable to a still more remark-



COVER OF PERSIAN MIRROR-CASE — INTERIOR.

able fact. I say traceable, for it is hard to realize with what difficulty one obtains precise information in Persia. Not only are attempts at historic records comparatively rare, but those which do exist are vague, imaginative, florid in style, and perplexing. In collecting many of the facts in these pages I have been obliged to depend upon oral information, often more or less traditional, which has been accepted or rejected

only after reference to numerous individuals.

Under the circumstances, it is almost inconceivable that paintings representing sacred scenes from Christian hagiology should also find acceptance with Mahometan amateurs. But as we have only to turn to Christian nations at this very day to find inconsistencies as glaring and absurd, we can set this down as only one more evidence that man is a medley of contradictions, and often unreasoning as the beasts of the field. Here is a people who consider all Christians so vile that few of them will smoke the same pipe or drink from the

same cup, or (in the case of the more fanatical) even shake hands with them lest they be defiled; and all this because they are Christians! And yet they will paint you scenes from the life of Christ, lavishing on them all their talent; and Persians themselves purchase and admire these works! I can only account for this anomaly on the ground that with many Persians, as with not a few Christians, religion has produced no response in their natures, but is outwardly accepted with a vague idea of ultimate advantage, and a belief that to reject it in this life is likely to result in inconvenience and perhaps serious damage. Some persons, furthermore, concern themselves but little with the ethics of art, but are ready to accept any expression of the beautiful, whether sacred or profane. Did not Titian paint the "Immaculate Conception," as well as a "Venus" of exceptional impurity? There is among all cultivated races a large class with whom sentiment is more potent than principle,—a class which not rarely deludes itself into believing that sentiment and religion are convertible terms.

But whatever be the reason, the origin and existence of such pictures in Persia is doubtless the source of the paintings on sacred Mahometan subjects. It is to representations of Christ with the golden nimbus around his head that we owe the familiar painting of Mahomet, which is now quite common in Persia,—represented with a conventional type of feature and expression, as has also been the case with the accepted portraits of the face of Christ, all following a type having no authentic source. It is a curious circumstance that the different methods of propaganda adopted by the "Cross" and "Crescent" are suggested by the scimitar which the Prophet is always represented as holding in his hands. A Mahometan, however, might with plausibility retort that Christ himself said, "I come not to bring peace, but a sword."



The origin of the Persian pictures of the "Holy Family" is a little obscure. It is generally agreed that Shah Abbass sent a number of artists to Europe to study the arts. There they were so impressed by the paintings of the Renaissance School, then at its height, that they became converts at once to the grandeur of the sacred subjects it selected and the noble scheme of color it formulated for draperies. Perhaps, too, these artists brought back to Persia a number of European paintings which served as models to subsequent generations of artists, the Persians being admirable imitators. At all events, a distinct system of compositions representing the Holy Family, with attendant saints and angels, arose about that time in Persia, which reached its perfection with Agâ Najeff. These paintings are from eight to twelve inches long and five to six wide; they are generally painted on the lids and backs of hand-mirrors, one side of the lid representing perhaps a group of flowers, and the other the Holy Family. Sometimes one side gives a Christian subject, and the other a legend from Mahometan martyrology. More oddly still, it is not uncommon to find a sacred subject on the outside, and on opening it, to be surprised by a painting of fair women, — which is so evidently borrowed in style from Europe that one puzzles his brain to remember whether he is looking at a copy from Boucher, Reynolds, or Gainsborough of the last century.

These miniature compositions are invariably executed on papier-maché, and are glazed and scumbled into harmony as well as protected by a rich varnish: the older pictures show evidence of having been repeatedly cleaned and varnished. The greatest known masters of this branch of Persian art are A' Zadek, A' Zemân, and A'<sup>1</sup> Najeff, the last of whom died about forty years ago. The name of the artist and the date are often found at the top of these paintings. Like all Persian work of

<sup>1</sup> A' stands here as a familiar abbreviation of Agâ.



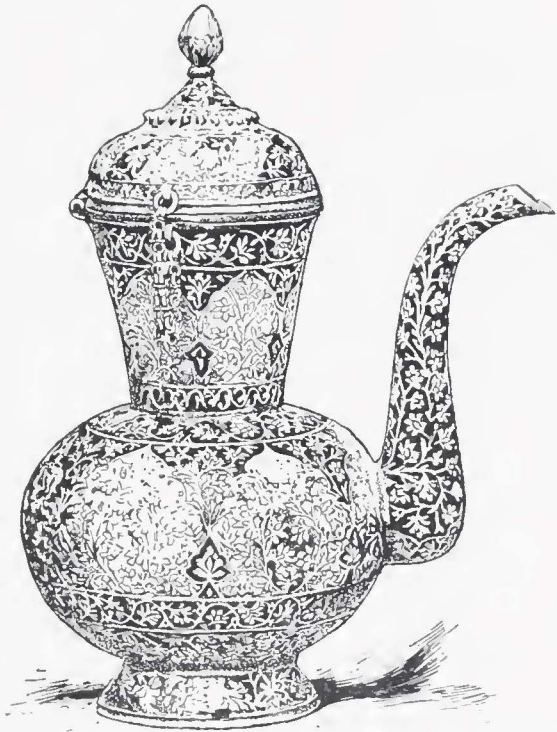
this sort, these miniatures show breadth of effect combined with the utmost minuteness and careful rendering of detail, together with a warm, delicious tone that recalls the works of Correggio. The drawing is sometimes defective; but this objection is less noticeable in these works than in many other Persian designs. These painted mirrors are not only greatly prized by Persian amateurs, but they are now finding abundant appreciation in Europe. There is an odd characteristic of all Persian pictures of the Holy Family quite worth the mention. Almost without exception, they have imitated the Venetian or Veronese type of female beauty; in other words, their women and children are all blondes of the most pronounced sort, with light, golden tresses, which is altogether different from the brunette type of Persian beauty that appears in other Persian paintings. The blond type naturally includes blue eyes, black eyes being the exception. But in Persia blue eyes are considered unlucky, partly perhaps because they are rarely seen in that country. The painters of these sacred scenes have therefore uniformly and carefully avoided admitting blue eyes in any of their pictures of blond women and angels.

We might go on to speak of some of the clever minute drawings in black and white executed by Persian artists, and of the designs in relief produced by the pressure of the thumb-nail on paper, a very curious and ingenious Persian art; but we have not yet touched on the arts of embroidery, carpets, and other textile fabrics, for which Persia has justly been famous for ages. We know from early sculptures that embroidery was practised in Persia thousands of years ago, aside from traditions to that effect. Although these are the best known arts of that country so far as concerns the United States, I am convinced that precise information on the subject is so scarce that a few observations thereon may prove not untimely. It is greatly to be regretted that some of the most elaborate and beautiful forms

of Persian needle-work are either no longer produced or are gradually going out of use, the lack of demand naturally lessening the production. The Persians are a versatile and fickle people, unlike other Orientals, and readily turn to new fashions. It is to this that is due the large variety of objects created by the industrial arts of Persia, and at the same time the rapid extinction of many of these in favor of new articles of personal and domestic use. This circumstance, it should be added incidentally, is a source of encouragement to American exporters who have the daring and sagacity to send their wares to Persia. The Persians are rapidly learning to abandon their own beautiful wares for those of Europe, and the first comers in the field are now about to reap substantial reward for their enterprise.

One of the arts of Persia, now no longer practised, is the embroidering of—what shall we call them?—well, ladies' pantalettes, called by Persians *naesh*. The house-costume of Persian women having undergone a great change in this century, being considerably abbreviated, the embroidered articles called *naesh* have been discarded. These *naesh* are about two feet long and sixteen inches wide, more or less. They consist of some superb pattern embroidered entirely in silk, so firmly and solidly that they are like carpets in miniature. Their value, of course, depends on the texture and beauty of the pattern. Their durability is simply phenomenal. Some of the old patterns still preserved in ancient families and dating back for centuries have acquired a soft gray tone, in which the intricate medley of brilliant colors melt and harmonize, as the splendor of autumnal foliage loses itself in the quivering haze of an October sunset. Every year the *naesh* embroideries are becoming more rare, really good ones being now excessively scarce. There is reason to believe that some of the more recent embroideries of this sort, coarser in texture and less delicious in tone, were wrought especially to meet

the foreign demand for Persian goods. In selecting pieces of naesh the purchaser needs to exercise some prudence, for the dealers have a habit of retouching an old faded piece with new colors which to many makes them not only fresher in appearance but more attractive. The cheat can be discovered only by touching a cloth slightly moistened to the part suspected; if the color comes off, the fraud is detected at once. For coverings to cushions or ottomans, and for the seats and backs of chairs, no material could be found more sumptuous and beautiful than these naesh embroideries, on which the women of Persia have in past ages lavished such taste and loving patience during their lives of enforced retirement in the *anderoon*.



OLD SILVER PITCHER, WITH ENAMEL IN THREE COLORS. VERY RARE. (ONE HALF HEIGHT OF ORIGINAL.)

Still another form of embroidery which is now nearly extinct in Persia (the more's the pity!) is due to female handiwork, and is directly owing to the peculiar Persian custom of female seclusion. This is the embroidery on linen of prayer carpets and of veils for street wear. The design is produced by working a pattern with white silk and drawing the threads, the result

being a raised pattern in silk lightened by open lattice-like spaces. Masculine appreciation of such work as this must after all be cold and perfunctory; and yet I venture to hazard the assertion that this embroidery does not yield in workmanship and beauty to the finest needlework of Mechlin or Valenciennes, or to the point-lace covering the robes of European queens.

Among the forms of Persian embroideries which happily are not yet extinct are the shawls and portières of Kermân. He or she is to be congratulated who obtains a good example of this art before an invasion of Persia by aniline dyes, and European manufactured stuffs relegates it to the limbo of dead arts. In general scope the needlework of the province of Kermân is allied to that of Cashmere. It differs from that in being of coarser texture, although often wrought on very fine stuffs similar to those made of cashmere wool. The design is also ordinarily in wool, but sometimes it is of silk thread on fine cashmere, or on the fine wool-stuffs of Kermân which resemble cashmere. The shawls of Cashmere are intended for a different purpose, and are generally made by another process. The work of Kermân is very beautiful, although the design commonly consists of variations of what we call the palm-leaf pattern, — which orientals affirm is properly intended as a conventional rendering of the cypress, the tree of immortality. It is worked with an exquisite union of rich, soft colors, associated with effective borders of flowers. The ground is generally scarlet or pure white.

Numerous other varieties of embroidery have been and are still made in Persia, but none presenting perhaps the same delicacy of artistic feeling, although sometimes exhibiting an amount of work almost beyond belief, and certainly surpassing (as is the case with most of the needlework of Persia) all similar work produced in the United States. The most important of these elaborate schools of art embroidery are probably those of



Shirâz and Rescht, and in lesser degree those of Karadâgh. They resemble one another in general character; the main features are massive and intricate designs wrought with silk in chain-stitch, with a wonderful massing of brilliant colors on broad-cloth, which is generally scarlet or gray, though sometimes black. The richer specimens are distinguished by having the design partly made of small bits of cloth of other colors, sewed into apertures cut into the groundwork. In the Shirâz embroideries, the inserted pieces are generally of velvet. Sometimes entire carpets are made on this elaborate scale, which are necessarily expensive, and scarcely fitted for any but oriental countries, where people leave their shoes at the door. The old designs of Rescht are more delicate and artistic than those of the present time. This, we regret to say, is due not only to a decline in taste, but also to an intolerable invention of modern chemists, who might have been better employed than in discovering aniline dyes. It is true, strict orders have been issued against the importation of these dyes into Persia, the Government being well aware of the irreparable injury they are capable of bringing on some of the most important industries of Persia. But Rescht being near the frontier, it is difficult altogether to exclude the aniline colors from that place, or at least to prevent smuggling and using them to an extent that is likely to ruin the reputation of all the embroideries of Rescht.

In this connection it would be unjust to omit all allusion to the superb embroideries with gold and silver thread, which at one time rivalled the very best work of that sort made in Europe in the Middle Ages. These embroideries were made on crimson and black velvet, or on blue and crimson silk. They often contain quotations from the Koran or the poets, interwoven with magnificent designs of flowers and vines. It would be impossible to exceed the splendor of some of these old Persian stuffs of gold and silver thread. Those made for

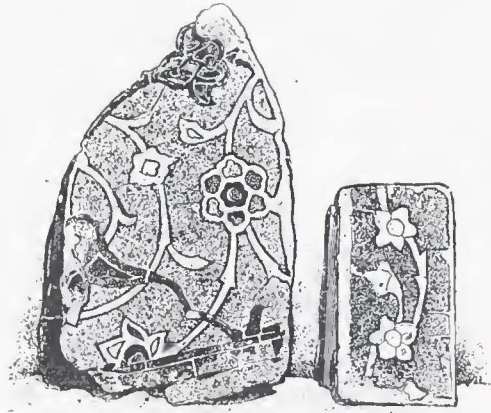
the royal family are sometimes embossed with diamonds and pearls. Fine examples of this sort of work are now becoming scarce, and collectors should not hesitate to seize upon them whenever they appear. There are as yet no imitations of this art in the market, as there are of some of the other Persian arts; now and then an enterprising travelling merchant succeeds in discovering choice bits hid away in the chests of some of the old Persian families, who are glad to sell them and buy cheap European wares in return. So vast have been the quantities of Persian embroidery and bric-à-brac already exported that one is amazed, considering also the wars which have ravaged that old country, that any fine examples of the noble decorative arts of Persia yet remain. Those who buy now may yet succeed in securing great bargains; but the chances grow less every day.

A glance at the manufacture of Persian rugs would seem to come naturally within this account of the arts of Persia, their artistic merits are so decided. But for certain good reasons the subject has been deferred to a subsequent chapter.

Music and the drama are also undoubtedly included in a general survey of the arts of a people. But the latter is elsewhere treated in the chapter on the Taziêh; and of the former I speak with diffidence, as the characteristic traits of Persian music can be intelligently described only by a practical musician. I may venture to say, however, that the music of the Persians is so entirely different from that of modern Europe as to make it impossible to institute a comparison; and yet no greater mistake could be made than to consider it unsystematic and barbarian. It is based on certain philosophic laws; treatises on music centuries old exist in the Persian language, and the people show great appreciation of the plaintive chords of their native instruments and songs. I think that those who have given attention to the music of ancient Greece might

gain a clearer perception of that subject by investigating the native music of Persia. Indeed, it would not be surprising if it should be found that the Dorians borrowed from the Greek colonies of Asia Minor, who in turn borrowed their music from the Persians. Both were of Aryan stock. We know that neither the Persian nor the Greek of antiquity disdained to borrow customs and ideas from each other. Why then should the Greek not have borrowed music from the Persians? Venus as a goddess had charms for both; why not Melpomene and Terpsichore?

In summing up the present aspects of Persian art, I think it reasonable to conclude that they do not so much indicate that it is moribund as that it is in a transition state. There is less breadth and force now apparent in the designs of Persian artists, less firmness, less originality, less humanity, less vitality;



EXAMPLE OF OLD PERSIAN KERAMIC MOSAIC.

but the national love for the beautiful is still active, and shows its yearnings by reaching forth to Europe for new ideas and forms of expression. Before an entirely new system of art-expression worthy of note and perpetuation arrives, we may look for every sort of artistic solecism and absurdity, relieved by occasional gleams of the new light that shall again dawn over Persia from the realms of the ideal.

## CHAPTER XII.

### RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL SECTS OF PERSIA.

THERE are some facts apparently simple enough in themselves, which yet fail sometimes of being fully appreciated until one comes into actual contact with them through the force of exceptional circumstances. Such are race-characteristics and differences in religious belief. Although a resident in the East for several years, and aware that the Mahometan world, like the Christian, is divided into sects and schisms, yet until I went to Persia I had taken little interest in these questions, and therefore had but faint conception of the reality of the differences existing in the bosom of the Mahometan fold, or of the strong antagonisms resulting from these differences. Those who are interested in religious and philosophical problems may not be disinclined to attend to a sketch of the numerous sects of Islamism in Persia, and especially since the rise and progress of the Mahdêe<sup>1</sup> of the Soudan aroused such a profound interest in the political world.

Setting aside, for the present, a consideration of minor subdivisions or sects, the followers of the Prophet are, first of all, divided into two great bodies, — the Sunnees, and the Shcâhs. The Turks and Afghans, the Arabs and most of the Moguls of northern India, are Sunnees; they consider that the caliphate descended from the Prophet through Omâr, Abû Bekr, Osmân, and the house of Moaviyêh. The Sunnees are so well

<sup>1</sup> Spelled as pronounced; the *h* is a guttural, and the last syllable is strongly accented.



known it is not essential to particularize here the details of their sectarian faith. But the Persians are Sheähs; they abhor the Sunnees; and Persia owes some of her most distinguished conquests and splendors, as well as some of her bitterest humiliations, to the religious wars which she has waged with the Turks in the west and the Afghans in the east.

The Sheähs consider that the heritage of the caliphate vested in Alee,<sup>1</sup> the son-in-law of Mahomet, and in Hassân and Hossein his two sons (who were slain by orders of Yezced, son of Moaviyêh, near Kerbellâh), and their posterity. The sacred line of uncrowned caliphs of the Sheäh faith consists of the Twelve Holy Imâms, all of whom, except the last, were martyred by the so-called sectaries of the Sunnee faith. The law of both these sects is based on the precepts of the Koran; but the Sheähs accept it with the addition of numerous annotations, or decisions, given by the Holy Imâms. The twelfth Holy Imâm has yet to come; he is called the Mahdêe. Both sects look forward to a final successor of the Prophet and a reformer of the Faith, called by both the Mahdêe, who shall unite all the believers in one orthodox creed. Hence the intense and profound anxiety that was exhibited by the entire Mahometan world in the late so-called Mahdêe. If he had succeeded in conquering Egypt, all the sects and races of Islâm would have rallied to his support, and thus proved their faith that he was indeed the Mahdêe that is to come. One hundred and thirty millions of enthusiasts were watching the situation with ardor and hope. Now that he is dead, Mahometans will continue to look into the future for the coming of the true Mahdêe.

They who consider Islamism an effete religion are mistaken. It is not less active now than in former ages; the warlike spirit is perhaps less apparent, or rather less formidable, but

<sup>1</sup> Spelled as pronounced.

only because during the last four centuries, since the discovery of America and the invention of printing, Christendom has made greater proportionate progress than the Mahometan nations, aided as it has been by advantages of climate. There is no question that climatic and geographical conditions have much to do with the present state of civilization. This explains in part why the Turk, or Mahometan, in Europe seems an exotic; but he does not give that impression in Asia or in Africa, where the sultry, unchanging temperature, the vast spaces fading away endlessly as eternity, the arid plains broken at long intervals by oases of verdure, suggest a dreamy, contemplative life and religion, relieved at intervals by spasmodic outbursts of tremendous passion and energy. It is because Mahometanism is a natural growth, or evolution, out of certain physical conditions, rather than a grafting, that it has such a vitality in Asia, and may continue for ages to maintain its sway. It is said that its laws were simply borrowed by Mahomet from the Levitical code. He may have taken the hint from thence, and undoubtedly did appropriate certain laws; but the new plant was essentially original, and unless it had been in congenial soil it never would have attained such deep and permanent growth. The principles and decrees of the Mahometan code, while ostensibly religious, are actually in harmony with the tribal and patriarchal laws which have never ceased to obtain in every form of oriental government; and many of the innumerable regulations for the conduct of the true believer in the ordinary avocations of life are actually based on the necessities of the climate, and may really be considered somewhat in the light of sanitary laws tending to preserve the health of nations in ages and countries ill-supplied with boards of health and scientific hygiene. Unless these observances had been made obligatory as religious rites, they never would have obtained the force they now receive. Of

course, as with all elaborate formulas and burdensome ceremonies, after a time the tendency was to wink at a more or less habitual disregard of many of the details of these quasi-religious and sumptuary attempts to control the habits of the individual, and to insist instead upon an external fanaticism for the Faith in its entirety. This by some is called Pharisaism, which, however, is hardly a sufficient explanation of such a result. The inclination of man to assert his independence is such that sooner or later there arises a disposition towards greater freedom of action, while the judgment still concedes that the accepted code of religious and economical principles is right, necessary, and expedient in theory, if not always so in detail and practice. We are speaking here, of course, regarding those forms of religion in which much is made of great elaboration of rites and ceremonies, or of codes interfering with the non-essential minutiae of human liberty of action.

It is not a little curious that the Sheähs also differ from the Sunnees in many of the minor details of law and ceremony, besides mooting the great question of the succession of the caliphate. The Sunnees abhor delineations of the human figure, and the Prophet seems to have also proscribed works of art in general. But the Sheähs are mostly Persians; and the Persians being an imaginative and æsthetic people, have found ways of explaining away the Prophet's teachings on this point. Many of their laws and penalties may indeed be set down as inoperative by reason of contrary customs, or because hedged in by such limitations as to ocular testimony that it is difficult to secure a sufficient number of legal witnesses. The Persians being also a social and convivial race, have found means to evade the penalties for bibulous excesses. It is curious to see, however, with this tendency to weaken the force of a theocratic code, the continued existence of laws like that of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;" or of what is called paying

“blood-money” to ransom the forfeited life of the murderer; or of the usage of escaping justice by seeking places of refuge.

The law of Persia, as already stated, is based on the Koran, and is called the *Shâhr*. But there is also the civil law, called the *Urf*, which is likewise termed the “law of custom.” Like the common law of England, it is the result of gradual growth from current necessities, — a code of precedents. But the *Urf* can never go against the *Shâhr*; and in case of appeal the final decision rests with the *Shâhr*, its canons in difficult questions being expounded by the written opinions of the Head of the Priesthood, called in Persia the Chief *Mushtahêd*; in Turkey this dignitary is termed the *Sheik ul Islâm*. The Chief *Mushtahêd* of Persia is only second to the Great *Mushtahêd* of *Kerbellâh* near Bagdad, where Alee is buried; of all the sacred places of the *Sheähs* that is the most venerated. The present Chief *Mushtahêd* is *Hadgi Mollâh Alee*. Among the *Sheähs* it may be questioned whether Alee does not rank with Mahomet himself. Of course, if asked, they would deny this; but the fact remains that the prominence given to the claims of Alee by many of the *Sheähs* has almost deified him in their practice. A sick man by the roadside is heard crying to Alee for help; workmen hoisting a weight call to Alee to give strength. The greatest event, or anniversary, in the *Sheäh* year is the celebration in dramatic form of the death of the sons of Alee in a play called the *Taziêh*, — a description of which is given in another chapter.

It is an inexplicable fact that while the genuine *Sheäh* is more liberal in his practices than the Turk, and except on special occasions more lax in religious observances, he is on the other hand far more fanatical outwardly, and holds foreigners in greater abhorrence. There are many mosques and sacred spots which a Christian may enter in Turkey, but great danger would attend any attempt of a foreigner or unclean Christian to approach the precincts of Persian shrines. It has been accom-



plished only twice or thrice, and then under a thorough disguise. This is the more to be regretted because some of the Persian mosques and tombs are well known to be marvellously beautiful. This seems an absurd contradiction, because in some matters wherein it would be least expected the Persians are exceedingly liberal. Freedom of speech is indulged in in Persia to a degree not exceeded in any European country. It is the most common thing there to hear men of all classes speaking with disrespect of the *mollâhs*, or Mahometan clergy, or criticising the government. Both the civil and religious authorities exhibit rare wisdom in permitting this liberty; for a vent is thus gained for the discontent which might, if repressed, seek expression by overt deeds. Discontent is universal in this age; but while the tongue wags, the arm is less likely to be uplifted.

The intolerance of the Persians is doubtless a trait of their race. The Sassanid monarchs and the Magians were terrible persecutors of all who were opposed to Zoroastrianism. But when we consider that only a few generations have elapsed since every land in Europe was darkened by the smoke of the fires that consumed martyrs by myriads, and when we see what intolerance still rages in many parts of Christendom that are called civilized, it ill becomes us to be severe in criticising the intolerance and fanaticism of the Persians. All have an equal right to be intolerant within their own borders, and only they who in this matter are wholly without blame, have authority to throw the first stone.

Another singular trait of Mahometanism in Persia is the fact, that while it is in its outward manifestations so fanatical that one would imagine that it must in every respect be free from intermixture with other cults, it still retains many customs inherited from the faith of the Fire-worshippers, or followers of Zoroaster, who preceded the Islamic conquest. Of course, such an origin for these customs is denied by true believers, but none

the less the fact remains. The Mahometan year begins with the month of Moharrêm, which of course varies from year to year, because the oriental year is arranged according to lunar months. But the Persians pay far less attention to the Mussulman New Year than to the beginning of the year accepted by their Parsee ancestors. The latter comes on the 20th of March, when the sun crosses the line, and is called, as we have already explained, the No Rooz, or New Day. It would be idle to deny that the celebration of the No Rooz, with all its attendant ceremonies, is inherited from the ancient worshippers whose teacher was the mysterious, little-known, but immortal Zoroaster, or Zerdûst.

An observation occurs to me here which I am well aware will not meet with universal assent; but having become tolerably familiar with both sides of the subject, it appears to me only the merest justice to call attention to it. In Mahometan countries all law and authority are deduced from the Koran; in other words, the government is theocratic. Until another code is introduced and accepted by the administrators of the law, it is only natural that they should regard any attempts to undermine the existing code not only with jealousy but with dread: for the Oriental is only held in order by a wholesome fear of those who interpret and execute the laws. Take that away, and anarchy ensues. In Constantinople circumstances have gradually forced a half-attempt to introduce a modified form of the *Code Napoleon*. But Persia is scarcely yet ripe for even such a half-way measure; any such change must come very gradually, and be approached with caution. Without entertaining or expressing any opinion contrary to enterprises aiming at a complete religious and probably a consequent civil transformation in the East, I desire to say that it is hardly fair to ascribe resistance to such measures altogether to intolerance. Prominent men in the Orient who are privately in favor of progress, and who

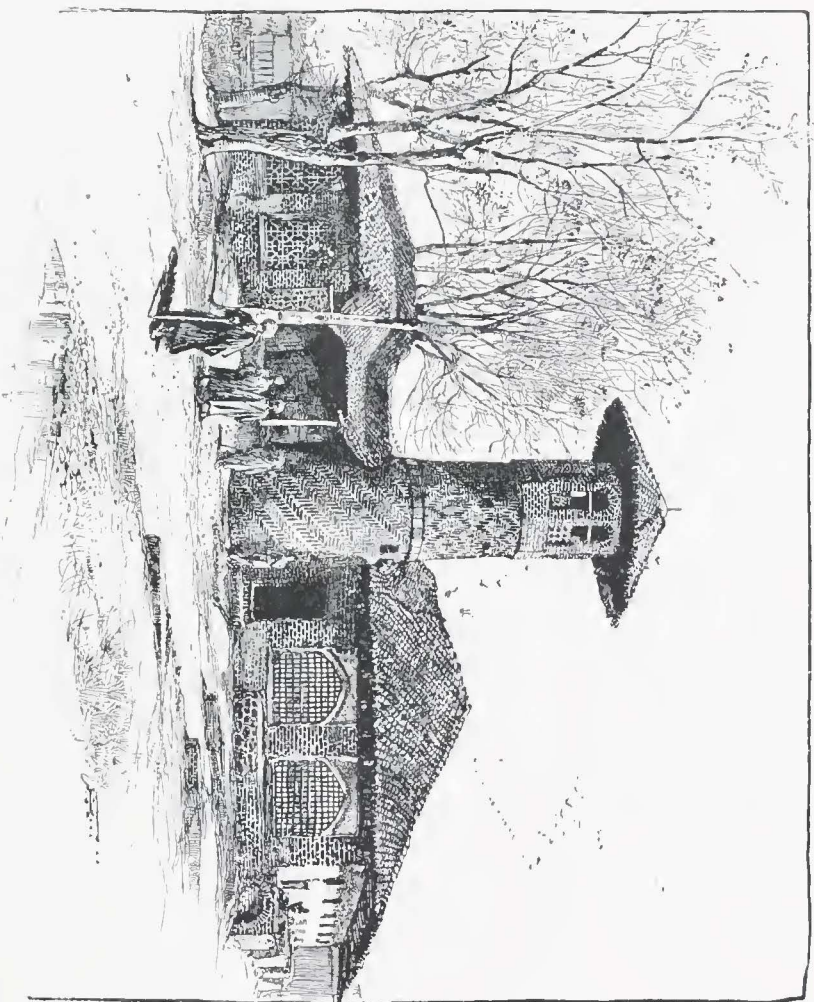
perhaps are entirely sceptical regarding the faith in which they were born, are still conservative in public, and apparently intolerant or apathetic towards any religious change, because they see that when a Mahometan becomes a Christian he must necessarily deny at once, *pari passu*, the authority on which the present civil laws are based. These intelligent men perceive what the masses only apprehend by the twilight of unreasoning intuition, — that such a tremendous upheaval as must be involved by a national movement towards Christianity should come very gradually, and be preceded by a modification of the laws or constitution on which national stability is based; and it does not necessarily indicate exceptional depravity on their part that they shrink from such a revolution, unable to foresee the ultimate result. Many of those in the ranks of Islamism who oppose the introduction of Christianity would seem to be, therefore, deserving of Christian charity rather than of aversion and sweeping condemnation. It is one thing to Christianize a wretchedly organized and savage society like that of the Sandwich Islands, barbarous in every respect, and quite another to change the institutions of a people who have been organized on a civilized basis for ages. The rapid transformation through which Japan is now passing, instead of furnishing a favorable example to the contrary, is qualified rather to incline thoughtful observers to regard the movement with suspicion as indicating national instability, and at least to suggest reserve in expressing an opinion concerning the ultimate result.

We have observed that the Sheähs of Persia offer some curious contradictions in fanaticism and liberality. A feature more remarkable than any I have previously noted is the number of forms of belief actually existing within the fold of the Sheäh sect itself. • The Persians, unlike the Moors of Barbary or Turks of unmixed descent, are a highly intellectual race, imaginative, acute, given to speculation, and impatient of aught that enchains

the individual opinion. Assenting outwardly to laws which are sometimes arbitrary or opposed to their convictions, they retain the right of private belief; and granted the one, large toleration is allowed for the other. I speak now of the Irânec, or genuine Persian, descended from the men of old who founded the great empire overthrown by Alexander and rebuilt in turn by the Sasanians and Sefavees, as distinguished from the numerous tribes or tributary races within the borders of Persia, but of Turanian stock. The Persian, pure and simple, is of Sanscrit or Indian origin; or rather it is still a question which is derived from the other, or whether both came from a common source in Central Asia. The Pehlevec, or old Persian language, is a Sanscrit dialect, and many words now used in Persia indicate relationship with the Aryan tongues of the West. The Persian speech of to-day is largely composed of Arabic, and in the northern provinces of Turkish as well. But as the English language has borrowed from all nations and yet retains its dominance over all it has borrowed, so the old Pehlevec of Persia, borrowing and adapting the wealth of other tongues, and yet maintaining a grand controlling individuality of its own, is still the ruling tongue of Irân, modified only by the inevitable changes produced by time. The Arabian or Mahometan conquest hastened, it is true, an exchange of the Pehlevec characters for the Cufic, which were then coming into use, and eventually also for the Arabic letters. But in this case the change was highly advantageous; for with a people endowed with an unsurpassed genius for decorative art the adoption of the Arabic characters, with their graceful curves and involutions, opened a magnificent field for the lively fancy of the Persian artists.

The student of the early Christian Church may be surprised to learn, in this connection, of a curious fact, already alluded to in these pages, which seems to bring one important phase of church history into near relation with the development of





A PERSIAN VILLAGE MOSQUE.



Persian art. In the pictorial and keramic art of Persia there is unmistakable evidence of the influence of Chinese art. The further one proceeds to trace this evidence toward the early stages of Persian art, the more prominent does this feature appear. This influence, after being felt for ages, revived and culminated in the sixteenth century. Now, the Persians have a tradition that the Chinese ideas which first permeated their art resulted from the journey eastward of a certain Persian artist, who was also the founder of a religious sect. He was named Manee. Persecuted for his doctrines, he fled toward China, and after a prolonged absence returned to Persia, bringing with him a taste for Chinese art, which bore fruit in a Chino-Persian art that only after ages so identified itself with the country of its adoption as to lose the distinctive traces of its origin.

There is no question that sometime in the remote past a certain Manee did exercise in some such way a decided influence upon the æsthetic expression of the facile and impressible mind of the Persian race. But exactly when it happened it might be impossible to discover, such matters as precise historical data being difficult to obtain from the Persian writers, except regarding recent history. Were it not for the classic and Byzantine writers, we should be quite in the dark concerning Persian history previous to the Sefavean dynasty. What a blank is the record of the great Greco-Parthian dynasty, which lasted over four centuries, but which is heard of or remembered only as it came into direct conflict with the Romans, or through the numerous coins which the rude peasant now turns up with his ploughshare in the spring-time! I say that it might be impossible to decide the epoch when the traditionary artist Manee thus became a potential factor in Persian art, were it not that we learn through the more precise records of church history that the great Manichæan sect was founded in Persia by a certain

Manee, who was born in 231 A. D., and was forced on account of his peculiar doctrines to fly eastward to China; but who eventually returned to his native country with his *Ertang*, or Gospel, illustrated by paintings done by his own hand, and was at last put to death by Varahran, — or, as the Persians pronounce the name, Bachrâm I. It certainly seems as if the relation between the two accounts were far more than a coincidence, tending rather to prove that the founder of the Manichæan sect was a man of such extraordinary ability that he not only founded a sect of wide-spread and tenacious character, — one of the most widely felt of the early church divisions, — but also exercised a controlling influence over Persian art for ages.

But before Manee attempted to establish a religion that should combine or harmonize the teachings of Christ, of Sakya Mûni, and of Zoroaster, the Persian mind had already shown, on repeated occasions, a tendency to pursue independent lines of religious speculation, inclining toward philosophical explanations of the problems of destiny, but more especially toward various forms of mysticism. The all but universal acceptance of Islamism by the Persians does not appear to have checked, but rather to have stimulated, this trait of the Persian character. And thus it happens to-day, that while we find an entire people pronouncing themselves outwardly the most fanatical of Mahometans, we see them at the same time divided into numerous sects, of which several are anything but Mahometan in theory, while their followers are practically Mahometans only in name.

This feature of Persian Islamism developed itself at an early period. Those who have grown familiar with Omâr Khayâm's quatrains through Fitzgerald's masterly paraphrase, or have been led to a knowledge of the poet of Nishapoor by Mr. Vedder's grotesquely imaginative, and characteristically original but altogether non-oriental illustrations, are aware that the



poetic tent-maker was, eight centuries ago, an agnostic of the most pronounced type and an irredeemable pessimist. A true believer, a genuine Mussulman, can be neither; and yet Omâr Khayâm was outwardly a Mahometan, accepted as such notwithstanding his exulting negations. But he was a Mahometan of the Hakemêe sect. He did not blaspheme the name of the Prophet: and while he cried for roses and wine, and defied all the spiritual verities, he outwardly bowed the knee and muttered his prayers and counted his beads with the faithful. Omâr Khayâm is commonly supposed by European scholars to have been a Sufee, — the Sufees, who in Turkey are called Bachtashee, being mystics, whose chief characteristic seems to be pantheism, borrowed in all likelihood from India. Essentially their belief appears to lie in the endeavor to spiritualize everything, and to consider all material objects as simply symbols of the ideal or spiritual, which is the only reality, — the individual being actually part of the universal, spiritual entity, and immortality, or the life after this, an absorption into the omnipresent Unity. In some respects Sufeeism, in its acceptance of the Koran as pure symbolism, suggests the Swedenborgian interpretation of our sacred Scriptures. Sufeeism appears to have existed in Persia, under one form or another, for nearly two thousand years. There are thousands of Sufees in that Kingdom at the present time, even among the mollâhs, or priesthood.

But Omâr Khayâm was not so much a Sufee as a Hakemêe, according to the traditions of the Persians themselves. The Sufees are sufficiently numerous still, but the Hakemêes are probably a larger body: it seems to be attended with success, if one may judge from its increasing numbers and the high social and official position of many of the followers of its mystical philosophy. It must be admitted that the mysticism of both the Sufees and the Hakemêes makes it easy to confound one with the other if one does not carefully analyze their respective beliefs.

That the distinction between these two philosophical Mahometan sects is sometimes confounded by the Persians themselves, seems evident from the fact that Hafiz and other poets have been alternately claimed by both sects. The Hakemêe doctrines appear to be best defined by saying that they include an absolute denial of the miracles of Mahomet's career; an acceptance of the Prophet as an exponent of spiritual truths conveyed in symbolical language; a rejection of a material devil, but a spiritual dualism of the principles of good and evil; unbelief in a future existence of physical pain for the wicked, but an absorption by the good after death into the Good, and of the evil into the emanation of Evil, the personality of the individual being annihilated at death by merging into an immortality of absorption with an all-pervading principle. Have we not here another form of Manichæism, an attempt to harmonize several creeds, — Buddhism, Pantheism, Dualism, and Islamism? One of the most celebrated and revered leaders of the Hakemêes was Seyed Abûl Hassân Djelveh.

There is another Mahometan sect of Persia, which, while especially Sheäh in its character, is also deeply tinged with that mysticism peculiar to orientalism, particularly in Persia. The sect has not so much a name as its followers, who are called Noseïree, but more often Alee-olla-hee, or believers in the divinity of Alee. Their creed is to the effect that on the death of Mahomet it was necessary for his disciples to have a continued emanation from the deity to preserve the Faith; and so the divine element entered into Alee, who thenceforth partaking of the divine essence logically became divine and more worthy of direct worship than Mahomet himself. This extraordinary belief may have been borrowed from the Christian acceptance of the man Christ as at once human and divine. Without some such borrowed ideas it seems difficult to understand why any Mahometans should find it necessary to substitute one higher

than the Prophet. The Alee-olla-hee are confined chiefly to certain semi-nomadic tribes in western and northern Persia; but a number are also found at Teherân, where they are subject to annoyances from the orthodox Mussulmans.

Another class of Persian sectarians who outwardly accept the Prophet and Alee are the Dalree, who are essentially pantheists, and believe in a community of women; the latter belief, however, they do not practise to any extent. Among the villages near Kermanshâh exists also the sect called Mosdakee; their tenets are obscure, but the most important seem to be a disbelief in individual immortality, a belief in the absorption of the soul into the universal presence after death, and in this life a community of women. They are not numerous. We have again the sect of the Moshirêk, who while outwardly monotheists and Mahometans are practically polytheists, — something like the ancient Greeks, who symbolized objects in Nature as types of the Deity, and thus inclined to a Nature-worship.

But the most remarkable sect now in Persia is probably that of the Bâbees, or followers of the Bâb. Their importance is not so much due to their numbers or political influence, as to the fact that the sect is of recent origin, full of proselyting zeal, and gaining converts every day in all parts of Persia, and latterly also in Turkey. The Bâbees present one of the most important religious phenomena of the age. It must be admitted, however, that they very strongly resemble in their communistic views the doctrines enounced by the famous Mazdâk, who was executed by Chosroes I. after bringing the empire to the verge of destruction by the spread of his anarchical tenets.

In 1810 was born Seyed Alee Mohammed, at Shirâz. The name "Seyed" indicated that he was one of the numerous descendants of the Prophet. Like all the founders of oriental religions, he began his career with a period of seclusion and meditation. He accepted Mahomet and Alee in the creed

which he considered himself predestined to proclaim; but he added to this the declaration that their spirits had in turn entered into his own soul, and that he was therefore a great prophet, — the Bâb, who was to bring their gospel to a legitimate conclusion. It became his mission, therefore, to announce that all things were divine, and that he, the Bâb, was the incarnate presentment of the universal life. To this doctrine was added a socialism which formulated the equality of all, sweeping away social classes and distinctions, and ordaining a community of property, and also, at first, of wives. The new doctrines took hold of the heart of the masses; men and women of all ranks hastened to proclaim their yearning for something that promised to better their condition, by embracing the wild teachings of the Bâb. This success was doubtless due in part to a religious restlessness, which might have turned to something more satisfying and true if only it had been known. But the Government could not long remain blind to the possible results if the movement were allowed to spread unchecked. Therefore, after several serious tumults, the Bâb was seized and executed at Tabreez. This only served to add fuel to the fire. A fierce persecution broke forth; but the Bâbees were not willing to submit tamely to suppression. They offered resistance in many quarters, which culminated in 1851 at Zenzân, a city between Tabreez and Teherân, celebrated for its exquisite work in silver filigree. The place was besieged for several months and finally stormed, the Bâbees fighting from house to house until every man, woman, and child in the city was slain. After this terrible event a conspiracy of Bâbees was formed to assassinate Nasr-ed-Deen Shah, who escaped with a serious wound in the leg. The conspirators were put to death with horrible tortures. Several similar attempts have, it is reported, been made since then, and many Bâbees have, I am told, been sacrificed secretly by poison administered in prison; but I do not vouch for this fact. The



Bâbees are now obliged to practise their faith in secret, all of those in Persia being outwardly of the Sheäh sect. But their activity does not cease, and their numbers are increasing rapidly. The sect has also extended to Turkey. The leader of the Turkish branch resides at Constantinople.

In Persia the title of the present head of the sect is Sob-e-Azêl. As his belief in the Bâb is a secret, his name is not mentioned in this connection. From all I can gather from various sources it seems safe to assume that the Bâbees of Persia now number nearly, if not quite, four hundred thousand believers. They are found among all conditions of society, and, strange to say, adherents are gained among the priesthood as well as the laity. Just now there seems to be unusual activity among the Bâbees; emissaries or missionaries are secretly pervading the country, not only seeking to make proselytes but also presenting modifications in belief. The community in wives is no longer a practised tenet of the Bâb sect, while it is proclaimed with increasing emphasis that the Bâb is none other than God himself made manifest in the flesh.

Another class connected with the Sheäh sect is worthy of mention, although it can hardly be called a sect. I refer to the Seyeds, or descendants of the Prophet by Alee and Fatimêh, the daughter of Mahomet. They are distinguished by the black or green turbans they are privileged to wear. Whether all of them can prove to the satisfaction of a genealogical expert that they have a right to claim such exalted ancestry may be doubted; but at any rate they form such a numerous body, and show such a disposition to make the most of their privileges, that during the present reign a special department of justice has been formed to administer the law to Seyeds.

The foregoing observations, although necessarily only partial, are sufficient to indicate a spiritual, intellectual, and civil

activity and restlessness that prove the Persians to be in a developing and transitional rather than a dormant state, and preparing in due time to receive impressions of the truth in a nobler form than any with which they are now familiar.

I have often been asked whether the Persians are still fire-worshippers. Such a question not only indicates the ignorance which continues to prevail concerning the East, but also suggests that poets and historical novelists are responsible for most of the small amount of history which satisfies the general reader. The number of persons who have derived their ideas of Persia from Moore's "Fire-worshippers" is far larger than of those who have gone to serious history for their information. When the Arabs, burning with religious zeal, carried the doctrines of Mahomet into Persia, and forced the acceptance of the Koran at the point of the sword, that country abandoned the so-called worship of fire and the principles taught by Zerdûst, or Zoroaster. The fire-worshippers who survived were mostly driven out of the country by persecution, and became the Parsees of India; a few remained in Persia, and their descendants are found there to this day, but they number scarcely twenty-three thousand. They are most numerous at Yezd, where they weave some of the finest of the silk stuffs for which Persia is famous. Elsewhere they are agriculturists. They wear a peculiar garb, of which a distinguishing color is yellow, and are probably the most upright community in a country where correct principles and practice are scarce. Of course they retain the worship and rites of ancient Persia, including the mystical veneration for fire-light. It is worthy of note that the more intelligent of the Guebres deny that they worship either the sun or fire, but rather the deity or principle symbolized by those objects. This may be true of educated Guebres; but the lower and ignorant classes undoubtedly have not sufficient refinement to make so subtle a distinction. Those who are opposed to smoking, on moral grounds, will be

pleased to learn that no Guebre ever uses tobacco, while to smoke in his presence is almost an affront, because of the sacredness of fire. The head of the Guebres in Persia is a very respectable and intelligent old gentleman named Manookjee; he resides at Teherân, and is in frequent communication with the Parsees of Bombay, by whom, it is said, he is delegated to look after the Guebre interests in Persia. As an English subject he is free from annoyance, and doubtless able to be of efficient service to his co-religionists. The peculiar method of burial followed by the Guebres—leaving the dead exposed to the elements to be devoured by fowls of the air—is due to the belief that to inter them in the ground would be to pollute it. Of course such a practice and sentiment could obtain only in a warm, dry climate. It was partly to this cause that the early Christians owed their persecution by the Zoroastrians, who were bitterly opposed to the modes of Christian burial.



A GUEBRE.

The Armenians, Jews, and Nestorians of Persia also form distinct communities entirely separate from the dominant Persian and Mahometan population, like small islands in the sea, and presenting an immovable front for ages against all the disadvantages of such isolation. These communities number probably from twenty-five to thirty thousand souls each. The



Jews are devoted entirely to trade, and most of the Armenians of Persia follow the same pursuit; and while meeting with oppression and injustice at times, like all the inhabitants of oriental countries, they appear to be scarcely less successful in proportion to their numbers than the Persians in acquiring property and high offices as well. The Nestorians are Chaldean Christians, devoted chiefly to agriculture; they have suffered terribly from the incursions of the neighboring Kurds, a bloody and intractable horde who respect neither God nor man. But notwithstanding these facts, and while it is customary to hear frequent complaints of the injustice meted out to Christians and Jews by Mahometan oppressors, my observations lead me to the conclusion that they are generally treated with much toleration, and are rarely forced to submit to greater injustice and indignity than is awarded to Mussulmans as well. But being subject-races, smarting under the chronic rapacity and misgovernment which have characterized oriental governments in all ages, they feel it more because inflicted by alien rulers of different faith; and hence they assume that they are treated with exceptional severity. It may be the case sometimes, but generally the Mahometans suffer the same results of misgovernment, and accept the burden with the resignation of fatalists. These conclusions may be disputed by some, but twenty-three years' experience in various parts of the East give me the right at least to differ from them.

The work of the American, English, and Roman Catholic missionaries in Persia is among the native Christians and Jews. The time for direct attempts to convert Mahometans to Christianity appears to be deferred to the future, indefinitely postponed until the death penalty is not only legally abolished, but also until popular opinion does not seek to vent fanaticism by furious attacks on proselytes to Christianity. Were the missionaries now to undertake a serious, organized, and public attempt to proselyte



Mahometans they would themselves come into great danger of being mobbed and massacred, and would certainly be required to leave the country as disturbers of its peace, which is already sufficiently threatened. We should not hastily condemn the Persians for feeling so strongly on this point.

These observations are illustrated by a characteristic incident which occurred at Ispahân a year or two ago. His Royal Highness, the Zil-i-Sultân, took a notion to attend service on a certain Sabbath at the English Protestant chapel, which is under the charge of the veteran missionary the Rev. Dr. Bruce. Some days subsequent to this two Persians, encouraged by the example of the Prince, also attended the same service. When apprised of the fact, the Zil-i-Sultân summoned them into his presence and ordered their heads to be struck off on the spot. On being remonstrated with by Dr. Bruce for such inconsistency, the Prince replied: "I have a right to go where I please; and I also went in order to satisfy myself whether Persians attend your services. But if they go to your church they may do it with the intention of changing their religion; and to do that is not tolerated by our laws."

The Prince is himself reputed to be a free-thinker, and in favor of European progressive ideas so far as concerns material improvement. But the above incident proves what I have stated, that even intelligent Persians perceive in open secession from Mahometanism at present an attack upon the only code which can be relied upon to preserve order in Persia. They regard it as a civil rather than a religious question. Of course, proselytism finds far greater obstacles to encounter when Church and State are so inextricably interwoven as they are in Mahometan countries.

The American missionaries have now been laboring fifty years in Persia. There are captious persons who ask, "Well, how many converts have they made? Would they not do

more by staying at home?" Although this is not a strictly fair way to judge of the value and results of missionary effort, yet I have no hesitation in affirming that the missionaries in Persia have made the same number of converts as an equal number of clergymen settled in towns of the United States during the same period. But even if they had been less successful in this respect, it would work no prejudice, nor serve as an argument, against the necessity and importance of missions. For, in the first place, years are required for breaking ground, for acquiring the language, for translating the Scriptures and other devotional and educational works, and for establishing schools.

But the true method for judging the result of missionary effort is that which regards it, not like a prairie fire that sweeps rapidly over the plains devouring all within its range, and as swiftly dying out, but rather as a mighty, silent influence, like the quiet, steady forces of Nature, which carry the seed and deposit it in the soil, nursing it with sunshine and with rain year after year, until an oak springs up and reaches out its growing arms over the sod, and in turn scatters the acorns, until a mighty forest waves its majestic boughs where once were rocks and thistles. Ages passed while Nature was producing this great evolution; and they who judged superficially by the few acorns first produced might have sneered at the slow but sure results that were to come after they had mouldered in the grave. Men do not reason about other great movements as they do about missions. Is it fair, is it just, is it sensible to make an exception in this case? American missions in Persia may be seemingly a slow, but they are an enduring influence both for secular as well as religious progress. Their growth is cumulative, and their power is mighty.

The American Colony in Persia, which consists altogether of missionaries at present, has been in that country fifty-one years.

They number about eighty-five, and are settled at Oroomiah, Selmâs, Heftavân, Tabreez, Hamadân, and Teherân. Several English missionaries are stationed at Ispahân. The necessity of having premises for schools and residences has resulted in the acquisition of considerable property by the American Colony in Persia. Although this is permitted under the "most-favored-nation" clause in the treaty between the United States and Persia, obstacles have been steadily presented to the purchase or rental of real estate by the missionaries, which has given rise to many of the questions brought to the attention of the United States Minister in Persia. Missionaries are a most estimable body of men in general, and in my efforts to extend to them the protection of the United States I have found them highly appreciative of all earnest exertions made in their behalf. From the nature of the case, however, it must be evident that a missionary colony located in a fanatical country like Persia must necessarily require more diplomatic aid than the same number of traders. A merchant arouses few prejudices in an Eastern country; on the contrary, his endeavors to promote trade tend to add to the wealth of all concerned. Persians are as ready to see this as any people. But the moment a missionary arrives in Persia he becomes a disturbing element; the prejudices of fanatics are aroused, and the apprehensions of those who wish to see order preserved are stimulated, not without reason it must be admitted. It is well enough to say that people should not be disturbed by the presence of a body of men whose labors are designed to promote human welfare, but when those labors must necessarily result in agitating families and shaking communities, it is not surprising that they should cause alarm if not resentment on the part of the invaded people: and while those who believe that the missionaries preach the truth desire to see the extension of their work, it is quite another thing hastily to condemn the people who oppose their advent and

progress in a so-called pagan land. It is not difficult to imagine what would be the feelings of a Protestant or a Roman Catholic or a Hebrew father in the United States, who should see a priest of a faith he detests exerting every effort, however honestly, to lead his child from the faith of its fathers. If in this enlightened country we are disposed to resent such invasions of our domestic peace, we must allow that something may be said in palliation of those Persians who view the progress of foreign missions in that country with suspicion and dread. To say that they oppose the truth because they are "sinners" is not enough, — for who shall say what is truth; or who is he that dares to affirm that he or his sect are the sole depository of the truths of the universe, the sole delegates inspired to interpret the tremendous problems of destiny?

Whether rightly or wrongly, the Persians undoubtedly have little love for the foreign missionaries so long settled among them. Although the treaty by inference allows American missionaries to reside in Persia, it is really by sufferance that they do so; and I consider it a very strong evidence of the natural amiability of the Persian character that our missionaries are allowed to remain there with so little annoyance, all things considered. But were they to enter upon a deliberate attempt to proselyte the Mahometans now, and decline to yield to the remonstrances of the Persian Government, there is little reason to doubt that they would be requested to leave the country; and considering the present condition of Persia, I should be very slow to condemn the Shah if he should follow such a course in such a case. But the American missionaries are aware of this, and while burning with zeal to attack the strongholds of Mahometanism, they are generally amenable to reason, and disposed not to precipitate matters by a faith that is not based on practical common-sense; that is to say, while undoubtedly their ultimate aim in Persia is to abolish faith in



the "false" Prophet, they are able to control their zeal, and by working in other directions to spread their influence, inspiring confidence in their intelligence and integrity by every



SMALL HOUSE OF PRAYER AND MINARET.

possible means, and thus gradually to sap the foundations of the dominant faith of the country. If I had remained in Persia it was my intention eventually to combine with the other Legations, if possible, to bring about a wider toleration, such as

exists at least nominally in Turkey. This, of course, must be a preliminary step to the actual toleration which can come only as the result of time. During this interval of waiting and patience, the American missionaries are forced to be content with directing their ostensible labors to the elevation of the Nestorians and Armenians to purer religious practice, and Christianizing the Jews. These efforts have been attended with some success, especially among the Nestorians. But as the Nestorians, or Chaldeans, of Persia are a small, entirely isolated community of scarcely thirty thousand souls, without the slightest present or future intellectual, social, or political importance, the money and energy bestowed in elevating them would be of little proportionate good, were it not that by this means the missionary cause in Persia obtains a point of vantage, whence to watch its opportunity for a direct invasion of the strongholds of Mahometanism.

It must be admitted that the most important factor now at work in the missionary field of Persia is one that is largely secular. I refer to the employment of missionary physicians. Persons who do not care to be instructed in the tenets of a faith other than their own are still in need of physical aid; all may not be in spiritual need, but all soon or later require a physician. If the practitioner be a man of ability, tact, and suavity, he acquires a personal influence that necessarily leads to a modification of the opposition to the progress of the missionaries with whom the physician is associated, and important concessions may thus gradually be obtained from those in power. Fletcher of Saltoun said: "Give me the song-makers of a country, and you may have its law-givers." I would modify this in an oriental country, and say, "Give me the physicians." If the physician be also a missionary, and withal a shrewd man, there is scarce a limit to the influence he can obtain.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE SHEĀHS AND THE TAZIĒH, OR PASSION-PLAY OF PERSIA.

THE traveller from Europe who for the first time rambles through the streets of Persia's capital in the sacred month of Moharrêm, will be surprised by a sound which is especially remarkable in the comparative stillness of an oriental city. It is the voice of children singing, in clear tones, snatches of a song he has never heard before. The notes are weird and plaintive, suggesting, in a certain indefinable way, strophes of the "Stabat Mater;" and yet the strain has a distinct individuality of its own, a musical cadence that fixes the attention, and touches the chords of the emotions.

"Is yon child recalling bits of a popular song or a recent opera which has taken the city by storm?" asks the interested stranger from Europe, who knows not that neither popular airs, nor operas, exist in Persia.

"No," you reply to him, "the strain you hear is part of the solemn chant of the Taziêh."

"The Taziêh! What can that be?" asks the bewildered foreigner again.

"The Taziêh," you reply once more, "is the Passion Play of Persia."

But this explanation, instead of satisfying, only stimulates the curiosity of the inquirer; and he who has undertaken to gratify it finds himself bewildered by the attempt to explain in a few words one of the most remarkable religious phenomena of the age. In

order to give an intelligible description of the Taziêh it is first necessary to tax the patience of the reader with the repetition of a few salient points in the rise of Mahometanism. If not altogether fresh to the student versed in oriental history, these events have probably attracted but little attention from the popular mind of Christendom, and no apology is therefore necessary for giving a running account of them here, including a number of facts that have probably never before been related in print.

After the death of Mahomet the succession was disputed, although the Sheâhs affirm that Mahomet had already designated Alee as his successor. The succession appeared to belong by right, as well as naturally, to Alee, who was married to Fatimêh, the only surviving daughter of the Prophet. But it was not until the accession and assassination of Abu Beker, Omâr, and Othmân, that the magnanimous Alee was elected to the caliphate. Even then he was not permitted to enjoy the long-deferred honors without an opposition, which eventually proved fatal not only to himself, but also to the continuation of the caliphate in the family of the founder of the Faith. After crushing two formidable rivals besides Ayesha the evil-hearted wife of Mahomet, who had offered the most bitter opposition, Alee found himself unable to overcome the resistance of Moaviyêh. It was at Damascus that the latter, a crafty and astute chieftain, succeeded in establishing the caliphate in the line of the Ommiades. Inferior to Alee in the field, Moaviyêh maintained his throne by superior adroitness. When Alee was in turn assassinated, his oldest son Hassân assumed the caliphate, to which he was peacefully elected by the people of Medina or Mediûêh. At the head of a powerful army he marched to encounter Moaviyêh. The enthusiasm of his generals and forces promised a decisive victory; but Hassân was a man of peaceable disposition, averse to active life, and preferring the tranquil domesticity of a private citizen.



Conscious of his unfitness to conduct a civil war requiring an arm of iron and a heart of steel, he proposed to abdicate in favor of Moaviyêh, reserving the succession to himself after the death of Moaviyêh, who was much the elder, and an ample revenue during a life of ease and retirement at Medina.

The terms of the pacification were accepted and religiously followed by Moaviyêh. But Yezeed, his son, foreseeing that the approaching death of his father would restore the virtuous Hassân to the caliphate, caused the latter to be poisoned by one of his wives. Although probably ignorant of the nefarious design of Yezeed, Moaviyêh acquiesced in the result; he could not resist the temptation, thus unexpectedly offered, of continuing the line in his family by naming Yezeed as his successor. The accession of the latter was accepted by the various provinces of the now extensive dominions of Islâm, with the exception of Medina and Mecca, or Mek-kêh, and the Persian satrapy, of which Bagdad and Cufa were chief cities, which gave in their allegiance to the lion-hearted Hosseïn, the brother of Hassân, and, like him, a grandson of the Prophet. Hosseïn was a man of different metal from Hassân. He had opposed his brother's abdication, and he now perceived, after escaping a plot to assassinate him, that the Empire was not large enough to contain himself and Yezeed in peace: he therefore boldly prepared for a final conflict that was to decide the claims of the Aleeites and the Omniades. Escaping from Medina, whose governor had schemed to entrap him, Hosseïn hastened with his family toward Cufa. Alee had made that city his capital; he was buried in the sacred shrine of Kerbelâh, near that city, and it was only natural that Hosseïn should now place reliance in the professed allegiance of the people of Cufa, who warmly invited him to proceed thither, promising him every support in the approaching decision of arms. But the Cufees were proverbially volatile and unstable,

whiffing uneasily from one extreme to another, like a vane whirled alternately by the veering blasts of an approaching storm, — to-day, one thing; to-morrow, another.

The inhabitants of Cufa had hardly sent a pressing invitation to Hosseïn to resort to their city, with the offer of a powerful host and their homage, when they allowed themselves to be easily diverted from their purpose by the swift messenger sent by Yezeed, who was ordered to seize Cufa. If not altogether acquiescing in the stern mandates of the new governor, the Cufees at least tamely submitted, and allowed an army to be sent to crush Hosseïn without so much as forewarning the heroic grandson of the Prophet of the danger to which they themselves had exposed him by their earnest profession of zeal in his cause. There was suspicion in the air: the known fickleness of the people of Cufa suggested the utmost caution; the character of Yezeed was well-known; and, on all hands, Hosseïn was urged to delay his departure, or, at least, to leave behind him his wives, children, and kinsfolk. But Hosseïn was a man of courage, and, what was more, a true believer in predestination. "What is written is written," is the doctrine of the Koran; of what worth is faith, if it will not bear the test in the hour of trial? What better occasion could offer for the son of Alee to testify to his descent from the Prophet, and to his unflinching belief in the tremendous fiat of Kismêt? Therefore, accompanied by his family and a score or two of Arab horsemen, Hosseïn went forth unflinchingly to meet his doom. Not alone to the annals and legends of the Christian Church must one look to find true martyrs and heroes of faith. If ever there was a hero that man was Hosseïn, son of Alee. The heroism of Hosseïn was the more remarkable, because from the outset of his journey he was oppressed by a presentiment of death stalking in his path across the desert, and rapidly overtaking the small troop of devoted victims wearily marching to the grave. "To God we belong,

and to God we return," was the utterance of resignation which burst from his lips in the agony of suspense.

On the low banks of the tawny Euphrates, the scene of so many tragedies of the long-forgotten ages, and near the spot where but recently the votaries of Zoroaster had succumbed to the irresistible onset of the hosts of Islâm, on the hard-contested field of Kadesiyêh, the despairing band was brought to a halt by the army which had been sent to intercept its progress. The negotiations which followed proved futile; for the General of Yezeed, the fierce Emir Odbeïd Allâh, would accept of nothing short of an unconditional surrender preceded by an absolute oath of allegiance to Yezeed, while Hosseïn preferred death to life on such terms. His four brothers, sons of Alee by another wife, and all his companions also declined to accept the safe conduct offered to them, choosing to share the fate of Hosseïn. In the mean time the enemy had planted themselves between the camp of Hosseïn and the Euphrates, and to the other horrors of this terrible hour was now added that of thirst in a land quivering with intolerable heat. The last night in the little camp was one of solemn preparation, of portentous dreams and fateful gloom. Zeinêb and Hosseïn, brother and sister, the children of Alee and Fatimêh, held mournful converse on the creeping horror of the morrow, — the day that should see the destruction of the family of the Prophet of God. Around them gathered, one by one, their children and kinsfolk and the small band of faithful defenders. Hosseïn urged them to fly while yet there was time, for the enemy sought only the life of one, — his own. "Allah forbid that we desert you now!" exclaimed Abbass, and all united in exclaiming with him that they would die with Hosseïn. The time for deliberation was past; there remained for them but one thing, — to die. But they would die in such manner that the memory thereof should ring round the globe and become a watchword and an inspiration to generations

yet unborn. A trench was dug around the camp and filled with fagots and tent-stakes, to kindle when the final assault should come. At daybreak the little band was surprised by the addition of Harro and thirty warriors of Cufa. Conscience-smitten by the perfidy in which with their fellow-citizens they were on the point of joining, they had decided to contribute their own lives to the final defence and sacrifice of the family of Alee.

The attack was begun by Shemr, a fierce partisan; the combat continued until the hour for noon prayer, when there came a cessation of arms. During the truce Hosseïn chanted the "Song of Fear," which is only recited in moments of extreme peril. The final catastrophe, which was never doubtful, was not long deferred after the resumption of the struggle. Hosseïn fell pierced with over thirty wounds; and his head was struck off by the ferocious Shemr, who carried it all gory to Obeïd Allâh. Among the slain were eighteen descendants of Alee and Fatimêh. But the slaughter suffered by the assailing army far exceeded that of the assailed. Hosseïn sold his life dearly. Zeinêb and some of the women and children were spared, and eventually taken into the presence of Yezeed, together with the heads of Hosseïn and his brothers. Yezeed acted with moderation, and the remaining descendants of the Prophet seemed to have retired from further participation in public affairs, laying aside ambition, and merging themselves into the life of private citizens or of religious teachers and expounders of the Faith.

Not so, however, was it with others, who although not of the house of Alee were firm believers in the rights of the descendants of the Prophet. Among the fanatic adherents of the cause was Al Muchtâr, called the avenger. Assuming the office of vindicator of the growing sect of Sheâlis, who cherished the memory of Alee, Al Muchtâr entered on a mission of extermination against all who were concerned in the slaughter of Hosseïn. The story of his persistent efforts and marvellous exploits merits



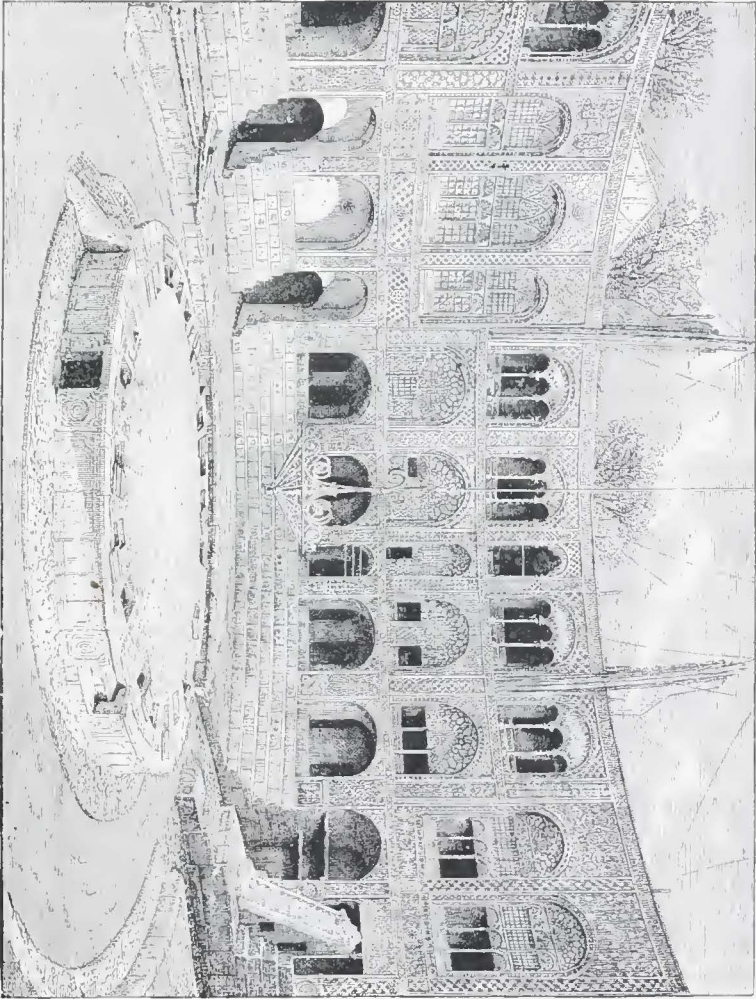
a separate narrative: but it suffices to state here that in the accomplishment of his tremendous task Al Muchtâr succeeded so thoroughly, that besides slaying all the leaders in that great tragedy, and an immense multitude in numerous battles, he slaughtered nearly three score thousand in cold blood before he himself fell under the stroke of the grim destroyer of all. The career of Al Muchtâr was however only an episode in the great drama about to follow, which was destined to involve nations as actors, and to gain in interest and importance for many ages, — a great religious phenomenon, directly resulting from the tragedy on the banks of the Euphrates. Christendom, engaged in its own thousand sectarian conflicts, little recked of the great religious movements that were being evolved in a distant land, — the land of Irân, which had given language to Europe, and developed a magnificent civilization before the rise of Athens; a civilization which had already produced one of the great theistic cults of the world ere the Star in the East pointed the Persian Magi to the lowly cradle-manger of Christ the Redeemer.

The entire Mahometan world from Afghanistân to the Straits of Gibraltar now seemed to acknowledge the sway of the caliphs of the line of Moaviyêh and his successors. The rival claims of Alee and his family appeared laid at rest and forgotten. But not so; in Irân, or Persia, the sectaries of Alee were slowly biding their time. It is not a little singular that not at Mecca, nor at Medina, where the Prophet first proclaimed his doctrines, were the claims of his children accepted, but in a distant land peopled by another race. His children were buried in foreign soil, and the honor accorded to their memory is to be found not in Arabia, but in Persia. This may be due in part to the fact that one of the wives of Hassân was a daughter of Yezdigêrd, the last monarch of the Sassanian line. Her remains were brought to her native land, and her tomb is now shown on the

rocky heights which overlook the extensive ruins of Rheï, the last capital of the Sassanides, where she bade her father farewell. There is no good reason to doubt the legend which marks the tomb of the daughter of Yezdigêrd.

But be the cause what it may, the fact remains that in Persia the memory of Alee and his unfortunate family was remembered with profound veneration by a small and persecuted sect, many of whom sealed their faith with their blood. They called themselves Sheâhs, and cursed the caliphs and all other Mahometans who are known by the name of Sunnees. The fathers of this devoted sect were the Twelve Holy Imâms. Other features regarding the Sheâh sect have been mentioned in the preceding chapter.

For many ages the Sheâhs of Persia were generally a persecuted sect of enthusiasts receiving scant tolerance from the numerous dynasties, either native or foreign, which succeeded each other with bewildering rapidity, and usually advocated Sunnee doctrines. After eight hundred years of heroic faith and endurance the hour of triumph came to the Sheâhs, as it comes to all who wait and believe. In the latter part of the fifteenth century there was born at Ardebeel a child named Ismaïl. On his father's side he was descended from Mirza Khazân, the Seventh Holy Imâm, and was therefore in the direct line of descent from Fatimêh and Alee; on his mother's side, singularly enough, he claimed descent by one remove from the Christian Emperor of Trebizond. Ismaïl proved to be possessed of superior talents. He instigated a revolt in which he succeeded, after several hard-contested fields, in deposing the Kurdish dynasty of the Ak Koyunlû. He mounted the throne of Persia in 1499 and founded the dynasty of the Sufees or Sufavees, the greatest she has seen since the time of Anushirwân the Just. Ismaïl, as the descendant of Alee, was naturally a Sheâh. He caused himself to be styled Shah Sheâh-ân, King of



THE TAKIEH, OR ROYAL THEATRE.





the Sheähs. Shah Ismaïl is likewise surnamed, on account of his services to the Sheäh doctrines, *Shah Djemmêt Muckhân*, or "the King dwelling in Paradise evermore." Not only did he consolidate Persia once more into a great empire, but he also united nearly the entire population in a common zeal for the faith of the sectaries of Alee. The Mahometan world soon learned not only that Persia was once more a vast dominant power, but also that she presented a united front against all the orthodox Sunnee nations who surrounded her on all sides, and against whom she now breathed potential curses and war.

It is not singular that the brilliant memory of the splendor and power of the Sefavean dynasty, associated as it is with the emphatic influence it gave to the adherents of Alee, should have made the Persians tenacious of a faith to which their country owed so much; nor that, like some European nations, religion and patriotism are with them almost synonymous terms. Inspired with new zeal and national enthusiasm, the Persian Sheähs of the early Sefavean period demanded a vent for their sectarian fervor. Such a vent partially came in the celebration of the anniversaries of the most important events that history and legend recorded in the lives of Alee and his descendants. The idea of thus commemorating the tragical events on which the Sheäh faith is founded appears to have been borrowed from a practice established by Moaviyêh, the first of the line of the Omniades, which it is quite likely was suggested to him by some early custom of the passionate and imaginative tribes of Arabia in the pre-Mahometan period. The circumstances connected with the murder of the third caliph, Osmân, were in the highest degree dramatic. Moaviyêh caused this event, on each return of the anniversary, to be represented at his court in Damascus, whether by recitations or dramatic impersonation or both does not appear. At any rate this very probably suggested to the Persians a similar commemoration of the principal event in the

lives of the founders and upholders of the Sheäh faith. Merely as a matter of hypothesis, I venture to suggest that possibly the Persians may have borrowed the idea of such annual commemorations from a practice which seems to have obtained ages before of celebrating the slaughter of Smerdis the Magian by King Darius, the annual celebration being called by the Greeks the *Magophonia*. What form of celebrating these events was in vogue among the Sheähs before the Sefavean period we can only imagine from what occurred with more pomp and pageantry during that dynasty.

Tradition states, however, that during the brief Deilamee dynasty, about 933 to 986 A. D., the practice began of commemorating the events in the history of the Sheäh sect by recitations given in the form of exhortations by prominent mollâhs, from pulpits erected in the public squares or (by invitation) in the residences of the chief dignitaries during the three months accounted holy by the Sheähs. These recitations varied according to the enthusiasm, the imagination, or the talent of the speaker, and were called *rhozêh*. The *rhozêh* recitations continue in full force to the present day; halls called *rhozêh khanêh* are especially constructed for these religious rhapsodies. But the zeal of the Sufavees, aided as it was by an opulence and splendor which has rendered the reigns of Shah Abbass the Great and his successors almost proverbial, quickly suggested more pomp and circumstance in the commemoration of the martyrdom of the saints of the Sheäh faith. Sir John Chardin, in his magnificent and generally reliable work on Persia in the Sefavean period, has given a minute account of the spectacle he witnessed at Ispahân during the holy month of Moharrêh. We are enabled from his narrative to form a conception of the elaborate ceremonies which already in the fifth reign of the Sefaveans had become established at these anniversaries. It does not appear from his description however, nor from anything I

can learn elsewhere, that any attempt was made in that age to give a distinctively dramatic character to the representations of these solemn scenes.

The idea of dramatizing them appears to have come only gradually, and is still in a somewhat nebulous condition, as will be evident in the sequel. Indeed, the Taziêh is the result of a long and gradual evolution, as an intelligent Persian informed me, rather than the inspiration of any single imaginative genius; and it yet lacks a certain rounded completeness or artistic symmetry and finish of detail. There is for all Mahometans alike a sacred month devoted to a terrible ordeal of fasting from sunrise to sunset. It consists of an abstention not merely from certain articles of food, or in taking nourishment in reduced quantities, as in the rather perfunctory fasts of the Christian churches, but is really an absolute abstinence from every form of nourishment or stimulant, including water and smoking, for the entire day. In summer the ordeal is indeed one of the most trying ever invented for the torture of man. This fast is called the Ramazân. In order to sustain the faith and fortitude of true believers at this season, the Sheâhs allow representations of the Taziêh and the exhortations of the Rhozêh during that month. But the true time for these representations is during the two extremely holy months of Moharrêm and Safâr. In these two months the expounders of the Alee sect have contrived to bring closely together a number of important and significant events. It is too much to ask the critical unbeliever to accept so remarkable a coincidence as the occurrence of such harmony in the events relating to the foundation of this sect; it is easier to assume that they were miraculously brought into such juxtaposition, or that the expounders of the Sheâh law, like doctors in some other religions, were gifted with the happy faculty of dreaming what they wished might occur, of creating the revelations with which they profess to have been inspired

It is true that the lives of Cæsar, of Cromwell, of Napoleon, and of some other distinguished men have presented some startling coincidences, which have been naturally accepted by the multitude as indicating in the most distinct manner the interest taken by an overruling Providence in the career of men raised by destiny to control the march of empire. In the present instance, however, it is easier to believe that the imaginative zeal of oriental fanaticism, rather than a Providence dealing with facts, is responsible for the close sequence of the numerous events that are attributed to the mysterious and extraordinary months of Moharrêm and Safâr. Among these occurrences are the deaths of Hassân and of Hosseïn, the birth of the Prophet, the martyrdom of the Imâm Rezâh, and the death of Fatimêh, daughter of Mahomet.

It should be stated that a month before Moharrêm occurs the solemn festival of Courbân Baïrâm, or the "Feast of the Sacrifice." The chief ceremony of this occasion is the slaughter of the camel, a ceremony repeated in every city of Persia. At Teherân the animal, gayly caparisoned, is led into a densely thronged square near the palace of Negaristân, and caused to kneel. At the auspicious moment a spear in the hand of a relative of the Shah is thrust into a vital spot behind the neck; but scarcely has the blood burst forth before a hundred knives are thrust into the poor animal by the bystanders, and in a twinkling the carcass is divided into many parts. Each quarter of the city endeavors to seize a portion, which may be kept for good luck during the succeeding twelvemonth. This ceremony seems a fitting prelude to the events of the succeeding month.

One becomes aware that the month of mourning has arrived, by the practical cessation of all but the most important labor. Business in the bazaars nearly comes to a stop, and as evening approaches the wild shout of the processions of fanatics may be heard from all parts of the city. The first ten days of Moharrêm



are especially devoted to the commemoration of the massacre of Hossein and his family ; but it is not until the last four or five days of this period that these processions, called *testêh*, become so demonstrative as to prove a disturbing element in the city. In those days a large part of the male population leave the shirt loose in the neck, and the *testêh* parade at all hours of the day, yelling with loud and monotonous cadence, "Ya Hossein, ya Hossein !" Sometimes they vary this by shouting "Ya Hassân, ya Hassân !" During the last two or three days of this public demonstration of mourning it is considered prudent for all foreigners and unbelievers to attract as little attention as possible, lest, if seen by these excited throngs, they be insulted or even assaulted by some of the mob, now frenzied by religious excitement to an extraordinary degree.

Although the danger is less than formerly, yet even at Teherân it is not wholly imaginary ; at any time there is a liability to renewed outbursts of the scenes of horror which formerly characterized the processions of the *testêh*. In 1884, for example, there was certainly an accession of fanaticism and excitement such as has not been seen at Teherân for several years. One procession which passed my gate on the morning of the tenth day presented a sickening spectacle. Preceded and followed by an admiring crowd of the rabble, a troop of some sixty men hurried by stripped to the middle, and in several cases completely nude. They all with one accord smote their bare bosoms with their right hands with a certain rhythm of sound. Their bosoms were raw from the oft-repeated blows ; all carried naked swords or daggers in their left hands, with which they gashed themselves, generally on the crown of the head ; a number were covered with streams of blood. As they rapidly strode in this fierce manner from street to street they continually shouted or groaned, "Ya Hossein !" The impression left on my mind for days by this hideous sight

was like that of a fearful nightmare. It is not uncommon for men to fall dead in these processions, overcome by the loss of blood or the terrible pitch of excitement to which they have wrought themselves. In the provincial cities of Persia the testêh sometimes meet, either accidentally or purposely, and hew their way through each other with serious loss of life. In Tabreez during the celebration of 1884 great excitement prevailed, and the troops were called out to quell what threatened to become a disastrous and overwhelming riot. At Teherân the severest penalties are now threatened against any leaders of the processions of the Moharrêm who contrive to encounter each other in the streets. Unfortunately this edict has not been extended to other parts of Persia, and serious disturbances still occur elsewhere.

It is needless to add that it is not the most law-abiding or intelligent people who join in these processions, but usually the more ignorant or vicious classes, who crave excitement or delude themselves into the belief that by such an occasional outburst of fanaticism they may lay up a reserve of piety that shall float them safely through another year of iniquity. Such a delusion is unfortunately not confined to Persia, nor to the sectaries of Alec. The better class of Persians stoutly affirm that this disordered zeal is entirely contrary to the commands of the Prophet, and instead of excusing it they declare that it is the *lutres*, or canaille, who engage in these excesses. Evidences are not wanting that long before the rise of Mahometanism examples of such mob violence were customary in Persia at certain annual festivals, and were winked at by the authorities as affording a vent for popular discontent which might otherwise prove troublesome to the Government. Hence it may be inferred that the excesses which have become attendant on the days of mourning in Moharrêm are practically a continuation of a very old custom, instigated by apparently another motive. One of the most curious facts in the development of civilization and reli-

gion is the lapping over, from one epoch to another, of the same customs under different names and seemingly inspired by altogether opposite causes.

But every circumstance connected with this commemorative period of public lamentation is quite subordinate, and as it were subsidiary, to the great dramatic representation of the tragedy which involved the descendants of Alee and Fatimêh in one common catastrophe. I refer to the *Taziêh*. In all parts of Persia this tragedy is reproduced with more or less power during the sacred months of mourning; but as in former ages, so at the present time, one must see the performance represented under royal patronage, and honored by the Shah himself and the royal family, in order to understand the varied character and significance of a drama in which the combined religious and patriotic fervor of a great sect and people find their most ample expression.

It is not easy for those of other beliefs to gain access to the royal *Takiêh*, for so the building is called where the drama of the *Taziêh* is unfolded for ten successive days. Having been specially favored by an invitation from the *Zahâr-i-Doûlêh*, a son-in-law of the Shah, to witness three scenes of this extraordinary performance, I shall endeavor to give a faithful description of what I actually saw. I am convinced, after careful reflection, that one who has seen the *Taziêh* has enjoyed the opportunity of forming some conception of the manner in which the dramas of ancient Greece were placed on the stage, and of the effect they produced on the imaginative, more simple and emotional audiences of that period, who needed no factitious scenery or other artificial aids to clothe the ideal with all the actuality of the real.

It may be well to repeat here that the leading purpose of the *Taziêh* is to represent the slaughter of Hosseïn, the son of Alee, and his family. But the chief incidents of this event

are not always represented in the order in which they occurred. In several instances episodes are placed on the stage which actually happened after the final catastrophe. The solemnity of the occasion, and the monotony which might occur from twenty successive acts played in the afternoon and evening of ten consecutive days, is also relieved by occasional episodes having apparently but a remote relation to the chief events of the drama. This, I think, is not so much because of the lack of constructive ability on the part of the actors and composers of the play, as it is the result of a distinct intention to secure two ends,—to prevent the vast and generally ignorant audience from losing its interest in the subject of the Taziêh, and at the same time to prevent diversion from the vast importance of the events represented. Thus alternately entertained or aroused to profound emotion, the audience is carried easily along from scene to scene until the tenth day, called the *Gattle*, or “Day of Slaughter,” when Hossêin is slain, at which time the excitement of the audience, and in fact of the entire city, reaches a point bordering on frenzy.

I was invited to attend on the fifth day of the Taziêh. We arrived at the Takiêh towards noon. On alighting from the carriage I was surprised to see an immense circular building as large as the amphitheatre of Verona, solidly constructed of brick. *Ferâshes*, or liveried footmen, cleared the way before us. Thrashing their staves right and left, they opened a way through the crowd that packed the great portal: and entering a dark, vaulted vestibule, I groped, or rather was impelled by the throng, towards a staircase crowded with servants whose masters had already arrived. Like all stairs in Persia, these were adapted to the stride of giants. A succession of springs upward finally landed me on the first gallery, which led around the building. A few steps in the twilight, and then an embroidered curtain was raised and I entered the box of the Zaliû-i-Doilêh. It was in two parts,



the first higher than the other ; stepping into the front and lower division, I was invited to recline at the left of my host upon a superbly embroidered cushion of velvet.<sup>1</sup> The walls of the loggia were of plain brick, but they were hung with cashmere shawls of price, and the choicest of rugs enriched the floor. A number of Persian gentlemen of lower rank occupied the back part of the apartment by invitation ; all alike were seated on their knees and heels, a most painful position for one not accustomed to it from infancy ; I was obliged to compromise by sitting cross-legged, Turkish fashion. It is worthy of notice that a nearly life-size portrait of Mahomet hung on the wall. Of course it was an imaginary likeness, and the Prophet himself, who denounced paintings of any object having life, would have condemned its appearance there ; but the Persians, having a marked aptitude for the arts, have, as we have already said, found means of explaining away the precepts of their religious founder when it has suited their tastes and convenience to do so. As representing the oriental conception of the person of the Father of the Faithful, the picture was not unworthy of comparison with the conventional idea of Christ which has been perpetuated by Christian art. The Prophet was represented as a handsome man in the prime of life, with ruddy features and a poetical and sensuous rather than a reflective temperament. On his head was a green turban ; seated cross-legged, a naked scimitar lay across his knees.

Having willingly made a concession to popular feeling by wearing a Persian kolâh, or black conical cap made of stuff imitating sheepskin, I was able to sit at the extreme front of the box and see and be seen without the interposition of a screen of gauze, which is required in the case of foreigners who are permitted occasionally to visit the royal Takiêh, — unless, indeed, they disguise their nationality and religion as

<sup>1</sup> The seat of honor is at the left hand in Persia.

I did. On looking forth over the vast arena a sight met my gaze which was indeed extraordinary. The interior of the building is nearly two hundred feet in diameter and some eighty feet high. A domical frame of timbers, firmly spliced and braced with iron, springs from the walls, giving support to the awning that protects the interior from the sunlight and the rain. From the centre of the dome a large chandelier was suspended, furnished with four electric burners, — a recent innovation. A more oriental form of illuminating the building was seen in the prodigious number of lustres and candlesticks, all of glass and protected from the air by glass shades open at the top and variously colored; they were concentrated against the wall in immense glittering clusters. Estimating from those attached to one box, I judged that there were upwards of five thousand candles in these lustres.

The arrangement of the boxes, or more strictly loggias, was peculiar. The walls nowhere indicated any serious attempt at decoration, except in single string-courses of brick (the only material apparent) and gilded Saracenic cornices over the arched loggias. Nor was there any regularity of design in the plan of details such as gives majesty to the arrangement of the galleries in Roman amphitheatres, like the Coliseum. And yet the general effect was picturesquely grand, as if the architect was so conscious that by merely following the arrangement suggested by the aim in view he would achieve a noble architectural expression, that he disdained to depend on anything but the constructive details to justify his genius. For example, one side of the loggia of the Shah, boldly disregarding symmetry, raised the arch of its broad window to twice the dimensions of the neighboring loggias. Opposite again was a row of loggias associated together by a line of semi-Saracenic archivolts over the windows, which were completely concealed by a green lattice and framed with mouldings painted green

and gold; these were appropriated to the wives of the Shah. Midway between these two divisions was still another group of latticed windows, and opposite to them in turn was a deep arched loggia resembling a reception-room, quite two stories in height, intended for a daughter of the Shah. As she did not occupy it when I was there, the gauze-like drapery was raised, displaying still another likeness of the Prophet. As if intentionally to prevent any monotony from too symmetrical a design, the entrances to the floor or pit differed in width, the widest being some twenty-five feet; the arched roofs extended to a height of thirty and forty feet respectively. These vaulted passages, being of course pierced through the walls, gave a means for gauging the vast solidity of the structure, the walls being nearly fifty feet in thickness on the ground; this added wonderfully to the really grand effect of this stupendous structure.

If this royal amphitheatre of Teherân were of polished marble like the amphitheatres of old, it would scarcely yield to them in the beauty and impressiveness of its interior. Material does really count for something in architecture, even if it appeals to the imagination alone. I could not avoid observing the masterly arrangement of the arches to produce strength and beauty alike. Whether the Persians borrowed the principle of the arch from the Assyrians or not, it is certain that they excelled in managing it before the Romans, to whom the discovery of the arch has been falsely attributed: and they still make it one of the most prominent and successful features of their architecture. In the centre of the arena was a circular stage of masonry, raised three feet and approached by two stairways. On one side of the building a pulpit of white marble was attached to the wall, of the form universally followed in Mahometan countries, being a lofty, narrow flight of steps protected by a solid balustrade on each side, and terminating in a small platform.

The speaker has no other platform than the upper step, which is crowned with a canopy. According as the spirit moves him, he occupies various steps of this scale of pulpit platforms. The spiritual exaltation, or the age and rank of the speaker, suggest from what elevation he shall exhort the people seated on the pavement below him.

But I soon discovered that all the architectural details of this remarkable building were secondary to the extraordinary spectacle offered by the assembled multitude. The entire arena, with the exception of a narrow passage around the stage, was absolutely packed with women, thousands on thousands. At a rough estimate it seemed to me that quite four thousand women were seated there cross-legged on the earthen floor, which was made slightly sloping, in order to enable those in the rear to see over the heads of those before them,—not that any of them could complain of high bonnets to obstruct the sight, for not a bonnet was to be seen, nor ever had been seen there. It was a dense, compact mass of women uniformly dressed in blue-black mantles, each having a white veil drawn tightly over the head and face, the only vent for sight being a small lattice of beautifully worked lace directly before the eyes. This was attached to the back of the head by a glittering buckle, those of the wealthier women sparkling with gold and brilliants. This is the only vanity a Persian woman is permitted to indulge in when abroad: they make up for it at home by a marvellous stratum of red paint and jewels,—at least so it is said by those who have seen them. Four thousand white heads and dark-blue mantles, and not a face to be seen,—that was a sight indeed! It was a spectacle to make one smile, and yet to reflect on the power of fashion and custom. Where except in the Orient, so full of absurdities and contradictions of the dictates of nature, would one find four thousand women, most of them let us hope beautiful, who would be willing to conceal their charms so effectually



from the gaze of mankind? Let no one imagine, however, that the women of Persia have not the power to create a veil-dispelling reform if they so willed: in no country have the women more general influence and power. But they have been brought up in the belief that religion requires that the face of woman must be concealed from public gaze; and the notion remains strong as the motive for chastity.

It is unnecessary to allude to the confused chattering which arose from this multitude of fair ones while waiting for the play to begin; it goes without saying. Now and again a pair of them would relieve the long interlude of expectancy by a wrangle, which in one case degenerated into a fight, resulting in the wrenching of veils and coiffure and a display of features before the entire audience.

An amusing character in the crowd was a quizzical old fellow with a cup and a jug of water, doling out drinks as an act of devotion; this he has done for many years at the Taziêh, in order to remind the people that Hossein suffered in his last hours from the agonies of thirst. As at a Spanish bull-fight, so here venders of refreshments might be seen with lemonade, tea, and kaliâns, the latter smoked by women as well as men. The masculine sex was in but a small minority in the arena; what few men were there stood behind the compact army of women. Most of the men present were in the loggias. When the pit was full and others tried to wedge their way in, the ushers and guards drove them out with unmerciful violence. Refreshments were served in our box repeatedly, and cigars for myself and dragoon, Persians preferring not to invite Christians to smoke their kaliâns. But after the performance began, all smoking and refreshments were banned as indicating a frivolity inconsistent with the tragical events of the drama.

The interval of waiting, although long, was neither tedious nor unprofitably employed, for from time to time some zealot

gave vent to a profound "Ya Alee! Ya Hosseïn!" then many voices would join in; and thus by gradual accessions of fervor expectation was intensified and piety increased to a degree proper to a thorough appreciation of what was to come. The holy zeal of the Faithful was yet further stimulated by the mollâhs, both old and young, — one a mere boy of fifteen, — who ascended the pulpit in turn and exhorted the people with a *rhozêh*, or religious rapsody, on the virtues and martyrdom of Alee and the Holy Imâms. As in a camp-meeting frequent *amens* are heard, so whenever some especially eloquent period was rolled forth in fervid tones responses were heard from every quarter, — now a loud "Ya Hosseïn!" or anon the sound of some one smiting his bare bosom.

At length a crowd was seen massing in the great entrance opposite the royal loggia, which resolved itself into a procession of nearly two hundred men, who proved to be servants of the Shah's household. Led by the head-steward of the Palace they entered the theatre, two by two, slowly marching around the circular stage. They were all dressed in black mourning livery; each had the breast bare, and with regular cadence, as they marched, they smote their bosoms with their right hands. The skin was crimson, for twice daily during five days they had repeated this extraordinary performance. The reader will remember that at the crucifixion the spectators smote their breasts; it has in all ages been one of the most common of oriental ceremonies for expressing lamentation.

This procession, like all which followed, delayed a moment opposite the royal loggia and saluted the Shah. Directly after them came a confused group of men in Arab costume, who beat their breasts in unison with a force that excited apprehension lest they should kill themselves, smiting over the heart with such continuous violence. After them followed a group nude above the middle; they held in each hand a large block

of hard wood, which they struck together with a sharp, exasperating rhythm. The two latter groups, like the chorus in the Greek plays, were collectively symbolical of a class, representing in this case the wild Arabs of the desert who from afar beheld the march of Hosseïn through their country, and bewailed their inability to assist the martyrs in their final struggle. As the last of the three processions filed out of the building the strains of martial music burst on the ear, solemnly breathing a funeral dirge. It was one of the military bands of the Shah, and was followed in steady procession by six other regimental bands, each in turn striking up a minor strain.

The last band had ceased its music and disappeared, when in the gate through which they had entered another group was seen collecting and forming. In front, facing the audience, were several children dressed in green; at their side warriors gathered glittering in the chain-armor and gold-inlaid helmets of past ages. Suddenly on the solemn silence, like the thrill of a bird at night, came the voice of one of the children, low and solemn, then rising to a high, clear tone indescribably wild and thrillingly pathetic,—a tragic ode of remarkable effect and power. He who has once heard that strain can never forget the impression it made, although altogether different from the minor chords of European music. This song of lamentation was an announcement to the spectators that they were to prepare themselves to behold a soul-moving tragedy,—the martyrdom of Hosseïn and the grandchildren of the Prophet. Other voices gradually joined in the chant, one by one, until a sublime choral elegy pealed over the vast arena with such an agony of sound that it actually seemed as if these actors in this theatric scene were giving expression to their own death-song. Still chanting, the troop gradually entered the arena, and with slow and measured tread marched around the stage and ascended the platform.

There they formed in double ranks, and with low obeisance paid their salutations to the Shah.

There was no scenery on the stage; the only objects it contained were such as to arouse the amusement of one who reflected on what was really the condition of affairs in the far-away little camp by the banks of the tawny Euphrates, where ages ago the group of martyrs surrounded by savage hordes suffered with thirst and perished miserably on the hot wastes of Mesopotamia. One could scarcely repress a smile at the chairs overlaid with beaten gold which were brought from the royal treasury, and the sofa and the uncouth beds covered with canopies to represent the tents. But to those who had never seen elaborate scenery and viewed things through the medium of a lively fancy these chairs, worth four thousand dollars each, seemed to indicate the reverence which Persia to-day extends across the ages to the champions of the Faith; and the absurd attempt to represent tents was to them no more absurd than the buskins and tragic masks worn by those who enacted the death of Agamemnon on the marble stage of the amphitheatre of Athens two thousand years ago. It was not things but men that riveted the rapt attention of the vast audience; not material objects, but the achievements and utterances of souls gazing down the vistas of time from the shining pinnacles of moral grandeur. If those Arabian heroes had foreseen, — and who knows that they had not a glimpse of the future? — I say, if they had foreseen that fourteen hundred years after their death their fate would be re-enacted and wept by mourning multitudes with profound honor and love, perhaps they would have laid down their lives with a smile of stern exultation and triumph.

Hosseïn was represented by an actor named Mollâh Hosseïn, who was draped in massive robes of green and cashmere wrought with gold; his head was covered with a large Arabian turban. During most of the performance of this day he sat with



head bent, wrapped in melancholy reflections on the approaching and inevitable doom. His brother Abbass — by another mother, the son of Alee but not of Fatimêh — was personated by Mirza Gholâm Hosseïn, who wore a Saracenic coat-of-mail of wire links, terminating in a white tunic. His head was protected by a grand helmet of olden time, graced with plumes. He was of a handsome cast and finely shaped, presenting altogether an impressive impersonation of the romantic heroes of whom we read in the picturesque pages of oriental poesy. Shemr, one of the leaders of the enemy, was attired in similar fashion. After Hosseïn, Abbass, and Shemr, the most prominent character of the drama was Zeinêb the sister of Hosseïn, whose part was played by an actor named Mollâh Hosseïn Zeinêb Khan. He spoke in falsetto; of course all the female characters were represented by men or boys.



MIRZA GHOLÂM HOSSEÏN AS ABBÂSS.

Zeinêb, at the opening of the scene, appeared shrouded in a thick mantle and seated on the earth, bemoaning her fate. The children of the various families gathered in the camp were also

grouped on the sand for the most part, representing a feature of the tragedy analogous to the chorus of the Greek plays. The entire performance was directed by a prompter, who walked unconcernedly on the stage, and gave hints to the players or placed the younger actors in their position. At the proper moment also, by a motion of the hand, he gave orders for the music to strike up or stop. But it was curious how soon I ceased to notice him at all; indeed, after a short time I was scarcely aware of his presence. So interested had I become in the extraordinary character of all that was going on before me, that I forgot there was no scenery, and actually seemed to myself to be gazing upon actual events as they once occurred on the banks of the Euphrates. This convinced me that the ancient Greeks, and Shakspeare after them, were right in paying little attention to artificial aids to dramatic representation. There can be no question that in proportion as the imagination is left to supply all the optical details of a drama, the reality becomes more vivid and the emotions are more forcibly aroused. The elaborate and costly details observed in mounting a play for the modern stage may create a curious interest and whet a taste over-stimulated by the restless activity and ceaseless excitement of the present age, but they have proportionately less power to kindle the imagination.

The orchestra alluded to above consisted of a band of performers who were stationed at the top of the building, — fortunately as it proved, for their instruments were kettle-drums and long straight horns, harsh and doleful, and startling enough to awake the dead. It is no marvel that the walls of Jericho fell down terrified by such a tremendous and unspeakable blast, for there is no question that these Persian horns, which are such as have been in use since the prehistoric days of Shah Jemsheed, are similar to those universally employed in Eastern countries from early ages. The evangelist must have had in his

mind such an instrument when he spoke of the last trump that should call forth the dead. A signal from the director at the beginning of each scene of the Taziêh awoke the confused war-din of the kettle-drums, and instantly after followed a startling burst from the horns. At the close of a scene the same fierce music stimulated the glowing enthusiasm of the faithful, and nerved their zeal for events yet more tragic and sublime.

The act for this particular day began with a scene between Zeinêb and Hosseïn. In an impassioned colloquy they lamented their fate, and encouraged each other to the exercise of mutual endurance and fortitude. As the scene closed she sank to the dust, and throwing ashes on her head lapsed into an attitude of impressive silence. Superb in the representation of lamentation and affliction was the scene which followed, when the young Alee Achâr, son of the dead Hassân, heroically resolved to go forth and fight his way to the river, and bring water for the sufferers in the camp. Clad in armor, the youthful hero submitted himself as a sacrifice, for he never expected to return. Magnificent were the pathetic tones in which he sang as it were his own requiem; the words rang forth like a trumpet to the farthest nook of the vast building, and the response came in united wailings from the thousands gathered there. Beginning in a low murmur like the sigh of a coming gale, the strange sound arose and fell like the weird music of the south wind in the rigging of a ship careening in a dark night on the swelling surges of an Atlantic storm. For several moments sobs and sighs, and now and again a half-suppressed shriek, swept from one side of the building to the other. Strong men wept; there was not a dry eye in the loggia where I was seated, except my own; and I confess that I was not altogether unmoved by this impressive scene.

Foreigners have said sometimes that much of this lamentation must be merely conventional, and as artificial as the

weeping and screaming of hired mourners at oriental funerals. But I cannot agree with them. Grant that the feeling was superficial, to be followed perhaps the next hour by laughter; yet there is no question that the conditions were exactly such as were likely to produce genuine emotion. The scenes portrayed represented incidents of the most tragic character which had actually occurred, and which in the course of ages had become part of the life and thought of the people who on that day were again so weirdly reminded of them. A belief in the suffering of the Saviour is not more indelibly impressed on the heart of the true Christian than the belief which the true Sheâh maintains in the sufferings of the sons of Alee.

A milk-white Arabian steed from the royal stables, superbly caparisoned, was now led into the arena, and after receiving the moving farewell of Hossem and Zeinêb and the godspeed of the chorus, Alee Aebâr mounted and started forth on his perilous errand. Instantly from several quarters appeared a troop of the enemy on horseback and on foot, armed Arabs of the desert, who crowded after in fierce pursuit. It was wildly exciting to see this mad race around the arena, where thousands of women were crowded down to the very edge of the narrow lane which was thronged with fighting steeds and warriors. But no one flinched; the horses were well-trained, and no accident resulted. Finally Alee Aebâr turned into one of the avenues of exit, and disappeared surrounded by the pursuing host. Nor did he reappear, for soon after he fell covered with wounds. Now followed a savage peal from the wild war-horns, and Shemr, the leader of the beleaguering army, appeared clad in complete armor; summoning the camp to surrender, he proceeded to hold a long colloquy with Abbass, the half-brother of Hossein. Shemr had come to order Hossein to yield, before his outnumbered troops should be annihilated by an overwhelming host. Hossein remained at one side wrapped in



melancholy forebodings, while Abbass, with grand and magnificent eloquence, unconditionally rejected terms which implied the abandonment of the claims of the house of Alee and Fatimêh to the caliphate, and proudly flung defiance at the foe.

After having seen some of the most distinguished actors of the age, I cannot avoid the conclusion that this colloquy between Abbass and Shemr would do credit to any stage; in parts, perhaps, rather too declamatory, it was as a whole a wonderful dramatic episode. In closing, Abbass, as if endowed with prophetic vision, gave vent to a noble apostrophe to the future splendor of Persia, the asylum for the devoted followers of Alee; these eloquent strophes of poetic fire called forth deep murmurs of applause. Waving his mailed hand with lofty scorn, Shemr, with equal dramatic stateliness, hurled at Hossem the responsibility for the disasters to come, and remounting his steed departed.

Now night came on; by tacit consent the decisive conflict was deferred until the following day, and all in the camp slept, most of them for the last time on earth. Overpowered with anxiety and suspense, Hossem and his family were soon wrapped in heavy slumber. But while they slept they were not forgotten. Alee and Fatimêh, the parents of those who were devoted to die for the rights of the Prophet's house, could not rest tranquil in their graves. If they were powerless to avert the doom of their children, for "what is written is written," they could at least bewail their fate together. Sublime was the idea, one probably never before conceived in the drama, — two figures shrouded in the cerements of the tomb conversing in sepulchral accents on the stage. A very difficult scene it was, indeed, to represent without the aid of scenery; but notwithstanding, the effect was solemn and impressive. As Alee and Fatimêh passed out of sight, Shemr and one of his generals appeared from the hostile army to reconnoitre the camp and

make plans for bringing the final assault on the morrow to a successful issue.

The concluding scene of this act, — if each performance can be characterized by a word indicating more of sequence than actually exists in the drama of the Taziêh, — represented the beginning of the battle. The resisting force was typified in the person of Abbass, who after a terrifying blast of kettle-drums and horns bade farewell to the little group on the stage, being first invested with a white mantle thrown over his shoulders by Hossein. Immediately on mounting his charger Abbass encountered a numerous troop of Arabs, who fiercely drove him around the stage until he disappeared for a moment in the lobbies, followed by the enemy. When Abbass reappeared he presented the aspect of having been in a severe conflict; one of his arms seemed to be hewn off, and his raiment was reeking with blood. Again the enemy pursued him, and when he once more appeared on the scene both arms were gone, and with drooping form he barely sustained himself on the saddle of the well-trained steed, who also moved with languid and infirm action. When Abbass reached the camp he was lifted by wailing friends from the saddle, and helpless and dying fell on the sand a maimed and bleeding form. As the enemy swarmed on the scene and Shemr raised his glittering scimitar to hew off the head of the prostrate warrior, an extraordinary wail of anguish burst with one accord from the vast audience. At that instant the Shah arose to depart, and at once the scene closed. The wounded man sprang to his feet, the uplifted sword was sheathed, and with a great tumult the audience surged towards the avenues of exit. Many of the women, however, would not leave until forced to move by the ushers, so anxious were they to retain their places for the performance of the evening. To the women of Teberân the Taziêh is the one great event of the year. They go early in the morning of

each day, and patiently wait for many a long hour for the entertainment to begin. I was told that before leaving the building the Shah sent a costly garment to Mirza Gholâm Hosseïn, the actor who had personated Abbass, in token of the royal appreciation of the admirable histrionic ability he had displayed on this occasion.

In the evening of the same day, immediately after an early dinner, my courteous friend again invited me to accompany him. Throughout the ten days during which the *Taziêh* is represented at the royal *Takiêh* there are two acts or performances each day, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. On the evening in question, we arrived half an hour before the beginning of the play, and were immediately served with refreshments. The audience was even larger than in the afternoon, but the general effect was of course somewhat different, for the immense interior was now brilliant with the splendor of many thousand candles gleaming through colored globes. Unfortunately the electric lights in the chandelier suspended over the stage, which might have diffused almost daylight glow over the most important part of the scene, were so dim as to be of no use: and the performance was therefore but imperfectly visible to those in the loggias, owing to the candles immediately below each loggia, which somewhat blinded the eyes.

The episodes of the drama given on this particular occasion were however interesting and well rendered, although having but a related value in the great drama of the fall of the family of Alee. The reader will remember in the historic sketch presented in the earlier paragraphs of this chapter the episode of Muchtâr the Avenger. The performance of this evening was intended to present the devoted heroism of the implacable Muchtâr and his final triumph over Obeïd-Ullah, the immediate instigator of the slaughter of Hosseïn on the banks of the Euphrates.

The first scene represented Obeïd-Ullah seated in lordly fashion on his divan, giving expression in terms of insolent exultation to his satisfaction that at last the difficult task assigned to him by his master Yezced was accomplished. The tidings had been brought him by a swift messenger that Hosseïn had perished, and the house of Moaviyêh was now firmly established on the throne whose foundations were cemented by the blood of the descendants of the Prophet. Soon the monotonous beat of camel bells was heard, and a train of the ships of the desert appeared; they bore Zeinêb and the children who had been spared from the slaughter. They were preceded by slaves carrying the heads of Hosseïn, Abbass, and the other heroes who had sacrificed their lives with them. Obeïd-Ullah smote the head of Hosseïn, and received the captives with haughty disdain. But Zeinêb replied with the fierce and reckless eloquence of despair, defying him to complete his deeds of sacrilege and blood by murdering the remaining descendants of Alee, who were now in his power. With singular magnanimity the ferocious satrap forbore to take the frantic heroine at her word, but ordered his guards to execute Moslemeh, a man of Cufa whose eyes had been put out by the order of Obeïd-Ullah for adhering to the cause of Alee, and who now, led by his little child, appeared before Obeïd-Ullah once more to curse him for his cruelties and crimes. Lovice, the child, shielded the father from the executioners who sought to hew him down. At last a fatal thrust intended for the father felled the faithful boy to the earth, where he lay dead. Moslemeh missing his child, and now without a guide, sought him hither and thither, calling for him in moving accents, until in his wild groping he stumbled on the lifeless form. He stooped down, and with intense anxiety felt the corpse from head to foot; and when the terrible truth fairly burst on him, he gave an agonizing cry and fell across the bosom of his child. This episode,



which was affecting in the extreme, was acted with consummate ability.

But now came the hour for retribution. Muchtâr the avenger appeared on the scene, entering the stage with majestic strides and stentorian tones. His armed retainers dragged Obeïd-Ullah from the seat of power, and with contumely and abuse hurried him to execution, together with his chief adherents. This part of the play was rather too realistic for the modern stage, two men being actually hanged by ropes suspended from the dome above, and another went through the similitude of being beheaded, while a cauldron was prepared for the boiling of yet another. But at this critical moment it was found that the Shah had left for the Palace, and the performance came to an abrupt termination just in time to save a poor man from a terrible fate. I could not help noticing, however, that the men who had been executed proved to be very lively corpses indeed on the closing of the entertainment, retiring from the stage with very limber steps, considering their narrow escape.

Although of a less connected and more sensational character than the previous performance, the acting of this evening contained some features which were scarcely inferior in quality to the best acting of El Abbass in the previous representation; it was also interesting as showing the scope of the great national drama of Persia.

Not until the second day after this, or the seventh of the Tâziêh, did I have an opportunity of seeing it again, when my kind friend once more placed his carriage and loggia at my disposal, and accompanied me with all the graceful courtesy of a true Persian gentleman. As the Tâziêh drew near its close the popular anxiety to see it increased with each performance, and long before the hour arrived for it to begin on this day the doors were closed, the building being packed to its utmost capacity. On arriving there we found a crowd surging back and

forth, anxiously waiting for a chance to gain admittance within the immense iron-bound portals. But only to a man of the rank of my companion would these doors now be opened, and then only after beating the gates for several minutes and shouting to the porters within to swing a door open sufficiently for us to pass. This was no easy operation, for the tumultuous masses at our back were obstreperous to such a degree that the porters were obliged to slam to the gate instantly, and there was thus imminent danger of being squeezed to death,—an accident which has repeatedly happened on the last days of the Taziêh. We were on the point of entering at last, when the door was unexpectedly jammed together so quickly that we had barely time to save ourselves by stepping backward. It had become a question whether we should be able to gain admittance at all on this occasion, when the great gates once more showed signs of relenting, and we quickly placed ourselves again where we could spring into the building: to our astonishment the gates flew wide open, and directly behind them loomed an enormous elephant, who with majestic undulating strides now advanced, forcing the crowd to fall back. Overcoming the natural awe inspired by the unwieldy monster, we quickly availed ourselves of the opportunity thus afforded us, and brushing past the mighty bulk found ourselves at last within the building as the gates closed again with a sound of thunder.

The performance opened as usual, with the processions described in the previous pages. The regular recurrence of the funeral music and bands of mourners with each act of the drama, while perhaps slightly monotonous, was however ingeniously contrived to keep before the mind of the spectators that this drama is not a mere spectacle to entertain, but a great commemorative representation, intended to keep alive the events on which the religion is founded which has given vitality to the national life of Persia for a thousand

years. The performance in the afternoon of the seventh day appeared to me to have been designed with consummate art, admirably adapted as it was to the character of the audience. While some of the details might seem to the European of the nineteenth century grotesquely absurd, yet the general *motif* was admirably conceived with a view to divert the attention of the audience and sustain the interest by appealing to a variety of emotions, and thus also gradually to lead up the spectators to the indulgence of the profound and overpowering emotion which would be evoked by the scenes represented on the two closing days of the drama.

It is well known that King Suleïmân, or Solomon, still holds a wide repute throughout the East for his vast wisdom, his skill in dealing with the mysteries of Nature, and the imperial dominion he exerted over the genii and demons of the unseen world. The belief in the magic power of Solomon, of which we have so many proofs in the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments" and the legends of Europe in the Dark Ages, still obtains in Persia. Solomon it was, in all his glory, who was represented on the stage of the Taziêh on this occasion. What relation Solomon held towards the House of Alee may appear to the general reader somewhat nebulous and remote. But the poetic fancy of the Persian dramatist seems to have had no difficulty in bringing Solomon into the play of the Taziêh, and that too in a manner which seems natural enough to the oriental mind. The great King was so versed in prevision or second sight, that it is claimed he was master not only of the past but also of the future. Thus it was no extraordinary exercise of power for his eye to pierce twelve centuries into the future, and descry the events that were to transpire on the sands of Arabia ages after he and his glory had descended to the tomb. Before us appeared, therefore, on this day the great and renowned King

Suleïmân, radiating power from his throne. As evidences of his influence over the genii and all created things, he now summoned before him demons and djinns, lions and tigers, crocodiles and all creeping things. From all sides they invaded the arena and made their obeisance to the great King. It must be admitted that many of these animals were not strictly shaped after correct models, and indicated only moderate acquaintance with natural history or the mechanics of imitation. But they seemed to interest the people, and therefore served the purpose. Of the demons and djinns I speak with less certainty, having had no opportunities of studying the natural history of the genus.

After giving this exhibition of his power, Solomon now prepared to receive the Queen of Sheba with a pomp suitable to the rank of the "high contracting parties;" for according to oriental legends the Queen of Sheba really visited the King with an eye to matrimony. This scene, while calling for little exhibition of dramatic talent, was very interesting as a spectacular show. To a European it was of special value, for it gave a tolerably exact although partial representation of the marriage ceremonies of an Eastern Court. First came a train of camels gay with elaborate housings; strings of melodious bells jangled on the necks of these stately animals, and tufts of crimson and blue waved on their lofty heads as they marched majestically around the arena with velvet tread. The furniture of the princess, enclosed in iron-bound chests, was carried by the camels and a train of richly saddled sumpter mules. A troop of horsemen magnificently mounted followed next, representing the military escort which attended the Queen. She appeared in truly royal state, seated with her maidens in a howdah of crimson and gold borne on the back of an elephant. This entire procession, including scores of animals any one of which if unruly might have wrought great



mischievous, passed around the arena so close to the densely packed masses of women that the sides of the great beasts sometimes actually touched the women's garments; but no one was harmed or even showed alarm. I could not help marvelling at the intelligence of these animals, which seemed to enter fully into the spirit of the occasion, and while sometimes showing a certain sportiveness exhibited no inclination to employ the power they had to fill the crowd with apprehension.

The Queen of Sheba having arrived in the presence of King Solomon with all the pomp essential to show the grandeur of both the King and the Queen, Solomon again made an exhibition of his necromantic skill by summoning before the audience a scene which represented the marriage of Khassâm the son of Hassân. This event had occurred the day previous to the final attack on the camp. Hosseïn foresaw that he and the larger part of the adults in his band were about to be destroyed. There was danger that the house of Alee might become extinct unless measures were taken to prevent such a result. Presuming that the younger members of his company might be spared when the general slaughter occurred, Hosseïn was naturally anxious to insure the preservation of the family while he was yet alive. It was therefore agreed that the two branches of the family should be united in marriage without delay; and it was arranged that Khassâm, the youthful son of the murdered Hassân, and Roodabêh, the daughter of Hosseïn, should be married that very day. The event was one of remarkable and touching character owing to the extraordinary circumstances which attended it, and also of great importance in the history of Islamism, and especially of the sect of the Sheähs. By this marriage the house of Alee was preserved from extinction. It gave to the Sheähs nine Holy Imâms, the great dynasty of the Sefaveans, which carried Persia to an exalted pinnacle of power and splendor, and also a great

multitude of Seyeds, or descendants of the Prophet, whose green turbans are now seen throughout the Orient.

The preliminary colloquy of Zeinêh the sister of Hosseïn, of Leila the mother of Khassîm, and of the young bridegroom himself was of the most affecting and impassioned character. The knowledge of what the morrow was to bring to them gave peculiar solemnity to what under other circumstances would have been an occasion of festivity and joy. The two women gave vent to vehement exclamations of sorrow, while the youthful bridegroom in the most pathetic accents bewailed the approaching doom of his House and the terrible scenes that surrounded his marriage. His eloquence was really extraordinary for one so young. In due time the little bride Roodabêh appeared at his tent-door, brought in a covered litter on the back of a camel led by Arab warriors of the desert. When she entered on the scene her bridegroom clasped her weeping in his arms, while the women also wept over them in heart-rending lamentations; and Hosseïn, aroused from his stupor of despair, also joined in profound but majestic anguish: they all perceived but too well what was to be on the morrow. A great wave of mourning now swept over the audience, and for several moments an awful sound of lamentation was heard from the sorrow and the rage of thousands. Selecting this crisis of emotion as a suitable time for closing the performance of the day, the Shah arose to depart, and immediately the audience dispersed.

I did not see the final scenes of the Taziêh on the three subsequent days. Although sometimes permitted to witness the Taziêh as I did, Christians are not invited to attend the last three days of the drama at the royal Takiêh. The events then presented are of too solemn a nature for the profane eyes of unbelievers. On the final day especially it is not considered advisable for Christians to be seen in the building by the people; for on that day the murder, or *gattle*, of Hosseïn is

consummated with a vividness which arouses the audience to the last pitch of agitation, and it is impossible to foretell what affronts might then occur if some excited devotee should in that hour take umbrage at the invidious sight of a foreigner and an infidel. There is an evident tendency now to moderate the excesses of the Taziêh; but I have been told that not so very long ago, carried away by the appalling excitement of the last scene of the drama, some of the actors have actually sacrificed their lives. An incident previous to the closing act, which indeed is of annual recurrence, was the demand for the release of a prominent criminal, — the demand made to the Shah himself by men who are townsmen of the prisoner. The crowd of armed fanatics is so clamorous and peremptory that the Shah finds it expedient to yield, and sends an order for the release of the prisoner. One is reminded by this incident of the clamor raised for the release of Barabbas at the crucifixion. During the last few days of the Moharrêm it is also common for the rabble to go to the prisons and insist on the release of criminals whom they demand by name. In order to prevent the storming of the prison and save his own life the jailer is forced to yield. In 1884 sixty-five men were thus set at liberty. So much is this an annual custom that the authorities dare not as yet interfere to prevent it, although the progressive spirit dominant during the present reign will undoubtedly check it before many years. Fortunately for the credit of the government and the well-being of society, means are taken to track and recapture these men immediately after the excitement has subsided.

After one has impartially set at one side a consideration of the excesses which have sprung out of the Moharrêm celebration, there remains much to admire in the Taziêh. As one manifestation of the sentiments of a great religious sect it merits respectful attention, while on the other hand it is most interest-

ing as an exhibition of the dramatic genius of the Persian race. It seems reasonable to infer that a decided talent for the drama exists in Persia, which only requires to receive toleration from the laws and customs of the country to reach a high degree of excellence.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### RESOURCES, PRODUCTS, AND TRADE OF PERSIA.

PERSIA has so long occupied an isolated position, and the direct commercial relations of the United States with that country are as yet so meagre, that the average American has very little notion of her products and resources, and the possibilities of wealth which may be realized by the establishment of a direct commerce between the two countries. The abundant coal-mines, whose discovery has opened such a brilliant opportunity of adding to the improvement and power of this ancient monarchy, have already been alluded to in one of the early chapters of this work. Had she no other resources, Persia, by availing herself of the cheapness of labor to develop these mines, might obtain a commercial foothold which would make her laugh at the shafts of fate. The false position in which she is placed offers the chief obstacle to the large exportation of Persia's mineral wealth at present. It is her misfortune that in her efforts to develop enterprise in this direction, she must encounter the opposition of both England and Russia. Of England, because, although the ally and friend of Persia, she cannot well brook a trade that in the East Indies might seriously compete with the coal-mines of Lancashire; of Russia, because she is committed to the policy of antagonizing every measure that can tend to elevate and strengthen Persia.

There is little evidence of silver and gold in Persia, although there is some reason to believe that a considerable quantity was

mined there in past ages, and it is possible that a more careful investigation than the Persians seem capable now of making may lead to fresh discoveries of ores containing those metals. Lead is abundant there, and easily mined. European mineralogists have also recently discovered traces of many other metals among the rocks of Persia.

One of the most important sources of Persian revenue are the turquoise mines, although there seems some evidence of falling off in the supply. The turquoises of Persia are of two sorts: the pale green stones with a tinge of blue are found in the southern province of Kermân, and are little esteemed; the larger specimens are used as amulets, bearing inscriptions from the Koran, engraved on the surface and gilded; in this form they make handsome ornaments. The better quality of turquoises are found near Nishapoor in Khorassân; the mines are very deep, and the shafts have been described to me as exceedingly dangerous, thereby causing many accidents. The stones found in these mines are the finest in the world; they have a rich gloss, and are of a dark sky-blue, faintly verging on green. The darker they are the more they are esteemed by the Persians, although the lighter shades are more fashionable in Europe. In addition to the color, an important point in selecting a good turquoise is that it should be without a flaw or speck: a specimen that is entirely of uniform tint and flawless is rare, and it is not uncommon for such a stone no larger than a bean to bring seven hundred to a thousand dollars at Teherân. The turquoise mines are farmed by the Mohper-e-Doûlêh, or Minister of Telegraphs and Mines, who pays eighty thousand dollars a year for the privilege. He also pays the Government a tribute of fifty thousand dollars a year for the right of controlling the pearl fisheries of the Persian Gulf. These fisheries were at one time of enormous value; but the revenue from them has of late sensibly diminished, owing in part to the fact that the oyster

beds, which are in shoal water, are nearly exhausted through the penny-wise and pound-foolish system of fishing for pearls all the year round, instead of restricting the business to certain seasons, according to the practice followed in the pearl fisheries of India. Doubtless rich beds of pearl oysters exist at lower depths in Persian waters, but beyond the reach of divers. It is stated that a diving apparatus has been brought from Europe for this purpose, but the inefficient way in which the Persians make use of such foreign and modern inventions makes the result very uncertain.

The vast extent of the desert wastes of Persia would lead one to conclude that her agricultural products must be of very little moment, and that she must therefore be obliged to import many of the necessities of life. But, on the contrary, such is the richness of the arable soil that whenever it is scratched and watered, it produces far more than is required to supply the wants of the population. So numerous is the list of vegetable products which grow or can be made to grow in Persia, that it would be tedious to mention them all here, and it will suffice to give a few facts regarding the principal productions. Wheat is grown in all the agricultural districts in such abundance that a very large quantity is annually exported, and a great deal more would be exported if there were means for taking it out of the country. The method of ploughing is of the most primitive character, and the soil is hardly scratched by the rude share. One can easily imagine what would be the result supposing that modern appliances were used, such as are employed on the western prairies of the United States. No oats or rye are raised, but barley in abundance, on which the horses are fed. The chief granary of Persia is in the northwestern part, although of course enough is raised in other quarters to supply local demands. It is almost needless to say that agriculture in

Persia is dependent on irrigation. The number of streams and lakes is so small, and the supply of water so insignificant, that there is probably no other country under cultivation where so much labor is required for procuring water, or where the expense of this precious element is relatively so high as in Persia. The supply of water is paid for by the hour, and a place is valuable in proportion to the number of hours conveyed with the freehold during which water is supplied per week. The details of this system are exceedingly complicated, — a system which has been organized at least since the time of Anurshirwân; but the details are so complex and tedious that they are better suited to a work of statistics than for a volume like this.

Cotton is grown to some extent in Southern Persia, but not of the finest quality, and a surplus remains over the home consumption for export. Tobacco forms another important product of Persia; a quality resembling the medium grades of Turkish tobacco is grown in the northern provinces.

There is another kind of tobacco that, so far as I know, grows only in Persia; it is cultivated chiefly in the central provinces; the best quality is yielded by the rich soil of Shirâz, which seems to have properties specially qualified to bring this species to perfection. This tobacco is called *tumbâk*. Being greatly esteemed in Turkey as well as in Persia, a considerable quantity is exported, to the estimated value of \$1,000,000 annually. *Tumbâk* has in its flavor a suggestion of sandal-wood. Another peculiarity of *tumbâk* is that it cannot be smoked unless moistened, without producing vertigo to an alarming degree; this is the reason why this tobacco can be smoked only in the water-pipe, — called in Turkey *narghilé*, and in Persia *kaliân*. The *tumbâk* is soaked in water, squeezed like a sponge, and packed in the top of the *kaliân*; a live coal is then placed upon it (this coal must be made from the root of the



vine, or it would soon be extinguished by the dampness of the tumbâk), and the smoke is drawn through the water that is in the lower bowl of the kaliân, and inhaled through a long flexible serpentine stem or a short stem of wood; the Turks prefer the former, the Persians the latter. Of all the forms for enjoying this most delightful solace for the cares and hardships of man, this of smoking through the kaliân is the most poetic and delightful, both for the elegance of the method and the flavor of the weed; but it could hardly become popular in America, because it takes much time to light the pipe, and the care and cleaning of it is laborious and must be delegated to the charge of a servant. In Persia every gentleman's house has a pishketmêt, whose sole business it is to prepare the refreshments and take charge of the kaliâns. The poorer classes generally have their daily smoke by resorting to a tea-house in the bazaars, or under the plane-trees in the centre of the village; for one or two cents they can enjoy a fifteen minutes rest for their souls.

Next to wheat, rice forms the greatest staple of diet in Persia, and happily she grows all that she needs. It is chiefly raised in the fat, alluvial lands on the southern shores of the Caspian, and the reeking rice-fields add to the malaria for which those districts have such a bad reputation. It goes without saying, that the Persians are among the people who have made the cooking of rice a fine art. The potato is greatly esteemed with us; the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, with nothing but a dish of potatoes before him and his children for their Sunday dinner, was so well satisfied that he felt profoundly thankful with the simple addition of salt thereto. In the natural pride we feel over the potato as a native of the spacious continent we inhabit, and grateful to it for the nourishment it has afforded to the soaring and inventive brain of the Western world, we are liable to forget that the mission of the rice-plant has not been altogether insignificant in moulding the destiny of the

race. Fully three fifths of the present population of the globe live on rice; the founders of the five great religions of the world were nourished by it. It might be worth while for scientists to look a little more closely into the brain-making qualities of this worthy vegetable.

One of the most important exports of Persia is opium. It was at one time a more valuable source of revenue than it is at present, but shows signs of reviving. The amount consumed in Persia itself is comparatively trifling, by far the larger proportion of the product being exported. Some years ago the annual yield of opium in Persia was very large. The unusual proportion of morphia which Persian opium contains made it justly preferable to that produced elsewhere, and large quantities found their way to foreign markets, especially to China. Two causes have latterly tended to check the culture and export of Persian opium. One of these causes alone might not have led to such a result, but the two coming about the same time have somewhat discouraged its production. These causes were, — the increasing adulteration of the article, which impaired its market value; and the fact that the attention given to its culture materially reduced the more important culture of wheat, which led the Government to regard the opium product with disfavor.

Persian opium is chiefly grown in the provinces of Kermanshâh and Ispahân. The latter city is the centre of the opium trade of Persia. The opium of the district of Ispahân is the best; the highest grade has been found to contain 15 to 16 per cent of morphia. It is fair to state, however, that of late the opium of Koom, Teherân, and Yezd has been growing in favor, some specialists considering the quality raised at Koom as surpassing every other grade of opium. As the highest quality of Smyrna opium does not contain a mean of over 13.57 per cent of morphia (some analyses placing it even lower), while the

Persian drug yields at the best 13 to 16 per cent of morphia, the latter certainly rivals that of Smyrna, and is beyond question far superior to that of Egypt and India.

The chief objection to the opium of Persia lies at present in the adulteration to which it is subjected, the principal ingredient in this deterioration being grape-must, and sometimes small stones concealed in the parcels. This difficulty might be remedied by any enterprising house, which through honest, capable agents could purchase the entire product of Persia, or of any of the opium-producing districts, and give direct attention to the preparation and packing of the drug. A pure article might also be obtained by a firm ready to form a contract for a certain quantity of a given grade of the drug for a term of years, the continuance of the contract depending on the non-varying proportion of morphia in the exported article.

The average price of the opium of Persia, in its crude state, is now \$4.77 per kilogram. To seventy-two kilograms of opium are added six kilograms of linseed oil. The mixture is then subjected to a manipulation which reduces the seventy-eight to sixty-six kilograms. These sixty-six kilograms are divided into one hundred balls, forming a Persian package; a specified number of the balls of opium makes a case. The cost of packing, freight, and other incidental expenses bring the average price of a case of Persian opium—such as it is when prepared for export—up to \$366.66. The excise duties vary at different centres of the trade, but five per cent *ad valorem* is the uniform rate according to the treaty of the Turkomantchai on all goods exported to Europe or America,—and, I may add, on all goods imported from those countries into Persia.

It is stated that on the average two thousand cases of opium, valued at \$732,000 are now exported from Bushire to England, besides what finds its way to China and other quarters from the other districts of Persia. There is no doubt that if sufficient

encouragement were offered, especially by the establishment of agencies at Ispahân or Teherân, or by making permanent contracts, that the product might easily be increased and the purity of the exported article improved. Indeed, the opium merchants of Ispahân have already made overtures for the American trade, and are prepared to make contracts for a term of years.

It is proper to state that inquiries made of practising physicians at Teherân, including an American physician, elicit the highest opinions in favor of the opium of Persia as regards the character and quantity of morphia it produces when unadulterated.

The silk-trade of Persia has long been one of the most important and celebrated enterprises of that country. We therefore think it quite worth while, especially in view of the increasing importance of American silk manufactures, to give considerable space to the consideration of this subject here.

We find the first mention of European merchants trading in Gilân silk in Marco Polo's work, about 1290 A. D. Marco Polo in speaking of the Caspian Sea, says: "Genoese merchants commenced its navigation some short time ago, from whence comes the silk which is called Ghelê,"—that is, silk from the Province of Gilân, in Northern Persia.

The Florentine Balducci Pegoletti, in his "*Tratto della Mercatura*," published in 1335, also speaks of "*Seta ghella*,"—Gilân silk. The Englishman R. Chancellor travelled to Moscow in 1553; and his companion, A. Jenkinson, who penetrated as far as Bokhara in 1556, made a report on the silk-trade of the Shirwân district in the Caucasus for Queen Elizabeth, who sent him to Persia in 1562, at which time he visited Derbend, Shemakhâ, and Casbeen, in Persia. And Edwards, another Englishman, who followed Jenkinson in 1567, reported that the Gilân silk was much better and comparatively cheaper than that of the



Caucasus; he therefore established a factory near Rescht, while Chapman, his companion, travelled and explored Gilân in 1658. The first English vessel, and probably the last, on the Caspian Sea was floated in 1573, and was sent with silk to Astrakhân. The expedition was unsuccessful, as piratical Cossacks from the Volga plundered the vessel of all it contained. Wolland, a little later, had factories at Hormuz; and Holstein, together with the free city of Hamburg, thinking to be able to divert some of the Dutch commerce to their own advantage, sent embassies to Russia and Persia for the sake of concluding commercial treaties and opening the transit of merchandise through Russia, offering large sums to accomplish the latter purpose. The results of the embassy to Persia in 1638 are related by Adam Olearius in his "*Persische Reise*." He states that the total product of raw silk in Persia was not far from twenty thousand bales, — a bale being equal to two hundred and sixteen pounds. Gilân produced eight thousand bales, Khorassân three thousand, Mazanderân two thousand, Shîrwân two thousand, Karadâgh two thousand, and Georgia the remainder. This would give about 2,808,000 pounds for the present area of Persia alone, — Shîrwân, Karadâgh, and Georgia no longer belonging to that country. He further says that one thousand bales, or 216,000 pounds (very nearly what it is at present), were used for home manufacture, and that the remainder was exported to India, Turkey, Italy, England, and Holland in Dutch ships.

The price of raw silk in the time of Olearius was forty-eight to fifty-two cents per pound, — that is, about one fourth of the present price, — giving a total value of \$1,404,000. Char-din, who wrote in 1669, thirty years later than Olearius, says that the yearly product was twenty-two thousand bales, — Gilân producing ten thousand bales, Khorassân three thousand, the central provinces three thousand, Mazanderân two thousand,

Kermân two thousand, and Georgia two thousand, — of a total value of ten to twelve million francs. The price of the silk was exactly the same as it had been when Olearius wrote. Chardin adds that the produce was increasing, and that the Dutch exported six hundred thousand francs' worth from Hormuz to Europe. In these calculations the nominal values of course do not represent the actual values, owing to the steady depreciation of gold.

At the end of the seventeenth century most of the silk-trade was in the hands of the Perse-Armenians, — then Persian but now chiefly Russian subjects, — as it continues to be at the present time. Peter the Great entered into an arrangement with these traders in 1711 to export all their silk through Russia instead of Turkey, while the Armenians by concurrent action obtained from the Shah of Persia the monopoly of the Persian silk-trade. It was found, however, that they acted fraudulently both towards the Russians and the Persians; and the agreement with Russia, as well as the monopoly, was withdrawn in 1720. The Russians after this assumed charge of the silk-trade, being induced to do so by the report spread by an East Indian who had settled at Astrakhân. This individual informed Peter the Great in 1722 that the Gilân trade had assumed gigantic proportions, and was on the increase; and that 1,200,000 pounds of Gilân silk had been exported into Turkey the previous year. The value of this silk was given at 3,200,000 rubles, — equal to £2,400,000. The Russians then floated their own ships on the Caspian: but the death of Peter, and the disturbances in Persia during the reign of Nadir Shah put an end for the time to Muscovite designs for the monopoly of Persian silk.

In 1738 several English merchants obtained the permission of Nadir Shah to open factories in Gilân, after they had contracted a commercial treaty with Russia in 1734, by which it was stipulated that all Persian silk for Europe, and all English goods for

Persia should pass by way of Russia. Jonas Hanway, who soon after became manager of the silk-trade in Gilân, reports that in 1744 Gilân produced two hundred and forty thousand pounds of raw silk. At the beginning of Hanway's directorship the price of raw silk in Gilân was two dollars per pound; but in the following year the price rose to five dollars a pound.

Gmelin reported in 1740 that the best silk was used for home manufacture, and that only the inferior qualities were exported. Every autumn Rescht was thronged with Turkish, Persian, and Russian merchants, buying silk. The Turkish merchants paid cash, and obtained their silk cheaper than the other merchants, who either bought on credit or gave goods in exchange. The price in 1741 per thirteen pounds weight was, for first quality, twelve dollars and fifty cents; second quality, ten dollars; and third quality, eight dollars and fifty cents.

The best statistics on the silk produce of Gilân in recent times are those of Fraser, the English traveller, who stated in 1882 that the average silk-production of Gilân was seven hundred and eighty thousand pounds per annum. He added that one third of this quantity went to Russia, one third to Turkey, and a third was retained in the country for home manufacture.

It is evident that the annual product of Persian silk is now only one seventh of what it was in the middle of the seventeenth century. The average price is three times greater than it was then, but only about a quarter of what it was when the English held the silk monopoly of Gilân.

On coming to a more particular investigation of the silk product of Persia at the present time, we find the following results. The silk-producing districts of Persia are — Khorassân in the East; the provinces lying on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea, north of the Elburz range; the middle provinces of Persia, forming a district lying between Kashân, Yezd, and the north of Fars, with Ispahân as a central point; and Azer-

baijân, in the extreme northwest. The exact quantity of the silk product of none of these districts can be stated with certainty; but the following figures, obtained from reliable sources at Teherân, I believe to be not far from the truth as regards the silk which enters into trade. In Gilân and Mazanderân nearly every family rears silk-worms; and much of the silk thus produced does not come into the markets at all, being manufactured by the women of the family into coarse stuffs used for shirts, trousers, kerchiefs, and the like. In the other districts, where the silk product is less important, every silk-grower also retains a certain quantity of silk for domestic use. Of the quantity of silk which does not enter into the trade, nothing can be therefore satisfactorily ascertained; but I should estimate it at a quantity equal to ten or even fifteen per cent of the amount which enters trade.

The raw silk of Persia is divisible into three qualities. First is the Abrishoom,—that is, silk of a super-excellent grade; second is the Gurûk; third is the Las. The first quality is divided into different numbers, according to fineness of texture, gloss, or color. In this connection might be added the fact that the Russian naturalist Gmelin speaks of three qualities. Chardin in 1669 mentions four: namely, Shirwân, the worst quality, called Ardash in Europe; Kharvaree, uneven, poor, and called in France Leghian,—a corruption of the word Lahijân, a town of Gilân; Kedkhodapesand, a medium quality used in Persia for home manufacture; and Sharbafec, the best silk for weaving, especially for the silk-stuffs of Yezd and Kâshân. The four grades mentioned by Chardin still exist; but they are, however, now classed as only different kinds of the Abrishoom quality, rather than entirely distinct varieties. Chardin ignores the silk called Gurûk, as also the Las. At the present day the people distinguish the various sorts of silk under the names of Alagbandec silk, which is the finest quality used for sewing-silk,



trimmings, laces, ribbons, and the like; of Sharbaff, which is employed at Ispahân, Kashân, and Yezd for weaving curtains, carpets, and bed-covers, batting-cloths, kerchiefs, etc.; of Parchebafee, used in Khorassân for weaving high-grade piece-goods; and of Shirwanee, which is an inferior quality of silk mixed sometimes with Gilân silk for coarser piece-goods. But all these are only different varieties of the species classed under the general title of Abrishoom silk; and indeed nearly all the inferior qualities of Persian raw silk are exported, while of the superior quality only about one third is sent abroad. In Gmelin's time only the third grade of silk was exported to Russia, because, as he says, good silk-workers did not then exist in that country.

In Gilân and Mazanderân the silk is collected at the end of May, and brought to market in the months of August and September; but in Khorassân and the other districts of Persia the silk-worms mature later, and the raw material is collected in June or July.

Khorassân produces yearly about 16,250 pounds of raw silk. The centres of the Khorassân silk-trade are Sabzevâr and Nishapûr, — places lying in thirty-six degrees north latitude and three thousand and four thousand feet above the level of the sea, on the northern confines of the lower salt deserts of central Persia. The Khorassân silk is generally good, and is rolled in skeins of thirty to thirty-one inches in length. It is purchased at present at Sabzevâr, at the rate of five to fourteen tomâns<sup>1</sup> per shalmânn of thirteen pounds. None of the Khorassân silk now reaches Teherân. A small quantity is sent to Yezd and Kashân; some is bought by Russian traders, but most of it is used for home manufacture in piece-goods. More recently many of the silk-growers of Persia have taken to opium growing; hence the great falling off in the silk production of that

<sup>1</sup> A tomân is equal at present to \$1.60 United States currency.

district. It is but a few years ago that Khorassân produced forty thousand pounds of silk per annum.

The silk product of the Caspian provinces is generally divided into that of Gilân and of Mazanderân, the latter also including the product of Astrabâd. The Gilân silk is the best which Persia produces. On account of a disease of the silk-worms the product for thirteen or fourteen years has been comparatively slight; the last two years, however, have shown a decided improvement. The product of 1885 amounted to about seven thousand bundles of shalmânns, equal to sixty-five pounds each. A bundle weighing sixty-five pounds at Rescht weighs when it reaches Teherân only 61.75 pounds. This loss of weight arises from the fact that in the humid climate of Gilân the silk absorbs dampness, while it loses its moisture in the dry atmosphere of Teherân. The total product of raw silk which entered trade from Gilân in 1882 was 432,250 pounds. It is rolled in skeins of twenty to twenty-one inches in length, and is sold at Rescht and Lahijân, Fûmen, and other towns of Gilân, at the rate of twelve to fourteen tomâns per shalmân.

The Gilân silk is occasionally mixed with Shirwân silk from the Caucasus, and then sent to Teherân. A large part of the silk of Gilân is manufactured into sewing-silk at Rescht, and elsewhere in Persia into trimmings, laces, fringes, cords, and similar stuffs. This is called Alangbandee silk. The sewing-silk, when ready for use and dyed of different colors, costs at Rescht sixteen to eighteen krans per pound, — equivalent to \$2.56 to \$2.72. Only the best silk, valued at fourteen tomâns per thirteen pounds, is used for the purpose, — about fifty per cent of the original price being thus added for the labor of cleansing, dyeing, twisting, and packing. About twenty thousand pounds of silk are annually converted into sewing-silk. The finest quality of Gilân silk is produced in the neighborhood of Lahijân, particularly in several villages belonging to

Mirza Mohammed Aleé Khan, who has been able to command for portions of his exceptionally fine silk the sum of three tomâns — equal to \$4.80 — per pound. The silk product of Gilân can be greatly increased; the greater part of it goes to Russia.

The silk product of the adjoining province of Mazanderân amounts to about thirty-five thousand pounds per annum. This silk is only of medium quality, rarely costing more than ten tomâns per measure containing thirteen pounds. It is sold in bags weighing sixty-five or seventy-eight pounds each. But little of the Mazanderân silk is exported to Russia, and that is generally improved by an addition of Gilân silk. Some of it goes to Kashân and Ispahân by way of Teherân; there it is combined with that of Kashân and Yezd, and manufactured into curtains and similar textile fabrics. The centre of the Mazanderân silk-trade is Barfuroosh. This branch of Persian silk is susceptible of large development. The silk product of the central districts of Persia amounts to about thirteen thousand pounds per annum. This silk is the poorest in quality, and has never been exported, being used altogether for home manufacture. But the amount now raised could hardly be increased, as the great scarcity of water existing in these districts interferes with the culture of the mulberry plantations.

The silk of the northwest province of Azerbaïjân amounts to about 32,500 pounds per annum, and is raised in the low-lying regions of that district. I am informed that the highest altitude at which silk-worms thrive in Persia is 6,500 feet above the sea level. Nearly all the Azerbaïjân product is exported to Russia, and is of inferior quality.

In summing up the results of the above facts, we find that the average product of raw silk in Persia now amounts to 608,000 pounds, of which fifteen per cent is retained in the country for home manufactures.

It is but just to add, that, for various reasons, there has been an inclination for several years to give less attention to silk culture in Persia and more to the raising of opium. The adulterations which have gradually entered into the packages of opium prepared for export having, however, somewhat checked the demand for Persian opium, effort is again turning in the direction of silk culture, which only needs encouragement to assume proportions larger than for many years.

The carpet-trade of Persia is scarcely less important than the silk-trade. Its leading features are doubtless so widely known, owing to the fact that so many Persian rugs have reached foreign markets for centuries past, that I shall content myself here with citing a few of the chief points relating to the subject.

There is nothing so indefinite as describing a Persian rug<sup>1</sup> simply as Persian, because there are twenty-five or thirty kinds of carpets that come under that head, each entirely distinct from the others; and unless the specific name is given, it is impossible to tell what sort of a rug or carpet is meant. It may be stated in general that the texture of Persian carpets is more close than that of Turkish carpets, which have a long nap and are thicker. Persian rugs are all made by hand, without a single exception; they are stretched on frames, as one would make a sampler, and all the members of a family work on them; a pattern prescribed for that particular carpet is before them, which they follow with more or less precision, according as their fancy suits them. As a rule, considerable license is allowed for the expression of individual taste in working out these patterns; no two carpets are therefore exactly alike; and the owner of an old Persian rug may be reasonably sure that while he may find

<sup>1</sup> The word "rug" is used in this connection for all Persian carpets, whether large or small; because, whatever be the size of Persian rugs, they all have the quality of lying flat without the aid of tacks, which European carpets require.



other rugs resembling his, not one that is absolutely identical exists. This quality gives them a value similar to that possessed by an oil painting.

But parallel with this peculiarity of Persian rugs exists another that is almost as strange; I allude to the fact that each carpet district of Persia presents certain general features in the designs and texture or material of its rugs, differing from those of every other district; and thus an expert can generally tell at a glance where a Persian rug was made. An exception to these observations exists in the case of the rugs now manufactured by the Messrs. Ziegler & Co., who have introduced a new method of turning out Persian carpets: by making advances to the workmen in Sultanabâd they keep them steadily employed; but one condition is that they shall not give rein to their individual taste, but like machines they shall continually reproduce the designs which are found to meet the prevailing fashions in Europe. If this process were to obtain to any extent in Persia, it would ruin the trade; for there is no question that spontaneity and individuality are two of the most important qualities of oriental art. The modern deterioration of Japanese art is due to the application on a large scale of what the Zieglers are attempting in regard to Persian rugs. European dealers may profit by it for a while, but the result in the end will be like the penny-wise and pound-foolish operation of killing the goose that lays the golden egg.

The Persian rugs made at the present time, independently of the Zieglers' supervision, do not yet seem to show any deterioration in quality, but there is a manifest tendency towards patterns less large and bold than those formerly designed. This would seem to indicate less artistic feeling; but in matters of taste it is dangerous to form positive conclusions. There was reason to apprehend at one time that the introduction of aniline dyes would ruin the entire carpet-trade of Persia, and

in fact all her noble textile fabrics. But the Persian Government saw at an early day the peril that lay in colors so fatal to all true artistic effort, and stringently forbade the admission of aniline dyes into the country. It seems strange that processes should be lost for producing articles by a people who actually continue to manufacture without interruption the very objects into which these processes enter. Yet we repeatedly find such a result occurring in the history of civilization. There never has been a time, for ages,<sup>1</sup> when the Persians have not been manufacturing rugs, during all which period they have been producing their own dyes; and yet within forty or fifty years the secret of making the superb blue color which distinguishes the finest examples of old Persian tiles, illuminated manuscripts, and rugs has fallen into disuse, and no one now seems able to reproduce it.

The most important classes of Persian rugs are those of Feraghân, Kermanshâh, Kermân, Shirâz, Khorassân, and Kurdistân; to which may be added those of Turkistân, mistakenly called Bokhara rugs by Americans. Although the Turkomans have been dragged into the Russian net recently, it is not long since they owed a *quasi* allegiance to Persia, and most of the Turkoman rugs reached foreign markets through that country. In my opinion they are the finest small rugs ever made; their durability is phenomenal; the dull, rich colors have the qualities of an old Dutch painting, and grow richer with time, filling the eye with ever-increasing delight as they gradually assume a peach-bloom, and the texture, close as that of velvet, becomes soft as fur with the touch of time. But beware of the Turkoman rugs which are made to-day; test them carefully before buying, for the Turkoman, now that he is under

<sup>1</sup> There is reason to believe that in size and magnificence the Persian rugs produced in the Achaemenid and Sassanid periods excelled any rugs of recent times, whether of Persia or India.

the Russian rule, can use aniline dyes at will; and for this reason not only are the colors less durable, but the patterns of these new rugs are liable to be less subtle and harmonious.

The rugs of Kurdistan are generally distinguished by an open rather than close texture, resembling in this respect crochet-work. It is due to this that these rugs have the quality of being identical on both sides; their colors are vivid, but finely contrasted, and some of them have the sheen and softness of silk. A rug that is altogether the reverse of this is a sort made chiefly in the south, of which the peculiarities are thickness, great density of texture, and the use of camel's-hair, which forms the ground of color, and is left in its natural state, — being a soft buff gray.

There is one kind of rug made in Persia which never leaves that country, owing to its great weight and bulk; I refer to the carpets of felt, called *namâds*. The best ones are made at Yezd and Ispahân, — the former being distinguished by a prevailing brown tone, and the latter by a mouse-gray tint. The *namâd* is made by heaping a low trench with hairs, and beating them flat with mallets until even with the edge of the trench; this compressed mass is then wet, and turned and returned and beaten until it assumes a dense, compact texture. A pretty design of colored threads beaten in on the upper side relieves the monotony of the general tint. These *namâds* have considerable durability, although unless carefully watched they are easily eaten by moths; but they form the most comfortable carpets I have seen, and are admirably adapted to bedrooms or libraries: one walks on them in heavy boots with as little noise as the stealthy tread of a lion's cushioned foot on the sands of Africa. They are made sometimes of enormous size. I have seen one that was eighty feet long and fifty feet wide in a single piece; it was brought from Ispahân on the backs of ten mules. Like all Persian carpets of size, the largest

specimens of *namâds* are, as I have in another place explained, invariably made to order, measured to fit the apartment for which they are intended. Another species of Persian rug which rarely reaches Europe is the *ghilleem*; it is a long, narrow, thin rug, richly colored with a general uniformity of pattern, and is made wholly or partly of cotton; the colors are imperishable, and the rug can be washed like a piece of calico. These *ghilleems* are very handsome, and can be put to almost any service.

It is difficult to give exact data of the value of the Persian carpet-trade. Certain prices per square yard are quoted from time to time as ruling in the markets; but the fact is that such things as exact prices do not exist in Persia. A man and his family make a carpet on speculation; and if they are greatly in need of money, they sell it for whatever it will bring. In like manner the dealer in the bazaars retails his rugs at every price, striking an average of profit and loss at the end of the year. The foreign buyer who makes a business of purchasing Persian rugs may in the same way strike an average of prices from year to year; but sometimes he picks up a rug at a price far below the average, and at another time he may pay far above the average for some rug of unusual rarity and excellence. To talk, therefore, of the ruling prices of rugs per square yard at Teherân is difficult, not to say absurd.

Before leaving this subject, it is proper to allude to the so-called silk rugs of Persia. They are rare, and of course very costly, — of small size, and used for draperies rather than carpets; this, in fact, may be said of all the finer qualities of the small-sized Persian rugs. The finest silk rug I have seen was the one spread before the famous peacock throne in the audience-hall of the Shah, inwoven with pearls.

Another very important industry of Persia is that of embroidery. Although in former ages the deft needlework of the



Persian women exceeded in skill and artistic merit that of the present day, yet it must be admitted that work of extraordinary beauty is still produced there, as has already been described in Chapter XI.

Of woven stuffs, Persia manufactures a large variety, all of course made with hand-loom. These stuffs are of cotton, of silk, and of wool; they all possess one quality in common, which cannot be said of all European manufactures, — durability. It would be a tedious and somewhat difficult task to undertake a description of these textile manufactures of Persia, especially if unaccompanied with illustrations and diagrams; but we can allude to the richness of the colors used, — which are invariably Persian, and being generally extracted from vegetables are permanent, — and to the very beautiful prints of *Ispahân*, which are stamped entirely by hand.

Another prominent manufacture of Persia, in which she at one time excelled, is the tanning of leather. The famous leather called “Russia,” which is in such repute for book-binding, was first made in Persia; and the Russians, who obtained the secret from that country, have never been able to equal the extreme fineness of some of the maroon leathers which are found on the book-covers of Persian manuscripts made centuries ago. The Persians have a tradition that they could reach the best results in the making of this leather only by carrying the hides to the tops of the mountains, and leaving them there to be struck by lightning. This in my opinion simply means that there was a mystery, or secret, in the tanning of this leather which they chose to ascribe to some supernatural power, in order to evade investigation and discovery. Some years ago, a Russian merchant agreed to furnish an English house with a large supply of Russia leather. It afterwards transpired that he had procured it at a low price in Persia.

The vegetable products of Persia do not differ very essentially from those of the adjacent countries of Turkey and Arabia. But in a few cases these fruits attain exceptional excellence in Persia. Of these are the pomegranate, considered in that country to have anti-febrile properties; the sugar-melon, a species of musk-melon peculiar to Persia, with a white, close-grained pulp, very sweet but somewhat flavorless, yet highly prized and cultivated with the greatest care, with the dung of pigeons kept for this purpose; and the apricot and nectarine, which are dried and exported in large quantities. The peach is indigenous in Persia, but I have seen none there equal to those in America. After the pomegranate, the fruit which most nearly reaches perfection in that country is the quince; it is not only very large, but has a flavor and fragrance equalled nowhere else. The fig, the apple, the date, the orange, the pear, and the grape of Persia are similar in kind and quality to those of Turkey, the fig being perhaps inferior; but the grapes are abundant, and besides furnishing a staple article of diet for the people, both fresh and dried, they afford several excellent varieties of wine.

The wines of Persia are red and white; the former has a body and flavor resembling burgundy, and is grown chiefly in the north of Persia. The best white wines are those of Shirâz and Hamadân; each has a distinct and delicious flavor and bouquet of its own. These wines are made by the Armenians and Jews, for the Faithful are forbidden either to drink or to make wine. They have ways of evading the former prohibition; but the latter ordinance is more difficult of evasion, and practically carries with it the prohibition of commerce in wines, — yet this difficulty might easily be overcome by a little quiet diplomacy, as I have good reason for believing. But the manufacture of Persian wines leaves much to be desired. I am convinced, however, that if European experts, taking advantage of the low cost of labor in Persia, should go to that country and

seriously enter into the task of preparing and exporting Persian wines, the result would be of the greatest benefit to the world at the present time, — the vines of France being diseased, and the French growers forced each year to import wine from elsewhere, or, what is worse, to flood the markets with a spurious article.

The sugar-cane grows finely in the Caspian provinces, but no systematic and scientific attempts have been employed to make it profitably productive.

Arboriculture in Persia has never reached the degree of skill shown in European countries. Some attention has been given to the improvement of fruit-trees, and extensive orchards are generally found in the neighborhood of the cities and in out-of-the-way, well-watered nooks among the mountains. The Persians have a custom of grafting the elm in such a way as to produce a tree with foliage as round and dense as a velvet ball; the shade is very dark, but the form of the tree is too artificial. They also train rose-bushes into the shape of trees, — the rose, by the way, being very abundant in Persia, although the varieties cultivated are not numerous. Vast groves of walnut are grown in the north of Persia, the nuts forming an important article of export. In the southwest large tracts of the country are covered with dense groves of dwarf-oak. But evergreens do not seem to take kindly to Persia: they certainly do not appear to be indigenous in the north of that country. The magnificent primeval forests which I saw in the provinces of Gilân and Mazanderân, clothing the slopes and the plains, are composed entirely of deciduous trees, — chiefly the elm, the plane, the walnut, the pomegranate, the oak, the locust, and the mulberry. The box-wood tree is found in the northern provinces, and the wood has been exported for many years into Russia, the annual yield being farmed by a Greek; but the supply seems now to be nearly exhausted.

The trees that one sees most commonly in Persia and learns to associate with almost every landscape of that romantic country are the poplar and the plane-tree, which are cultivated for the wood, and in Persia serve for building purposes, as does the pine in the United States. The natural form of the plane-tree, or sycamore (which Persians call the *chenâr*), is spreading; but in order to obtain long timbers available for house-building the Persians often plant them in dense rows close together, and lop off the branches while they are young, which gives the tree a tall, slender form. On page 268 additional facts may be learned regarding the *chenâr* of Persia.

It may sound strange to talk of the fisheries of Persia, as she is a country not only without a navy, but owning only a few small coasters in the Persian Gulf to represent a mercantile marine. Through the exactions of Russia, Persia is not even permitted to fly her flag on the Caspian Sea, which, considering her weakness in all maritime matters, seems like adding insult to injury. Notwithstanding these facts, the Persian fisheries on the southern shore of the Caspian are important. They are farmed by an Armenian named Elianoff, who has accumulated an immense fortune out of the salmon and sturgeon he has caught at the mouth of the Persian rivers and exported to Russia. Salt forms another important article of Persian commerce, extensive mines of this mineral being found in various parts of the country.

It is evident from the foregoing observations that Persia is a country of large natural resources. Although she is far from availing herself of her advantages, the country cannot be called poor. All things are relative: the wages may be low, but if the laboring classes succeed in laying by something, if the upper classes succeed in accumulating fortunes, if the Government is



without a debt, if the Court is able to maintain a respectable degree of spectacular splendor, and if the Shah reserves something every year from his revenues, it would be a mistake to assume that such a country is either entirely impoverished or depressed because, dollar for dollar, its wealth may not be equal



A PERSIAN BLACKSMITH.

to that of some of the Great Powers. While the progress of Persia may to us seem slow, yet she does progress; and this is very much in her favor, if one considers that for thousands of years she has had no appreciable infusion of fresh blood to stimulate her energies,—like the emigration of Germans to

Russia, of the Moors to Spain, or of the Huguenots to England. Persian commerce is also adopting Western methods, and is again on the increase. This is partly owing to the fact that unlike the Turks the Persians are a commercial race. In Turkey trade is almost entirely in the hands of Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and Franks. In Persia it is quite the reverse, and there are no keener tradesmen than the genuine Irancees; their commercial ability is well displayed by the large fortunes accumulated by the Parsee traders of Bombay, who are Persians pure and simple.

It is difficult to obtain exact statistics regarding the foreign trade of Persia; but I have been authoritatively informed that the imports from Europe average eighteen millions of dollars annually, and are increasing. The question occurs, Shall the United States seek a share of Persian trade? The Persians are not averse to our goods; they already import several hundred thousand dollars' worth of our canned fruits, cottonades, toys, cigarettes, stoves, and various other articles, indirectly through Europe. This indirect importation tends of course to increase the price of these goods, and makes it easier to keep them out of Persia by the introduction of cheaper wares from European merchants. It is manifestly for our interest to stimulate a direct trade between the two countries. And to bring this about was my endeavor while in Persia. I found a dense ignorance existing on the part of each people regarding the resources of the other.<sup>1</sup> Much of my time was therefore devoted to replying to numerous letters received from our merchants requesting information, and in disseminating commercial pamphlets, trade-circulars, and every species of information about the United States among the Persians, including the Shah himself, the prominent

<sup>1</sup> As an example of this ignorance, I may cite the American sausage manufacturer who was anxious to open a trade in pork sausages with the Persians! One might as well undertake to supply the Esquimaux of the North Pole with palm-leaf fans.

officers of the Empire, and the leading merchants of the country. Before leaving Persia I had the satisfaction of seeing relations established between the traders and manufacturers of the two countries which only need to be vigorously followed up to produce results of permanent value.

One of the prime factors in maintaining a commerce with Persia is the continuance of the United States Legation at Teherân, whose duties should be executed by men zealous to promote the interests of their country. And the American Minister should be reinforced in his efforts in this direction by the appointment of full American consuls at Tabreez, Rescht, and Bushire. I have already alluded, in another chapter, to the disgrace that would attach to a great government like that of the United States were it to abandon the permanent and growing colony of its citizens in Persia to the protection of the legation of another Power, even though friendly. And I would repeat that it is not less important for us to maintain a full diplomatic and consular service in Persia if we have any serious intention of opening a commerce with that country. This truth is so patent, that only those who are too short-sighted to see beyond the immediate local interests of their own county or State, or who are absorbed in the selfish pursuit of maintaining themselves in office to the exclusion of every other interest, can attempt to argue the question.

Russia, although ostensibly friendly towards the United States when her interests do not clash with ours, is determined at every cost to grasp the trade of central Asia. However fair be the words she speaks at Washington, she is watching the interests of the United States in Persia with jealousy; she is opposed to the dissemination of progressive doctrines in that country by our missionaries, having been already detected in intriguing against them; and were she to discover evidences that American commerce and enterprise were taking root there,



she would be likely to scruple at no intrigue to exclude our manufactures from Persia. This is not the place to present my proofs; but I make these statements advisedly. England also is inclined to look askance at our trade in the East, although her friendship for the United States is naturally much more genuine than that of Russia; at the same time it is folly for our State Department now to intrust our commercial interests in Persia to her care, or to that of any foreign officials, they having to further national trade interests of their own.

Germany, in turn, has recently established diplomatic relations with Persia, with the distinct intention of carrying out the new policy of extending the tentacles of her commerce in all directions. It is to be regretted that the new German minister at Teherân, Herr von Braunschweig, has thought proper to show his lack of friendship for the United States by repeated efforts to belittle our influence in Persia. In making this allusion to the affronts officially and gratuitously offered by Herr von Braunschweig in turn to every member of the United States Legation at Teherân, the author violates no obligations of official secrecy. The facts were notorious at Teherân among Persians as well as Europeans, and were doubtless reported at other diplomatic posts. In calling attention to this matter here the author feels that he is merely acting in the line of duty. If our Government has demanded the explanations and apology it could not honorably avoid doing, and if reparation has been made, it seems proper that the fact should become as public as the affronts which rendered it necessary, for a threefold reason, — to show that our Department of State is not unmindful of our diplomatic status abroad; to emphasize at Washington the position of a minister so lacking in international comity towards a friendly power; and to prove to our patriotic representatives that efforts to uphold the honor



and influence of their country will be appreciated at home as well as abroad.

Although it is unlikely that Prince von Bismarck distinctly dictated the course followed by Herr von Braunschweig, it is possible he would not seriously deprecate such action on the part of his diplomatic officials towards a country which he had observed adopts a foreign policy so different from his own. To allow such affronts to pass unnoticed would therefore result eventually in lowering our influence, thereby affecting the position of our naturalized citizens abroad as well as the extension of our export trade, and in the end also the prosperity of our affairs at home. Home and foreign interests are interdependent, and one cannot be neglected without its reacting on the other. A nerveless or vacillating foreign policy must sooner or later bring its own punishment. Under the circumstances, any attempt to withdraw or weaken the United States Legation at Teherân would not only be a national disgrace, but would dispel all hopes of extending our trade into central Asia, — a trade to which we have as much right as any other power.

My opinion has repeatedly been asked concerning the possibility of making American capital available in the construction of railways in Persia. Having given the question some attention, I find that at present the difficulties in the way of success are practically insurmountable. Railways can be built there, it is true; but the question is, if built, will they pay? Unless there is a reasonable prospect of receiving fair interest on capital invested, it is absurd to risk the capital. A through railway from Russia or Turkey would be attended with engineering obstacles and corresponding large cost. If the rolling stock and rails were imported into Persia, the first cost would be further increased; while if the plant were all made there, the machinery for it would require to be transported at great cost over high mountains, on mules. However we look at it, the expense of

constructing a steam-railway in Persia would be enormous, requiring extraordinary guarantees to insure adequate returns. But instead of finding in the situation any promise of such guarantees, we see rather a poor, widely scattered people, who would not for ages pay the mere running expenses of a steam railway by local travel and traffic. If there was ever any hope that a railway to India through Persia would prove remunerative, that hope is now of no avail since the construction of the English and Russian railways, which are rapidly converging towards Herât. One through railway to India is certainly sufficient to meet any demands of European travellers that may occur for many years to come. If the projected railroad through the Euphrates valley should ever be undertaken, that would present an additional reason for attempting no such enterprise in Persia for the present, although at some distant period branch roads might be extended to Persia.

But as if this were not enough to check enterprise in this direction, there remains to fight the concession to Baron Renter. If national expediency has led the Shah to oppose the rights imprudently conceded to the Baron, the fact remains that the concession is still in full force as regards any attempts of other Europeans to lay railways in Persia on their own account. A foreign capitalist, other than Baron Renter, would be able to attempt such an enterprise in Persia only by constructing and working it in the name of the Shah himself, who in return for ostensibly appearing to be the owner of the road must be assured of a certain annual percentage. Steam-railways in Persia will not prove profitable, until the entire plant can be made in that country out of native iron smelted by native coal. Once constructed, such a road would in most parts of Persia be conducted with moderate expense, labor being cheap, and the climate such as to cause little damage to the road-bed.

The true way to begin with railways in Persia is with two or

three horse-railroads on the plains of the central plateau, which would be sure to yield a reasonable profit, horses being cheap. As the people became accustomed to using these roads, small steam-engines might be gradually substituted for horses; and thus little by little a system might be established which would encourage the construction of larger railways. Such a road would undoubtedly prove very profitable between Teherân and the shrine of Shah Abdûl Azeem. Eventually it might be extended to the Shimrân. A horse-railroad eighty miles long, from Teherân to Casbeen, and another of two hundred miles to Koom and Ispahân, would also prove advantageous and undoubtedly profitable. Having succeeded with these, steam-railways would come in their turn. But I cannot advise any capitalists to base hopes of profit upon steam-railways constructed in Persia during the present generation.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE SHÂHR AND THE URF; OR THE LAWS OF PERSIA.

THE principles of justice are eternal, and an instinctive perception of them is found, in however rudimentary a form, among all races and conditions of men. But as wide a difference exists in the methods of practically applying those principles as in the forms of worship by which men give outward expression to their common assent in the existence of a Supreme Being. A comparative study of law may therefore approach in interest a comparative view of theology, and possess attractions even for minds that prefer the fascinations of poesy and fiction to the arid theorems of Papinian and Blackstone.

Persian law is doubly interesting, because it presents a singular contrast to the laws of Christendom, and in addition offers an opportunity of seeing in actual practice a theocratic system such as our Puritan fathers endeavored to revive, and of which we still see musty vestiges in the attempts of well-meaning but often egotistical *soi-disant* reformers, who undertake by sumptuary laws, based on their interpretations of Scripture, to guide the every-day acts of the individual. In the over-legislation of the present period, and the attempt to lead men to heaven by legislative enactments founded on the theories of fanatics and egotists instead of relying on the influence of precept and example, we see the same process going on which, carried to its legitimate conclusion, has filled the laws of Persia with absurdities, and with impertinent attempts to interfere with private acts and



guide the individual in matters which concern no one but himself. Were all the blatant reformers who besiege our legislatures with intent to cram their opinions down the throats of the community to succeed in their efforts, we should ultimately arrive at the same condition as that in which Persia now finds herself,—so bound hand and foot by numerous petty regulations that the individual must either disregard the greater part and thus become a law-breaker, or he must obey them all and resign his identity and free agency. In Persia they have perhaps not enough so-called reform; but in our country we have so much of it that one becomes as weary of the word as were the Athenians of hearing Aristides called the Just. Every one with us appears to consider himself divinely delegated to meddle with the business of other people, and to mould their characters, habits, and pursuits by law according to his own theories. We live in an age of hobby-horses, the worst of it being that no one is content to ride his hobby alone, but attempts to force others to ride it with him.

Persian law is divided into two departments, the *Shâhr* and the *Urf*. The former is administered by the *mollâhs*, or priests, and is based upon the *Koran*. The latter is the Oral law administered by secular judges, who decide cases according to common-sense and traditions, or precedents, orally handed down. As the *Urf* is administered independently of the *Shâhr*, an increase of its powers would gradually result in the extinction of the latter. It is undoubtedly the aim of the Government to bring about such a change, as one of the most important factors in promoting the elevation of Persia to the plane of modern progress; but any efforts in this direction can be pursued only with great shrewdness and caution, for the *mollâhs* are naturally violently opposed to any abridgment of their powers. In a general way the *Urf* takes cognizance of criminal cases, and the *Shâhr* of civil cases. The criminal is tried before the *hakêm*,

or ket-hodâh,<sup>1</sup> of a town or village; in the award of penalties, however, he follows the rules prescribed by the Shâhr, so far as they have not passed into desuetude. Sometimes a criminal case is appealed directly to the governor of the province, or to the Shah himself: this is especially the case if one of the parties involved is in any way connected with the Government. The Shah or the governor concerns himself little with the law in such event, but decides at once, and with a word or a gesture decrees retribution or reward.

But although all questions not of a civil nature are by custom relegated to the decisions of the Urf, it is not uncommon for the judge to allow a case to be appealed to the Shâhr when it is of special difficulty, or when the rank of the party is such as to make him dread the consequences of his decision. Any decision rendered by the religious expounders of the Shâhr is accepted without demur as final; the sacredness of the Shâhr and the sanctity of those who administer decisions based upon it make it impossible to dispute the decisions of that august tribunal. While therefore the Urf occupies a prominent place in the administration of justice, the Shâhr continues by far the more important legal authority of the land; and it is by a study of that code and the methods of administering it that one can alone obtain any correct notion of the administration of justice in Persia.

The expounders and administrators of the Shâhr are called Mollâhs and Mushtahêds. The highest mushtahêd of all, — the present Chief Justice, as it were, of the Supreme Court of Persia, — is Hadgi Mollâh Alee, to whom allusion has been made on a previous page. Like all his predecessors, he must first have sat at the feet of the Great Mushtahêd of Kerbellâh near Bagdad, who dwells ever at the tomb of Alee. Hadgi Mollâh

<sup>1</sup> The former word means "a learned man," hence "a magistrate;" the latter word means "the governor of a small town," or of a quarter in a large city.

Alee is an elderly gentleman of great dignity and gravity of deportment. He assumes no outward pomp, but rather affects a primitive simplicity. Although possessed of large estates, he makes no attempt at display. When he goes abroad he is mounted on a white mule and followed by a single attendant; but the crowd part before him as though he were a supernatural being. A word from him would hurl the Shah from his throne, or be the fiat of doom to every Christian and foreigner in the land. The Shah stands in his presence; the soldiers deputed to guard the United States Legation told me that although sent there for my protection, they would not hesitate to slaughter us all if so ordered by Hadji Mollâh Alee. Happily he who now wields such tremendous power is a kindly old gentleman, far too shrewd to adopt extreme measures. But it can easily be perceived that no measures of reform in Persia can be considered without taking into account the Chief Mushtahêd and the religious code of which he is the high expounder.

In ordinary cases a decision by the inferior mushtahêds with their seal attached is sufficient; but cases of importance must be referred to the Chief Mushtahêd. The question at issue is brought to his consideration either by a statement of the actual facts, or in the form of a supposed case. He renders his decision with a quotation from the Koran, or from the voluminous commentaries which form the Persian code. This decision is usually written by the mushtahêd on the margin of the paper containing the question at issue, in his own hand, and ratified by his seal. That ends the case. Although of course attempts to bribe or influence the judge are made, the Chief Mushtahêd, Hadji Mollâh Alee at least, may be considered as reasonably impartial in his decisions. His position is so exalted that he cannot afford to weaken it by any appearance of corruption; nor has he anything to fear from the aggrieved party. It was my fortune, in conducting to successful issue an important and

long-pending case, to have to appeal to the decision of Hadji Mollâh Alec ; and I speak with a knowledge of the facts in stating that neither influence nor bribes could swerve him from a decision which in its results bore hard against his own people.

The Shâhr consists of a vast collection of dicta, applying to every conceivable situation in life. Like the theocratic code of other Mussulmans it is based on the Koran, but differs from them in the fact that it is enlarged and fortified by the opinions of the Twelve Holy Imâms,—these Imâms being considered by the Sheâhs to be the true caliphs, and their opinions having scarcely less weight than if delivered directly from the Almighty. Early in the rise of Mahometanism it was the custom of the disciples of the Prophet to have recourse to him for explanation or expansion of the vague declarations of the Koran. After his death these commentaries were generally transmitted orally, and were called traditions, becoming in time very voluminous, so that it was necessary to reduce and codify them, adding opinions regarding the more obscure enactments. Hence the authority of the Holy Imâms. But besides them there was, between the third and the seventh century of the Hegira, a large number of commentators of the Sheite law ; among the chief of these doctors was the Sheikh Mohamed Ibn Mohamed Ibn el Neëmân Abou Abdallah, and the Sheikh Seyed Morteza Aboul Kassêm Alec Ibn Alec Ahmêd el Honsseïne, surnamed Ibn al-hedâ, or the “Bamer of the Way of Life.” One of the most complete and authoritative compilations of the jurisprudence now in use in Persia was prepared by the Sheikh Nedgeen ed-deen Aboul Hassêm Djafer Ibn Alec Yahyâ, surnamed El Mohekik, who was descended from a long line of doctors of the law. The title of his codification is “*Scherayêt ul Islâm fi messaïl ul helâl vel harâm*,” which being interpreted means “Mussulman ordinances regarding matters permitted and matters forbidden.” It is evident that they are in error who imagine that the



administration of justice in Persia is arbitrary and without the forms and principles of law. Her code may differ from that of other nations, but it is not less formal, elaborate, and explicit.

The code of Persia is in four parts, with numerous subdivisions or chapters. The first treats of religious rites and duties; the second, of contracts and obligations; the third, of matters relating to the person; and the fourth part, of laws relating to the chase, meats and drinks, legal procedure, and the specification of penalties both from a religious and a civil point of view. Many will see in the code a strong resemblance to some of the ordinances of Moses; and hence it has been assumed by some writers that Mahomet was largely indebted to the Mosaic law for the decrees of the Koran. But this theory is precluded by two facts: first, that the entire history of the East shows that from the earliest periods such laws have regulated the lives of men; second, that the *Sheâh* code is infinitely more voluminous and minute than the Mosaic. The probability is that both are suggested by a common source,—customs and laws in practice long before the origin of the Pentateuch. But Moses perhaps, like Mahomet, gave them a divine authority, in order to impress anew the importance of order and law on a people about to enter upon an independent national existence. Mahomet, for a similar reason, crystallized the regulations which had long guided the Arabs into a new form, and emphasized their force by calling them divine.

Many of the laws of the *Shâhr* are based on sound reason, and in their application are not unlike the laws of other countries; such, for example, are many of the civil laws relating to the tenure of land, the law of contracts, and the like, although some of them, it must be admitted, strike a European as extraordinary. Most of them are founded however upon actual needs and circumstances, and could not well be otherwise with Orientals. But the laws relating to religious duties are thoroughly

Levitical in character, and the ordinances regulating the relations of the sexes and the matters of penalties are of the most extraordinary character. One ceases to wonder at the prurient fancy of the Persian mind and the copious variety of Persian vices, when he reads the *Shâhr*. A careful study of its precepts on these subjects makes it easy to understand that the broad language of the "Arabian Nights" can offer nothing offensive to the oriental taste. Many of these laws are unquotable in this volume, but a few examples may be given that will suggest a general idea of some of the features of the *Shâhr*.

In the part prescribing religious ordinances we read that —

"It is forbidden any man to say his prayers in the presence of any woman who, either at his side or before him, is also praying, whether praying together with him or alone; and without regard to the character of the woman, whether she be wife or within the forbidden degree of kinship, or a stranger. But the interdiction ceases if there be a curtain between two individuals of opposite sex, or some object which prevents him from seeing her, or a distance of at least twelve feet, or, finally, if the woman is behind the man at such a distance that in prostrating herself she cannot touch his feet. If the space is insufficient to suspend a curtain or observe the legal distance, the man and the woman shall say their prayers consecutively, precedence being given to the man.

"One should avoid praying before an open fire, before the representation painted or graven of animate objects, or in the stable of horses, asses, or mules; but it is permitted in a sheepfold. . . . One is forbidden to pray in an apartment wherein is a Fire-worshipper; the presence of a Christian or a Jew is unimportant. One should avoid having an open book before him, and should not pray before an overhanging wall or in a room where there is a *pot de chambre*.

"Whoever is a Mussulman, of sound mind and of the male sex, has the right to summon to prayers in public. To be of age is not indispensable; it suffices to have reached years of discretion. The caller must however be of good habits, the possessor of a good voice, be able to distinguish the prescribed hours and periods, must be purified from all impurity, and give the summons from an elevated point. A woman may be qualified to give the summons to prayer, but only for women.

"He who is dumb must wag his tongue while mentally repeating his prayers.

“The spot where the forehead should touch (during the genuflections of prayer) should be on the same horizontal plane on which the feet rest; nevertheless, one may exceed this line by the thickness of one brick more or less.

“Whoever suffers from tight shoes should take them off before saying his prayers.

“Whoever has offered prayer without certainly remembering that he has fulfilled every regulation, is obliged to repeat the prayer.

“If the audience assembled at prayer be composed exclusively of women, the prayers may be directed by a woman, or by a hermaphrodite.

“He who cannot properly pronounce the vowels shall not lead the prayers.”

Such are a few examples of the five hundred and forty-nine laws respecting religious worship. The regulations concerning fasting and pilgrimages number no less than one thousand and twelve. Good works, and rules concerning the poor, also take up a large part of the First Division of the *Shâhr*. The law of sales includes six hundred and twenty-five titles in the Second Division. This part contains some very curious instructions relating to the purchase and sale of slaves. I subjoin a few examples from this division:—

“It is permissible to sell a piece of cloth or of land simply by a general exhibition of them to the purchaser, without obliging him to make a minute inspection. Nevertheless, it is more prudent to examine and touch the object sold, because of the various uses to which it may be put, and of the difficulty of obtaining an exact notion of the object without touching, measuring, or inspecting it. . . .

“In case of dispute between the parties concerning the condition or a knowledge of the condition of the thing sold, . . . at the moment of sale, the purchaser shall be believed on his oath. But this point is contested.

“Proof by taste or smell is indispensable when the object of sale is eatable or smellable.

“Articles of such a nature that they cannot be proved without breaking,—such as nuts, melons, or eggs,—may be sold in ignorance of the condition of the contents; and in the event of the purchaser finding them defective, he has the right to interest and damages, but not to a return of the article.

"The following cannot be objects of sale: fish caught in a pond or a brook entering a river; human milk; the hide, the wool, the hair, the entrails, and the bones of animals before being separated from the body of the animal; or the offspring of any stallion before birth, — even when these objects would merely form additional items in the sale of other objects. The re-purchase of an article before delivery is forbidden.

"It is not permitted to sell fruits on the tree before they are shaped, that is before the kernel is formed; but when they have reached that state they may be sold.

"After they are matured, fruits may be sold with or without the tree.

"It is not permitted to sell fruits green in color [at maturity] before they become green.

"It is recommended to the purchaser of a slave to change his name, to cause him to eat sweetmeats at the time, and to offer an alms.

". . . One should avoid counting or weighing the purchase-money [for a slave] in presence of a slave.

"The specifications of a thing sold should be done in a manner to leave no doubt in the mind of the parties; it should further be stated in usual terms, in order that in case it be contested the dispute can be settled by reference to the dictionary.

"Neither precious stones nor pearls shall be made the object of a sale specifying delivery after a given term, because of the uncertainty that the seller will be in possession of them at the end of a fixed period, and because of the changes to which such objects are liable by reason of their shape and nature."

If the above law were applied to the sale of stocks, what a change would come over the financial world!

"The costs of weighing and measuring an article sold shall be charged to the vendor.

"The costs of counting and weighing the purchase-money shall be charged to the buyer."

This refers to the fact that coin in the East has never been milled until recently, allowing of clipping, which obliged the weighing of money.

"The costs of brokerage shall be paid by the party that gave the order to the broker."

The bankruptcy and mortgage laws of the Shâhr are sufficiently copious, including two hundred and eleven titles. Part-



nerships, rental, farming, letters of attorney, wills, and similar civil questions also have a prominent place in the *Shâhr*. There is also a separate section devoted to the regulation of horse-racing and games with the bow and the javelin. It may appear that such questions as sports are hardly within the province of the religious law, but as the sage codifier of the *Shâhr* observes, —

“There is no doubt that the agreements growing out of these exercises are of a legal nature, the Prophet having declared that sport is unlawful except with the bow and the javelin, and in the races of quadrupeds with horny feet and uncloven hoofs. The Imâms have also successively repeated that the angels hold in execration every species of betting, and curse those who are addicted to the practice, with the exception of wagers made in the races of quadrupeds with horny hoof, uncloven, and in trials with the bow and the javelin.

“*El Sapêk*, that is the horse first in. This horse is the one which first reaches the goal, passing the competitors by the neck and shoulders. Some juriconsults are of the opinion that it is sufficient for the winner to pass the others a head's length to the top of the ears; but the first opinion seems the more reasonable.

“It is forbidden to any one who has begun to surpass his rivals [in exercises at coursing or at a mark] to sell his advantage for any price. The object of such exercises, which is to render manifest the skill of the archer or the runner, would not be gained if this sort of transaction were tolerated.”

The subject of the relations of the sexes, a question of prime importance in the laws of all nations, naturally assumes transcendent prominence in the code of an oriental people, where woman, although living a secluded life, is the object centring the thoughts and attention of all. We find, therefore, that no less than one thousand four hundred and twelve titles in the *Shâhr* are given to the subject of marriage and divorce, besides the large number devoted to concubines and slaves and the rearing of children. The first section begins as follows:—

“Marriage constitutes a commendable act for those persons who cannot control their carnal desires. As for those individuals whose will is strong enough to master the passions, there are many opinions. Never-

theless, there is a general agreement in recommending marriage, for the Prophet hath said, 'Marry, and establish a family;' 'The most wicked among the dead are the celibates;' 'After Mahometanism, there is no greater benefit to man than the possession of a Mussulman wife, who pleases his eye, obeys him, and in his absence watches faithfully over his honor and his goods.' Opposing opinions are founded on the celibacy of the prophet John the Baptist, and they who hold it base themselves on this example for proving the superiority of celibacy over matrimony. Nevertheless, if we consider that this superiority is maintained by religions other than ours, and that in our canonical books no recommendation of the sort can be found, it must be doubtless admitted in all cases that marriage is a commendable act.

"He who desires to contract marriage should seek a woman combining the following four requisites: legitimate birth, virginity, fruitfulness, and chastity. One should not be content with beauty or riches; it is indeed forbidden to contract marriage with these points alone in consideration.

"Marriage should not be consummated while the moon is in the sign of the Scorpion: . . . nor during an eclipse of the moon; nor on the day of an eclipse of the sun; nor at noon-time; nor towards the end of twilight; nor during the last three days of the months called *el mohâk*, during which the moon is below the horizon; nor between dawn and the rising of the sun; nor during the first night of each month, excepting the month of Ramazân; nor during the middle night of the month; nor during a journey; . . . nor in a tempest, nor during an earthquake.

"The presence of two witnesses in all that relates to marriage is not an indispensable condition, and a marriage contracted secretly is legal and valid.

"The silence of a maiden, when the proposition of marriage is made, is equivalent to consent.

"The consent of a widow or a *divorcée* must be audibly pronounced.

"Any man, whether bond or free, may form as many temporary marriages as he chooses.

"Marriage is forever forbidden between a husband and the wife who having been divorced and taken back by the same husband, has in the interval undergone three or four other divorces, and contracted marriage with two different men.

"The dissolution of marriage by mutual agreement carries a perpetual prohibition of their re-marriage.

"If the husband desires one of his wives to accompany him on a journey, the one who is to go shall be selected by lot.

"It is recommended to the husband to treat all his wives alike . . . in their rights.

“A wife may renounce her rights in favor of her husband or of the other wives.

“If a wife renounces in favor of the other wives, the husband is obliged to divide equally among them the time she has renounced.

“If a wife has renounced only in favor of one or the other of his wives, the husband is bound to give to that one who is designated the time which otherwise he would have devoted to the first one.

“The foregoing dispositions apply equally in case the renunciation is made by several wives to the advantage of one of the others; for example, if the husband having four wives, three of them renounce their rights with his consent, the husband is bound to cohabit only with her in whose favor the others yielded their rights.

“A wife may at any time retract the renunciation she has accorded to the husband; but such retraction is only effective for the future, not being retroactive.

“The extreme limit allowed for the nursing of an infant is fixed at two years, but one may wean a child at the end of the twenty-first month; to reduce the nursing time below that limit, however, is to render one's self guilty of a grave misdemeanor.

“If a mother asks wages for nursing her child, such as would be given to another woman, she shall always have the preference.

“If the mother offers to nurse her child gratuitously, the preference shall be awarded to her; but in the event of the mother asking a wage, and another woman offers to nurse the babe free of charge, the husband is free to accept the gratuitous offer.”

The provisions concerning divorce are numerous, and the formulas and conditions are so various as to make it impossible to give a correct idea of the legal status of the question in Persia by the mere quotation of a few of the many paragraphs in the code bearing on the subject. Many of the details and required conditions are not of a nature admitting of quotation. But it may be stated in general that the following are the chief points and formulas to be observed in a Persian divorce.

The divorce is pronounced by the husband in the presence of not less than two witnesses, both of whom must be present at the same time; it cannot be of binding force unless pronounced by word of mouth; a written bill of divorce is not effective except in the case of one who is dumb. The husband must invariably

use one of three verbal formulas in pronouncing a divorce, — any other mode of expression, even if the meaning is clear, being invalid. The expressions to be used are *Enté talekoon*, — “Thou art divorced;” or, *Felanêt talekoon*, — “Such a one is divorced;” or, *Hazée talekoon*, — “This person is divorced.” The formula must always be spoken in Arabic. A wife must have kept apart from her husband the period of a lunar month to make the divorce effective. If he has but one wife, it is unnecessary for the husband to pronounce her name in the act of divorce; but if he has more than one wife, then the name of the one to be divorced must be pronounced at the time; otherwise, the fiat having been uttered, which wife is included in it must be decided by lot. The divorce cannot be pronounced by a husband under ten years of age or of unsound mind. A woman cannot be divorced except on the fulfilment of five conditions in the marriage, of which the first is that the marriage was in all respects legal. A husband may in absence divorce a wife by a mandate borne by a messenger; but no divorce pronounced on the authority of a third party is binding. If a husband on reflection retracts the divorce, stating that he had no serious intention of separating from his wife, the divorce is annulled.

There are three chief kinds of divorce, — the divorce by virtue of which the husband cannot take back his wife; the divorce with this right in reserve; and the temporary divorce, made in order to prove whether the wife is with child by a husband from whom she was previously divorced. The most important and most common of the conditions causing the irrevocable divorce is when, after the wife has twice been taken back, the husband for the third time pronounces the formula of divorce. In the case of reserving the right to re-marry her, the husband to the ordinary formula must add a statement affirming the reservation.



The temporary marriage is an institution peculiar to Persia, and abhorred by all Mahometans elsewhere. The Sheähs defend it on the plea that it is not forbidden by the Prophet, and is therefore right, — on the principle of their law that whatever is not forbidden is allowed. It is my opinion that the temporary marriage is an institution established prior to the Mahometan conquest, and is therefore inherited from the old Fire-worshippers. This seems to be borne out by the prehistoric tradition regarding the temporary marriage of Rustêm to the daughter of the King of Semengân when on a hunting excursion, the result being the birth of Sohrab. A prominent example of the use of the temporary marriage at the present day is given in the account of the Moayer-ul-Mamolêk related in a previous chapter of this work.

Four conditions are indispensable to the legality of a temporary marriage, — the contract, the personal conditions (to be hereinafter described), the dowry, and a statement of the period for which the marriage is contracted. The absence of any of these conditions reduces the marriage to simple concubinage or prostitution. The chief point in the contract is that it be drawn up in legal form before a mollâh, by the consent of both parties. The personal considerations are numerous, of which the most important is that the woman shall profess one of the four revealed religions, — Islamism, Judaism, Christianity, or Magianism. The fact that Magianism is included in these four religions is to my mind conclusive evidence of the Zoroastrian origin of this form of marriage. If through error a man has contracted such a marriage with a woman not confessing either of the four religions, he must insist as a condition that she abstain from wine and unclean meats during the term of the marriage. In temporary marriages it is advised to select a Mussulman woman of pious and chaste disposition; but if such an arrangement is formed with a woman of loose habits, she should

be obliged to abstain from such life during the term of the marriage.

The dowry paid by the husband is the most important feature in the temporary marriage. It should be of a nature that can be weighed or measured and minutely described in the contract; but the amount may be of any degree, large or small. The husband must pay half the sum or goods stipulated if he dismisses the wife before consummation of the marriage; after that she is entitled to the entire amount, and it cannot be withheld from her.

The duration of the temporary marriage is settled by mutual agreement, and written in the contract. It may be the fraction of a day, or ninety years; it may even antedate the period when the contract is made, if mutually desired. Numerous other conditions may be included in the contract, but the above are indispensable. An important accompaniment of such a contract lies in the condition that a woman married in this fashion cannot be divorced. For this reason, although the temporary marriage is chiefly accepted by women of the lower classes, who thus contribute a temporary companionship to men on a journey, it is and may be accepted without disgrace by women of rank and character who desire to insure to themselves permanence in the marriage relation and security regarding their dowry. But neither party to such a marriage can inherit from the other. After the cessation of the contract the wife can enter into no new relation of the sort until the expiration of a lunar month, in order to prove whether she is with child by her late husband. In such event she cannot marry again for four months and ten days. The father of the child, according to custom, although not bound by the laws, acknowledges the paternity and supports the child until it is of age.

The penalties for fornication, adultery, sodomy, and similar vices are very severe, — death in the form of lapidation being

the most common on the repetition of the latter, and for the first offence in the case of adultery. But so many exceptions or possible contingencies are included in the decision of such cases and the execution of the penalty, that a careful following of the law would necessarily result in the escape of most culprits. Another reason why laws bearing on these vices must be more or less inoperative in Persia is found in the general prevalence of sensuality, which naturally makes it difficult to find one who, as the Saviour said, "being without sin, shall cast the first stone." Still another reason lies in the extreme difficulty of procuring the proper testimony. The majority of cases of this nature cannot be considered without the testimony of four witnesses; and if any or all of these are women, one must be added to the number for each woman. The evidence of women is altogether excluded in cases of unnatural vice. It is evident that four witnesses to a case of this sort must be comparatively rare. In point of fact, although it is probable that in early times the penalties for these vices were severely enforced, such is rarely the case now; the facility of divorce makes it scarcely necessary so far as regards adultery. While I was at Teherân I heard of a woman and her accomplice who were condemned to lapidation for adultery; but as I never learned of the execution of the sentence, it is probable that the affair was condoned through the influence of friends and the payment of a certain sum. The injured husband made more than usual stir about the matter in this case because he was a mollâh, and his spouse had shown the bad taste of preferring to run away with a cook to staying at home with a doctor of the law.

Notwithstanding the many peculiar laws and marriage customs of Persia, and contrary to what one might suppose, happy and permanent marriages are by no means uncommon; indeed, I am prepared to hazard the statement that there is but little more misery from this source there than in most Christian

countries. An important point in the social relations of the Persians is the great affection existing between parents and children, and the uniform respect shown by the latter to the former.

The laws of procedure include no less than three hundred and ninety-five titles. In administering the *Shâhr* it is required of the judge that —

“He should be of legal age, sound of mind, faithful in the duties of Islamism, of good life, of legitimate birth, well instructed, and of the male sex.

“A judge should be endowed with a good memory, for one who lacks memory is incapable of exercising this function.

“Authorities differ as to the necessity, in the case of a judge, of knowing how to read. They who deny the necessity base their opinion on the fact that at the commencement of his mission the Prophet, although illiterate, governed the Mahometan community; but it is preferable to grant the necessity, because it is difficult for any other individual than the Prophet to conduct most affairs without a knowledge of writing.

“The judge should hold his sittings in a spacious and open place, in order that access to him may be easy.

“The magistrate should invite men versed in science and law to attend his sittings, and to advise him in case he is liable to fall into error; for we Sheahs consider that only one person is infallible [the *Imâm*].”

The regulations concerning evidence in the *Shâhr* include one hundred and seventy-one titles, of which it is not worth while to quote more than two or three extracts here:—

“The testimony of a minor who has not reached the age of puberty cannot be admitted. . . . Jurists, however, are not agreed as to the admission of the testimony of persons aged ten years, in cases involving mayhem and murder.

“The testimony of any person in a state of insanity or imbecility is not admissible, by the unanimous opinion of jurists.

“The testimony of any one who does not profess the true faith, even when he is recognized as a Mussulman, shall not be admitted against a true believer, nor of any other person: because heresy constitutes a presumption of evil life and immorality, invalidating the right to testify.

“In default of Mussulman witnesses of good character, the evidence of an unbeliever may be admitted in the matter of wills.



“Reputable life constitutes a condition of ability to testify; for whoever is of notoriously bad life offers no guarantee [of his word].”

A number of the conditions to the admission of evidence are so contrary to the prevailing practice of the Persians that those titles are of course of no effect and void:—

“The testimony of a husband in favor of his wife shall be admitted.

“The evidence of a wife in favor of her husband shall not be admissible, except by the added testimony of another person of good character.

“ . . . The best-received opinion admits that a slave is capable of furnishing evidence in every case, except against his master.”

The laws bearing on the number of witnesses required in specific cases are numerous and minute. The following are fair examples:—

“No crime or misdemeanor amenable under the canon law [that is, the *Shâhr*] can be certified by the testimony of one man and two women, by the evidence of one man corroborated by the oath of the plaintiff, nor by the evidence of women alone, no matter what be their number.

“In the question of succession of an infant deceased immediately after birth, regarding his viability and in the matter of inheritance, the evidence of one woman is valid for the quarter amount of the sum total of the inheritance.

“With the exception of the two exceptions specified in the preceding article, the evidence of persons of the feminine sex shall not be admitted unless the witnesses are of the number of four, at the least.”

The question of penalties, retaliation, and blood-money includes twelve hundred and fifty-nine titles of the *Shâhr*. Many of the penalties therein prescribed are now falling into disuse in Persia, although the principles upon which those regulations are based continue in full force. One of the fundamental principles of Persian law is the *lex talionis*, or law of retaliation, the injured party being thereby entitled not only to punish the offender himself, but also to demand that the penalty should be of a nature to indemnify him for his losses. There are civil cases in our law in which the award of damages for injured affections, or for a

limb broken by the carelessness of others, practically admit this principle; but the wider application it receives in Mahometan countries is by us considered a relic of barbarism. Is it so? It certainly can hardly be considered as such when coupled with the power to procure remission of the penalty by the payment of a sum of money proportioned to the damage done. Is there not many a criminal with us who would gladly pay a given sum rather than linger in prison? On the other hand, are there not some people who would prefer losing a finger — nay, a hand — rather than endure a ten thousand dollars fine or five years imprisonment? All these questions are comparative; and in assuming that our systems of government and order are every way the best, it is possible that we act with haste and without sound judgment.

One of the most objectionable features of Persian law is that which allows the penalty, when of a physical nature, to be applied by the injured party or his family. Thus in case of conviction of murder the family of the murdered man are entitled, if they wish, to execute the murderer, and in such manner as they choose. But penalties of this sort may be condoned for money; and the necessities of the people, or the love of money, — which is one of the worst traits of Persian character, — generally induce them to accept the price of blood prescribed by the laws. The cases in which vengeance is wreaked by the injured party are becoming annually more rare, chiefly as a result of increased contact with Europeans and a growing amelioration of sentiment. Eventually all this class of cases will be decided by the Urf, which permits the judge in his discretion to award such penalties as the occasion seems to require, and which may be consistent with the spirit of the age.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### NOOKS AND CORNERS OF PERSIA.

IN the summer of 1884 ill-health, resulting from the steady duties of the Legation, suggested a short absence from the capital. One of our excellent missionaries, the Rev. J. L. Potter, was also in need of rest, and together we decided upon an excursion towards the Caspian Gates.

We were obliged to take tents with us, — a large one for ourselves, one for a kitchen, and one for the servants: also bedding and cooking utensils, and, to carry ourselves and all these *impedimenta*, twelve horses and mules. We were also attended by two mounted *gholâms*, or royal guards, to protect and find good quarters for us; a savage dog was likewise added to the caravan, to watch the camp at night. It was in July, and our plans had to be made to travel by night, as it is impossible to journey in Persia by day during the warm season. One is fortunate, therefore, if he has the moon to light his way as he slowly creeps over the long roads and lonely plains of this thinly peopled country.

The baggage was started in advance at 5 p. m., with orders to await us a *farsâkh*, or four miles, beyond the city walls, near the ruins of Rheï, setting up our tents there and preparing dinner. There we planned to remain until midnight, and then take a fresh start for seven hours' travel. But when we arrived at the proposed camping-ground we failed to discover our tents, and could gain no trace of the baggage-train although we sent

horsemen off in several directions. Here was a pretty predicament, — a prospect of wandering sleepless and dinnerless all night, with entire ignorance of which road to follow in order to overtake the caravan! We finally decided to try a road over the mountain, one of several leading to Hatûnabad, thus taking a route which we had not intended. The night was superb, the moon clear, the sky serene, and the silence phenomenal, as we toiled hour after hour on a road which led over a vast plain of sand, gradually rising to a lofty and rocky pass. At two in the morning we came to a village embowered in foliage, — an oasis indeed. Here was the country-seat of a gentleman of the Court. Arousing the keeper, we were in a few moments admitted to the freedom of a spacious parlor, and hastened to stretch ourselves, booted and spurred though we were, on the divans, where bread, watermelons, and tea were furnished us; very grateful they proved under the circumstances. As we started once more in search of the baggage-train we met a man who proved to be one of our muleteers, who for reasons of his own had tarried in the city, and was now hastening to rejoin the caravan. From him we learned the direction the train had taken.

At eight o'clock of a scorching morning we at last arrived at the village of Hatûnabad, and at the farther end of it discovered our tents by the side of a stream. It was a welcome sight, for there was not a cloud in the sky, and the mercury already stood at 106 degrees in the shade. After a hasty breakfast, we threw ourselves on our cots and slept several hours. On waking, we found the thermometer registered 110 degrees in the centre of our large tent, — and this with a good breeze blowing. We were now in the pestilential alluvial plain of Veramûn, which we had not intended to visit at this time; and it behooved us to look well, lest with the heat and malaria we should get ill. Notwithstanding the intense heat, boys were bathing in the brook, standing for hours bare-headed in the sun, and women quietly



washed their clothes, not minding the heat, as if it were cloudy weather. It is "kill or cure" with the natives of such a climate; the feeble die young, while the survivors are able to resist everything. On consideration of this fact I am inclined to think that if Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were reared in the south of Persia, where the heat is greater than at Veramîn, they were well prepared for the trial of the "burning, fiery furnace."

Towards evening we were able to creep out of the tent; the cooler air suggested that a glass of milk would meet our wants better than anything else. But in Persia it would never do to send for the milk, for it would have been simply impossible to get it without water. Therefore, after much difficulty, we succeeded in having a cow brought to our tent. But even now the difficulties did not vanish. According to Persian notions, a cow may not be milked without the presence of its calf; it is a disgrace for a man to milk a cow, so a woman had also to come; her husband was obliged to come likewise to look after her. She was greatly embarrassed to conceal her face while milking, as the mantle would not remain in place; but she at last avoided the difficulty by sitting on the farther side of the cow, while we discreetly kept on the other side!

After a bath in the brook, we tried to sleep until the rising of the moon; but the heat and the mosquitoes defied description. It was aggravating to see all our men sleeping like logs. At eleven the white disk of the moon, "round as the shield of our fathers," loomed over the plain and touched a battlemented wall above us with silver. It took nearly two hours to strike the tents and load the mules, for we were short-handed, one of the three muleteers having thought fit to run away. It was a striking scene riding across the silent plain, and sometimes fording one of the numerous forks of the Jargé Rood. This river offers a good example of many of the rivers in Persia. Rising in the mountains, it has every right like other rivers to reach the sea

either alone or by the friendly aid of some larger stream ; but it soon divides into many smaller streams, which are utilized by the

tillers of the soil for irrigation, and what remains in the main channel is at last lost in the parched sands that cover so large a part of the plateau of Central Persia.

As dawn began to appear, the mighty and mysterious cone of Demavênd was seen to loom out of the darkness in the north, and while the constellation of the Dipper hovered over the giant mountain like a coronal of gems, the light of approaching day flushed the lofty snows with a rosy gleam. Having seen the dawn nearly as often as the sunset (which is more than



A PERSIAN WATER-CARRIER.

many can say), I am sure that there is no effect of Nature so solemn and impressive, and at the same time so elevating to the soul, as the dawn of a clear day, when a low wind hums a weird hymn like to an elegy over the destiny of the ages.

We rode at sunrise into the leafy lanes of the hamlet of Sheerabad. Of course there was no inn, and our gholâms, after beating at several gates, at last found a garden where we could lodge. The tent was set up under the shade of avenues of chenârs; but we could not wait for it, and threw ourselves exhausted on the dusty floor of a porter's lodge, and fell into a deep slumber. Awakening towards noon we heard the cicadæ drone in the thickets, but needed not that characteristic oriental sound to inform us that it was a sultry day, with the mercury at 105 degrees. Breakfast was awaiting us in the tent, of which we partook lightly, as we were both beginning to feel the fatigues of night-travel in that burning atmosphere, and were prostrated for two days. On the third night we concluded to push on to Aïvanikeff. We got away at eleven, but were detained by the falling of one of the sumpter mules into a ditch.

Once out on the plain, we entered on a scene which reminded one of Sahara; and indeed we were crossing part of the great saline desert, reaching hundreds of miles south and east, called the Salt Waste of Khorassân. Not a thing of life was to be seen; not a bird in the air; not an insect breaking the silence; not a blade of grass. Even the full moon, in a cloudless sky, seemed dim. My companion was so weary that he repeatedly threw himself on the sand and fell instantly to sleep. We met frequent caravans, for we were on the great route to Mesched and Turkistân. The caravan of a prince was of especial interest, consisting as it did of many scores of horses and mules, a crowd of picturesque retainers, and numerous wives in tachtravâns and kadjevêhs. There was something peculiarly weird about the scene as we journeyed over the vast, seemingly endless and arid waste; for although it was clear starlight and moonlight, objects were visible but a short distance, and the bells of the trains and the chanting of the muleteers were heard long before the trains suddenly came on us out of space. The noiseless tread of the



sponge-like feet of the camels made these ships of the desert seem like ghosts as they silently passed. During those still watches of the night my thoughts were wandering back amid the long past events of that historic land, and by a freak of the fancy Shelley's lines were ever flitting in my brain:—

“Where the desolated tombs  
Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind  
Their wasting dust.”

A little to the southward, on our right, lay the ruins of Shar-i-Veramîn, surmised to have been at one time a capital of the Parthians; and this fact doubtless suggested these lines to my memory.

The sun ushered in a day of fearful heat, and we hurried to reach a shelter at Aïvanikeff. The ruddy walls of the town appeared straggling on a slope, rising above a treeless plain between two mountain ridges, one of which is supposed by some to represent the famous *Pylæ Caspiæ*, or Caspian Gates, through which Alexander the Great pursued Darius to his doom, and marched thence on his triumphal career to India. As we ambled into Aïvanikeff, a long train of Turkomans rode forth bound to Teherân. They were a shaggy, savage troop, armed to the teeth, and wearing immense sheepskin caps that made them look like mushrooms. Their errand now was peaceful; but time was not long ago when the Turkomans made dashes across Persia as far as Aïvanikeff, carrying off women and children into slavery, with booty in plenty, and then vanishing as swiftly as they had come.

After some search, a man was found in Aïvanikeff who was willing to give us part of his house. Two decent rooms were offered us; but we gladly preferred a *balâhanê*, or open room over the gate, through which a strong gale was blowing unobstructed. After breakfast we threw ourselves on our cots exhausted. When I awoke I found every one asleep; it was like



Thomson's description of the Castle of Indolence, — the entire town was asleep in the middle of the afternoon. In the covered court-yard below us muleteers and servants sprawled in all directions like dead men, even among the horses' legs; the horses themselves were asleep; while a hurricane was howling without in a cloudless sky, and the mercury ranged at 108 degrees in the shade. One of my horses having been thoughtlessly tethered in the sun, had his face blistered. The people said that it "was not a warm day for Aïvanikéff; but for the wind it would have been much hotter." We realized, however, the meaning of the passage, "The shadow of a great rock in a dry and thirsty land." Towards evening the town awoke. It was now much cooler, and the people walked the bazaars or on the roofs, and sat down under the stars to the solid meal of the day. There is this to be said about the climate of central Persia, that such is the elevation of the country there is necessarily considerable variation in the temperature between day and night; when the sun disappears, the elevation of four thousand to five thousand feet has a decided influence on the atmosphere.

At Aïvanikéff we entered on a new stage of the journey. The intensity of the heat, combined with the debility of our health on starting, now decided us to turn northward into the mountains, instead of pursuing our journey eastward, — thus securing a more salubrious air.

The next point was to get information about routes and distances. There are no guide-books in Persia, and off the regular post-roads a farsâkh may mean anywhere from three and a half to five miles, according to the intelligence of the informant. One of the most exasperating things in Persia is the attempt to get correct information about distances. "How far is it to Firoozkooch?" we asked of one man. "It is six farsâkhs." "And how far do you say it is," we asked of another.

"Seven farsâkhs," he replied. "Well, but the other man says it is six." "If he says it is six, then it is six," he again replied, with a shrug. What could one do under such circumstances but to strike an average and run the chances? At eleven o'clock we were again in the saddle, marching northward. In an hour we were taking a cool breeze off Demavênd, which rapidly lowered the temperature, and for the first time in four days we were reasonably comfortable.

We continued our ride from Aïvanikeff over a winding mountain road up to the ruins of a castle, which from the brow of a steep cliff overlooked one of the most desolate yet wonderful landscapes on the globe. Below us spread a volcanic valley, broken into as many shapes and ridges as is the rugged sea on a stormy day. Almost every color was to be discerned there, combining to give a gorgeous effect to the rock-ribbed hills; but not a single vestige of vegetation was to be discovered, — even the birds appeared to avoid the scene of dreadful desolation. Thence we rode cheerily onward to the castle of Durabad. This is a picturesque ruin, perched on the apex of a hill, around whose base flowed a brawling stream like a moat. From this point the scenery became very agreeable, affording one of those contrasts and surprises that add so much to the attractions of Nature in a land like Persia. Vineyards and orchards of apple and fig and pomegranate constantly increased in number, and granges nestling under the dense shade of wide-spreading che-nârs. Babbling brooks stole musically across our path, and where the hill receded lovely intervalles were seen, in which the reapers were gathering the grain. It was difficult to imagine that at the same hour on the previous day we were gasping for air among the oven-like roofs of Aïvanikeff.

Our satisfaction was complete and our surprise unfeigned when we arrived at the village of Sarone. In Persia, and generally throughout the East, villages are massed in a huddle of

houses, huts, and shops, often surrounded by a high battlemented wall, whose gates are closed at nightfall. But at Sarone it was quite otherwise. We entered along winding ravines, gradually ascending. Down the centre of the gorge coursed a broad shallow stream, ever cooled with the shadow of the close overhanging cliffs and hills. On each side were luxuriant orchards and picturesque cottages peeping through the greenery, surrounded by low mossy walls or hedges tufted with white, yellow, and scarlet flowers. The lazy clatter of mill-wheels and the wild warbling of the nightingale blended with the fluttering sigh of the gusts in the tree-tops and the musical brawl of the streams. In all my travels I have seen nothing more idyllic.

Following the windings of the larger stream, and often splashing in the water, — for this, half the time, was the only road, — our patient horses brought us at last to the centre of the straggling village. And here again a delightful surprise awaited us. For we came on a hill abruptly springing out of the valley, crowded to the top with houses rising in successive stages in the most picturesque fashion, with latticed windows, and projecting balconies decorated with wood-carvings, at once graceful and elaborate. At the foot of the hill, by the river-side, lay a clearing like an esplanade, shaded by immense che-nârs. In this stately greenwood the elders and magnates of the place were seated; they were counting their rosaries and smoking the kaliân. Between times, they engaged in grave discourse, which to one ignorant of the language might easily have passed for something profound. These gentlemen had learned who we were from the gholâms, who had preceded us to announce our coming; and now, with deliberation and dignity, they approached and welcomed us to Sarone. To my astonishment they then invited us to occupy the court-yard of the village mosque, and actually led our horses into the

enclosure. But as this proceeding was unprecedented in Persia, where fanaticism has such wide influence, we concluded it would be the wiser plan to decline an invitation which could not receive the approval of more religious residents. We therefore rode on a little farther, and pitched our tents in an orchard of apricot and plum trees by the stream.<sup>1</sup> Our horses were tethered around us in the grass, and in a few minutes the cook was preparing dinner, of which we were now heartily in need.

In this charming retreat we remained several days, finding the pure, bracing air a wonderful restorative. The people were very respectful; but we had to allow a certain license to their curiosity on the first day, as there was no record of any European ever having passed through that valley before our visit. We were a species of *feræ naturæ* to them, — legitimate objects of study and observation. A low wall near the tent was lined with women in dark-blue mantles. With one eye peeping through an open corner of this veil, they carefully scrutinized us, and were talkative to each other of our every movement. As they became more familiar, they grew less cautious about their veils, and not infrequently a pretty face was thus disclosed. The lads were less reserved. More or less nude, these urchins prowled nearer, and undertook to invade the camp itself. But a few cuffs and kicks judiciously bestowed by the gholâms where they would prove most effectual, soon cleared the camp of what might have proved a nuisance.

From Sarone we proceeded up the gorge to a noble tableland, thousands of feet above the sea, dominated by the gleaming snows of the mighty cone of Demavênd. We made our next stop at the large town of Demavênd, which is the capital of a prosperous district. It is a very picturesque, well watered place, lying thickly wooded in the hollow of a green valley. Our

<sup>1</sup> The valley of Sarone is noted for its dried nectarines, which form an important article of export.



tents were pitched in a sort of park near the centre of the town. Demavênd has quite a business in the weaving of silks, the tanning of leather, and the manufacture of felt. Several shrines of great antiquity also give interest to this place, being of artistic and archæological importance. But we were forced to be content with merely an external view of these objects. A few months later, I may add here, an old bath fell in at Demavênd, and one of the villagers brought me, at Teherân, some of the tiles which had incrustated the interior. They proved to be very rare examples of the art of the time of Shah Abbass, and gave me an idea of what treasures of decorative art must be still concealed in those forbidden shrines of the town of Demavênd.

While we were at this place we wished to send letters to our friends at Teherân. We found that there was no post-office and no mail-carrier, the town being off the post-roads and telegraph lines. Our only resource was to do as others do at Demavênd in such a case, — to hire a special messenger, called a *cossat*, who was to receive half his wage in advance and the other half on delivery, if the letter reached its destination within the time specified in the letter. This sort of postage is necessarily expensive.

From Demavênd we proceeded to Raineh. The road led over a formidable mountain pass, which was reached by a fine series of zigzags, engineered by General Gasteiger, a European in the employ of the Shah. At the top of the pass is the shrine of a Mahometan saint and a massive hostel. Adjoining is a cemetery, which contains the bodies of travellers who have perished in the winter storms. Every year many are lost on that mountain. From the pass the road was magnificently constructed along the lower slopes of Mount Demavênd, whose stupendous peak towered on our left to the height of twenty-one thousand feet. Such a landscape as that through which we rode on this glorious day cannot be surpassed. On our right

was the river Harhaz, which, after its junction with the foaming Lar, rushed through a gorge, or rather an abyss, whose precipitous walls arose one thousand feet on each side. Below us we saw the extraordinary town of Ask, entirely covering a shelf at the foot of these cliffs, reaching completely across the narrow gorge on each side of the roaring torrent. And then, after a long Alpine ride following the edge of the precipices, we came to Rainei, a lovely village completely embowered in velvety masses of foliage, on a slope so steep that the hamlet seemed ever slipping into the gaping abyss.

We found a green plot on a terrace, and there pitched our tent for a quiet Sabbath. The sense of relief was immense, as we sat on the grass under the trees sipping a cup of hot tea, the usual beverage in Persia, and somewhat like the lotos-eaters saying to ourselves, "We will return no more, — at least, until next week!" As we were retiring for the night, we were startled to see a hand mysteriously appearing inside of our tent, followed by a lamb that was pushed into our presence without the utterance of a sound to indicate the whence and the wherefore. Summoning a servant to inquire into the matter, we learned that the lamb had been sent by the village priest as a present.

While we were at Rainei one of our party fell ill, and medical advice being necessary, it became a serious question how to obtain it. Several days must pass before a physician could be summoned from Teherân. On inquiring we found a native itinerant doctor, who, after curing or killing all the sick at Rainei, was on the point of leaving for the next village. It was decided to call him. Tall, swarthy, and black-bearded, and with an eye as keen as an eagle's, he entered the tent with the bearing of a king. After a low but not a servile bow, he begged permission to be seated. This being granted, he gathered up the skirts of his tunic and seated himself on his knees

and heels upon the rug. Having felt the pulse and deliberately examined the countenance of the patient, he said gravely, "Please God, he will recover." His prescriptions he declined to prepare himself, but requested us to send a servant with him who might buy the drugs and compound them in our presence. This is the custom of practitioners in Persia, in order to avert suspicion and lessen danger to their own lives in case a patient dies on their hands. When prepared, the medicines were not disagreeable to the palate, although quite different from those in use in the European pharmacopœia. They proved efficacious in this case, and health being improved we left Rainei for the valley, or great crater, of Mount Demavênd. We dared not proceed any further at that time in the direction of the primeval forests and jungles of the Mazanderân, owing to the danger of malaria.

A number of interesting incidents attended the succeeding course of the trip, which the limits of this chapter require me to omit; but I heartily advise those who wish to enjoy horse-back travelling and camping-out to try Persia.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN PERSIA.

THE present political condition of Persia is one of great interest and of growing importance. The proximity of the Russian empire to this ancient monarchy, and the clearly defined character of Russia's designs would alone be sufficient to make the study one of value to the political student. But when we consider that Persia is one of the parties most interested in the progress of Russia towards India, and that Teherân is the centre of many of the intrigues which are entering into the solution of the Oriental question, it evidently becomes necessary to possess information regarding the political and military position and condition of Persia at the present juncture.

Nasr-ed-Deen Shah, the present ruler of Persia, is the fourth of his line, and has now been on the throne thirty-eight years. He found matters in a somewhat disturbed condition on his accession, being established in this position by the aid of the foreign ministers then resident at the court of Persia. He succeeded in quelling several rebellions, and captured Herât in a manner creditable to his administration.<sup>1</sup> In those days brigandage was rife, especially on the upper roads to Khorassân and between Ispahân and Bushire. Now there is not an Eastern country more safe for the traveller than Persia. The Kurds on the western frontier are of course to be excepted; but they have been a predatory set of cutthroats ever since the time

<sup>1</sup> On page 60 the capture of Herât was inadvertently attributed to the previous reign.



of Xenophon, and will probably remain such for ages to come. The Bactiars are also a crafty and treacherous body, on whose lands the unprotected traveller incurs some risk. But elsewhere one may traverse the vast dominions of the Shah, even thinly peopled as they are, with a security not approached in any part of Turkey, and superior to that experienced in some parts of Europe and the United States. Occasionally the mail-carrier is attacked when known to be carrying money; but with this exception, I did not hear of a highway robbery during the time I was in Persia. When the English frontier commission was in Afghanistan in 1884-85, eighty thousand dollars in coin were transported monthly across the lonely wastes of Khorassân from Teherân, to pay the expenses of the commission. The coin was in charge of a single European, with two or three attendants and a soldier; and yet in no instance was this treasure attacked. Such facts speak louder than prejudices, theories, or false reports; and in spite of all that is urged against the government of Nasr-ed-Deen Shah, it is my impression that these facts constitute a strong point in favor of the efficiency of his administration.

Persia has no debt. The army is poorly paid, it is true; but this is largely due to the rapacity of those who have the distributing of the funds. With the Persians money goes much further than it does with us; and while the wages of the troops appear pitifully small, they are really in about the same proportion as the wages paid to European armies, and would be sufficient for the moderate requirements of such a people in such a climate if the paymasters and officers did not appropriate half the wages before the money reaches the pockets of the poor soldiers. But thievish paymasters are not confined to Persia. The subjects of the Shah are not poor; there are few evidences of extreme poverty in that country. Of course all things are relative; but if Persian peasants or laborers can by

working two thirds of their time contrive to obtain a livelihood for themselves and families, and often accumulate a little something, then they are as well off as the laboring classes of Europe, even if nominally they receive less wages. There is doubtless much hardship in Persia; the conscription for the army is a great hardship, as it is in all countries whose armies are recruited by force: look at the enormous number of men remorselessly forced into lifelong servitude in the armies of Russia. But paupers are far less numerous in Persia than in Italy or Spain; and the wealthy Persians, in accordance with the precepts of their religion, do much to alleviate extreme want in their country. The fact is that nowhere can a spot be found on earth which does not have its own share and form of suffering and privation. It is evident that the poor we have always with us, and that suffering is equalized the world over, each age and nation coming in for its own proportion.

That there is money in Persia is further evidenced by the fact that while maintaining an extensive ménage, the Shah is continually adding to his accumulated funds. Not only does the Crown of Persia possess one of the most costly collection of jewels in the world, as has already been indicated in these pages, but his Majesty is credibly reputed to have in his vaults many millions of coin and bullion. The ministers and leading merchants of Persia also command wealth that would be respectable in any country. At Teherân they maintain costly establishments, to which they are constantly adding, — furnishing them lavishly with mirrors, carpets, bronzes, furniture, and the like, imported at great expense from Europe. Unlike the Turks, the Persians are shrewd and successful in business. At Teherân there are a number of Persian merchants whose wealth may be set down in the millions. These facts indicate thrift and prosperity. Persia resembles France in being largely sufficient unto itself. While there is no question that

relatively Persia is less opulent and powerful than she was in the palmy age of Shah Abbass, and while there is also no question that corruption is universal, the facts cited here prove on the other hand that the country is far from being exhausted, that her vitality is still scarcely touched, and that if allowed to pursue unmolested the path of progress she seems inclined to enter under the influence of increasing relations with European races, Persia will gradually rise once more to a station worthier her past renown.

In her efforts toward progress Persia has several obstacles to encounter, any one of which would be sufficient to crush a less intelligent and hardy people. Time must be given her to overcome each of these in turn; and it is too much to assume, it is manifest injustice to judge, that because an old nation requires more time to readjust itself to new conditions than a young and still immature people, she is therefore necessarily and hopelessly declining, or effete. In the case of Persia, it is more than likely that with some who loudly proclaim her approaching downfall the wish is father to the thought.

The first and greatest of the obstacles which complicate the present condition of Persia is Mahometanism. With the peculiar doctrines of that cult we have nothing to do here; we propose only to consider its bearings on the Persian government. Any country hampered with a state religion is so far handicapped in the race for life; but if in addition to that the government and the laws are subject to official direction by the clergy, the case is indeed serious. But proceed still further, and imagine a nation whose sovereign draws from the priesthood his authority to rule, and whose laws are based on religious exactions; whose law-givers are priests and whose judges are also priests; whose government in a word is theocratic, — and we find a system utterly and absolutely

at variance with the spirit of the present age, and opposed to genuine progress in all ages. That is exactly what we find in Persia. It is not to be denied that it was the religious impulse which gave to Persia the power and splendor of the great dynasty of the Sufavees; it was religious fanaticism grafted on genius which established that family on the throne of Persia. But having furnished the building power, the same impulse of religious fanaticism or conservatism prescribes the limits of action, and presents a face of adamant to the spirit which has slowly but surely developed the energies of western Europe in a direction that allows of unlimited progression. The Shah of Persia is in favor of placing his country in the line of modern progress; the chief men of Persia are not averse to it if it can be done without too great a shock, — some of them indeed are earnestly in favor of change. But the clergy, or mollâhs, are irrevocably opposed to innovation from whatever quarter; they have their grip on the throat of the nation, and the advantage is with them, because not only is every law of the land on their side, but they are the expounders of that law. A railway cannot be laid in Persia without their consent. It is true that in spite of the Mahometan clergy the tendency of the country is gradually making towards progress; but because of their opposition the movement is seriously retarded, and may eventually be so delayed that the independence — nay, the very existence — of Persia may be forfeited. The frontier of Persia is so magnificently defended by her natural ramparts, that with any reasonable social and political progress it would be possible for her to present effectual resistance against invasion; while as it is, she is unprepared to encounter any of the leading nations of Europe without powerful allies.

Another obstacle with which Persia has to contend is the general corruption of those in power. Too many of her leading men are more influenced by venality than by patriotism. They



are capable of being bribed to resist any progressive movement, by intrigue if not openly, and to act treasonably against the Shah himself by harassing and hampering any plan he may attempt to put in execution to develop the resources of the country. When they do not proceed to this extreme, many of them practically act against progress by appropriating to themselves such a large share of all moneys advanced by the Shah for public works that he becomes discouraged, and hesitates to enter into undertakings that will only be used to fill the coffers of his ministers. It would be a mistake to assert that this is a new thing in Persia. Official corruption has existed there for ages, as it has in many other countries to a greater or less degree; but in an old country like Persia, threatened as she is by outside aggression, the evil is more apparent and infinitely more perilous.

A third obstacle to the progress of Persia is the continuous rivalry between England and Russia, and the active interference of the latter with every movement which tends to elevate Persia. For there is, of course, not the slightest doubt that Russia intends to absorb Persia, and she is naturally opposed to any enterprise which tends to add to the difficulties she may encounter in so doing. For this purpose Russian diplomacy acts with sleepless vigilance in Persia; now with threats, anon with dissimulation and blandishments, and always with money, she works openly and secretly to accomplish her ends. Russian diplomacy has been as greatly applauded as it is dreaded by the world: but the secret of its success is sufficiently simple. There is nothing mysterious in it; it is based on the gullibility of the people with whom she has to deal, aided by a genius for fiction which has never been surpassed, — to which she adds the ironical pretence, which has its effect on some well-meaning but obtuse philanthropists, that her conquests are pursued in order to liberate enslaved races and further the cause of religion

and civilization ! It is easy to see, therefore, what success would attend Russian diplomatists in dealing with a government and people like that of Persia. Her armies too weak to cope with those of her powerful neighbor, and her officials too venal to resist Russian gold, it is not surprising that Muscovite influence has gained a strong hold in Persia. And this influence has been greatly strengthened by the weakness displayed by England in the discussion of the Afghan question. This for two reasons : first, because the Persians, like all Orientals, worship the rising star, and turn from the setting sun ; second, because it is manifestly extremely perilous for a country so situated as Persia to offend the power which is in the ascendant, by siding with her apparently declining rival. There is absolutely no question that British prestige in the East has weakened very greatly, and perhaps irretrievably, during the last decade. This is due to the weakness and fatuity of the home government and not to the inefficiency of English officials in the Orient, many of whom in Persia and India have had the ability and the astuteness to cope with the Eastern question if properly supported in their prescient efforts.

If one were asked whether the Persians in their hearts favor either side, beyond a readiness to accept their bribes, I should emphatically reply that they cordially hate both England and Russia, and would give glory to God if both could be abolished from the earth. Politically the Shah and many of the most intelligent Persians are secretly in sympathy with England, because she seems inclined to leave Persia alone ; and they are violently opposed to Russia, because her designs for the conquest of their country are evident and sure. But as England is disposed to limit her interest in Persia to protecting her against the predominance of Russia, and is not acting vigorously even in that direction, and as she is disinclined to enter into an offensive and defensive treaty with Persia against the

common enemy, naturally great caution must be exercised by the Shah in openly declaring sympathy with England. On the other hand, it becomes highly expedient on the part of the Persian government to show an outward friendliness towards Russia,—a hypocritical courtesy that veils the most intense aversion. Even he who accepts her gold prays inwardly to Allah that Russia may be blasted and her infidel hosts scattered to the winds; but he says to himself, "If I do not take this coin some one else will, who may do more harm with it than I." Russia is profoundly mistaken if she thinks that in buying the service she also purchases the love of those Persians whom she engages to carry out her designs against their native land and religion.

The hand of Russia is evident in so many ways in Persia that it is difficult to enumerate them all, but a few cases will suffice to indicate her methods and the measure of her success. Persia labors under the disadvantage of having but meagre means of entrance and exit for her foreign trade. The trans-Caucasus route, with Rescht on the Caspian for its port, is the best, at least for northern Persia. But it is useless for trade with any country except Russia, because of the stringent regulations passed by Russia, which practically close the way for all goods in transit across her territories, in order that she may monopolize the trade of central Asia. Another northern route *via* Trebizond and Tabreez is also greatly hampered by the fact, that goods passing that way are forced to enter a Turkish port and pass across foreign territory. Turkey makes a pretence of allowing free transit by that route; but this liberty is hampered with various annoyances, one of which is the examination at random of ten per cent of all goods in transit. In winter this road is also all but impassable, while the port of Trebizond is at that season well-nigh valueless owing to its northern exposure. The southwestern route *via* Bagdad and Kermanshah is still more objec-

tionable, because goods by that route must again enter a Turkish port, and no free transit is allowed there, but all articles must be examined and pay full duties, — a process which must be repeated when they cross the Persian frontier. There remains only the route by Bushire on the Persian Gulf. Apparently this should be by far the best way for the trade of Persia to take; and it is undoubtedly important to the trade of southern Persia, and would be serviceable in case of war with Russia or Turkey, because goods landed at Bushire are at once on Persian soil without having to go across the territory of perhaps a hostile neighbor. But the advantages of the Bushire route are largely neutralized by great disadvantages: only vessels of light draught can enter the port; others must anchor in an open roadstead several miles from the town. Moreover, the road from Bushire as far as Shirâz is of a difficult character, over terrific mountain passes and along the edge of precipices where there is only room for the portage of freight of a certain size. Many accidents occur on this route.

One of the happiest events that could befall Persia would seem to be, therefore, the opening of a more convenient port within her own borders, from which goods might be distributed free from the obstacles that check trade by other routes. Such a port exists at Mohammerah. It lies in the Shat-el-Arab, or delta at the mouth of the Euphrates. It is on Persian territory, is commodious and safe, has depth of water for the largest ships close to the shore, and goods can be transferred from there to lighters and towed to Shuster, two hundred miles nearer the heart of the country. From Shuster, the route to Ispahân and Teherân would lie through one of the richest though least cultivated districts of Persia. A commercial highway through this district would not only be an astonishing aid to the development of Persian commerce, but it would also open up the southwest of Persia, improve the resources of that region, and lead to the



exportation of the vast quantity of bituminous coal which now lies there awaiting the advent of enterprise and capital. Such a highway could be laid out for a moderate sum, probably two hundred thousand dollars. The Shah has expressed himself in favor of it, and decided to give the money required; capable European engineers have surveyed the route, prepared their estimates, and repeatedly received orders to be in readiness to begin work. The English and the Austrian ministers and the writer have frequently brought directly to the attention of the Shah and his ministers the importance of opening Mohammerah to commerce, both for the growth of Persia and the increase of her commercial relations with the Western world. And yet the work lingers, and at last accounts seemed as far from inception as ever. There are many who are in haste to assert that this procrastination is due to the penuriousness of the Shah himself. It is true that in view of the corruption and speculation which invariably attend any public enterprise in Persia, the Shah may well hesitate to fling money into a bottomless pit. But the returns to the country from the projected enterprise would be such as far to counterbalance any probable increase of the estimated outlay. No; the reason the road to Mohammerah is not built is because it might add too greatly to the progress, prosperity, and resources of Persia, and make her too independent of Russia. Therefore Russia opposes the work by open threats, or thwarts it by secret intrigues. It is the purpose of Russia to throttle Persia by fixing her iron grip on the throat of that unfortunate country, to prevent her from drawing in the invigorating air of the progressive nineteenth century, until in a dead syncope the old Empire falls helpless into the ruthless embrace of her grasping and insidious foe.

Another means which Russia takes to interfere with Persia is seen in her efforts to inveigle the pastoral tribes, including the famous Shah Sevend, to cross the northwestern border, with the

intention of forcing them to remain. As some of the best material for the Persian army is drawn from this source, the purpose again becomes obvious. Still another method is to entice the Christian subjects of the Shah into Russia and make Russian subjects of them, under specious promises of improving their condition. They find too late that they have fallen into the clutches of a power that seizes all it can, gives up nothing, and compasses heaven and earth if so be it may draw another proselyte into the fold of the White Czar, another conscript for his armies, another slave to swell the unwieldy hordes of the Slavs, or another colonist for Siberia. When I was on the point of leaving Persia, a prominent ecclesiastic of the Armenian church called on me to request my influence in mitigation of the injustice suffered by the Armenians who had become Russian subjects, and especially to complain of the sore outrage of their having recently been commanded to forsake their religion and language and teach neither one nor the other to their children. I expressed my sincere regret that under the circumstances no human aid could be of any avail, aside from the fact that it is a delicate matter for one nation to interfere in the internal affairs of another.

Russia again shows her hand in Persia by a specious and insidious process for which perhaps she invented the name. I refer to her steady attempts to nibble into the territories of her neighbors by slow attrition, under the pretence of what she euphoniously calls "a rectification of the frontier." Anxious, as she alleges, to rectify her frontier in order to avoid difficulties and incursions (for so powerful a state Russia is singularly afraid of her weaker neighbors!), Russia in 1883 claimed, took, and held the very important frontier range called the Damân-i-Kuh in northeastern Persia, one of the most valuable barriers left to this afflicted country. The Shah made his great expedition to Meshêd in 1883 ostensibly on a pilgrimage to the

tomb of the Imâm Rezâh : his real purpose was to examine the question of the frontier, and if possible avert the absorption of so important a portion of his territory. The matter created a great deal of ill feeling at Teherân, and would undoubtedly have resulted in war if Persia had felt strong enough for so unequal a contest. But she was of course obliged to recede, and Russia is now firmly intrenched on the northeastern border, with every barrier removed that might impede her march from that quarter. It was also stated at the time, that Russia goaded the Shah into secretly signing an offensive and defensive treaty with Russia, in which he agreed to side with that power and against England in the event of war. When this transaction came to light, England at once declared that it was impossible for such a treaty to be in existence ; and Russia dissembled, as the time had not yet come for full revelation of her purposes. But I have every reason to believe that a treaty of such nature was drawn up ; whether it was signed, is more doubtful.

A year later, Russia suggested the absorption of the eastern and richest portion of the large province of Khorassân, including the holy city of Meshêd ; this also she desired for the laudable purpose of "rectifying the frontier"! When the proposal was made, the Sedr Azêm, or Prime Minister of Persia,<sup>1</sup> a venerable dignitary of great weight and character, replied with indignation and scorn, "You have taken our cradle, and now you ask us to give you our life!" He referred to the fact that the district absorbed the previous year was the birthplace of the Khajâr dynasty, while to take Meshêd is practically to attack the seat of the Sheâh faith, on which the autonomy and laws of Persia are based. Persia will fight to the death before she abandons Meshêd.

We do not need to go into the question involved in the robbery of Sarracks from Persia preliminary to Russia's recent

<sup>1</sup> On going to press, news comes of the death of the Sedr Azêm.

advance towards Herât. She wanted it, and she took it; that is all that requires to be said about that transaction. These recent events show that Persia cannot be eliminated from any discussion of the intrigues and difficulties between England and Russia near her eastern frontier. Although little consulted by either, she is one of the parties most interested and involved in the Eastern question. Among numerous examples of this fact, we may cite the case of Eyoob Khan, the claimant to the throne of Afghanistan, who is interned in Persia, and strictly maintained a prisoner at Teherân by the Shah, under British pressure, the expenses thereby incurred being secretly paid by England, it is whispered. At the time that a collision seemed imminent, in 1885, a direct intrigue was carried on with him by the Russian Legation at Teherân. He was advised to make his escape; funds were furnished him; and everything was ripe for his flight, when the intrigue was discovered, and he was at once taken from the free quarters he had been permitted to occupy, and closely confined at the Palace. That communications and money passed between Eyoob Khan and the Russian minister in the winter of 1884-85, and that Eyoob Khan transmitted money to confederates near the eastern frontier, and that he made preparations to place himself under Russian protection on Russian soil, there is no doubt whatever.

Nor as to the ultimate intentions of Russia in Persia and Afghanistan is there any longer room to question. While I am inclined to think that the operations of Russia in those parts in 1884 and 1885 were, so far as England is concerned, somewhat in the nature of a feint to lead her to mass her forces in India, and with the Soudan war on her hands to be thus unable to interpose and prevent a *coup de main* on Constantinople, yet the definite purpose of Russia sooner or later to push her conquests southward until she reaches the Indian Ocean, either at Bombay or Bushire, cannot now be



doubted. The secrecy of her tactics in those quarters shows the same far-sighted determination to accomplish a vast and deep-laid scheme that she has displayed in Europe for a century. None but the most unsophisticated, or those gifted with phenomenal credulity, can for a moment accept any other solution of the conduct of Russia.

I had precise information of her advance to Panjdêh, or the Ford of Five Bridges, and to other points farther south, before the facts were first rumored in Europe, where they were persistently denied by the courts and press of both England and Russia, and then finally confirmed. To move thus in secret, to pave the way with promises and gold, to bluster and prevaricate when discovered, but in any case to move steadily ahead and to recede not an inch until her battalions halt on the shores of the Southern Sea,—this is the policy and the determination of Russia. Said a Russian gentleman to a member of the United States Legation: “Believe nothing you hear *à propos* of the imbroglio on the eastern frontier. Even if you hear any one swear that we do not want Herât, do not believe him; not even if I swear, not even if the Czar should swear, do not believe it. We want Herât, and we shall have it!” This was said at the time affairs were so critical between the two powers; at Tcherân the situation was strained to such a point that the members of the British and Russian Legations avoided meeting.

Looked at in the abstract, Russia has quite as much right to advance on India as England had to take it. Regarding the matter from the higher ground of abstract justice, both England and Russia are interlopers in Asia. But that is not the way that nations have progressed; history everywhere shows that the only justice that has prevailed in national affairs has been the law of the strongest. It is not Russia's right to advance, if she can do so, which is in question here,

but her dark methods, her treachery, her dissimulation and deceit. Furthermore, the world may also hesitate with reason to see her accumulate any more territory; she already has more than has been held by any power since the foundation of the globe. If to this she adds the whole of India, of Persia, of China, of Corea, of Japan,—and she is bent on having them all,—what advantage will it be to the world? So far as India is concerned, she is certain to be under the sway either of England or Russia for ages to come; and wherein will she be benefited by a change of rulers, just as she is beginning to feel the advantages of the beneficent sway of England? It is nonsense to assume that any Asiatic people could be improved by exchanging the rod of England for that of Russia. English rule doubtless has its blunders and crimes; but has that of Russia less? Yet if Great Britain would maintain her hold in the East, she must be at once more wary and firm; success with Orientals is absolutely dependent on both. The recent appointment of Yahia Khan, late Mouchir-i-Doûleh, to the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Persia shows that England has again been caught napping.

We cannot see how even the blindest partisans of Russia can deny that if she has a certain right of the strong to advance wherever her arms and diplomacy can carry her, England also has the right to defend what she already holds. Self-protection is the first law of nations as well as of individuals. That England will be able to defend her possessions in the East Indies is however quite another matter, concerning which no definite predictions can be made. The domination of a civilized people numbering two hundred and forty millions by less than two hundred thousand aliens and foreigners, of whom forty per cent are non-combatants, is one of the most extraordinary phenomena in history. It is impossible to belittle this tremendous administrative feat by any sneers or comparisons.

The fame of England would be immortal did it rest on the conquest and maintenance of her power in India alone. But it has now become a question, how much longer she can preserve her dominion over that vast empire inhabited by a brave and intelligent people, who under the rule of England are learning to wield the weapons that will in turn expel her from India. One secret of England's success in that quarter has been the difference of race and religion which exists in the seething population between the Himalaya and Cape Comorin. Once let the hate and rivalry which exist between Mahometans, Buddhists, and Hindus be laid aside, and one of the greatest safeguards of the British dominion would give place to an insurmountable peril. The military education which the Indians are acquiring under English rule is rendering them capable of doing England as much harm, in case of their turning against her, as now she derives advantage from the employment of these wily foes,—for foes they are and always will be to foreigner and Christian.

It is useless to conceal the fact that the East Indies are anxious to cast off the English yoke, and to do so would even be willing to exchange it for that of Russia, in the expectation of discarding that in turn. Like all subject races, they have vague hopes that any change would be for the better. Not the slightest dependence can be placed on their fidelity beyond the moment that it seems for their interests to serve England. The emissaries of Russia are even now swarming in the north of India,—not Russians, but Asiatics in Russian pay, who are familiarizing the people with grandiose ideas of the overpowering growth, the magnitude, the wealth, and the generosity of Russia. They are lavish in promises of what Russia will do when once she supplants the English, and they can point with truth to the fact that the government of the Czar deals gently with the religious and race prejudices and customs of

her Asiatic subjects and feudatory chiefs, always excepting when they are Christians. While inveigling the Asiatic tribes into her power by every manner of trickery, it must be allowed that once having obtained the upper hand, Russia generally understands better than England how to keep them content. This is partly the result of a more profound and more definitely organized policy, and partly because as a semi-Asiatic people the Russians more clearly perceive the peculiarities of the Asiatic character. It may be said in parenthesis, that it is for this reason also that the diplomacy of Russia partakes of the organized system and bureaucracy of Europe, but the character and methods of Asia. Only a power that was largely Asiatic in its craft, finesse, and duplicity would have thought or dared to lead Sir Peter Lumsden and the English frontier commission up and down the wastes of Persia and Afghanistan on a wild search after commissioners whom Russia never intended to send, notwithstanding her agreement to do so. The sublime impudence of the transaction is altogether Asiatic in its conception, and so startling and extraordinary that the astute Mr. Gladstone failed to appreciate that it was possible for any one intentionally to trifle in so preposterous a manner with the whiskers of the British Lion.

As for Afghanistan, that rude country is already half Russian. Two stupendous mistakes have been made in the last decade by two of the leading powers of Europe. Russia committed a probably fatal blunder when she failed to seize Constantinople in 1876. Destiny rarely grants such an opportunity twice. England likewise made a blunder which may ultimately cost her the empire of India, when she retired from Afghanistan. It is idle to deny that not the slightest reliance can be placed upon either the love or the fidelity of the Afghans. They are a loose-jointed nation, composed of numerous tribes and clans, rivalling one another in turbulence and ferocity, treachery and fanaticism. The two most important of these tribes are the Sadouzâi and



Barukzâi, the throne oscillating alternately between these two. They have no reason to love the English; the only question is, Do they love the Russians less, and which of the rivals is most to be dreaded? They know that Russia will sooner or later invade Afghanistan, — not as the English did, to lavish their blood and money and retire, but to stay. If they deem the English a broken reed too weak to lean upon, they will of course line their pockets with the promises and gold of Russia, and with crocodile tears of rejoicing sink into her arms.

Abdulrahmân, the present Emeer of Afghanistan, has passed several years on Russian territory, where he was treated with a politic courtesy which personally inclined him toward that astute power. At this very moment, when England and Afghanistan are cooing together like a pair of turtle-doves on the green bank<sup>s</sup> of the Bendemeer, the emissaries of Russia swarm in Cabool, and go about the streets known of all men except the English stationed there to observe and report. Russia, in the mean time, is rapidly pushing her railway from the Caspian towards India. At Michaelovsk, on the eastern shore of the Caspian, she is collecting a vast depot of stores of war; the seven hundred ships and steamers afloat on the Caspian can in a few hours transport thirty thousand men across the sea, and she has little to fear from an interruption of her communications in that quarter. While it is true that England could by the way of the Suez canal throw fifty thousand men into Herât almost as quickly as could Russia at this time, yet it is to be considered that every day carries the Russian railway nearer to Herât, and every day also increases the probabilities of a general European war that would make it for the interest of powers hostile to England to seize or block the Suez Canal. Take away that means of communication suddenly, and not only does the commerce of Great Britain fall into jeopardy, but she would infallibly lose India, all her

relations with that country being at present adjusted to a little narrow artificial stream that may easily be closed or destroyed. England's safety lies in either holding and garrisoning the Suez Canal, or by establishing a protectorate in Egypt and laying railways the entire length of its area; by the latter means she could send troops to India by the way of the Nile and Suakim if the canal were closed. As she cannot well do the former, she clearly has a certain right to protect herself by the latter plan, which is all the more feasible and proper now that the Ottoman Empire has taken another step toward the grave, and in view also of the gradually unfolding purpose of France, the probable ally of Russia, to obtain control of the whole of northern Africa, from Morocco to Egypt inclusive.

It will be asked what prospect has Persia of escaping from the general absorption by which the Anaconda of the north is gradually swallowing and assimilating the Asiatic races? Has she any better hope than Bokhara or Khiva or Afghanistan? To this I unhesitatingly answer, Yes.

The Khanates which Russia has seized in central Asia were never more than temporary governments. Their rulers have been Khans or Emeers, which in their case is equivalent to Counts of the old German empire. The power is similar, but the tenure of office much less stable; for the rulers of these petty states, — petty in population and power, but not in territory, — have been at any time liable to be assassinated or deposed. These Khanates have no historic importance, and the obstacles surmounted in making a conquest of them have been greatly and purposely exaggerated by Russia. The difficulties between Russia and China concerning Khuldja a few years ago were for the time held in abeyance, because Russia found that it would not be possible to seize and hold that district with a less force than fifty thousand men, operating a long distance from its base. What is such an army in comparison with the

vast forces that must be put into the field in a European conflict? General Kauffmann won his successes against the Tekké Turkomans with a trifling corps of forty-five hundred men.

But because Russia has thus far succeeded with moderate means and effort in her movements against the semi-civilized hordes east of Persia, it does not follow in the least that she would encounter no greater obstacles in seizing and holding Persia. In her last two wars with that country Russia invaded Persia with armies of thirty thousand to fifty thousand men; and although she succeeded in humbling Persia, it was not done without several campaigns and much hard fighting, decisive success coming only when so able a soldier as General Paskevitch took command of the invading armies. The Persians labored under the double disadvantage of being poorly paid by their penurious sovereign Feth Alee Shah, and of being in a transitional state of military discipline, the attempt having only just commenced to introduce European drill and tactics into the Persian army.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding these disadvantages, the Persians repeatedly routed Russian armies in the open field, and heroically withstood several severe sieges. Since that time the European military system has become domesticated in Persia, and the army is reasonably well supplied with modern arms. The *matériel* is excellent. Properly led, the Iranees, the Bachtiarees, the Loores, and the Djamshedees, who form the armies of Persia, are not inferior fighters to the Turks. With Orientals everything depends upon their leaders. Persian officers are not stupid by any means, but they are so indolent and corrupt that they lack *morale* and *esprit de corps*. But now, in case of a war with Russia, if the Persian army were provided with experienced and

<sup>1</sup> It was during the reign of Feth Alee Shah that the action of M. Garabaioff, the Russian Minister at Teherân, in affronting the laws of Persia, aroused the populace to storm the Russian Legation and murder the Minister and his suite.

talented English or German officers, there is no question that it could be depended on to make a good report. The army is at present nominally fixed at fifty thousand men, but actually represents about thirty thousand. It might however be raised, in case of an emergency, to two hundred thousand.

The natural defences of Persia are also of great importance, although they can be turned more easily since Russia wrested from her the range of the *Damân-i-Kuh*. The great central plateau of Persia could be defended from invasion by skilful engineers and strategists, particularly owing to the long marches over arid wastes, where Persian cavalry could operate with great damage to invaders. The Caspian provinces are likewise capable of defence against an invasion by sea, as there is no port affording passage for any but small craft except *Ashouradê*. In summer time the Persian government could depend in those districts on deadly malaria and fever to serve as allies giving no quarter to European invaders, and in winter on impassable snow and mud. Were England or Germany to aid Persia, they could land an army at *Mohammerah* which might with little difficulty bisect Persia at *Ispahân*, proceeding thence to operate in the defiles of the *Elburz* or to cut the Russian railway to India.

These may seem like colossal plans, difficult and disproportionate to the object in view. If, however, England proposes to hold India she must be prepared for bold strategy. She can be sure that unless she attacks the Russians in the rear, by harassing their long line of march or their stealthy railway, Russia herself will employ this manœuvre against England, by causing a flank insurrection in India while the British forces are occupied defending the passes. With seventy-five thousand trained Russian troops in front and one hundred and fifty thousand trained Indian troops firing into the flank and rear, caught as it were between the upper and nether millstones, may not the English



be ground exceedingly fine? It is absurd to sneer at such possibilities. Possibilities they are which too much sense of security will turn into probabilities. It behooves England therefore to maintain a close and friendly alliance with Persia, and to make her plans to aid the Persian army not only with money and arms, but in case of war with the moral support which would be obtained by the addition of twenty-five thousand British grenadiers. The emulation thus aroused would enable the Persians to meet equal numbers of the Russians with success. The fanaticism which is the basis of the victories won by Russia with her ignorant troops would be offset by an equal amount of fanaticism on the part of the Persians, and by not less physical courage. Thus it is evident that the chances of success are not entirely in favor of Russia in case she attempts to repeat in Persia the experiments tried at Khiva, Merv, and Panjdêh.

Still another element of advantage has recently come to the aid of Persia. I refer to the diplomatic relations which have been established between Persia and the German Empire. It is reasonable to suppose that Prince Bismarck is too sagacious a statesman to enter into such negotiations at this critical period in the history of Persia without a distinct purpose, and unless he saw that Germany would find profit in doing so. He has too many important enterprises on hand to extend his vast genius in any new direction uselessly; and Germany is relatively too poor to waste any of her moderate revenue in establishing a legation of the first class unless she proposed to win ample advantages in return. The significance of this movement has not been sufficiently appreciated by the world at large. A further consideration of this point leads one to remember that perfect harmony does not exist between Germany and Russia. Between the courts there is a semblance of friendship, because the Emperor William does not forget that the Czar is his nephew,

while his genial but despotic temperament places him in accord with the iron rule of the house of Romanoff. He is moreover anxious above all things that hostilities between the two countries should be averted during his reign, which is now drawing to a close. Between the two peoples, however, there is no love wasted. The Crown Prince also is known to be inimical to the Czar for personal as well as national reasons; and his consort being at the same time an English Princess and a woman reported to have great influence over her husband, it would seem that only a slight pretext would be required to bring on a tremendous collision between Germany and Russia after the death of the Emperor William. The conflict cannot long be deferred. When it comes, Germany may derive decided advantage from inviting a war on the flank of Russia, provoking a general rising of the Khanates, and supplying Persia with the sinews of war, and at least with able officers, and perhaps a few regiments.

In addition to these reasons, it is to the advantage of Germany that Persian autonomy should continue for the present. She is making every effort to extend her trade and establish markets for her manufactures. By only permitting the transit of goods across her territories, subject to regulations which are practically prohibitory, Russia distinctly proclaims that she proposes to monopolize the trade of central Asia. If she were to obtain unlimited control of Persia, the same restrictions would of course obtain there. German goods by the channels of direct trade would also be excluded in that case, which would be of decided disadvantage to Germany in the present condition of her commercial designs. Therefore, both for self-protection in peace as well as in war, Prince Bismarck probably sees advantages in preventing the extinction of the Persian empire. Aided by such an ally, Persia's chances for resisting the Muscovite plans for absorption would be substantially improved.

Another point which Russia or any other power proposing to absorb Persia must take into her calculations, is the fact of the wonderful national vitality of that country. In this respect the Persians resemble the French. What European nation besides France would be in her present prosperous condition after the convulsions and calamities she has undergone within the past century? Not once, but many times has Persia likewise been overrun and apparently subdued. But after each conquest she has thrown off her chains and arisen with renewed vigor and splendor.

A distinguished Turkish diplomat called my attention to a peculiar point of difference between Turks and Persians. "When the Turks are conquered," said he, "they have such pride and spirit that they scorn to remain under the yoke of another, and migrate. After the liberation of Greece, the Turkish residents sold out their property and left. They are doing the same now in Roumania and Batoum. Whereas the Persians have so little spirit that they are willing to remain on soil which has been wrested from Persia. See, for instance, how the Persian money-changers and merchants remain at Bakû and transact business and thrive, perfectly contented to be under the government of the Czar. That in brief shows how different and superior the Turks are to these mean-spirited, mercenary Persians."

However, I cannot assent to the opinion that this trait of the Turks indicates superiority, although having a high respect for them, but think it shows instead a people of inferior adaptability and practical sense. The North American Indian retires before his conqueror until he vanishes into oblivion; while the polished Athenian remains in his native land after the Romans have conquered it, and in turn dominates their intellects, as the Persians may do with the Russians if ever they should make a conquest of Persia, — an event which appears to be improbable, and to

become more remote every year that it is postponed; for each year will develop new problems for Russia to overcome, and may also add to the progress and resources of Persia. The real danger to Persia from northern aggression appears to lie less from direct and open attack and invasion than from gradual and insidious attrition along the frontier, which little by little gnaws into the heart of the country. This method is more difficult to resist, because generally accomplished in such a way as apparently to avoid occasion for hostilities; and it also has the merit of attracting less attention in Europe. So long as Russia is engaged in difficulties with England, or has a European war on her hands, she may be relied upon to leave Persia alone, satisfied that the country may be devoured at leisure. When the Turkish or the Afghanistan questions are temporarily quiescent, then Russia resumes the process of nibbling away the Persian frontiers.

Russia, it may finally be said, will probably persist in exhibiting the restlessness which obliges the Old World to continue to be an armed camp, until her internal needs and revolutions inevitably demand all her attention, and force her to give her undivided energies to the adjustment and regulation of affairs at home. The present perfunctory arrangement between England and Russia about the delimitation of the Afghan frontier is probably the result in part of the death of the Mahdee and the cessation of British operations in the Soudan. While England was occupied in that quarter, Russia seized the occasion to add to her territory and steal a march towards Herât. Although her advance is temporarily checked, the check is only for a brief interval. During this interval Russia will continue her railway toward India, and renew, as she is now doing, her attempts to absorb the provinces of Persia.

It is proper to reiterate here, that in the foregoing expression of opinion the writer does not dispute the right of Russia



to seize Asiatic territory: if England has any right to be there, so also has Russia; the time has arrived for both empires to cease from schemes of extension, and to consolidate and develop the territory already acquired. It is the peculiar methods adopted by Russia to secure her ends which may be justly questioned, even by her friends. The writer has received many courtesies from Russians. He has the highest regard for some of the noble qualities that distinguish their character, and entertains no doubt of the increasing grandeur and power of their country, when the government of the Czar listens to the demands of a great people to allow them the internal development and the measure of freedom which should be generously accorded by every government that exists for the people, be it democratic or monarchical.

Enlightened observers find it impossible, however, to agree, in the present age of the world, with Russia's foreign policy and her Machiavellian methods, and are obliged to draw a strong distinction between the people of that country and the unscrupulous government by which their minds are chained, and by which the tranquillity of the world is incessantly menaced. While Americans, as citizens of a nation on friendly terms with both powers, wish for Russia all true prosperity, they as earnestly desire that such prosperity may not be at the expense of the peace and life of a country with so grand a history as Persia.



I N D E X.





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ARAH GER, flower painter, 326.

Abbass, Shah, patron of the Arts, 278; invites Mir Amâr to Ispahân, 289; beautifies Ispahân, 293; brings foreign artists to Persia, 300.

Abrishoom (*See* Persian silk), 418.

Abool Hassân Khan, artist, 320.

Abdullah Ibn Hassân, charvadâr, description of, 238; testifies his pleasure on descending the Afteha Pass, 267.

Abdulahmân, Emcer of Afghanistan, 487.

Adultery, penalties for, 453.

Afghanistan, foreign relations of, 486; commission for arranging frontiers of, 471.

Afghans, description of, 142; relation to the ten tribes, 142; tribal divisions of, 142; relations of, with Persia, 143; disposition of, towards England and Russia, 486.

Afteha Pass, ascended by American excursionists, 251; description of village of, 249; height of the Pass, 253.

Agâ Babâ, reception at, 40.

Agâ Mehmêt Hassân, artist in enamel, 310.

Agâ Mehmêt Houssein, flower painter, 326.

Agâ Mohamed Khan, makes Teherân his capital, 138; character of, 174.

Agâ Najeff, miniature painter, 327, 330.

Agâ Sadek, painter, 319; supposed painting by, 326, 330.

Agriculture of Persia, 409.

Ainâh Karree, work, so-called, 279.

Ancesc-e-Doûlêh, invites ladies of the United States Legation to the Palace, 205; favorite of the Shah, 205.

Alee, veneration of the Sheâhs for, 342; succession of, to the Caliphate, disputed, 366; ghost of, at the Taziêh, 395.

Alee Koolé Beg, battle-painter, 326.

Alee-olla-hec, sect of, 352.

Alec, Ustâd, a Persian architect, 279.

Alee Yahyâ, codifier of the Shâhr, 442.

Al Muchtâr, avenges the death of Houssein, 370.

Anderoon, or women's quarter of the house, 69, 104.

Arabic language, influence of, on Persian art and literature, 252.

Arabs of Persia, 134.

Arajêb, country-seat of, 120, *et seq.*

Arbre Sec. *See* Chenâr.

Arbre Sol. *See* Chenâr.

Archer, story of, 215.

Architectural decorations, general use of, in Persia, 64.

Architecture, characteristics of, in Persia, 273.

Ark, or Royal Palace, 72.

Armenians of Persia, 144, 357; engage in manufacture of wine, 425; difficulties encountered by, in Russia, 480.

Arms of Persia, 63.

Army of Persia. *See* Persia.

Art career, the, in Persia, 315.

Arts of Persia, 271.

Aryan tribes, 138.

Asiatics, essential points of difference of, from Europeans, 88.

Ask, town of, 468.

Assédooleh Khan, 213.

Assêfêd-ed-Doûlêh, Mirza Aboul Vahâd Khan, lately Minister of Commerce, 235; appointed Governor of Khorassân, 235; character of, 235; rencontre with driver of asses, 236.

Astarâ, 22.

Audience chamber of the Shah, 73.

Azerbaïjân, Province of, 133.

A'Zemân, miniature painter, 330.

BÂB, sect of the, 353; doctrines of, 354.

Bâbees, disciples of the Bâb, resist the Persian government at Zenjân, 354; Turkish branch of, 355; present leader of, 355; present doctrines of, 355.

Bachtiarees, tribe of, 139, *et seq.*; assassination of Il Hance of, 140; quality of, as soldiers, 489.

Bagh Ferdôze, 117, 279.

Bakû, arrival at, 15; hotels of, 16; description of, 17; Persian quarter of, 17; new city of, 18; petroleum of, 18; meaning of name of, 20; celebration of coronation of Czar at, 21; departure from, 22.

Barukzâi. *See* Afghans.

Baths, public, 90.

Batoum, 3; Turkish population of, 3; fortified by Russia, 6.

Betting, laws concerning, 447.

Beroon, men's quarter of house, 65.

Bismarck, Prince von, policy of, 435.

Book-covers of Persia, 292.

Boxwood, supply of, in Persia, 429.

Braunschweig, Herr von, Minister of Germany, affronts the members of the United States Legation in Persia, 434.

Bûler, General, captures Herât, 60; fortifies Teherân, 69.

Bushire, disadvantages of, as a port, 478.

CALLIGRAPHIC art of Persia, 288.

Caravansaries of Teherân, 89.

Carpets. *See* Rugs.

Casbeen, Kalantâr of, 40; arrival at, 41; description of, 41; old mosque of, 41.

Cereals of Persia, 409.

Chardin, Sir John, describes the Taziêh, 376. report of, on Persian silk, 416.

Chenâr, or plane-tree of Persia, legends concerning, 268.

Chief Mushtahêd. *See* Hadgi Mollâh Alec.

Chinese art, influence of, on Persian art, 349.

Circassian race types, 10.

Climate of Persia, 46, 110.

Coal of Persia, 44; discovery of, 45; obstacles to exportation of, 407.

Code Napoleon, adopted in Turkey, 344.

Code of Persia. *See* Shâhr and Urf.

Connaughts or aqueducts, 70.

Consular Service of the United States in Persia, importance of maintaining it, 433.

Country-seats of Teherân, 108, 110.

Cossat, or mail carrier, 467.

Cotton, product of, 410.

Criminal Law. *See* Urf.

Criminals, custom of demanding release of, during Moharrêm, 405.

Crown-Prince of Persia. *See* Musaffâr-ed-Deen Mirzâ, Valiâh-ed-Doulêt-i-Irân.

Cufic writing, 289.

DAHREE, sect of, 353.

Damân-i-Kub, wrested from Persia, 480; importance of, 489.

Damghân, 136.

Daondiêh, garden of, 115.

Dar-i-noor, famous diamond, 74.

Darius slays Smerdis, 376.

Deev Sefeed, or White Demon, 258; tribe of, so called, 302.

Deilamee Dynasty, originates the Taziêh, 376.

Dellâls, or pedlers of Teherân, 81.

Demavênd, Mount, height of, 57; character of, 258; effect of, as seen at night-time, 262; last view of, from the Afteha Pass, 264; seen at dawn, 460.

Demavênd, town of, 466; antiquities of, 467.

Devil's Mill, in the Lar Valley, 259.

Diplomacy, aids and methods of, 147.

Distances in Persia, difficulty of obtaining information concerning, 465.

Divorce, laws concerning, 449.

Djêlvêh. *See* Seyed Abûl Hassân.

Dorian music borrowed from Persia, 337.

Doshembé Bazaar, post station, 36.

Drama, the, in Persia, 336.

Dress in Persia, 107.

Duelling objected to by a Persian gentleman, 168.

Dulfêk, Mount, 24, 38, 39.

EAST INDIANS, anxiety of, to expel their English rulers, 485.

Edwards, report of, on the Persian silk trade, 414.

- Eft-c-Khar-e-Douïlêh, Princess, daughter of the Shah, 206; absence of her husband, 208; succeeds in bringing him home, 213.
- Elianoff, farms the Persian fisheries, 430.
- Embroidery, art of, in Persia, 331, *et seq.*
- Emcer-i-Nizâm. *See* Mirza Taghy.
- Emin-e-Douïlêh, hunting anecdote of, 196; character of, 221.
- Emin-e-Sultân, lucky adventure of, 242.
- Enamel, art of, in Persia, 309.
- England, weakened prestige of, in Persia, 476; how regarded by Persia, 476; blunder of, regarding Afghanistan, 486; true policy of, in order to protect her Indian possessions, 487; possible policy of, in the event of war with Russia, 491.
- Enzeli, arrival there, 23; reception at, 24; royal pavilion of, 24.
- Erzroom, 133.
- European colony at Teherân, 144.
- Evidence, Persian laws concerning, 454.
- Eyoob Khan, interned in Persia, 482; intrigues with Russia, 482.
- FANATICISM of Persians, shown by riot at Jeferabad, 159; by attack on Mr. Nelson, 161.
- Fatimêh, wife of Alee, ghost of, at the Taziêh, 395.
- Ferûkh Khan, draws up the treaty with the United States, 145.
- Feth Alee Shah, painting of, with his sons and courtiers, 77; description of, 77; sports of, with his wives, 78; anecdote of, 113; abandons the Barukzâi to their fate, 143; numerous progeny of, 127; parsimony of, in paying his troops, 489.
- Fire-worshippers, character and customs of, 130; present state and number of, 356; doctrines of, 356; customs regarding sepulture, 357; present head of, 357.
- Firdousee, influence of, on Persian art, 300.
- Firmâ Firmâ, Prince, 180.
- Fisheries of Persia, 430.
- Foreigners at Teherân, 144.
- Forest trees of Persia, 429.
- Fornication, penalties for, 453.
- Fraser, report of, on Persian silk, 417.
- Frelinghuysen, Hon. Frederick T., definition by, of aims and methods of diplomacy, 147.
- Frontier Commission, 471.
- Fruits of Persia, 428.
- GARDEN of Paradise. *See* Bagh Ferdôze.
- Gâtêh, or plaster of Paris, 274.
- Gâtêh pourree, work in, 277.
- Gelandevêk, village of, 243.
- Geology of Persia, 52.
- Germany, Legation of, at Teherân, 434; apparent intentions of, in Persia, 434; minister of, affronts the United States Legation, 434; probable policy of, in Persia, 492.
- Ghilân, scenery of, 37; silk of, 420.
- Gholâm Rezâh. *See* Mirza Gholâm Rezâh.
- Goats of Kermân, wool of, 134.
- Gravier, Admiral, courtesy of, 6.
- Guards of United States Legation, implicit obedience of, to will of Chief Mushtahêd, 441.
- Guebres. *See* Fire-worshippers.
- Gulabêk, village of, 112.
- Gurûk. *See* Silk, Persian.
- Gypsies, their use of coal, 45.
- HADGI MOLLÂH ALEE, Chief Mushtahêd, source of his authority, 342; character of, 440; power of, 441; incorruptibility of, 441.
- Hagiology, Christian, treated by Persian artists, 328.
- Hakemêe, sect of, 35.
- Hammadan, authorities of, persecute American citizens, 231.
- Hamburg, enters into the Persian silk trade, 415.
- Harhaz River, scenery of, 260; description of, 468.
- Ilâtûnabad, encampment there and heat of, 458.
- Hecatompyles, 136.
- Helmund, Rivtr, 52.
- Herât, capture of, by General Bûler, 60; determination of Russia to seize it, 483.
- Herodotus, record by, of a great chenâr in Asia Minor, 269.
- Holstein, engages in the Persian silk trade, 415.

- Holy Family, pictures of, by Persian artists, 330.
- Horse-racing, laws concerning, 417.
- Horse railroads in Persia, feasibility of, 436.
- Horses, Arab breed of, in Persia, 134; care of, 154.
- Hosseïn, grandson of the Prophet, asserts his right to the caliphate, and his doom, 368, *et seq.*
- Houssëin, Ustâd, a Persian architect, 279.
- House-builders at work, 69.
- Houses, Persian, plan of, 64, 104.
- Hulagu, introduces Chinese artisans to Persia, 279.
- IBRAHÎM MIRZÂ, Shah Zadé or prince, visit to, 126.
- Iliyâts or nomads, habits of, 136; taxes of, 260. *See also* Nomads.
- Imâm Rezâh, tomb of, 285.
- Imâms, Twelve Holy, authority in the Religious Law, 442.
- Imports of Persia, amount of, 432.
- Infant work, 313.
- Intolerance of Persian Mussulmans, palliation for, 345.
- Inkhorns, or kalem-dâns, art in, 321.
- Iranees. *See* Persians.
- Iridescent tiles, 286; secret of making when lost, 297.
- Iron mines of Persia, 45.
- Irrigation in Persia, 70.
- Islamism, sects of, in Persia, 339, *et seq.*; evidences they show of retention of Zoroastrian customs, 343.
- Ismail, Shah, founds Sefavean dynasty, 372: descent of, 372; titles of, 372; revives sect of the Shcâhs, 375.
- Izz-ed-Doulêh, Prince, character of, 182.
- JARJÉ Rood, River, 242; description of, 459.
- Jeferâbâd, village of, 122; riot of villagers of, 159.
- Jenghir Khan, Minister of Arts and Sciences, discovers coal mines, 45.
- Jenkinson, A., reports state of Persian silk trade, 414.
- Jews of Persia, number and condition of, 357; eugage in wine making, 428.
- KAIMAKÂM, murder of, 77.
- Kalem-dâns. *See* Inkhorns.
- Kamarân, Prince. *See* Naib-e-Sultanêh.
- Kamaraniêh, villa of, 120.
- Karoon River, description of, 48, 52.
- Kashee ware, 296.
- Kauffmann, General, 488.
- Kasr-i-Khajâr, summer palace of, 109.
- Kelât, or robe of honor, method of bestowal, 164.
- Keramic art of Persia, 280, *et seq.*
- Kerbellâh, tomb of Alee at, 342; Great Mushtahêd of, 342.
- Kereem Khan, the Zend, 174, 181.
- Kermân, Province of, description of, 134; embroideries of, 334; wool of, 334.
- Khajâr, tribe of, 138; character and laws of, 180.
- Khaleel Sultân, mausoleum of, at Rheï, 59.
- Kharzân Pass, 39.
- Khassîm, son of Hassân, marriage of, 103.
- Khorassân, Province of, formation, 52; character of scenery of, 135; designs of Russia regarding, 135, 485.
- Khuldja, threatened by Russia, 488.
- Koodoom, post-station, 38.
- Kurds, character of, 132.
- LAKES in Persia, 52.
- Lankorân, port of, 22.
- Lar River, 257.
- Lar, valley of, 257; description of, 257; hot springs of, 259; trout of, 261.
- Laws of Persia, 342, 348, *et seq.*
- Laws, civil, of Persia, 445, *et seq.*
- Lead mines, 45.
- Leather, manufacture of, in Persia, 427.
- Legation of the United States in Persia. *See* United States.
- Legations at Teherân, 112, 145.
- Lex talionis, practised in Persia, 455.
- Library, royal, 73.
- Lootf Alee Khan, 174.
- Lord High Treasurer. *See* Sadr Azém, *also* Mestofec-ul-Mamolêk.
- Lumsden, General Sir Peter, in Afghanistan, 456.
- MAGOPHONIA, 376.
- Mahdêe of the Soudân, 338, 339.



- Mahmoud Khan, Minister of Foreign Affairs. *See* Nasr-ul-Mulk.
- Mahometanism an obstacle to progress of Persia, 473. *See also* Islamism.
- Malêk, visit to, 126.
- Manee, introduces Chinese art ideas to Persia, 278, 349; founds the sect of Manichæans, 350; execution of, 350.
- Mani. *See* Manee.
- Mau-oo-har, Chinese artist brought to Persia, 300.
- Manookjee, head of the fire-worshippers, 357.
- Marco Polo, his characterization of the Arbre *See*, 268; alludes to Persian silk, 414.
- Marriage, Persian laws concerning, 447; temporary marriages, 451; origin of, 451.
- Massood Mirzâ. *See* Zil-i-Sultân.
- Mazdâk, founder of a communistic sect, 353.
- Meddlesomeness of soi-disant reformers of the present age, 439.
- Mehmandâr, definition of title of, 24.
- Mehmêt Alee, artist in enamel, 310.
- Mehmêt Amîn, artist in enamel, 310.
- Mehmêt Hassân, artist in enamel, 310.
- Mehmêt Hassân Khan, portrait painter, 310.
- Mehmêt Taghy Khân, General, Mehmandâr, receives United States Minister, 24; manners of, 39; anecdote of, 167.
- Mestofce-ul-Mamolêk, abandons smoking, 103. *See also* Sedr Azêm.
- Metals, art in, of Persia, 302, *et seq.*
- Michaelovsk, massing of stores of war there by Russia, 487.
- Miuâr. *See* Enamel.
- Miniature painting in Persia, 323, *et seq.*
- Mineral wealth of Persia, 415.
- Minister of Arts and Sciences, 220.
- Minister of Commerce. *See* Mohper-ed-Doulêh.
- Minister of Finance, 220.
- Minister of Foreign Affairs. *See* Vizîr-i-Haredjêh.
- Minister of Justice, 221.
- Minister of Telegraphs and Mines. *See* Mohper-ed-Doulêk, 220.
- Mint, the, 220.
- Mir Amâr, the calligraphist, 289; fate of, 290.
- Mirror cases, 324.
- Mirza Achmêt, painter to Zil-i-Sultân, 325.
- Mirza Aboul Vahâd Khan. *See* Assefêt-ed-Doulêh.
- Mirza Gholâm Hossain, impersonates Abbass at the Taziêh, 391; honored by the Shah, 397.
- Mirza Gholâm Rezâh, the calligraphist, 288, 291.
- Mirza Seyed Khan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, term of office, 165; receives a royal rescript, 192; character of, 226; course of, in dealing with foreign legations, 226; method of transacting official business, 227; conduct of, towards Russian Minister, 229; manner of, in the matter of presents, 230; last interview of, with United States Minister, 230; death of, 231; conduct of, in connection with difficulties at Hamadan, 231; mishaps to the son of, 232.
- Mirza Taghy, Emcer-i-Nizâm, deposition and murder of, 175, 226.
- Missionaries, efforts at proselyting Mussulmans, 133; work and designs of, in Persia, 358; results, 360; intrigues against, by Russia, 433.
- Missions. *See* Missionaries.
- Missionary physicians, advantages of, in Persia, 364.
- Moatamêh-ed-Doulêh, character of, 181.
- Moaviyêh, usurps the caliphate, 366; line of, 371; establishes drama on the death of the caliph Osmân, 375.
- Moayêr-ul-Mamelêk, summer residence of, 117; his father a collector of antiquities, 206; narrative of escape to Europe, 207; city residence of, 276.
- Modahûl, or commission for services, 149.
- Mohamed Ibn Mohamed Ibn el Neemân Abou Abdallah, Shiekh, codifier of the Shâhr, 412.
- Mohamed Shah, captures Herât, 60; executes the Kaimakâm, 77.
- Mohammerâh, port of, 52; advantages of, as a port, 478; projected highway to, 478.
- Mohper-ed-Doulêh, Minister of Mines and Telegraphs, 234; character of, 235.
- Mokarness, work in, 277.
- Mollâh Hossain, actor at the Taziêh, 390.
- Mollâh Hossain Zeinêb Khan, actor at the Taziêh, 391.
- Mollâhs, opposition of, to progress, 474.

- Mosaic, Persian, 299.  
 Moshrek, sect of the, 353.  
 Mouchir-i-Doulêh. *See* Minister of Justice,  
*also* Yahia Khan.  
 Mounds, ancient artificial, 51.  
 Mountains of Persia, 48.  
 Murdâb, lagoon of, 24.  
 Mushahêd, Chief, 342.  
 Mushtahêds or Doctors of the Religious  
 Law, 410.  
 Music of Persia, 64; instruments of, 213;  
 character of, 336.  
 Musk-melon, culture of, 428.  
 Musaffâr-ed-Deen Mirzâ, Valiâh-ed-Doulêt-i-  
 Irân, Crown Prince, telegraphs to United  
 States Minister concerning the mission-  
 aries, 133; character and aims of, 188.
- NACSH, or ladies' apparel, 332.  
 Nadir Shah, painting of, in battle, 325; grants  
 permission to open silk-factories, 416.  
 Naib-e-Sultânêh, Prince Kamarân, 120;  
 character of, 190; country seat of, 240.  
 Naizmudin, account of destruction of Rheï  
 by, 59, note.  
 Namâds (*See* Rugs), 425.  
 Nasranec. *See* Nestorians.  
 Nasr-ed-Deen Shah, telegraphs to United  
 States Minister, 36; accession of, to the  
 throne, 174; character of, 174; executes  
 Mirza Taghy, 175; attacked by Bâbees,  
 176, 354; mobbed in his carriage, 176;  
 habits of business, 191; recreations and  
 tastes, 192; conversation with his courtiers  
 at Sultana-t-abâd, 193; method of fol-  
 lowing the chase, 194; hunting anecdote  
 of, 196; court ceremonials of, 196; cere-  
 monies at No Rooz, 198; reception ac-  
 corded to foreign diplomatists at the races,  
 205; ceremonies on visiting a subject, 218;  
 adventure of his wives at the Jargé Rood,  
 242; difficulties on ascending the throne,  
 470.  
 Nasr-ul-Mulk, Mahmud Khan, Minister of  
 Foreign Affairs, character of, 233; con-  
 duct of, in affairs with Russia, 234; hos-  
 pitality of, 234.  
 Nathenz, iridescent tiles of, 287.  
 Nazzer, duties of, 152.
- Nectarines, export of, 466, note.  
 Nedjeen-ed-deen Aboul Hassêm Djafer Ibn  
 Aleé Yahyâ, Sheikh, compiler of Persian  
 law, 442.  
 Negaristân, Palace of, 75.  
 Nelson, Mr., mobbed by fanatics, 161.  
 Nestorians, number and character of, 131;  
 missionary work among, 358.  
 Newspapers in Persia, 221.  
 New Year, Persian. *See* No Rooz.  
 Nightingales in Persian art, 327.  
 Nishapoor, 136.  
 Nomads of Persia, 136. *See also* Hiyâts.  
 No Rooz, ceremonials of, 198; races of, 201;  
 derivation of, from the fire-worshippers,  
 344.  
 Noseirec. *See* Aleé-olla-hce.  
 Nursing of infants, regulations concerning,  
 449.
- OFFICES, sale of public, 164.  
 Olearius, Adam, report of, on Persian silk, 415.  
 Omâr Khayâm, character of his poetry, 323;  
 religious opinions of, 351.  
 Opium, story of eater of, and hashish, 216;  
 culture of, in Persia, 412; qualities of,  
 412; value of export of, 413; medical  
 opinion of properties of, 414.  
 Oroomieh, Lake of, 52.
- PANJDËLI, advance to, by Russia, 482.  
 Parsecs, derivation of their name, 131; as  
 traders, 482. *See also* Fire-worshippers.  
 Pauperism in Persia, 472.  
 Peacock throne, 73.  
 Peasantry of Persia, traits of, 173.  
 Peddlers of Teherân, their wares and methods,  
 81, *et seq.*  
 Pehlevee language, 346.  
 Penalties, laws concerning, 455.  
 Perec Bazaar, 24.  
 Persia, reasons for obscurity into which she  
 has temporarily fallen, 43; climate and  
 physical aspects of, 46; silence of its land-  
 scapes, 52; rivers of, 52; arms of, 63;  
 music of, 64 (*See also* Music); population  
 of, 128; races of, 128; derivation of name  
 of, 131; products of, 407; monetary con-

- dition of, 471; obstacles in her path to progress, 473; routes of, to the sea, 477; her campaigns with Russia during reign of Feth Allee Shah, 459; size and character of her army, 489; natural defences, 489; vitality of Persia, 492.
- Persians, customs special to, 87; character of, 87, 89, 130; called Iranecs, 130.
- Persian women. *See* Women.
- Peter the Great, gives attention to the silk trade of Persia, 416.
- Plane-tree of Persia. *See* Chenâr.
- Physicians, Persian, character of, 245; methods of prescribing, 468.
- Physicians, missionary, 364.
- Political, the, situation in Persia, 470, *et seq.*
- Population of Persia, 128.
- Porecelain of Persia, 297.
- Portrait painting in Persia, 317.
- Potî, arrival at, 6; port of, 6; town of, 7; women of, 8; railway from, to Tiflis, 10.
- Potter, Rev. J. L., 459.
- Printing in Persia, 221, 288.
- Procedure, regulations concerning, 454.
- Prophet, the, portrait of, 328, 329.
- QUINCES of Persia, 428.
- RACES of Persia, 128.
- Railways in Persia, expediency of building, 435; dependent on consent of the mollâhs, 474.
- Raineh, description of, 468.
- Reception accorded to foreign envoys by Persian Government, 217.
- Rectification of the frontier, a Russian diplomatic euphemism, 480.
- Reflêt tiles, 286.
- Reformers of the period, remarks concerning the pestilent and impertinent interference of, 439.
- Refreshments, method of serving, 102.
- Religious law. *See* Shâhr.
- Religious ordinances of the Shâhr, 444.
- Rescht, reception by notables of, 26; house of the Valee of, 27, 29; Valee of, 25, *et seq.*; excursions in vicinity of, 30, 32; rice fields of, 30; silk product of, 31; departure from, 34.
- Rhages or Rheî, site of, 58; historical data relating to, 58; destruction of, 59; question and identity of, as to name of, 59.
- Rheî. *See* Rhages.
- Rigor and cruelty of Persian rulers explained, 181, 185.
- Rice, culture of, at Rescht, 30; product of, in Persia, 411; importance of, as an article of diet, 412.
- Rivers of Persia, 52.
- Roads in Persia, 110, note.
- Rohillâs. *See* Afghans.
- Roodabêh, daughter of Hossein, marriage of, 403.
- Roofs, how constructed at Teherân, 69.
- Rugs, or Persian carpets, description of, and trade in, 422, *et seq.*; method of manufacturing, 426; silk rugs, 426.
- Rukseh, the steed of Rustêm, 301.
- Russia, intrigues against American missionaries in Persia, 433; character of her diplomacy, 475; methods of, in opposing progress of Persia, 477; attempts to entice the Shah Sevend from Persia, 479; bad faith of, towards the Armenians, 480; seizes Sarracks, 481; renews her insolent demands for territory, 481; intrigues with Eyool Khan, 482; determination to seize Herât, 483; blunder in not seizing Constantinople, 486; intrigues in India against England, 485; character of her diplomatic methods, 486; strong distinction to be drawn between the people and the government of Russia, 495.
- SADÊK. *See* Agâ Sadêk.
- Sadik-ul-Mulk, acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, 322.
- Saduzâi. *See* Afghans.
- Sales, law concerning, 444.
- Sani-e-Donlêh, Minister of Printing, 220.
- Santons, or religious mendicants, 99, 240.
- Sarone, description of village of, 465.
- Sarracks, Persia robbed of, by Russia, 481.
- Sausage manufacturer, anecdote of, 132, note.
- Sculpture in marble in Persia, 312.
- Sects, philosophical, in Persia, 338.
- Secular law, the. *See* Urf.
- Sedr Azêm, abundant smoking, 103; office



- of, 220; character of, 220; reply of, to the demands of Russia, 481; death of, 481, note. *See also* Mestofee-ul-Mamolêk.
- Safavean dynasty, rise of, 294; arts of that period of Persian history, 295.
- Sefeed Rood River, 38.
- Serrasiâb, 237.
- Servants, Persian, character of, 150; anecdotes illustrating their depravity, 151; quarrelsome disposition of, 156; riot of, at Jeferabad, 159; dishonesty of, 161; wages eked out by presents, 163; number of, employed, 169.
- Seyed Abûl Hassân Djelveh, the Hakmeer, 352.
- Seyed Alee Mohammed, the Bâb, 353.
- Seyed Khan. *See* Mirza Seyed Khan.
- Seyed Morteza Abûl Kassêm Alee Ibn Alee Ahmêd el Hosseine, Shiekh, codifier of the religious law, 442.
- Seyeds, or descendants of the Prophet, 355.
- Shah, the. *See* Nasr-ed-Deen Shah.
- Shah Abûl Azeem, shrine of, 60.
- Shah Sevend, tribe of, 138; attempts of Russia to seduce them from their allegiance to Persia, 479.
- Shâhr, or religious code of Persia, 342, 438, *et seq.*
- Shams-el-Imarêt, or royal pavilion, at Teherân, 72.
- Shar-i-Veramîn. *See* Veramîn.
- Sheâhs, doctrines of, 339, *et seq.*; intolerance of, 342; sect revived by Shah Ismaîl, 372; twelve Holy Imâms fathers of the sect, 372.
- Sheba, Queen of, motive of, for visiting Solomon matrimony, 402.
- Shemr assaults the camp of Hosseïn, 370.
- Shercefabâd, village of, 461.
- Sheristanêk, a resort of the Shah, 195.
- Shimrân, description of, 57, 110; country seats of, 114, *et seq.*
- Shirmân, silk of, 420.
- Silence of Persian scenery, 53.
- Silk, culture of, in Persia, 30; history of trade and culture, 414; amount produced, 415; districts where it is produced, 417; method of growing it, 418; different qualities of, 418; amount now raised, 420.
- Simurgh, the magic bird of Mount Demavênd, 258.
- Sitting, Persian method of, 66.
- Slavery, abolition of, in Persia, 170.
- Sob-e-Azâl, head of the Bâbees, 355.
- Solemn entry, ceremony of, at court of Persia, 217.
- Solomon, repute of, in the East for necromantic power, 401.
- Spence, Hon. Carrol, negotiates treaty with Persia, 145.
- Stables, service and conduct of, in Persia, 153; swine kept there, 153; a refuge for fugitives from justice, 154; theft of provender in, etc., 155.
- Steppes of the Caucasus, 13; nomads of, 14.
- Sufecism defined, 351; difference between Sufecs and Hakmees, 351.
- Sugar-cane, culture of, in Persia, 429.
- Sultan Alee Mechedee, the calligraphist, 289.
- Summer resorts of Teherân, 109.
- Summees, doctrines of, 338.
- Super Salâr, 220.
- \*
- TABREEZ, 133.
- Tachtravân, description of, 238.
- Taghy, Mirza. *See* Mirza Taghy.
- Takiêh, or Royal Theatre, description of, 384.
- Taziêh, the, 365, *et seq.*; probable origin of, 376; instituted by Deilamce dynasty, 376; described by Chardin, 376; preliminaries to exhibition of, 377; description of, 382, *et seq.*
- Tea-houses of Teherân, 99.
- Teherân, arrival there and reception, 42; made the capital of Persia, 56; position of, 56; climate of, 56; fortifications of, 60; gateways of, 63; caravansaries of, 89; public baths, 90; street scenes, 93; workingmen of, 94; life in, 94; tea-houses of, 99; visiting customs of, 101; country seats of, 108.
- Temperature of Persia, 47, 111.
- Temporary marriages. *See* Marriage.
- Tents of Persia, 195, note.
- Ten Tribes, the. *See* Afghans.
- Thumb drawings, 331.
- Tiflis, 13.
- Tiles, art in, 280; with representations of life, 300.



- Tobacco, culture and product of, in Persia, 410.
- Trade of Persia, conducted by Persians, 432.
- Tramways. *See* Horse-railroads.
- Treasury, Royal, of Persia, 73.
- Treaty between United States and Persia, 145.
- Trebizond, emporium formerly, 1; boats of, 1; present highway of, to Persia, 133.
- Trees of Persia, 429.
- Trout of the Lar, 261.
- Tumbâk, a species of tobacco, 110; value of export of, 410; method of smoking, 411.
- Tumuli on the central plateau of Persia, 51.
- Turkomantchai, treaty of, 145.
- Turks of Persia, 142.
- Turquoise mines, 136.
- Twelve Holy Imâms. *See* Imâms.
- UNITED STATES, national airs of, played at Teherân, 64; Legation of, 113; country residence of Legation, 120; character and duties of Legation in Persia, 144 *et seq.*; interests of, how protected in Persia, 145; treaty of, with Persia, 145; affronted by German Minister, at Teherân, 434; foreign policy of, 135; commercial interests in Persia, 433; intrigues of Russia against citizens of the United States in Persia, 434.
- Urf, or secular law of Persia, 342, 438, *et seq.*
- VALEE of Rescht. *See* Rescht.
- Valiâh-cd-Doulêt-i-Irân. *See* Musaffâr-cd-Deen Mirzâ.
- Vallé, Pietro della, mention of Teherân by, 56.
- Veramîn, Shar-i-, capital of Parthia, 162.
- Villages of Persia, described, 50.
- Visits, customs regarding, in Persia, 101 *et seq.*
- Vizîr-i-Laskêr, 222.
- Vizîr-i-Baredjêh, Minister of Foreign Affairs, 220, 226.
- Vlassoff, M. de, Russian Consul at Rescht, hospitality of, 33.
- WATER, how obtained in Persia, 70.
- Wind-storms of Persia, 49.
- Wines of Persia, 428; commerce in, 428.
- Women of Persia, education, character, influence and talents of, 105; habits of, 106; costumes of, 107.
- Wood-carving, 312.
- Workingmen, methods of work, 65, 94.
- XENOPHON, arrives at Trebizond, 1; statement of, regarding Persian servants, 169.
- YAHIA KHAN, lately Minister of Justice, friendship of, for Russia, 222; gives breakfast to American citizens, 222; account of career of, 225; made Minister of Foreign Affairs, 484.
- Yezd, business of, in silk, 417.
- Yezeed, assassinated Hassân, 367; succeeds to the caliphate, 367.
- Yule, Edward, his translation of Naïzmudin's description of the destruction of Rhei, 59, note.
- ZAHHEER-I-DOÛLÊH, Grand Master of Ceremonies of the court of Persia, character of, 213; dinner given by, to United States Minister, 213; story told of boyhood of, 215; invites the author to the Taziêh, 381.
- Zal, exposed on Demavend on account of his complexion, 259.
- Zarda Kooch Mountains, height of, 48.
- Zendarood River, 52.
- Zenjân, held by the Bâbces against the Shah, 354; silver work of, 354.
- Zergendé, village of, 112.
- Zil-i-Sultan, Massood Mirzâ, murders the Il Hancee, 140; character of, 185; aims of, 186; treatment of merchant of Ispahân, 187; breakfasts with Naib Sultânêh, 190; conduct towards son of Mirza Siyed Khan, 232; executes Persians who had attended services of the missionaries, 259.









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