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GLIMPSES OF PERSIA

GLIMPSES OF PERSIA

BY

M. M. WOOD

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY
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DEDICATED TO

D. S.

BY

T. N. W.

FOREWORD

THIS book may be of interest to those who know something about Persia, and of use to those who are talking to others of Persia; the bibliography on page 78 will help those who would like to enjoy a better book on the land of Iran.

Every one who wants to know more about this fascinating country is recommended to read the world-famous "Hajji Baba of Isfahan," and the book rightly named "The History of Persia," by Brig.-Gen. Sir Percy Sykes, K.C.I.E., C.B., C.M.G. To the latter the author owes practically all the historical information given in "Glimpses of Persia."

M. M. WOOD

SHALDEN,
October, 1921

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GLIMPSES OF PERSIA

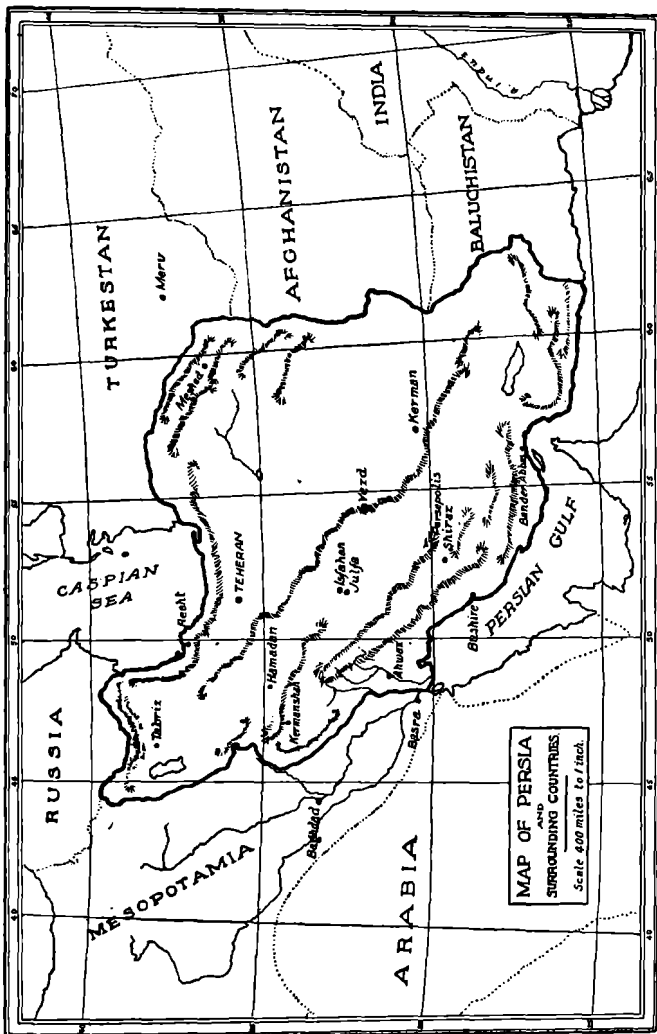
CHAPTER I

A LAND OF CONTRASTS

WHEN next your doctor orders a complete change, take his advice and go to Persia.

The change begins at once, for you will write to Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son for a ticket to Kerman, Yezd, or Isfahan with full instructions for the journey. Instead of a ticket comes a kindly-worded letter saying: "We have no arrangements for inland travel in Persia, and it would be necessary for you to make them locally at Bushire or Basra. In regard to steamers to the Persian Gulf, there are occasional direct sailings of cargo boats, with limited accommodation, from home ports. Another route is by P. and O. liner to Bombay with transshipment there to the Karachi steamer, which at Karachi overtakes the boat to the Persian Gulf."

You then begin reading books on Persia and discover to your joy that rivers do not run into the sea; that towns in the plains are 5000 feet above sea



MAP OF PERSIA
AND
SURROUNDING COUNTRIES
Scale 400 miles to 1 inch.

level; that robbers and mountains abound; that the country is three times the size of France;¹ that corridor trains are replaced by *kadjavehs* slung on the back of a mule; that the lakes are so salt that you cannot sink; and that the people are cheery, hospitable, and with a keen sense of humour. You further learn that Persian fathers and sons have different surnames, and that boys receive nut-money instead of pocket-money.

With the exception of the Caspian Provinces to the north, where maidenhair fern luxuriates, and the coast of the Gulf to the south of the plateau, Persia is dry—dry as a chip. For days, weeks, and months the sun, moon, and stars shine through a perfectly clear atmosphere² with never a cloud in sight. In *Yezd* “nine or ten not over large falls of rain or snow in the twelve months constitute a wet year.” At *Isfahan* the average rainfall for a year is less than five inches, compared with the thirty-two inches and many sunless days in England.

Practically the whole country depends on irrigation in order to make use of the extraordinarily fertile soil, for, given water, even the ordinary desert will bear good crops.

¹ The population of Persia is sixteen to the square mile, as compared with 374 in the United Kingdom.

² Buildings fifteen miles away look quite close at hand.

A Dunsterforce¹ man in talking about the flat-roofed houses in North Persia said: "It used to snow a lot and then the sun shone, and often we used to have to sit out of doors because it rained so inside." So hot is it along the Persian Gulf that the Red Sea seems cool, and yet so cold on the bracing inland plains that you walk beside your donkey because it is too cold to ride.

If you had friends in the Dunsterforce you probably read "The Adventures of the Dunsterforce" or "With the Persian Expedition," and noted that all staff officers were recommended a book called "Hajji Baba." If you have not done so already you now spend 2s. 6d. on "Hajji Baba," and after skimming a few pages you feel sure that your change will be complete, and that Persians do not lack a sense of humour.

Idly turning over the pages of the Postal Guide you read on page 709 that parcels are not delivered in Persia! "The addressees are advised of the arrival of the parcels at the frontier offices and must pay for their onward transmission if they are to be forwarded into the interior, before they can be sent on. All parcels must be packed in

¹ The name given to the force serving in North Persia under Major-General L. C. Dunsterville, C.B., C.S.I., during the war of 1914-18.

wood, tin, canvas, linen, or similar material, and not merely in paper or cardboard."

Meeting a friend at lunch, you hear that rumour says that a kindly soul in England once sent a present of two tubes of toothpaste to a friend at Isfahan. Knowing that roads like "goat's staircases" lay between Bushire and Isfahan, the tubes were carefully wrapped up and labelled "parcel post." The parcel arrived at Bushire, "the addressee" was notified, and he forthwith arranged for its transport for the intervening 450 miles by mule over the "goat's staircase." On the arrival of that gift he paid 10s. for carriage.

Persia has had a letter post since 1874. A friend wrote from Persia, 11 January, 1921 (note the date): "We have had no mails for five weeks," and again on 11 March, 1921: "It is simply ages since I got any news from you. We hear that a mountain slipped down and got across the road, effectually stopping all transport." Another letter brought the cheering news: "They have just captured 300 robbers, and the roads are safer than they have been for years." Is it any wonder that letters sometimes fail to reach "the addressee"?

If the idea of going to Persia is a new one, it would be of interest to the reader to take a piece of paper, sketch an outline map of Persia, filling in

the names of the countries on her frontiers, and the principal towns, navigable rivers, and railways, and then to study the map of Persia in "The Times Atlas" or in that issued by H.M. Stationery Office, Kingsway, W.C. 2.

As you look at the map let your mind go back into history, back into the days when caravans of loaded horses, mules, and camels carried the wealth of nations from East to West and West to East, and you see Persia on the highway of the nations.

Look again, and you see not caravans, but steamers, load line awash, belching forth black smoke as they throb on their way from West to East and East to West, and as you look you see Persia, alone and silent on her deserted highlands, while the rush of life pulses through the Red Sea.

Look again at your map, look up—look on. In the days to come as you go to India, where will you stop to pick up petrol for your aeroplane?

[N.B.—Readers who do not like history are advised to leave Chapter II. and continue at Chapter III.]

CHAPTER II

MEN WHO MADE PERSIAN HISTORY

FAR back in the mists of distance there lived a man whose father's name meant "many horses," his daughter's "the discreet," and his own "bay camels," or Zarathustra—the man we know as Zoroaster. He was the founder of the Zoroastrian religion, and his name reappears again and again as we turn over the pages of Persian history.

The date of his birth is unknown, but at any rate by 600 B.C. and possibly long before, the religion he founded had become the religion of Persia. Some 2400 years later Professor E. G. Browne of Cambridge visited the present-day temple of Zoroaster in the city of Yezd, where the sacred fire still burns, tended by the white-veiled priests of the Zoroastrian or Parsi faith. With veneration he gazed at the representatives of an old-world faith which twelve centuries of persecution and insult under Moslem rule have not succeeded in uprooting from its native soil. He writes: "I was much struck both by their conduct and by the high

average of their good looks. Their religion has prevented them from intermarrying with Turks, Arabs, or other non-Aryans, and consequently they represent the purest Persian type, which in physical beauty can hardly be surpassed."¹

Cyrus the Great, King of Persia, 550-529 B.C.

Travellers to-day are taken to the foot of one of the most remarkable monuments of Persian history, for 2450 years ago Cyrus the Great was buried in Persia.

In a setting of sun-scorched hills on a rock-strewn plain stands an utterly simple, white, stone tomb. The tomb itself is mounted on seven terraced steps of white limestone, the lowest step being two feet high, and fifty feet long by forty feet broad. The whole building stands some thirty-six feet above the level of the plain.

There is no trace of the use of mortar, and yet that tomb in the dry atmosphere of Persia, uncared for and unrepaired, still stands after the winters and summers of more than two thousand years. In the long past those massive blocks of stone were fastened together with heavy metal clamps. To-day the traveller notices that the birds have found suitable nesting places, for the clamps have

¹ "A Year among the Persians."



THE BRIDGE OF ALLAH VERDI KHAN



[Photographs: Bishop Linton

“ It was built in the days of Shah Abbas the Great ”



TRAVELLING BY POST WAGON

been scooped out for other and possibly more modern uses!

As far as history is concerned, we first hear of Cyrus in 550 B.C. when, as king of Anshan, according to the tablets of Nabonidus he marched to the conquest of Ecbatana—the modern Hamadan. “The silver, gold, goods, and substance of Ecbatana he spoilt and to the land of Anshan he took the goods and substance that were gotten.” How or when he became king of Persia is not known, but four years after the conquest of Ecbatana the tablets refer to him as such.

From that time onwards the history of Persia is the history of a conquering nation. Cyrus led his victorious troops to the shore of the Ægean Sea, where he defeated and captured that man of wealth, Cræsus, and with him the Greek colonies of Asia Minor. Instead of crossing to Europe he disappeared into the East, where it is believed that he subdued the greater part of present-day Afghanistan. He reappears in history when by drawing off the waters of the Tigris and Dyala during the low water season, he defeated the Babylonian army, captured the city of Babylon, and gave Persia the honour of becoming the greatest kingdom in the then known world.

Cyrus stands out in the Bible, in secular history,

and in the folk-lore of Persia as a man of true greatness, loved and admired by those who lived under his rule, and worthy to be spoken of in Isaiah xlv. 28 as "My shepherd." In the Book of Ezra we have instance after instance of his thoughtfulness and kindness to the Jews whom he was allowing to return to their own country; not only did he give them permission to rebuild Jerusalem and their temple, but he returned the gold and silver treasures whose value was such as to warrant their having been transported from Palestine. In 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23 we read: "Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord, the God of Heaven, given me; and He hath charged me to build Him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all His people, the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up."

Darius, 521-485 B.C.

Under Darius Persia was still to the front. The king led his Persian troops across the River Danube and they marched victorious by the banks of the Indus. A glance at the map of the Persian empire, to be found at the end of Bibles, will show that in his day the Persian empire stretched from Africa to China.

In his reign gold and silver coins first came into use. We are told that Darius ruled Persia by means of "satraps," and "as there was no fixed salary for officials [they] probably bought their posts."¹ In view of conditions in the twentieth century this is of interest (see page 48).

Xerxes, 485-466 B.C.

Historians describe Xerxes, the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther, as famous for his beauty, voluptuous, fond of luxury, and with no desire for glory. It is difficult to reconcile this description with the following facts, unless the reputation of Xerxes is based almost entirely on the deeds of his subordinates.

In 484 B.C. he marched in person to Egypt, ravaged the Nile Delta, and left his brother behind him as governor. Babylon gave him trouble, so he besieged it, sacked it, looted it, and carried off the golden statue of Bel Marduk, the idol of the city.

Three years later (possibly because his generals forced him to do it) he began a campaign which gave Greek history some of its most glorious pages.

According to Herodotus, the Greek historian, Xerxes collected an army of five million men (!), including Persians armed with lassoes, Cissians

¹ "History of Persia," vol. i, p. 174.

and Indians with chariots drawn by wild asses, Arabs mounted on dromedaries, and some aborigines of South Persia whose helmets were made of horses' heads. (It would be interesting to know if there is any connexion between these warriors and the knight of the chess board, see page 22.

It is amazing, with our modern knowledge of the difficulty of moving troops without petrol and all that it stands for, to read that with this army Xerxes left Persia, marched to Abydos, where he built a solid causeway across the Dardanelles with the aid of two bridges of boats and "cables of exceptional strength," and thus crossed into Europe, to say the least of it at some distance from his base!

The pages of Greek history tell of the deathless fame of the defence of Thermopylæ, the capture of Athens by the Persians, and the famous sea fight of Salamis, when

No more could one discern the sea,
Clogged all with wrecks and limbs of slaughtered men :

• • • • •

They [Greeks] with oar fragments and with shards of wrecks
Smote, hacked, as men smite tunnies, or a draught
Of fishes ; and a moaning, all confused
With shrieking, hovered wide o'er that sea-brine
Till night's dark presence blotted out the terror.¹

¹ "The Persæ," translation by A. S. Way.

When day dawned the Persian fleet was nowhere to be seen. Thousands of Persians died of hunger as Xerxes fled to his bridge of boats, only to find that a storm had washed it away. Those who could, reached Asia in ships and lived to fight the Greeks another day. This chapter of Persian history closes with the assassination of Ahasuerus by a captain of his guard.

Alexander the Great, 335-323 B.C.

It was 136 years later that the Greeks had their revenge, for in 330 B.C. Alexander of Greece led his army into Persia. Crossing the Karun at the site of the modern Ahwaz, he totally defeated the Persians at the Pass of the Persian Gate. He marched to the capital, Persepolis, burnt the palaces, and ordered a general massacre of the inhabitants as a reprisal for their treatment of the Greeks in the past.

Rapidly marching north, he became master of the summer capital Ecbatana—the scene of the Book of Esther, and the modern Hamadan so well known to the men of the Dunsterforce.

Persia was now part of the Grecian empire.

Noshirwan the Just, A.D. 531-578

From the days of Alexander to the conquest of Persia by the Arabs the outstanding kings of the Sasanian dynasty are Noshirwan the Just and Khusru the Victorious.¹

To avoid possible complications Noshirwan began his reign by killing all his brothers and their male children. He then concluded a peace (shortly to be broken) with Rome, whereby Rome agreed to pay a sum equivalent to half a million pounds sterling for the upkeep of fortresses garrisoned by Persians in the Caucasus.

During his reign we first hear of contact between the Persians and Turks. In A.D. 567 the Turks sent an embassy to Noshirwan proposing an alliance. Noshirwan did not take to the idea, for he seems to have poisoned the ambassadors and said that they died from natural causes!

Sir Percy Sykes describes him as a many-sided

¹ For four centuries after the death of Alexander Parthian kings reigned in Persia. In their successful encounters with the troops of Imperial Rome we have the origin of the expression, "a Parthian shaft or shot." Pretending to fly in terror and disorder, the Parthian soldiers suddenly turned in their saddles, and with their unrivalled horsemanship and marksmanship delivered the Parthian shaft that turned the tide of many a battle.

man whose character seems to have been a mixture of strength and justice. He encouraged travellers to visit Persia; spent large sums on improving the roads and building bridges; gave grants of seeds, agricultural implements, and stock for the development of agriculture; reclaimed waste land; insisted that every man and woman should marry and work; and made both begging and idleness punishable offences.

He founded a university where medicine was specially studied. He also read Persian translations of Aristotle and Plato and published a book of laws of the land.

In his reign the game of chess was introduced from India, and two Persian monks brought silk-worm eggs from China—the ancestors of the famous silkworms of Persia to-day.

His vizier, Buzurgmihir, was a very remarkable man, and possibly was the originator of many of the reforms of this reign. "According to general belief he was put to death on account of his being a Christian."¹

Khusru, A.D. 590-628

Khusru, a contemporary of Ethelbert, king of Kent, and of St. Augustine of Rome, had as his

¹ "History of Persia," vol. i, p. 499.

chief wife an enterprising Armenian Christian called Sharin, who with her ladies and the Shah played the popular Persian game of polo. The poet Nazami in describing a match says :—

At times the Sun bore off the ball, at times the Moon ;
Now Sharin won, and now the Shah.¹

When Khusru's power was at its height he attacked Syria, captured Damascus, sacked Jerusalem, marched rapidly across the desert and captured Alexandria with all its wealth. Thus Persian soldiers again crossed the Nile. Rome dispatched Heraclius to meet the invaders. Defeat followed on defeat until Khusru himself suffered a lingering death at the hands of his own nobles in "The House of Darkness."

The Moslem Army of Arabia

Five years later Khalid the Arab issued an ultimatum to Hormuz, governor in South Persia : "Accept the faith and thou art safe . . . if thou refusest, thou shalt have thyself to blame. A people is already on thee, loving death even as thou lovest life."

In A.D. 635 twenty leading Arabs were dispatched to summon Yezdigird III, king of Persia, to

¹ See note on p. 28.

embrace Islam. The rabble of Ctesiphon jeered at their homely garments, and compared their bows to a woman's distaff. Through an interpreter Yezdigird was called upon to embrace the new faith or pay tribute. Like a true son of Iran (Persia), in his reply he referred with contempt to their misery, their eating of lizards, and their infanticide. With simple dignity the Arabs acknowledged that they had been as described, but claimed that now all was changed. "We are poor and hungry yet will the Lord enrich us and satisfy us. Hast thou chosen the sword? Then between us shall the sword decide."¹

The Arab gauntlet lay on the soil of Persia.

At the battle of Kadesiya 120,000 Persians were defeated by the Arab invaders, and the national standard was sold by a Moslem soldier for (the equivalent of) £800.²

Victorious, the "lizard eaters" marched through Persia, capturing wealth undreamed of, occupying Ahwaz, Isfahan, Kerman, and pushed north to the shores of the Caspian Sea and east to the barren province of Makran where Omar of Arabia called a halt. . . . In a miller's hut near Merv,

¹ "History of Persia," vol. i, p. 536.

² For origin of standard see "Persia—Past and Present," p. 264.

Yezdigird III, the last of the Sasanian dynasty, was murdered for his jewellery.

Persia became a Moslem country. "Iran," says Noldeke, "was penetrated to the core by Arabian religion and Arabian ways," but to this day on September 12 the Parsis of Persia still keep the birthday of Yezdigird III, the last Zoroastrian king of Persia.

Shah Abbas the Great, A.D. 1587-1629

Collectors of lustre go to Persia hoping to become possessed of a tile of the days of Shah Abbas the Great. Persians, as they introduce visitors to the wonders of their country, point to one treasure after another saying: "That was the work of Shah Abbas the Great."

Map lovers will appreciate his selection of Isfahan for his metropolis, situated as it is in the centre of the kingdom, 5300 feet above sea level and with that rare gift in Persia, an abundant water supply from one of the country's greatest inland rivers.¹ The city of Isfahan is built on the north bank of the Zenda Rud, and the Armenian suburb of Julfa on the south bank; between the two

¹ Some seventy miles below Isfahan this river completely disappears in a marsh and salt lake.

stretches the bridge of Allah Verdi Khan. From the cloudless sunshine of a Persian day, the visitor steps down into the dim coolness of the lowest section of the bridge and stands silent, gazing down a vista surely unknown elsewhere. Arch after arch stretches for almost a quarter of a mile, for the bridge possesses no less than six routes for traffic, one on which he stands, just above the rush of water, another a thirty-foot paved road approached by an avenue of trees, and on a level with the surrounding country. This road is flanked on each side by covered arcades for the use of foot passengers, while those who wish for a better view can climb the steps at either end of the bridge and cross it, so to speak, on the ramparts above the arcades.

As the visitor listens to the ripple of the water and lets the sight of those arches sink into his soul, he hears his Persian friend say: "It was built by the orders of Shah Abbas the Great."

Sir Percy Sykes in describing this monarch says: "His portrait shows a very handsome man, with fine clear-cut features, keen eyes, and large moustache. Throughout his life he was noted for courage, activity, and endurance of fatigue. His ideas were far in advance of those current in his time and his general outlook was eminently wide

and sane, although his readiness to kill on the slightest pretext was deplorable.

“His fame does not rest on military exploits alone: it is also founded on his genius for administration and especially on the thoroughness with which he took in hand the improvement of communications throughout the empire. He built caravanserais and bridges in such number that every ancient work is now credited to him. No sovereign who ever ruled in Persia is so much respected or beloved as Shah Abbas the Great.”¹

A contemporary of our Queen Elizabeth and of James I, he drew to his country “gentleman adventurers” from England, who came offering “six pair of pendants of exceeding fair emeralds; two other jewels of topazes; a cup set in gold; a salt; a fair ewer of crystal the shape of a dragon;” and a request to enter his service. They received in return “forty horses all furnished, two with exceeding rich saddles, plated with gold and set with rubies and turquoises.” Sir Robert Sherley became master-general of the Persian Army, and in recognition of his services against the Turks was awarded a grant of bread for sixty years!²

¹ “History of Persia,” vol. ii, pp. 265, 268.

² Polo lovers will be interested in the account given by Sir Anthony Sherley (brother of Sir Robert) of the game

In 1627 Shah Abbas agreed to deliver 10,000 bales of silk in exchange for English cloth of the same value, and trade relations continued until the Afghans overran Persia and occupied Isfahan in 1722.

The Twentieth Century

Taking a leap of 200 years, with their story of warfare and political interference on the part of European nations, we find Persia in the throes of change. Her Shah and previous Shahs have, with their suites, visited Europe.

After the bloodless revolution of 1906 the Shah signed the Persian Magna Charta, granting to the

as played at that day in Isfahan. "Before the house there was a very fair place, to the quantity of some ten acres of ground made very plain: so the king went down, and, when he had taken his horse, the drums and trumpets sounded; there were twelve horsemen in all with the king, so they divided themselves six on the one side and six on the other, having in their hands long rods of wood, about the bigness of a man's finger, and at one end of the rod a piece of wood nailed on like unto a hammer. After they were divided and turned face to face, there came one into the middle and threw a wooden ball between both the companies, and having goals made at either end of the plain they began their sport, striking the ball with their rods from one to the other, in the fashion of our football play here in England."

nation a national assembly, or mejliss, consisting of 200 elected members. All males between the ages of 30 and 70 who could read and write, and who were not employed by the Government, and had never been convicted of crime, were to be eligible for election.

The twentieth century has seen schools opening in every direction, regardless of the lack of trained teachers; Bahaism¹ spreading through the land; women demanding their rights; and the nation becoming daily more democratic and more nationalistic in feeling and outlook.

On the other hand, railways are non-existent, the roads in central Persia are as they were in the days of Cyrus, the bridges of Shah Abbas stand, but in ruins; the mails are liable to be lost or stolen at every stage, and the whole country is a mass of bribery and corruption.

On 22 June, 1921, after an interval of six years and a half, the Shah summoned the fourth Mejliss. To quote from his speech in "The Times"

¹ Bahaism teaches that divinity was manifested in Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Zoroaster, and others, but in greater fullness in Baha Ullah, who is set forth to the Jews as the Messiah, to the Christians as Christ Who has come again, to the Moslems as the Mahdi, to the Parsis as Shah Bahram. For further particulars see "Modern Movements among Moslems," by Dr. Wilson.

of June 28: "The most urgent question before the new Chamber is that of finance. The Treasury is now empty and no money is due till the end of the year."

Persia is looking to-day for

The Man who will make Persian History.

CHAPTER III

THINGS PERSIAN

TRAVELLING in Persia is a delight to the good-tempered. You can walk, ride, drive, travel by *kadjaveh* or *takhtiravan*,¹ but not by train, and seldom at the time you wish. It is typical of this land of leisure that when, with English impatience, you say that a thing must be done "at once" the reply comes soothingly: "It shall be done this hour," or if you say: "Do this to-day," the Persian reply is: "To-morrow, by the will of God."

Entering Persia from the west, i.e. from Baghdad, it is possible to travel from the frontier to Tehran on a road transformed during the war, by British engineers, from a track to a road worthy of the name and fit for wheeled traffic.

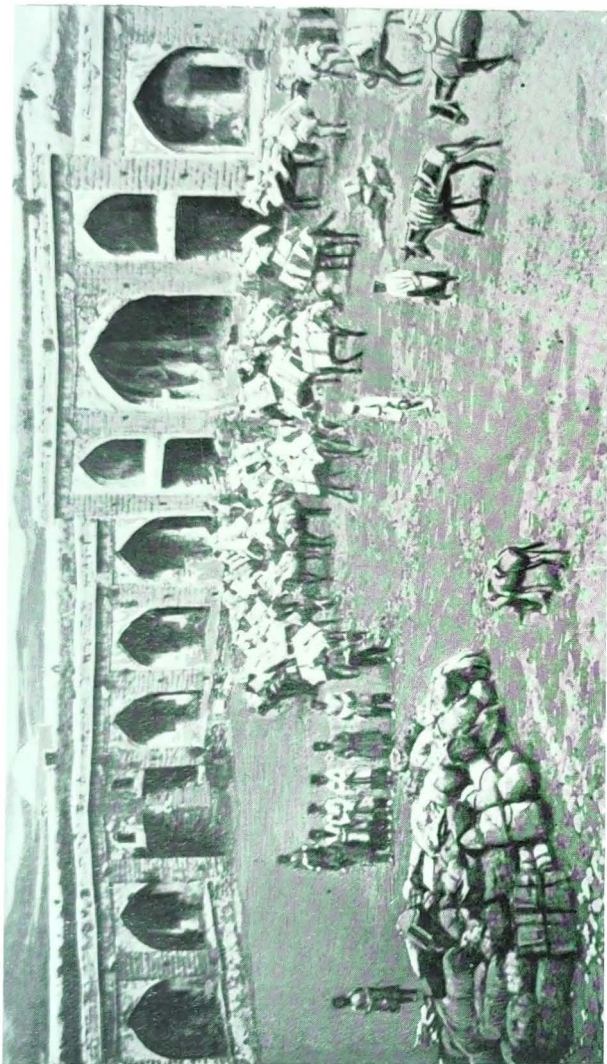
Half way between the frontier and Tehran the

¹ A *takhtiravan* is a box seven feet by four feet with doors and windows. The roof is covered with felt. Inside there are a mattress and cushions. The whole is built on shafts and slung on two mules, one in front and one behind. The motion is rather like that of a rolling ship.—"Behind the Veil in Persia and Turkish Arabia," p. 25.



Photograph: W. H. Tuxedie

THE ROAD TO SHIRAZ



Photograph: Bishop Linton

A CARAVANSERAI

road passes through the city of Hamadan (6280 feet above sea level), the scene of the Book of Esther. Professor Jackson before the war described it as follows: "Nature has given Hamadan a location that is in many ways remarkable. A level plain spreads like a garden before the feet of the city for fifteen miles in length and ten in breadth . . . well watered, yielding barley, wheat, fruit, vegetables, and the poppy plant. Six thousand feet above it tower the snowy peaks of Alvand. Not a sign of the ancient glory of Ecbatana. I saw instead only crooked streets, alleys where ran channels of dirty water, rows of shabby houses with flat roofs, and not a vestige of beauty anywhere. The winding streets which I followed led past a Mohammedan burying ground located in the heart of the town. I shall never forget the stench from the shallow graves. Nothing but the severity of the winters and the healthy position of the town itself saves Hamadan from pest. Street cleaning ordinances appear not to exist, and nature scavengers, the birds of prey, seem sadly to neglect their duties, for the carcass of a dead dog was lying in one of the frequented lanes during the entire time of my two visits to Hamadan."

"Isfahan," says the Persian, "is fair, Shiraz is beautiful, but Tehran, Tehran is very beautiful."

A city of lovely gardens, running water, electric light, telegraph headquarters, the Imperial Bank, motors, tramways, mosques, gateways, camels, bazaars, minarets, veiled women, and chemists' shops, while above all towers the snow-capped Mount Damavand.

If rich, it is possible to hire a private carriage for the journey of 300 miles from Tehran to Isfahan; if not, the journey can be made by post wagon—a long, open, wooden, four-wheeled vehicle with no springs, and drawn by four horses abreast, which travels day and night. The following is a passenger's description of a trip taken in November, 1920:—

“From Tehran I came by post wagon. I booked my seat and arrived at the posthouse at 8.30 a.m., the time we were supposed to start; but there was no sign of a cart till 11 a.m. ! First of all the mail bags for Isfahan and other places were packed in, then all the baggage belonging to the travellers, and finally the travellers took their ‘seats’ on the top of everything else. There were twelve of us, so our space was cramped. At last the horses, four abreast, were ready, and we started off. We soon realized that we needed all the coats and rugs we had to keep us warm, and anything soft we could find we sat on. At first one felt like a pea being shaken about in a box, but in time one settled

down. Every twelve to fifteen miles the horses were changed, which meant a delay of half an hour. We took these opportunities of eating our meals, for it is too shaky to do so when driving. It was usually possible to buy bread, eggs, and tea. The first night I did not get much sleep. . . ."

If, on the other hand, you land at Bushire on the Persian Gulf, *en route* for Shiraz, Isfahan, or Yezd, you travel first of all over the fourteen miles of "very light railway" which represents the railway system of South Persia. Then, with luck, you continue by Ford lorries up the war-constructed road over the Malu Pass down to Kunar-Takhteh. From there it is a case of riding, or plunging head first into a kadjaveh and making the best of things. Kadjavehs are two boxes with hoods over them slung on each side of a mule. If the passengers are not of equal weight, stones and luggage have to be used to ensure the kadjaveh remaining at the side of the mule and not underneath. The bumping of wheel transport is exchanged for the rocking motion of the mule.¹

¹ "September 26 is memorable for the breaking of the kadjavehs, after which the animal set to work to kick the remains of his load to pieces. The remains were carried on for firewood and the former occupants rode, the baby going in front of each of us in turn."—*Extract of letter from Biria, 1920.*

It is hard to make a mental picture of the "road" over the Turkan Pass, *en route* for Shiraz. Those who have risked their ankles up the Lairig to the pools of Dee will understand, for it is like the last section of that climb. Town dwellers can best picture it if they think of a house pulled down and left as it fell. That would roughly represent the road surface over the Turkan Pass. It is best to dismount from saddle or *kadjaveh* and do this stage on foot!

From Shiraz to Isfahan it is possible to travel by post wagon. Bishop Linton, writing in February, 1921, says: "We had various experiences on the road as we ran into some bad weather. On one occasion we got into a huge hole. The wheels of the wagon were up to the axles in mud. The driver whipped the horses furiously, but all to no purpose. The guard suggested that they should call on Ali (a Shiah Moslem saint), so they all shouted: 'Ya Ali' and whipped the horses, but with no more result than before. The postman said that he always called on Murteza Ali and suggested that they should try him. So they tried again, but the wheels only got more embedded than before. At length they came to me and asked what I recommended. During the earlier part of the day they had wanted me to teach them English, and as I

had then used the word 'cheerio,' they asked what it meant. I said that it was a word to use to cheer them up if they were down in the dumps. Here then was a suitable occasion. I said: 'First take the heavy bales off the front of the wagon, then all get round the wagon and when I say: "One, two three," all shout "Cheerio" and tug at the wheels and push hard.' So they unloaded the bales and we all got to our places. At the given signal we shouted 'Cheerio,' the driver whipped, we all pushed, and the wagon jumped clear of the hole."

Home Life

Captain G. B. L. Noel, describing to the Royal Geographical Society a journey made in 1920, said: "The politeness of the people is perhaps one of the chief charms of travel in Persia." Amusing, fond of jokes and story-telling, lovers of poetry, and with a wealth of etiquette that has earned them the title of "the Frenchmen of the East," the Persians—men, women, and children—are sociable to their very finger tips.

The houses they live in are built for fine weather and for extreme heat. Those in Yezd are provided with underground rooms where the family can keep cool during the heat of the day. Miss E. Sykes

in "Persia and its People" gives the following description:—

"All Persian houses of any size have birooni and anderoon. The birooni, or men's rooms, are approached from the street, a high mud wall hiding the house entirely, and, once through a strong outer door, a passage leads to a courtyard on to which several rooms open, and which has a tank in the centre. It would be folly for a man to make any ostentatious display of wealth unless he were in a position that rendered him secure from being 'squeezed.' Therefore the birooni where he sees his friends, and where any one may visit him on business, is always badly furnished.

"It is in the anderoon, which is invisible from the outer courtyard, though the only approach to it is through the latter, that the master of the house keeps his women, his choicest carpets, and silken divans, and the European lamps¹ and pictures so dear to his heart. Here are sunk beds of flowers round the tank, which perhaps is lined with vivid

¹ Captain J. Noel, speaking of the Caspian Provinces, says: "Petroleum is found of such good quality that people can drain it from the ground and burn it without refinement in crude lamps."—"The Geographical Journal," June, 1921.

An excellent account of the South Persian oil fields is given in "Persian Pie," "How Oil Comes to Us," pp. 22-25 C.M.S., 2s.).

blue tiles, and possibly a tree spreads its welcome shade in the corner of the enclosure."

The *kursi* is a feature of Persian houses. The statement that "our cat could generally get through a bolted door" explains why the houses are rather draughty and distinctly cold when the snow is deep on the ground, and the thermometer registers twenty degrees of frost. On such days the *kursi* is a delight. It consists of a pan of burning charcoal, placed on the floor. Over the charcoal is a low table on the top of which, spreading all around, is a thick rug. Under this rug a whole family can find warmth and comfort on the coldest of days. Those who know how to appreciate the joys of a *kursi* put a bolster under their heads, draw the *kursi* rug up to their chins, and resign themselves to warmth and sleep. Others sit with their legs in the warmth, work, smoke, or eat sweets.

Sweet-eating plays a prominent part in Persian life. When a baby is born it is weighed and its weight in sweets is handed round to all the people in the house. When a guest arrives, tea and sweets are at once offered. "For a quiet call on quiet people, two or three plates of sweets are enough, but at a regular sweet-eating at a big house, one or two trays will be set on the ground before the guests, each with five dishes of sweets on it, each dish

holding about a pound and a half to two pounds of sweets. The Persian ladies are often very pressing with their sweets, even to the point of putting them into their visitors' mouths. Often, too, the guests are made to carry home what is left, or part of it, in a handkerchief."¹

Some of the Persian sweetmeats have been described as follows. Pashmak is made of sugar and butter, crystallized like snowflakes or thistle-down. Gaz, made in Isfahan, is a nougat flavoured with tamarisk juice and pistachios. One variety of gaz is supposed to cure rheumatism. Fig paste is called "ease the throat," while burnt almonds and peas, pomegranate jelly, toffee, and rock candy abound.

All well-to-do Persians make their own sweetmeats and consider bazaar-made sweets very inferior. Persian sweetmeats certainly are delicious and quite good food. After a small operation they are pressed into the patient's mouth to restore strength; they are also given after a fright, and a child who had been ordered plenty of milk by an English doctor was given three-quarters of a pound of sweets for her dinner—"So much more strengthening than milk," said the mother.

Another typical Persian institution is the bath.

¹ "Children of Persia," p. 38.

To go to the bath is a serious undertaking, and in view of the rainfall in Persia, water in any form is not a subject to be treated lightly. It takes most of the day to have a bath, and the custom is not to attempt it unless you have new clothes to put on afterwards. "Khanum, give me a new shirt. I have not been able to go to the bath since this one was new," is a request sometimes made.

Rich people have their own baths, but the majority go to the public ones which, like a Turkish bath, consist of several heated rooms and a plunge tank. Here many happy hours are spent meeting friends, chatting, eating sweetmeats, and resting in the steamy atmosphere. Women dye their eye-lashes and replait their hair—possibly not to be undone until the next bath. The men, according to Mohammedan rules, dip right under the water before putting on their new clothes, and dye their finger nails and the palms of their hands with henna. The water in the plunge tank is changed once in two or three months. During a cholera epidemic the governor of a Persian town ordered that the bath water should be changed at least once a month.

Irrigation

Persia already irrigates with great care; but with the help of modern engineering, and by means of

artesian wells and even greater care of the rivers now lost in the sand, the country might be transformed from a desert to a garden.

One very ancient method of irrigation is still in use at Yezd, and provides many a trap for the benighted traveller. Thirty miles away from the town, at the base of the hills, is a well, where water is found at a depth of 300 feet. Yezd, in the centre of the sandy desert, lies some 300 feet below the level of the water in the hills. For the whole thirty miles shafts are sunk at intervals of twenty to forty yards apart at a decreasing depth, until Yezd is reached. A tunnel is then made from shaft to shaft, the water is let in and appears in an open ditch in the desert. These *kanats*, or underground water channels, are mentioned in 200 B.C., when the king of Parthia, fleeing from his enemies, attempted to fill up the *kanats*.

Truly water is precious in Persia, and yet there is reason for us to think of Persia when caught in the rain. In A.D. 1740, one Jonas Hanway travelled in the interesting provinces north of the Elburz Mountains. It rained every day. During the voyage home he must have given thought to the matter, for on his return to England he invented the umbrella.

Carpets

Carpets have probably been made in Persia for the last 5000 years; references to them date back to 3000 B.C., and to-day we see them advertised daily in our English newspapers, or for sale in London shops.

Travelling from the Gulf to Shiraz it is possible to come across a group of tribeswomen making, out in the open, on a low frame parallel with the ground, a carpet that we should love to possess. Persian carpets are hand-made. Londoners would do well to pay a visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum, for England has been fortunate enough to secure a hand-made Persian carpet of coloured wool on silk warps 34 feet 6 inches by 17 feet 6 inches, dated 1540. Until 1890, when it was bought and transferred to London, it was in the mosque at Andebil in North Persia. This huge carpet, looking like one great picture, has 300 *hand-tied* knots to the square inch, making a total of about 33,000,000 knots. (We are accustomed to speak in millions, but it takes a long time even to count one million.)

All Persian carpets are not made in the open; some are made in factories. In Kerman these so-called "factories" are often below the level of the ground, lit and ventilated only by the doorway.

The carpets are hung on frames against the wall from ceiling to floor. In front of them hangs a plank with pulleys at each end so that it can be raised as the carpet grows from the floor upwards. On this plank sit the workers, passing the wool round the warp, making the knot, and pressing it into place with a coarse comb. Above them in tufts hang the different coloured wools; behind them walks a man who "calls the patterns," "three blue, one white, two green," etc.

The hours of the carpet-weavers are from sunrise to sunset, the age of the workers is 5, 6, 7, and upwards. "They are paid at the rate of 2d. a day."¹ Any one who has sat on a seat where he could not reach the floor, or who has watched children, has noticed that the feet are crossed at the ankle. "Twelve hours daily." Those who know anything about the soft bones of childhood know what it means—those children are rendered cripples, hopeless cripples for life. In one factory where the children were examined, thirty-six out of thirty-eight were crippled or deformed in some way. "I have just admitted a child of 7, I think suffering from starvation fever. She is so weak, but quite conscious, and says nothing but: 'Cold water,' and: 'Let me lie still.' Her mother is dead,

¹ "Behind the Veil in Persia," p. 44 (A.D. 1909).

her father has left her. She had been sent to weave when she was 5, but broke down utterly three months ago, but as she was bound for three years and her grandparents had drawn all her wages in advance the master would not let her off, and her aunt carried her daily to the factory. Too weak to speak, dear wee mite, she is lying gently stroking her turkey-red pillow."¹

Another side of the picture. A medical missionary writing in December, 1920, of the severity of the cases in a C.M.S. hospital says: "This specially, but by no means exclusively, applies to the maternity cases. The sad condition of the little carpet-weavers . . . the frequency of bony deformities from which they suffer very often necessitates serious operations (usually either craniectomy or Cæsarean section) at time of childbirth because of pelvic contraction."²

So much for Moslems employed by Moslems, but it comes as a blow in the face to find that a British company, with British managers and with business houses in London, in 1921 is employing children in its carpet factory in North Persia. The factory

¹ "Mary Bird in Persia," p. 122.

² These conditions apply especially to Kerman, but the employment of "infant" labour is almost universal. See "Persia Mission Letter," No. 4.

compares favourably with Persian factories, the children look healthy, and the rooms are light and airy, but to quote from the "Mission Letter," No. 4: "The children are not so young as those I saw in Persian factories. None was younger than 6 or 7. . . . At my suggestion the manager gave instructions that the children were to have a back-rest fixed to the bench on which they sat to work."¹

It seems unnecessary to say more, except to murmur: "Exploitation of children and—public opinion."

The Bazaar

The following is a Frenchman's description of the bazaars of Isfahan:—

"They are narrow and covered with little cupolated arches. As at Tehran the darkness seemed at first absolute. In this gloom, however, a great deal of work is done. There was a round hole in the top of the vaulted roof, through which streamed a thin column of light, so full of dust that it seemed like a thick, luminous, opaque stick reaching to the ground. We went through the bazaar, which was filled with hundreds of carpets brought by the caravans from the neighbouring

¹ Copies of the "Persia Mission Letter," No. 4, can be had at 2d., post free, from the Hon. Sec., Persia Diocesan Association, 16, Salisbury Square, E.C. 4.

provinces and from the country round—from Kerman, Hamadan, Baluchistan, and Afghanistan. Besides carpets there were English cottons, silk from Kashan, velvets from Resht, and delicate cashmere veils, covered with a bold design of flowers. These were actually being made in the bazaar, the pattern being stamped by hand, and dyed piece by piece with genuine vegetable dyes.

“The potters sat crouching over their pots, all the same colour—blue. There were also saddlers making the beautiful Persian harness for horses, donkeys, and camels. In the iron and copper workers’ quarters the noise was almost deafening.”¹

The bazaars also take the place of many newspapers and many books!

Police

The very word conjures up a person we trust and who gives us a comfortable feeling of safety. The following extract from Dr. Wilson’s “Persian Life and Customs,” speaking of Tabriz, may explain some of Persia’s troubles in the past and difficulties of the future:—

“The city government consists of a Beglar-Begi, or mayor, and the Kad-Khuda, or aldermen. They hold court in their own houses, have their own

¹ “Through Persia in a Motor Car,” p. 212.

prisons and punish with fines, bastinado or imprisonment in chains.

"The salary of such an official is derived from various sources. The revenue of some crown villages is assigned to him. He receives fines, ten per cent for collecting debts, fees from illegal traffic, and presents at festivals and various occasions.

"The police are the personal retainers of the mayor and alderman and are employed or dismissed by them at their pleasure. They receive no salary but are required to pay the alderman a certain amount each month. To assure a daily income to themselves, and to collect this extra amount, they are alert and active in ferreting out offenders. But as their object is to make the greatest cash profit out of each case, they are ready to overlook a crime for a liberal donation, or to torture one who refuses to pay. A person who is falsely accused has little hope of easy and speedy escape except by a bribe of money. . . . Looties and rogues often become policemen in order to be unmolested in their rascality."¹

One is reminded of the days of Darius, and that Hajji Baba became a policeman. It is significant that Sayyid Zia ud Din, the Prime Minister of

¹ "Persian Life and Customs," p. 67.



[*Photograph: Bishop Linton*

A GLIMPSE OF PERSIA



(Photograph : J. Biggs

MUNAVVER—ENLIGHTENED

Persia, in his proclamation of 23 February, 1921, referred to the police courts as follows:—"It is necessary that our courts of justice, the centre of wickedness and fraud, shall be utterly demolished, and on the ruins a true house of justice erected, whose pillars are truth and right."¹

Three months later Sayyid Zia ud Din had to fly to Mesopotamia and Kavam-jes-Sultaneh was released from prison and made Prime Minister.²

In 1915 British residents were ordered to leave Persia. Some of them going south to the Gulf passed through the Bakhtiari Country. They were given a true welcome, entertained most hospitably, invited to pitch their camp in a chief's garden and were sent on their way rejoicing. Afterwards they were informed that their late host had accepted a sum equal to £20,000 from the Germans as the price for their capture. Is it any wonder that public money does not always reach the road or bridge for which it was intended?

¹ Since this was written the police have become a Government force, but abuses die hard.

² "The Times," 6 June, 1921.

CHAPTER IV

WHY?

BORN and bred in a Christian country, with all that this means, from the building of hospitals and the giving of a seat to a tired woman to the providing of water for cattle in a railway truck, we find it hard to be Christian in our judgment of Persia when we hear of the unutterable cruelty to animals,¹ the incessant lying and cheating, and the position of women in an otherwise attractive nation. As we look at Persia of the past and Persia of to-day, involuntarily we say: "Why?" Why this stagnation and isolation? Why this lack of progress?

There are countries in the world that have something in common with Persia, and which without unfairness might be compared with it.

Turn to Palestine. In the past it was fertile, healthy, and had a thriving population; a little country flowing so to speak with oil, wine, milk,

¹ Men who were serving in Persia tell us of the horses, mules, and donkeys driven till they dropped, and then left alive for the vultures and dogs. They tell also of the methods used to drive them.

and honey. What did our men find as they toiled up those rock-strewn hills and marched through the squalid, unclean streets of Jerusalem? Why this change?

From Asia Minor comes the description of "the finest peasantry . . . dying, partly no doubt owing to bad harvests, but owing still more to the neglect of the most ordinary precautions and duties of government. Roads unmade, bridges broken down, mines unworked, unprincipled and exorbitant pashas, wastefulness and disorder."¹

St. Paul in his stirring days travelled to and fro in Asia Minor from one busy city to another. Why this change?

Hall Caine, speaking of Morocco, says: "A land where the ways of life are the same as they were a thousand years ago, a land wherein government is oppression, wherein law is a tyranny, wherein justice is bought and sold, wherein it is a terror to be rich and a danger to be poor, wherein a man may still be the slave of man and a woman is no more than a creature of lust."²

Think once more of Persia in the days of Noshirwan and Persia of to-day. Why does this

¹ Bosworth Smith, "Mohammed and Mohammedanism" ("Story of Islam," p. 120).

² "The Scapegoat" ("Story of Islam," p. 123).

blight seem to settle on country after country where Islam rules? Does one reason for the lack of progress lie in the fact that the Mohammedans instead of emphasizing the thought that lies behind action, insist on the carrying out in detail of certain forms of prayer, positions, hours for prayer, fasting, washing, dressing, and travelling, leaving it open to the followers of the Prophet to lie, steal, cheat, or injure and still be "good Moslems," provided that the outward forms are duly performed? Whereas he whose allegiance to Christ is real, has one aim for all his life of action and speech—to bring glory to His Name; and behind all our hospitals, abhorrence of slavery, love of fair play, the work of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, our police, Barnardo's Homes, regulation of work in factories, and early closing hours, lies the thought: "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Mohammed himself said: "I am no reader," and it was not till after his death that his words and visions were collected from "date leaves, shoulder blades of mutton, tablets of stone, and the breasts of men"¹ and put together in the Koran as we have it to-day.

The Koran is written and used in Arabic; and

¹ "History of Persia" and "Story of Islam."

Moslems in non-Arabic-speaking countries such as Persia, Nigeria, etc., have to learn and recite it without understanding the meaning of the words they are repeating, relying on their mullahs, or priests, for their teaching in the Mohammedan religion.

Teaching about Women

Mohammed in Sura IV of the Koran lays down that a man may not have more than four wives (he himself had nine at one time). A man may have as many concubines as he can afford, and temporary wives are a recognized custom in Persia. "He can have as many temporary wives as he likes. They can be married either for a few days or for a few years."¹

It needs little imagination to picture the position of women under such conditions, and to see why Moslem women do not live the free life of women in Christian countries. Shut up, if wealthy, in the anderoon or women's quarters, herded together, unable to read or write, what must be their mental outlook? What does it mean for the children to hear and see all that is going on around them? A religion that depraves the home depraves the nation.

The writer will never forget Miss Mary Bird,

¹ "Five Years in a Persian Town," Malcolm, p. 177.

sitting at a tea table at Liverpool, and telling of her visit to a Persian house. On the floor lay a girl wife aged 12, desperately ill with typhoid, her eyes filled with despair. Miss Bird knelt beside her and learnt the reason of that look. Her husband had just been into the room and had told her that he would divorce her if in a fortnight's time she was not up and about, and looking as attractive as before. She knew that such a rapid recovery was impossible. A fortnight later he re-entered the room, pronounced three times the word "divorce, divorce, divorce," and that girl, ill and utterly unprotected, was turned out alone into a Moslem street.

It is said that one out of every three marriages in Persia ends in divorce. A sad-faced drudge told us: "I am the twenty-fifth wife, some are divorced, some are dead; to-morrow it may be my turn to go."

On the other hand the paradise promised to Moslem men is one in which every true believer will have "seventy-two wives and 80,000 slaves, all houris specially created for him."¹

Those who know the Gospels will contrast the life of Mohammed with the life of Christ—the teaching of Christ with the teaching of Mohammed.

¹ "Our Moslem Sisters," p. 239.

Shiah Mohammedanism

Mohammedanism in Persia is not quite the same as elsewhere, for the Persians are Shiah Moslems, or followers of Ali.

Shiahs teach that Mohammed was the last "book-bearer" but that Ali, his adopted son, first cousin, and son-in-law, was as divinely appointed, and should have been his successor as Caliph instead of Abu Bakr and Omar, who are recognized by the Moslems of India, Turkey, and elsewhere. The fact of Persians being Shiah Moslems explains why the name of Ali is continually on their lips. It is also a common saying that Ali is present in the heart of every true believer.

Ali had two sons, Hasan and Husein, the latter having a special link with Persia as he is said to have married the daughter of Yezdigird III, the last Zoroastrian King of Persia. (See page 24.)

Husein, grandson of Mohammed, led an unsuccessful revolt against the reigning Caliph. After a plucky fight he was cut off from all assistance at Kerbela near the Euphrates, and on 9 October, 608, he was slain.¹

From that moment the Moslem world was

¹ A graphic account of this event is given in "Persia and its People," pp. 144-8.

divided into orthodox Moslems, or Sunnis, who acknowledge the first Caliphs, and Shiah Moslems, or followers of Ali, who look upon Abu Bakr and Omar as usurpers.¹

The first ten days of the month Muharram are dedicated to the memory of Husein. Mourning is worn, and shooting and other amusements are not indulged in. Each day some scene of the martyrdom at Kerbela is remembered. On the tenth day the people grasp their throats, crying: "I thirst" in memory of Husein's suffering when cut off from the Euphrates and from all water supply. Processions are formed, and they lash themselves with whips of chain and cut themselves with knives until their white clothes (representing shrouds) are soaked in blood, while the whole air rings with cries of "Ya Ali," "Ya Husein." On this day the climax of woe is reached and the people, ceasing to do any work, walk barefoot through the streets, wailing: "He is dead, he is dead."

In Tehran during these days a sacred play is performed. Hundreds of black-robed women and children sit in front of the stage, and behind them the men. This play has some fifty-two scenes. In

¹ The effigy of Caliph Omar is paraded through the streets and publicly burnt in Persia on a special night during Muharram.

one of them Husein is shown mourning for the loss of his son, his infant child Abdullah, and his armour-bearer. He is seen bidding farewell to an old slave and to his wife Shahrbanu, the Persian princess.

In the last scene of all the resurrection is depicted, the patriarchs and prophets rising from their graves, while the angel Gabriel tells Mohammed to hand the keys of Paradise to Husein saying: "The privilege of making intercession for sinners is exclusively his; Husein is by my peculiar grace the mediator for all."

Upon this the prophet of Islam gives the key to his grandson with the words: "Deliver from the flames every one who in his lifetime shed but a single tear for thee, every one who has in any way helped thee, every one who has performed a pilgrimage to thy shrine, or mourned for thee. Bear each and all with thee to Paradise." And the scene ends with joyful sinners entering the abodes of the blessed through the intercession of Husein.¹

Christians will find it interesting to think out and discuss how Shiah Mohammedanism is likely to affect the Christians of Persia and the work of our missionaries.

¹ "Persia and its People," pp. 155, 156.

CHAPTER V

THREE TYPES OF MODERN MISSIONARY WORK

D ID you ever lie in a hospital bed listening to the rattle of the approaching dressing trolley while you waited your turn in the doctor's round?

Have you ever sat listening as you never listened before for the sound of the doctor's car; and as your thoughts went to the room upstairs prayed: "O God, send him quickly"?

Doctors and Nurses

Now turn your thoughts to Persia and its roads and transport. "For a hundred miles in all directions we have no surgeon or doctor, no nurse or any asylum for the blind or insane, no dispensary, no hospital, because—all these things spell Christianity. If any one needs medical help he must come to us in Yezd." These are the words of the doctor in charge at Yezd mission hospital.

Dr. Alicia Linton of Isfahan, speaking of the women, says: "The nearest women's hospital is Yezd, 180 miles by road, or Tehran, 300 miles to

the north. There is no women's hospital to the south right down to the Persian Gulf and none to the west till you reach Baghdad."¹

Send your thoughts back to the opening paragraphs of this chapter and use your imagination.

* * * * *

'A medical college has been started in Tehran where modern medicine is taught—largely by European teachers or by Persian medical men who have studied in Europe. But fully qualified Persian doctors are still few and far between and "in between" lies the type of doctor who still feels both pulses, administers broth made of a cock as suitable for a hot disease, and the broth of a hen for a cold one; who uses boiling tar as a styptic, and relies on a blue bead sewn under the patient's skin to draw away the evil from the affected part. Is it any wonder that the news of the Christian doctor spreads and that patients come hundreds of miles to the mission hospital?

They come on camels, horses, mules, donkeys, in *kadjavehs*, and on foot, they come over mountains and deserts. Robbers, officials, merchants, mullahs, chiefs, beggars, executioners, *Kashgais*, and *Bakhtiaris* fill the wards.

¹ "Persia Mission Letter," No. 4.

Rich and poor receive the same welcome, are cleaned by the Persian and English nurses, gently handled and cured by the medical missionary; while above all, as they lie on their beds or wait in the out-patient department, they hear for the first time of the God Who loves them and the Saviour Who died for them. As their eyes follow the doctor round the ward they *see* Christianity—a life being spent in the service of Him Who said: "Heal the sick and say unto them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."¹

Those who remember the stench of gangrene can realize what some of the wounds are like after weeks of neglect, "dressed" with filth, a mass of pain and crawling with maggots.

Dr. Alicia Linton writes of the Persian medical mission nurses: "I confess I can only marvel at what these girls accomplish. The way they overcome the difficulties inherent in the position of women, their patience, their efficiency, their tireless efforts to carry out the doctor's orders—all these make it a real pleasure to work with them. Their sense of humour and their fun are, I think, the saving of them, otherwise their discouragements would wear them down."²

¹ St. Luke x. 9.

² "Persia Mission Letter," No. 4.

Dr. H. T. Marrable of Kerman writes: "We owe much to the loyal help of our assistants, both men and women: some of them are highly skilled in various departments of the work, such as administering anæsthetics, compounding and dispensing, X-ray treatment, and bacteriology, and with their co-operation we are able to get through an amount of work altogether out of proportion to the size of our qualified staff."¹

Dr. H. White of Yezd, speaking in the Queen's Hall, London, said: "Last year there was a commotion in the street outside the hospital door. I went out and found a band of Arabs, dusty and travel-stained. This was their story. 'We have travelled a journey of 200 miles to bring you our chief for treatment.' For ten days they had travelled across the desert, resting in the caravanserais at night. Every one who met them in the desert would ask them: 'Where are you going?' 'We are going to the mission hospital.' 'Why not go to some doctor, a son of the Prophet?' 'We have been to the sons of the Prophet and our chief

¹ "In C.M.S. hospitals there are 3775 beds with an average of one doctor and one nurse to fifty beds. In English hospitals the proportion is usually about ten doctors and twenty nurses to that number of beds." — Medical Mission Auxiliary Report, C.M.S., June, 1921, p. 131.

is no better but worse. We are going to the Christian hospital.' And the news spread through the desert that there was a Christian hospital where there was hope.

"They arrived and were taken into the hospital. They saw the blind receive their sight, they saw bullets extracted and bones set. They saw their own chief operated on and the pain of years banished. And they heard the reason of it all.

"Medical missionaries not only tell the people about the Lord Jesus Christ but they paint a picture of the Lord's own work. The people *see* Christianity worked out before them day by day. Their hostility vanishes, their suspicions cease, they become our friends, and we are able to tell them of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Twenty years ago the C.M.S. promised me a second doctor to work with me in the men's hospital; I have never seen him. I have been waiting for twenty years. We can offer you the maximum of work and the minimum of pay, but you can have the most glorious opportunity of winning men and women for Christ."¹

¹ Up-to-date information about medical mission work can always be obtained from the Medical Mission Auxiliary of the C.M.S.; also in the "Mission Hospital," 2d. monthly, 3s. post free per annum.

“Factories for Making Men”

Did you ever in the days of your youth have a garden? And in your impatience did you pull up the plants to see how they were growing? It is even slower work growing men and women.

Out on the grassless football grounds the boys in the C.M.S. schools in Persia learn to “pass” and to play for their side. Sitting round the hostel fire in the winter evenings they practise their newly-acquired English by reading “The Boy’s Own Paper” and other boys’ books sent out from England; and slowly they learn of kindness to animals and chivalry to women, and that the brave speak the truth and despise a bribe.

Day by day as the missionary and his helpers teach in class, play games, or take school prayers, the boys are learning what it means to be Christian men. Away up in the mountains in the free life of the holiday camp they watch the daily life of a Christian, and in those glorious summer nights they get nearer to the man who would lead them to Christ, and to the One from Whom he draws his strength.

In the stillness of the night the educational missionary looks right on into the future, to the time when his boys will be the law-makers of Persia, the

doctors, the teachers, the employers of labour—men who will leaven every side of Persian life with Christian ideals—men who will lead Persia to Christ.

The preacher has his audience for a few minutes, the medical missionary his for a few weeks, but the educational missionary has his for months and years at the most impressionable time in a human life. It is the Persians themselves who have christened mission schools—"Factories for making men." Roughly a day's work for an educational missionary is as follows:—

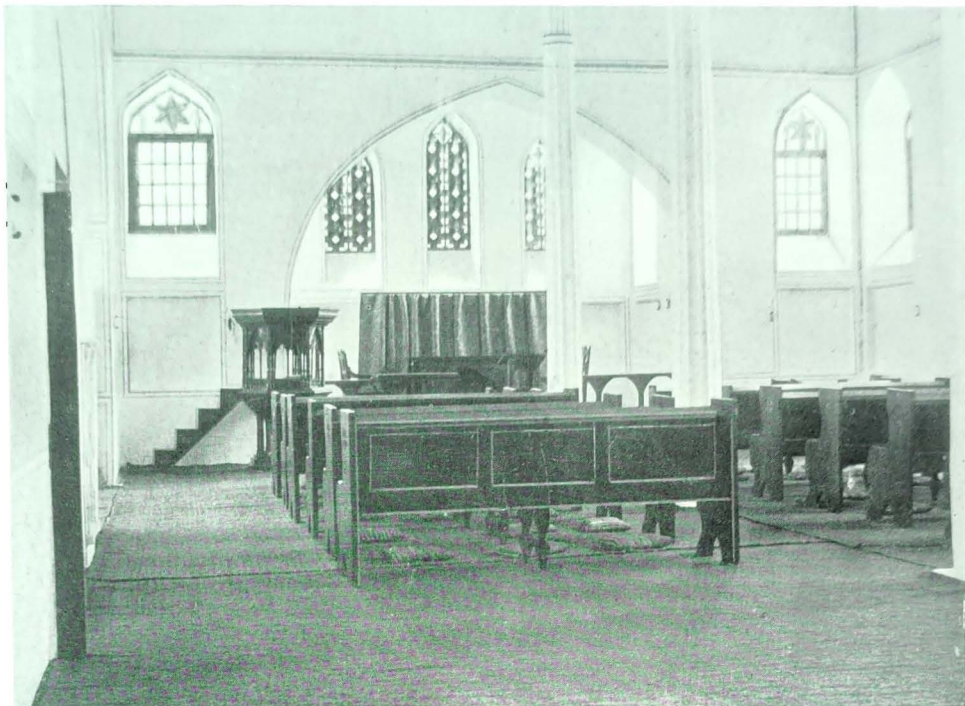
- | | |
|------------|---|
| 8.45. | Prayers in the school hall |
| 9-12. | School |
| 12-1.30. | Odd jobs, lunch, football |
| 1.30-3.30. | School |
| 3.30-7.30. | Twice a week masters' classes |
| | Twice a week night school for young men |
| | Games with the boys |
| | Visiting Persian houses |
| | Having Persian lessons |
| 7.30. | Supper |
| 8-12. | Accounts, preparation of lessons, answering letters, etc. |

(If he is an ordained man to this list can be added : preparation of sermons in Persian and English, and taking services and classes on Sundays.)

Some idea of what the work may mean can be gathered from the following : "We have started an



A FREE SON OF THE DASHT



ST. LUKE'S CHURCH, ISFAHAN

[Photograph: Bishop Linton]

Old Boys' Association. Our aim is fairly inclusive, it includes physical, mental, and moral training. We have games and matches with the South Persia Rifles, and lectures. We had a great show here the other day to inaugurate the Old Boys' Association. We had tea, then a meeting, at which — spoke on 'The Body.' One of the Persian princes whose boys are at the school, spoke on 'The Mind' and Dr. — spoke on 'Character,' each emphasizing the importance of his own side and showing how the O.B.A. would try to meet the need by games and lectures, etc. We are devoting one room in the school to the use of the association."

"We have sixty girls in our little school, but this does not show how far-reaching its influence is, for many of them have stayed with us from 5 years old up to the time they were 18 or 19, when they left to be married. We now have married girls in Tehran, Kasvin, Kerman, Bombay, and in all the villages surrounding Yezd, besides a great many in the town itself."

The principal of the Stuart Memorial College closed the Bible after reading the story of the Good Samaritan: "Boys," he said, "did you notice what the Lord Jesus said at the end?"

* * * * *

The snow was deep and the poor of Isfahan were

dying of starvation and cold. Down in one of the back streets those college boys found a widow with three little children. They had no fire, no money, and had eaten their last bit of food.

"If you come to our school at noon we will give you something to eat," they said. The woman—a Moslem woman—could not believe her ears. Food for her . . . from boys!

She went, and day by day through that bitter Persian winter she got food. How? Those boys took it in turns to do without their own dinners.

* * . * * *

"The Chief of Police is an 'old boy.' I have often sat with him in his office or in my study discussing the moral condition of the town, and the need for sanitary reform."

"Broadly speaking, evangelistic work is proclaiming Christ *to* the people, medical work is reproducing Christ *before* the people, educational work is reproducing Christ *in* the people."

Free Sons of the Dasht¹

To fold up your tents, to hang your pots and pans on a cow, and to ride away on your mule when bored or short of food, has its attractions.

¹ Untilled land.

Away in the western mountains of Persia there are hundreds of thousands of tribespeople living the free life of the hills, paying tribute to no one, making their own laws and following their own chiefs.

One large tribe is the Kashgais. In winter they live near the Gulf; in summer, in the mountains a hundred miles from Isfahan. They spend six months in the south, two months each way on the road collecting their taxes, and two months in the north.

Their chief takes in "The Times" and has tutors educated in India for his sons. He himself has only one wife, and steadily discourages his people from having more than one. The women are free, unveiled, and good riders. Every man of the tribe carries a rifle and the boys are usually crack shots.

Those who can remember the fascination of throwing stones at a telegraph wire will understand why the telegraph service in Persia is sometimes interrupted. Good shooting needs practice and the county rate is not assisted by gun licence fees in Persia.

In 1915 a letter came down from the mountains to Isfahan C.M.S. hospital asking Dr. D. W. Carr to come to the summer quarters of the Kashgai tribe, and offering a warm welcome, transport, and pay-

ment for all medical work. He went, taking with him the Rev. J. H. (now Bishop) Linton.

For the first fifty miles they drove in a four-horse carriage provided by Sulat-ud-Douleh (the chief); then they mounted mules and scrambled up and down the mountain tracks into the heart of the Kashgai Country.

To left and right up every valley and beside every stream were the black goat's-hair tents of the Kashgai tribe, while their herds of cattle and goats roamed the countryside.

It was dark when the travellers arrived. Gratefully they warmed their hands at the blazing fire outside the tent provided for them—a tent with sitting room, bedroom, and dining room complete, and with carpets on the ground. Sulat-ud-Douleh himself came to welcome them, and the mountain air added sauce to a delicious meal of partridges, rice, sweetmeats, and tea.

Next morning he sent for them. His tent, like those of his people, was of black goatskin but very large, richly carpeted and lined all round with rugs made by the women of the tribe. From this tent he rules the Kashgai Country, interviews his under-chiefs and issues the orders to be carried out in the 30,000 tents of the tribe.

Young, keen, dressed in a flowing white robe

with a long staff in his hand, Sulat-ud-Douleh was waiting to receive them in his black tent, looking every inch a ruler, while beside him, boyishly holding on to the tent pole, was one of his three sons. Tea was brought in by lesser chiefs and handed round in small glasses mounted with solid gold and carried on gold trays. The spoons and sugar basins were also of gold.

Every day this visit was repeated, while for the rest of the fifteen days, from morning to night, patients crowded round the missionaries' tent. One by one the doctor saw the sick cases while Mr. Linton sat with those who waited and told them "the old, old story of Jesus and His love."

Towards the end of the stay an operation was performed on the chief's eye (this was done in the royal tent). His three sons were present to watch what the doctor did. Dr. Carr explained to the onlookers that it was always his custom before beginning an operation to ask God's help and blessing. So a prayer was said. This seemed to make a great impression on the boys' minds, for they went off afterwards and told their tutor all that the English doctor had done, and specially about the prayer. The chief's eye was cured, but there were other matters troubling him. Two diseases had made their appearance in the tribe—

tuberculosis and, since contact with a town, venereal disease. "Tell me what I can do," he said.

"And, Dr. Sahib, there is another matter I also want to talk about. In this tribe there are 30,000 tents, every one of them numbered and registered. There are on an average six or seven people to each tent. We reckon that there must be altogether 200,000 people in our tribe. But we have no doctor and no teacher and no schools for them. Now, Dr. Sahib, if you will send us a doctor, I will build him a hospital down where we live in the winter, and I will put into it just whatever you order—beds, medicines, and all the rest—and I will give him a camp hospital to use when we are travelling. And, if you will send me a teacher I will build him a school in our winter quarters. I will get everything you say is necessary for it—desks, books, maps, and so on—and I will give him a camp school for the time we are moving to our summer quarters. But—I make only one condition. Whoever you send must be one of yourselves."

"But, chief," we said to him, "if we came here, we should come to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Turning to the doctor he replied: "Dr. Sahib, you may preach the Gospel as you will, I give you a free hand."

Seven years have passed. No Christian doctor

or teacher has accepted this invitation. The medical mission work at Isfahan goes on, and in 1921 Dr. Carr wrote: "We had the head of the Kashgai tribe with us for two months. He came down with a very severe attack of jaundice and stayed in one of the private wards. We were able to see a good deal of him."

* * * * *

To the north of the Kashgais lies the Bakhtiari Country. Many years ago they too asked for missionaries.

The first missionary farewell service of the Persian Church was held on 16 July, 1921. The service was Persian, the missionaries were Persian, the money for the venture was Persian. And as the outgoing missionaries, Persian and European, knelt in silence before the communion rails of St. Luke's Church, Isfahan, it was a Persian congregation that rose behind them, blessed them, and sent them forth in the Name of the Lord, to begin the first medical mission in the Bakhtiari Country.

CHAPTER VI

CONTACT

WHO are we to throw stones at Persia? Behind us lies a public opinion educated for centuries by Christian teaching. Our red Royal Mail vans do not have to travel across hundreds of miles of lonely desert, and yet as they drive through the streets of London a postman sits behind that closed door. Does the R.S.P.C.A. find no work to do in England? Has no one ever taken a bribe, or for the sake of profit . . . ?

Persia has not had the chance of being taught Exodus xxii., Ephesians v. 22-33, and Ephesians vi. 2. Shall we pray that we may have justice in our thoughts of Persia?

The Indo-European telegraph line passes through Persia. From the headquarters to Tehran to Meshed, from Tehran to Afghanistan, from Tehran to Bushire, there are scattered through the length and breadth of Persia isolated Englishmen and their wives and children. There are also British managers and assistants in the Imperial

Bank of Persia; missionaries, American in the north, C.M.S. in the south, the British and Foreign Bible Society and London Jews' Society in both north and south; British traders and British consuls.¹ These men represent Christianity and Britain to Persia.

Many Persians come to England. The Persian Embassy in London is at 47, Bramham Gardens, S.W. 5. Shall we pray for the Ambassador, his staff, and all Persians in England?

Thousands of young Persians have been trained by British officers and N.C.O.'s in the South Persia Rifles. In the autumn of 1921 this force was disbanded and the British officers and N.C.O.'s withdrawn from Persia. The men they have trained and left will need our prayer help.

On the anniversary of the death of Husein, a young Persian officer—a Christian alone in a Moslem city—beat himself with chains as did the others. In the little church at Isfahan that officer made public confession of his failure, and was publicly received back into the fellowship of the Church. One result is that the Christians of that

¹ In March, 1921, in the city of Yezd, with a population of 50,000, the British male population consisted of four.

town have resolved to pray regularly for one another, and specially for those in the scattered villages far from the fellowship of other Christians. "Do pray for such, you simply cannot realize their intense need of your prayers." Have we prayed as we might for isolated Persian Christians in Moslem surroundings?

"Long before you can get a letter from us," said a missionary in Persia, "the need has passed; if only we can feel that you are praying for us all the time."

Thinking of the size of Persia, the roads of Persia, and the scattered and isolated Christians, the Bishop and the missionaries ask for your prayer help.

The Persia Diocesan Association has been formed for those who would pray for Persia. Any one wishing to have the Mission Letters and to turn them into prayer, is asked to write to the Hon. Sec., Persia Diocesan Association, 16, Salisbury Square, London, E.C. 4; photographs and copies of past letters can be had on application to the Hon. Sec., P.D.A.

"Day by day Persia is becoming a more democratic and more nationalistic country." Away in the north, at Tehran, is the Shah of Persia with

his assistants, linked by telegraph with the governors of provinces and towns. Shall we pray for the ruler and leaders of Persia?

The telegraph poles reach far away into the distance across the desert, linking up the towns and villages of Persia. In only three of these towns in the whole of South Persia are there "factories for making men" (or women). The boys and girls in these schools will be the leaders in Persia—maybe their leadership will depend partly on our prayers.

"This afternoon I went to see one of our 'old boys' who is dying. He is a Christian in all but name and consequently his father and family do not take much care of him. He told me that when he is very tired and lonely he takes out his Bible and reads a few verses, and so gets peace in his heart. We had a long talk and read a passage and prayed. He said he would have been baptized if he had been well and able to work to support himself, but, if he were baptized now, he would be left stranded."

In the stillness of this Persian night there are men and women, aye, boys and girls, looking up at the stars and wondering. As they lie on the housetop or away in the silence of the desert, or in the restless movement of a caravanserai, shall we help them with their wondering?

There are Armenians, Bahais, Jews, Moham-medans, and Parsis in Persia.

Glancing back through the pages of this book perhaps some one will pray for :—

Those who are trying to lead Persia to Christ ;
The employers, English and Persian, of child labour ;
Christian influence in the homes and factories of Persia, in the treatment of the sick, and for those who employ animals ;
The men, women, and children of Persia ;
The missionaries of the Persian Church.

The chiefs of the Kashgais and Bakhtiariis have asked for missionaries. The Governor of Shiraz offered to put a tax on the city to help pay expenses if the C.M.S. would restart work there. No one has gone.

At Yezd the doctor has waited for twenty years for a colleague. He is still waiting.

In the whole of South Persia, only in Isfahan, Yezd, and Kerman are there Christian hospitals or schools, because . . .

Why not go to Persia ?

WANTED :

MEDICAL MISSION HOSPITALS in Persia want :

Doctors, nurses, beds supported at £15 a year, X-ray apparatus, spare parts, sterilizers, surgical instruments, swabs, bandages, hot-water bottles, syringes, and clinical thermometers.

Full particulars from the Medical Mission Auxiliary, C.M.S., Salisbury Square, E.C. 4.

EDUCATIONAL MISSIONS in Persia need :

Masters and mistresses teaching English, mathematics, geometry, physics, chemistry, typewriting, geography, French, as well as that for which the schools exist. Books of reference, books for libraries, pictures, games, science apparatus, Hammond typewriters with Persian and English, duplicators, paper, pens, and pencils.

Full particulars from the Young People's Dept., C.M.S.

TRAVELLING MISSIONARIES in Persia would get through more work if they had :

Co-workers, bicycles (motor and push), bicycle accessories, typewriters, lantern slides, and anything else you would need if there were no trains and no shops.

MORE MEMBERS OF THE PERSIA DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION

Full particulars from Hon. Sec., Persia Diocesan Association, 16, Salisbury Square, E.C. 4.

POSTAGE TO PERSIA

Letter post, 3d. for first oz., 1½d. each oz. after. Book post (ends open, well protected), ½d. per 2oz. Parcel Post does not exist. For information see page 12.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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