

CHAPTER IX.

ENTRY INTO HAMADAN—THE SITE OF THE ANCIENT ECBATANA.

SEPT. 21.—Leaving Sadawah at daylight, we ascended the mountain to the eastward of it, by a winding road, passing in our way a small domed tomb, on an eminence, which was venerated as the sepulchre of a Sheikh Rubbeagh. We were about two hours in gaining the summit of this mountain, walking up the greater part of the way, to ease our horses, the road being everywhere of steep ascent.

The composition of the mountain throughout was blue slate, interspersed with veins of quartz; and the height of its summit appeared to me, by rough estimation, to be about three thousand feet from its base, which is itself an elevated level of about the same height above the plain of Bagdad; so that the tops of this

range may be perhaps about seven thousand feet above the level of the sea.

We found the air very sharp and cold, and were exceedingly glad to hasten our descent on its eastern side, which showed everywhere the same materials, but was more rugged, and broken into deeper ravines and bolder cliffs. In the way we met some Persian shepherds, with their flocks, and passed a few springs of bitter water, descending into the eastern plain.

Near the foot of the hill we came to a small khan, called Karwansera Meear Kotel Sadawah, which had been erected by some humane individual, as a shelter for passengers. During the four winter months, this mountain is said to be impassable by caravans, from the snows with which it is covered; and it is asserted that not a season passes without the death of many shepherds and peasants from the cold alone.

Our descent on the east was not much more than half the distance of our ascent on the west in perpendicular height, when we came out on an extensive and fine plain, covered with villages, gardens, and brown ploughed fields; and, turning to the south-east, we opened the prospect of Hamadan, seated in the same plain, and standing amidst a profusion of trees and verdure.

The whole distance of our journey from Sadawah to Hamadan was about eight hours, and our course on the whole about east-south-east. On entering this town, we passed through a burying-ground, of which the tombs were of an unusual kind; some of these were like stone chests, or sarcophagi, of the common size of the human form, closely covered on the top, and sculptured all over the sides and ends with devices of flowers, &c., and very ancient characters of Arabic inscription on them: others, again, were four times the human size, in height, breadth, and depth, and were formed of large slabs of polished stone, like the planks of a chest, each side in one piece, and all perfectly plain, except the upper part, in the centre of which was a small tablet, for the inscription. The tombs of the females had devices of combs, and

other articles of the toilette, to distinguish them from those of the males.

The entrance to the town of Hamadan was as mean as that of the smallest village we had seen, and great ruin and desertion was apparent on every side. We saw an old dilapidated brick sepulchre, standing detached, of a square form, and evidently of ancient date as a Mohammedan work, but now entirely neglected. This was said to be the tomb of Sheekh Aboo-el-Senna, or, as he is sometimes called, Abu Ali-ben-Senna, the Avicenna of Europeans, a distinguished philosopher, and author of the Arabic work called *Mukamat-el-Arafin*; but whose name and reputation seems to be almost forgotten here.

We continued our way through poor bazaars and miserable streets, until, after much difficulty, we obtained shelter in a half ruined caravansera.

During our detention of three days at Hamadan, where we were kept waiting for a safe opportunity to proceed on our way, I had the ill-fortune to be seized with a violent fever, originating, perhaps, in the combined causes of sudden change of temperature, bad water, and the free use of fruits, which, from necessity and convenience, formed here our chief food. This confined me to the khan more than I could have wished; but I still profited by our stay, to examine many parts of the town, and extend my enquiries to such particulars as most interested me at the moment; the record of which was, however, necessarily very brief and hurried, though there is no spot where I should have been more pleased to have been able to make extended enquiries, and amass copious materials for description and investigation. It is not in the power of travellers, however, always to command what they desire; and in barbarous countries especially, they are often detained against their will in places of no interest, and hurried away as precipitately from those at which they would gladly prolong their stay.

Up to the time of Sir William Jones, whose authority on subjects of Oriental geography, few dared to dispute, it was con-

sidered that Tabreez was the site of the ancient Ecbatana; but subsequent authorities almost universally agree in placing this capital of the Median Empire at Hamadan. The data on which this conclusion is founded are very clearly and concisely stated by Macdonald Kinnier,* and can leave no further doubt on the subject. As we have seen before, Ecbatana was a city existing in the time of Semiramis, by whom it was visited nearly two thousand years before the Christian era; and Diodorus Siculus, in

* 'There is every reason to believe, that the city of Hamadan either stands upon, or near the site of the ancient Ecbatana. Pliny says, that Susa is equidistant from Seleucia and Ecbatana, and that the capital of Atropotia (Azerbaijan) is midway between Artaxata and Ecbatana. Isidore of Charax places it in the way between Seleucia and Parthia; and Diodorus Siculus describes it as situated in a low plain, distant twelve fursungs from a mountain called Orontes. These testimonies are as strong in favour of the position of Hamadan, as they are irreconcilable to that of Tabreez, which Sir William Jones supposes to be the Median capital. The former is nearly equidistant from Susa and Seleucia, is in the direct road from Seleucia to Parthia, and situated in a low plain, at the foot of the celebrated Mount Elwund: but Tabreez is neither equidistant from Seleucia and Susa, nor is it in the road from Seleucia to Parthia; on the contrary, it is situated in a distant province, which has almost as often been included in the kingdom of Armenia as in Persia. When I was at Hamadan, in 1810, I was shown the tomb of Mordecai and Esther: † a circumstance, of itself, sufficient to attest the antiquity of the place. The Persians, themselves, say it was the favourite summer residence of most of their sovereigns, from the days of Darius to that of Jungeez Khan; and, indeed, it is reasonable to suppose, that a preference might be given to its fine situation. During eight months in the year, the climate is delightful; but in winter the cold is excessive, and fuel with difficulty procured. The plain is intersected by innumerable little streams, covered with gardens and villages, and the vegetation is the most luxurious I ever beheld.

'Elwund which is, no doubt, the Mount Orontes of Diodorus, when viewed at a distance, has the appearance of a long range of mountains. The length of Elwund proper is, however, not more than twelve miles. It is completely separated from the northern ridge; and near its summit, which is tipped with continual snow and seldom obscured by clouds, is a beautiful valley, perfumed by a thousand sweet-scented flowers. This mountain is famed in the East for its mines, waters, and vegetable productions. The Indians suppose that it contains the philosopher's stone; and the natives of Hamadan believe that some of its grasses have the power of transmuting the basest metals into gold, as well as of curing any distemper to which the human frame is exposed. The only curiosity I observed on this mountain was an inscription upon a rock, called Gunj-Nauma, or history of the treasure: a name which it has received, from a belief that it contains an account of a treasure buried near it. This inscription is in the same character as those at Tukti Jumsheed, Maudir i Solimane, and on the Babylonian bricks.'—*Geog. Mem. on Persia*, 4to.

† 'The tomb of Avicenna is also at Hamadan.'

describing that event, gives some of the local features of the place, which mark its identity with Hamadan,—especially the description of the mountain Orontes, the plain below it, and the general want of water.* Pliny, in his general description of Persia, speaks of Darius the king having transferred the city of Ecbatana to the mountains, as if there had been a place of that name originally in the lower parts of Persia, near Persepolis and Pasagarda, or the Tomb of Cyrus.† In another part of his writings he speaks of a peculiar oily spring near Ecbatana, of which I could gain no information at the present day, though such springs are not among the most permanent features of nature.‡ The locality of Ecbatana is, however, corroborated by

* When Semiramis came to Ecbatana, which is situated in a low and even plain, she built there a stately palace, and bestowed more of her care and pains here than she had done at any other place. For the city wanting water, (there being no spring near,) she plentifully supplied it with good and wholesome water, brought thither with a great deal of toil and expense after this manner. There is a mountain called Orontes, twelve furlongs distant from the city, exceedingly high and steep, for the space of five-and-twenty furlongs up to the top: on the other side of the mountain there is a large lake, which empties itself into the river. At the foot of this mountain she dug a canal fifteen feet in breadth, and forty in depth, through which she conveyed water in great abundance into the city.—*Diod. Sic. b. 2, c. i.*

† Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. 6, cap. 26.

‡ Polycletus (he says) speaks of a certain fountain of Cilicia, near to the city of Soli, which yielded an unctuous or oleous water, that served instead of oil. Theophrastus reports the same of another fountain in Ethiopia which had the like quality. And Lycas states that among the Indians, there is a fountain, the water of which is used in lamps to maintain light. The same thing (he adds) is reported of another water near Ecbatana, the capital city of Media.—*Plin. Nat. Hist. b. 31, c. 2.*

It is more than probable that this is the same substance, not oily water, but petroleum or bitumen, mentioned by Plutarch in his *Life of Alexander*. He says ‘Alexander traversed all the province of Babylon, which immediately made its submission; and in the district of Ecbatana he was particularly struck with a gulph of fire, which streamed continually, as from an inexhaustible source. He admired also a flood of naphtha, not far from the gulph, which flowed in such abundance that it formed a lake. The naphtha in many respects resembles the bitumen, but is much more inflammable. Before any fire touches it, it catches light from a flame at some distance, and often kindles all the intermediate air. The barbarians, to show the King its force and the subtlety of its nature, scattered some drops of it in the street which led to his lodgings, and standing at one end, they applied their torches to some of the first drops, for it was night. The flame communicated itself swifter than thought, and the street was instantaneously on fire.’—*Plutarch's Life of Alexander.*

other authorities. Ammianus Marcellinus, for instance, in speaking of the Nisæan horses, places them in the plains of a fertile country of Assyria, on the western side of a high mountain, called Corone. This is evidently a part of the chain called Zagros, Orontes, and Jason, in the same place; and Corone is written perhaps for Celonæ, the name of the district where these horses were bred. Now Ecbatana is placed by Ammianus at the foot of Mount Jason, in the country of the Syro-Medes, which just before he numbers with Zagros, Orontes, and Corone, as parts of the country inhabited by the warlike nation of the Suziens, and which it appears he confounded as parts of the same chain which separates Susiana from Media.*

This corresponds also with the distance assigned by Diodorus Siculus to Ecbatana from Persepolis, when, in narrating the return of Antigonus with his whole army into Media, after the defeat and death of Eumenes, he describes him as spending the rest of the winter in a town not far from Ecbatana, where the Palace Royal of Media stood; and adds, that when Antigonus marched from Ecbatana, the capital of Media, into Persia, it took him twenty days march to reach Persepolis.† Again, in Arrian's History of Alexander's expedition, the distance from Ecbatana to Persepolis is estimated at fifteen days *forced* marches: as Alexander marched twelve days from Persepolis, and then encamped within three days of Ecbatana. Plutarch estimates this march of eleven days as three thousand three hundred stadia, or about thirty-eight miles per day; and adding the three days yet remaining before reaching Ecbatana, the whole distance would be nearly four thousand stadia, or about five hundred miles.

One of the most interesting events that is recorded as happening at Ecbatana, is the death of Hephæstion, the favourite of Alexander; and the grief of the Macedonian conqueror at the loss of his friend. It is adverted to slightly by Diodorus; but

* Amm. Mar. lib. 23, cap. 6.

† Diod. Sic. lib 19, cap. 2, 3.

detailed more fully by Arrian, whose account is worth transcribing at length : Plutarch says, that a supply of three thousand actors had been newly despatched from Greece, to divert the King, by shows and entertainments, when he had finished his most urgent affairs at Ecbatana, and that it was during their exhibition that Hephæstion was taken ill. Plutarch also confirms the account given of the immoderate grief of the King, who ordered the manes and tails of all his mules and horses to be cut, and thrown down the battlements of the neighbouring cities. And Ælian expressly says, that he cast down the walls of Ecbatana to the ground.

The description of Hephæstion's death and Alexander's sorrow at Ecbatana, as given by Arrian, will be found below.*

* ' When Alexander arrived at Ecbatana, he offered sacrifice to the gods for good success, according to his custom ; he also exhibited gymnastic and musical sports, and made a royal entertainment for his friends. About this time Hephæstion was taken violently ill, and it was on the seventh day of his sickness when the boys exercised themselves at wrestling. But when the king received news of his declining state, he left off his sports, and hastened towards him with all speed ; but before he could reach the place, he was dead. Sundry authors have given an account of Alexander's grief upon this occasion, very different from each other ; but in this they all agree, that he was seized with immoderate sorrow ; but after what manner he testified it to the world, is a matter of great dispute among them, some giving their opinion one way, some another, according as they are inclined by passion or prejudice, either for Alexander or Hephæstion. They who have wrote the most extravagant accounts seem to have imagined, that whatever the king said or did, to show his excessive concern for the death of one whom he so dearly loved, ought to redound to his praise. Others are rather inclined to condemn such immoderate grief, as unbecoming any monarch, and much more Alexander. Some tell us, that he lay almost a whole day, lamenting over the dead body of his friend, and refused to depart from him, till he was forced away by his friends. Others lengthen out the time of his lamenting over him to a whole day and night. Others again affirm, that he ordered Glaucus, his physician, to be crucified, because of the potion which he had indiscreetly administered to him ; while others tell us, that when Glaucus saw that Hephæstion would not refrain from drinking an unreasonable quantity of wine, he refused to take any further care of him. That Alexander should lie prostrate upon the dead body of so dear a friend, and tear his hair, and show other signs of grief, I neither deem improbable, nor indecent, they being done after the example of Achilles, whom he imitated from his youth. Some authors tell us, that he caused the body of Hephæstion to be put into a chariot, and that he would be charioteer himself ; but this is not credible. Others say, he caused the temple of Æsculapius in Ecbatana to be demolished, which was a barbarous action, not at all suited to the character of Alexander, and, indeed, much rather resembling that of Xerxes, a known despiser and reviler of the gods, who is reported to have thrown fetters, out of revenge, into

Of more recent events, the entombment of Esther and Mordecai at Hamadan, may be mentioned. The sepulchre of both is still shown there, and pilgrimages are made by the Jews of the surrounding country to this sacred building, the key of which is always in the keeping of the chief priest of the Israelites in the city. My illness prevented my visiting either this, or the tomb of Avicenna, the great Arabian physician, which is also shown here : but I learnt from the few inhabitants of the place, with whom I had any intercourse, that both these relics of antiquity are held in great honour by the respective classes of Jews and Mohammedans ; and that the minutest traditions respecting these are treasured up with care ; while no one knows, or desires to know any thing of Semiramis, Alexander, Hephæstion, or any other of the Pagan personages, whose names are associated with the history of

the Hellespont. However, what is related by some authors seems not improbable, namely, that when Alexander was upon his march towards Babylon, many ambassadors from the Grecian states met him, among whom were some from Epidaurus, whose request when he had granted, he sent an offering to be hung up in the temple of Æsculapius, notwithstanding, as he said, that god had not showed himself at all favourable, in not saving the life of a friend, whom he loved as his own spirit. Many assure us that he ordered sacrifices to be offered to him as to a hero ; and some add, that he sent to Ammon's temple to consult the oracle there, whether he should not sacrifice to him as a god ; but Jupiter denied that liberty. However, all authors agree, that the king neither tasted food, nor changed his apparel, for three whole days after Hephæstion's death, but lay all that while either lamenting, or silently endeavouring to conceal his grief, and that he commanded sumptuous obsequies to be performed at Babylon, at the expense of ten thousand talents (some say much more), and ordered a strict and public mourning to be observed throughout all the barbarian countries. Many of Alexander's friends, that they might divert that excess of grief into which he had then fallen, are said to have devoted themselves and their armour to Hephæstion ; and that Eumenes, whom we mentioned to have had a grudge against him, a short while before, was the first proposer of it. This office, however, he performed to him when dead, lest the king should have entertained a suspicion that he had rejoiced at his death. Alexander gave strict orders that none should be appointed captain over the auxiliary horse in his place, lest his name should be forgotten in the cohort, but that it should always be named Hephæstion's cohort, and that the banner which he had chosen should be continued to be carried before them, as well in their several marches as in battle. He moreover exhibited gymnastic and musical sports, much more sumptuous and magnificent than any of his former, as well for the multitude of the combatants, as the greatness of the prizes contended for. Three thousand combatants are said to have been reserved for this solemnity, who, shortly after, performed their exercises at his tomb.—*Arrian's History of Alexander's Expedition.*

Ecbatana. In the time of Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Hamadan, and described the tomb of Mordecai and Esther,* there were no less than fifty thousand Jews settled here, which is more than the whole of the present population: but this is easily credible, as the whole aspect of the city gives proof of former magnificence and subsequent decline. It is remarkable too, that at the same period, according to the same authority, there were not more than fifteen thousand Jews in Ispahan, though in that city resided the Chief, in a University, on which all the other Jews of Persia were dependent. This fact alone proves with what comparatively high importance the sacred depository at Hamadan was regarded, for it was this alone which could have drawn so many more Jews to reside in that city than at Ispahan.

* Sir Robert Kerr Porter obtained the following translations of the Hebrew inscriptions still existing in the tomb of Mordecai and Esther.

Hebrew Inscription on a marble slab in the Sepulchre of Esther and Mordecai.

‘Mordecai, beloved and honoured by a King, was great and good. His garments were as those of a sovereign. Ahasuerus covered him with this rich dress, and also placed a golden chain around his neck. The city of Susa rejoiced at his honours, and his high fortune became the glory of the Jews.’

Inscription encompassing the Sarcophagus of Mordecai.

‘It is said by David, preserve me, O God! I am now in thy presence—I have cried at the gate of Heaven, that thou art my God; and what goodness I have received came from thee, O Lord!’

‘Those whose bodies are now beneath in this earth, when animated by thy mercy, were great; and whatever happiness was bestowed upon them in this world, came from thee, O God!’

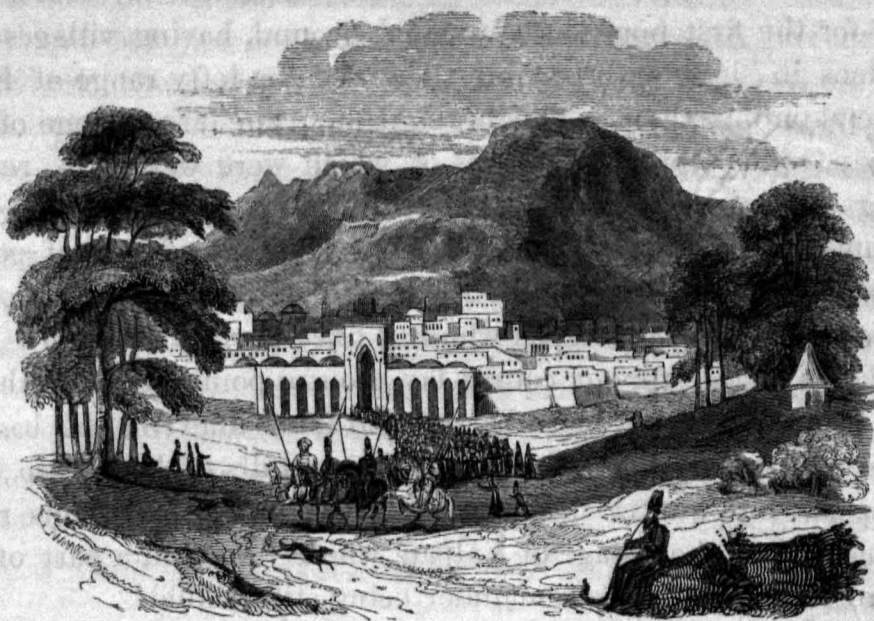
‘Their grief and sufferings were many, at the first; but they became happy, because they always called upon thy holy name in their miseries. Thou liftedst me up, and I became powerful. Thine enemies sought to destroy me in the early times of my life; but the shadow of thy hand was upon me, and covered me, as a tent, from their wicked purposes!—**MORDECAI.**’

Inscription around the Sarcophagus of Esther the Queen.

‘I praise thee, O God, that thou hast created me! I know that my sins merit punishment, yet I hope for mercy at thy hands; for whenever I call upon thee, thou art with me; thy holy presence secures me from all evil.

‘My heart is at ease, and my fear of thee increases. My life became, through thy goodness, at the last full of peace.

‘O God! do not shut my soul out from thy divine presence! Those whom thou lovest, never feel the torments of hell. Lead me, O merciful Father, to the life of life; that I may be filled with the Heavenly fruits of paradise!—**ESTHER.**’—*Travels in Persia*, vol. ii. p. 109.



CHAPTER X.

FROM HAMADAN, BY ALFRAOON, KERDAKHOURD, AND GIAOUR-SE,
TO GOOLPYEGAN.

SEPT. 24th.—Hearing of a party destined for Ispahan, who were to set out this afternoon, we prepared for our departure, determining not to lose the occasion of their company. My fever, which was sufficiently violent to confine me to my carpet in the khan during the whole of yesterday, had rather increased than diminished; and I had no sort of medicine with me to counteract it. This, however, was not a place from which to hope any other relief than rest could afford; and as even that had been hitherto constantly interrupted by idle enquirers, we determined to quit Hamadan with all possible speed.

It was immediately after the prayers of noon that we mounted our horses at the khan, and going southerly through the town,

came into the high road. Our course along this lay east-north-east for the first hour, over unequal ground, having villages and gardens in sight of us on all sides, and the lofty range of Kooh Alwend on our right. This brought us to the large village of Tafreejan, some separate portions of which were walled in, resembling distinct castles. The valley in which it lay had several streams of water, many fruit-gardens, and abundance of poplar trees: but, retired as this spot seemed to be from the public eye, there were many courtezans who had fixed their abodes here.

From Tafreejan, our course lay about a point more southerly, and the road became more barren and more uneven; the basis of it, as in the first part of our way, being hills of blue slate, with veins of white quartz interspersed. A second hour by this route brought us to the village of Yalpan, where we found a part of our promised company, the remainder being still behind.

Since quitting Bisitoun we had seen no public khans on the road, nor are there any, it is said, between this and Ispahan. Passengers take shelter, therefore, where they can find it; sometimes beneath a shed; at others, in the stable with their horses; and, as was our case at Kengawar, they sometimes sleep in the open air. In the way from Tafreejan to Yalpan we had a heavy shower of rain, which lasted nearly the whole of the way, and wetted us so completely, that we needed more than ordinarily some place of shelter, to dry our garments and to repose. The cold of the air was extreme, and on the range of hills on our right, which is a distinct chain from the Alwend, there had recently fallen sufficient snow to sheet over their summits with unbroken white, though the spot where the snow lay was not more than two hours' distant from hence. The place on which our companions had taken up their quarters was merely an open court, with some few little dark hovels around it, into which asses and horned cattle were driven at night. After wandering about the village, however, for some time, we at length found a subterraneous cave, apparently a place of shelter for cattle also, in which we took up our abode.

SEPT. 25th.—After a night of great suffering and increased fever, with total loss of appetite and insatiable thirst, I felt myself so weak, as scarcely to be able to support myself without aid. Some of the party whom we had joined, now came to say, that in consequence of a dispute between the principal owner of the merchandize, and the chief muleteer of the caravan, it was likely that those remaining behind at Hamadan, would be detained there for three or four days longer; and that their companions here could not proceed without them. My Dervish and the Fakeer, who were both much more alarmed at my illness than myself, urged me by all means to await here the result of their joining us, that I might in the mean time assist my recovery by repose. As they spoke, however, of a station only two hours distant, and as the weather was fine, after the rain of yesterday, I preferred proceeding, if possible, even alone, in order to be gaining something, however little, on our way; as well as to try what the change of air and water might effect.

Tafreejan and Yalpan are nearly equal in size, and the population of each is less than a thousand persons; though their appearance would induce a stranger to make a larger estimate. As building land is of no value, every house occupies a large space in its courts, its stables, its gardens, &c. The buildings are mostly of mud; but better wrought, and neater and cleaner, than Arab dwellings of people of the same class. The inhabitants are all ill-dressed, and are also an ill-looking people. The language spoken among themselves is a corrupt Turkish, which my Dervish understood, and Persian is only used by them to strangers. They are here, as in many other of the villages through which we passed, such expert thieves, that a large copper washing jug, called Ibreh, with an iron hook and chain, and three or four smaller articles, were stolen from beneath our heads as we slept, in the cavern before described, without either of us being at all disturbed by the robbery.

We quitted Yalpan about ten o'clock, and went slowly on to

the south-east, for I was now so weak, that the gentlest motion of the horse was painful to me. Our road was still over barren hills of blue slate, and generally uncultivated ground ; when after a tedious ride of three hours, in which we had scarcely gone more than six miles, we reached the village of Alfraoun.

We alighted here at the house of a man known to the Fakeer, and were treated with great civility. In the room where we were received, two of his daughters were employed in making a carpet for sale. The woof was formed by two layers of coarse twine, about a quarter of an inch between the cords of each ; the upper layer having its cords falling into the intervals of the lower, so that the space was reduced to half. Large balls of coloured worsted were hung on a frame close by. The cords of the woof were stretched by two horizontal bars, one above, and the other below, and the carpet itself was worked from the bottom upward. The girls sat before it, and beginning each toward their respective side, approached, until they met each other in the centre. The whole process consisted in taking into the fingers two or three threads of worsted, of the colours suggested by the fancy of the workers, passing them underneath a cord of the woof, twisting them a little by the hand, to secure them in their places, and then cutting off the ends with a knife, leaving a length of perhaps half an inch from the bottom of the woof to the surface of the carpet.

I continued still exceedingly ill ; my fever was somewhat abated at night, but I had yet no appetite, and was as weak as an infant.

SEPT. 26th. — We had been put to sleep by the Fakeer's friend, in the stall, with all his live stock, consisting of three or four cows, as many asses, and a large family of poultry. The air of such a place, when the door was closed, which the owner himself did, after we had retired, to keep his animals in safety, was not of the purest kind ; nor was there a window, or a vent-hole of any description to relieve us. As our own horses were

obliged to stand out, we found in the morning that the friend of the Fakeer had appropriated almost all their corn to his own use, for he had taken their bags from them after we had retired; and as we were up early, he had not yet returned them to their original place. A few other articles were stolen from us by this host, in the confidence of friendship, which we could not recover.

For the last three days I had tasted only toasted bread and water. I felt now some little appetite, and as there was nothing simpler to be had here, I took a little warm milk and water, with a little bread in it, which increased my strength.

We quitted Alfraoun, which in size and population resembles the two former villages, about eight o'clock, and went about east-south-east over cultivated ground, and a generally descending level. In an hour we came to a very small place, with a few gardens, called Kalajek, where the people also spoke Turkish. We could now see that Alfraoun was seated at the entrance of a fine plain, having on the east and north-east three or four large villages in sight, whose names we could not learn.

From hence in two hours more, sometimes over bare, and sometimes over cultivated ground, we reached the village of Kerdakhourd, where I found it necessary to alight, as I was too weak to proceed further.

We had thus been three days performing one stage of seven hours, chiefly from my weak state, which incapacitated me from proceeding further, or faster, than we had done. My companions attributed this, with every other lesser evil, to the influence of some malicious enemy, who followed our steps with ill-wishes. It was in the confidence of this being the cause, that the Fakeer deposited in two newly made graves, which we had passed on the high road between Kalajek and Kerdakhourd, a few rags from off his clothes, to allay the spirit of the enemy who was thought to persecute us. On enquiring whose ashes these graves contained, we were told that a pious and upright Moslem of Hamadan had

lately seen the shade of a former friend in a dream, who had desired him, if he feared God, and wished to be esteemed of men, to go to the lonely spot which he named, and erect there two decent tombs, as the bodies of two devout men lay murdered there, and their souls could not have rest until the rites of sepulture were given them. This was an affair of a few weeks back only; and while the story gave strength to the belief of an evil influence being exercised against us, the Fakeer having placed some of his rags on the grave was thought sufficient to do away the charm, so that the rest of our way was promised us to be more auspicious.

Kerdakhourd offered nothing of novelty in its appearance, being a widely spread village of mud-dwellings, with many gardens, poplar trees, bad water, and abundance of good grapes. Our accommodation there was as humble as before, partaking of the same stalls with our animals.

SEPT. 27th.—We set out from our station with the rising sun, as I had slept well, and felt much stronger than on the preceding day. The morning was cold, however, to a most painful degree, and though my legs were bound round with thick and coarse woollen in several folds, and I was warmly clad above, with two large cloaks over all, it was nevertheless not until the sun had risen three full hours, that the temperature of the air would admit of my throwing off one of these heavy garments. My companions, too, were muffled up in bags and carpets, and seemed to suffer still more from the cold than myself.

Soon after our departure, we could perceive that Kerdakhourd was seated at the commencement of an extensive plain, running to the south-east, between two high ranges of blue slate hills, watered by a small stream in its centre, and studded with numerous villages. The whole of this tract is called Melyer, and is generally well-cultivated, and well peopled throughout its whole extent, which is about twenty miles long, and seven or eight broad.

In two hours after our leaving Kerdakhourd, we had opposite

to us, on the left of our road, and distant two or three miles, a large castle, seated high on an artificial mound, and now containing within it a peopled village. It is called Khallet Mohammed Bek-Tahavildar, and is probably a modern work, though we could obtain no accurate information as to its age.

There were a number of villages distinguishable from afar, by their gardens and poplar trees, and some even near the road, but of these we learned only the name of one on the right, called Nazijan, which we passed about two hours after being opposite to the castle before named.

The stream, which ran through the centre of the plain, flowed to the north-west, so that we were again raising our level. Its waters were highly transparent, but its bed was choked by long grassy weeds, and the water itself exceedingly bitter and disagreeable to the taste.

About noon we entered the large village of Kherdoo, which is the usual halt of caravans; but as the next stage was said to be only four hours, and I had continued to gain strength, and to lose my fever as we went along, we made only an halt of an hour here to repose a little, and then pushed on to regain our lost time.

At Kherdoo the stream is larger than before, but its waters were still of a bad taste. We noted at this place a rude bridge formed of the trunks of poplars, supported by upright posts. Separate portions of the town are enclosed by walls, and the houses are large enough to contain all the conveniences which the people desire.

From Kherdoo we set out again before El Assr, and going still east by south along the plain, with the stream of water on our right, we passed, in about two hours, a large village seated amidst gardens, but as it lay a little off the main road, we did not learn its name. The district from here onward is called Charrah.

Two other hours on the same course brought us to Giaour-

Se, a name given to a cluster of villages with their fields and gardens, in one of which we noted an old high mound that had probably been the site of some ancient castle, and originally given the place its present name. We found the people here more than usually inquisitive, and far more impertinent in their replies than we had yet experienced on the road. A small caravan of Zuwaits, or Pilgrims, going to the tombs of Imam Ali, and Imam Hussein, had halted here on their way from Kashan, from which they had been six days on their journey, and they made to us the same complaint of the unusual incivility of the people of Giaour-Se.

In the course of the day, though travelling through a plain covered with excellent soil, abounding in villages, population, and cattle, we had met not less than fifty families, in different parties, emigrating from their homes, on account of want, and going towards Hamadan and Kermanshah to seek a subsistence. Some of these were in a state of great apparent wretchedness, and among them were little naked infants of three or four years old, walking along, barefoot with the rest, on a stony road. The cooking utensils and bedding, which comprised all their moveables, were divided among the members of the family, while the husband and the wife carried each a young child or two at their backs. From general report it appeared, that for the last three years there had been a deficiency of rain in this part of Persia, called Irak-Ajam, extending from Ispahan to Kermanshah; and that in the central part of this space, about Goolpyegan, there had been absolutely none; so that all the productions of the earth had been retarded, and every necessary of life was at a price beyond the reach of the poor. The parched and dry state of the soil in the parts we had traversed had been constantly remarked by us, as well as the anxiety with which the peasants looked towards the approaching season of the rains. The flocks had not diminished, as they had found sufficient browsing on the mountains, nor were the fruits deficient, as the gardens were all

watered by little rivulets; but still no supplies of water could be drawn for their agriculture. Grain was now more than tenfold the price it bore three years since; about a pound and a quarter English of wheat costing half a rupee, or fifteen-pence sterling! We ourselves felt the daily expenditure for our horses and our own food to be increasingly heavy; as from Bagdad to Kermanshah, four rupees a day covered all our expenses; from thence to Hamadan, with an additional horse and man, seven rupees were barely sufficient; and now we found less than half a rupee to remain out of ten, which had been set apart for the service of the day. The larger portion of this money was required for corn and bread: for besides this, a little fruit through the day, and some boiled rice and butter, or rice and milk, at sunset, satisfied all our wants. We were thus expending nearly as much money as the same number of persons might travel comfortably for in England, and had not more than the barest necessities to sustain life for such a sum.

SEPT. 28th.—We quitted Giaour-Se, muffled up in bags and blankets, to protect ourselves against the cold, and envied the peasants their warm sheep-skin coats and jackets, without being able to purchase one, as my purse seemed likely to be emptied, by the demand on it for food, long before we should reach our journey's end, even with the most rigid economy. Our course from hence lay nearly south, through a continuation of the same plain as we had passed over yesterday, watered by the same stream coming from the southward, and equally abounding in good soil, many villages, and verdant gardens. The high blue slate mountains on each side of us began now to approach each other, so that the plain was growing progressively narrower; and after going about four hours south, we came to its termination, which was formed by the ends of the two lines of hills meeting each other in a semicircle.

From hence we went up east over a steep but low hill, which forms the pass into another plain, and terminates the district of

Tcharrah. From the top of this hill, we went down about east-south-east, over a gentle slope; and following the winding of the road to south-east and south, we came, in about two hours more, to the village of Kuddungah, where we alighted.

The plain, in which this is seated, is nearly of a circular form, and from seven to eight miles in diameter, surrounded generally by mountains of slate, from one thousand to fifteen hundred feet in elevation from their base, and some of the highest summits perhaps two thousand. In the plain are eight or ten large villages, with gardens, the names of which we did not learn, but Kuddungah is the only one that falls in the line of the public road. There is here a stream of less bitter water than we had drunk for many days past, and some few hovels near it for the shelter of passengers, but of the most humble kind.

SEPT. 29th.—It had frozen hard during the night, and we had found it necessary to keep up a blazing fire for ourselves and horses, who felt equally with us the unexpected severity of the weather. We therefore suffered the sun to be a full hour high before we departed, and even then we shrunk within our cloaks for warmth.

On leaving Kuddungah, we went up east-south-east over the side of a sloping land, having high hills near us on our left, and many villages and gardens in the plain on our right. After travelling for three hours on this course, we reached the large village of Hufta, whose dwellings are secured within a castellated enclosure of a better kind than any we had yet seen, and whose gardens are more extensive and more productive than most others which we had passed. It is here that the road from Kermanshah and Hamadan to Ispahan joins, and continues the same all the way beyond this. As we met here a caravan from the last place, making its halt, we stayed to exchange the news of the way, and in the mean time regaled ourselves from the gardens of Hufta with some of the finest-flavoured peaches that we had yet found in all Persia.

From hence we turned up to a broad pass between two hills, keeping south-easterly for three hours more, over a constant but slow ascent. On each side of us, at the distance of only two or three miles, were mountains of blue slate, some of them two hundred feet high, and, like all the rest we had yet seen, entirely destitute of wood. The soil was here of richer quality than before; and through our whole ride of three hours, we found the peasants employed in ploughing with oxen in pairs, hoeing weeds by a hoe similar to our own, and scattering the seed by hand, without afterwards harrowing it into the earth, by which means flocks of wild pigeons, as in Egypt and Syria, robbed the husbandman of half his labours.

After passing a small cluster of huts with little water and no gardens, called Allimabad, we came, in half an hour more, to the poor village of Koramabad, where we halted for the night.

From the hill which terminates the district of Tcharrah to this place, the whole of the territory is called Kezzaz. and here this district ends.

SEPT. 30th.—This small village of Koramabad, which consists of about thirty or forty huts, was so destitute of every thing but bread and water, that we were compelled to make this our only fare. A vigilant look-out was necessary also to prevent the pilfering of the inhabitants, as they made two or three silent attempts to steal in upon us unobserved during the night, but without succeeding.

We quitted this place soon after sunrise, and going up south-east by south, over a continuation of the ascent of yesterday, with hills close to us on each side, we soon opened the view of a wide plain, terminated by distant mountains, and entered into the district of Kemmera. We still met several troops of families removing to the westward, in consequence of scarcity, as well as parties both of the living and the dead, on their way to the tomb of Imam Ali, at Kerbela.

From the top of the slope, which extended nearly an hour's

journey beyond Koramabad, we began to descend, coming in half an hour to the small village of Saaky Sookhta, which consisted of a few huts, enclosed by a mud wall.

About an hour beyond this, we had opposite to us, on the right, a neat little village, called Chartack, seated at the foot of the hills, at the distance of a mile from the high road, and inhabited by Christians, of the Armenian sect; though, in all other respects, of dress, language, manners, &c. they were the same as their Moslem neighbours.

Our course now became south-east, over a good road, with cultivated land on each side of us; and here we were accosted by three men looking out from a pit, over which a ragged piece of tent-cloth was raised. They demanded of us a toll, saying they were stationed there by the Government to keep the road clear of robbers, showing us their muskets at the same time; but as we suspected that they were themselves bad characters, using this plea as a decoy, we answered their demand in a tone of defiance, and continued steadily on our way.

It was nearly three hours from hence, and after we had passed several distant villages on our right, that we halted to drink at a small place called Elia-abad, peopled by Armenian Christians. Though the rains had failed here, as well as in all the other parts of the country, the industrious population had distributed the water of several little rivulets among their grounds; and we saw, for the first time, the young corn of the second crop above ground, the soil being laid out in oblong beds, with bordering ridges to confine the water on them, as in garden lands.

From hence, in about an hour and a half, we passed through a ruined village, in which was a saint's tomb. The place was called Mohammedabad, but not more than twenty of its dwellings were inhabited. In less than two hours more, on a winding course of from east to south-east, we entered Khomein, where we made our halt at a khan, as incommodious as most of the smaller ones stationed in the way. Through the latter part of our ride there had

been a visible improvement in the state of agriculture and general industry, resulting from the greater activity of the people alone as the soil was the same, and the water not more abundant than before. In the neighbourhood of Khomein, which was a large village seated amidst gardens, we saw ploughed land sown with grain and smoothly harrowed, extensive fields of cotton, and portions of the soil appropriated to other productions.

The village of Khomein occupies a great extent of ground, though its population does not much exceed two thousand souls. The Sheik, or civil governor, for there are no military in any of these villages, has a large and good house, with gardens attached to it. There were in this man's service three Russians, who had been taken prisoners in the last war; and, with a number of others, were then distributed over different parts of the country, to prevent their being an expense to the state. Two of these young men, calling at the khan to know what strangers had arrived, soon became on an intimate footing with Ismael, to whom they told their story. They wore the Persian dress, spoke the Persian language, and expressed no dissatisfaction at their present state, or a wish to return home; though we, as Arabs, sympathized with them sufficiently to induce such a confession, if the feeling itself existed. These young men were both shaved, and wore mustachios:—so general is the wearing of the beard among all classes of Persians, that these were the only two persons we had noted without that appendage since our entering the country.

OCT. 1st.—On leaving Khomein, we went up south-east by south over a steep hill; and continued ascending for three full hours, before we gained the summit of the range over which we had to pass. We watered our horses near the top, and met at the spring there a numerous troop of Persian horse-soldiers, from the district of Bactiar, on the west of Goolpyegan, two days' journeys, and in the mountains of Lauristan. They were leaving the service of different chiefs there, and going to seek new employment under the Shah Zadé at Melyer, and his brother the prince, at Kermanshah.

At the top of the dividing range of hills, the district of Kembra ends, and that of Goolpyegan begins, its fine plain, covered with dwellings and gardens, being now full in view before us. About half-way down the hill, we passed a ruined enclosure of buildings, where there are stationed some agents of the Government, to collect the dues on merchandise passing this way, who suffered us to proceed in peace, as we were but lightly laden. On entering the plain, and still keeping the same course, we crossed the gravelly bed of a stream, now dry, by a lofty bridge of three arches. In the spring, a large body of water comes from a mountain called Badian, a few hours to the south-west of this, and fills this bed, going north-east through the plain, and bearing the name of the mountain in which it has its source.

Soon after noon we entered the town of Goolpyegan, having been travelling for about six hours on a course of south-east by south; and from the nature of our road, which was almost all mountainous, we had gone perhaps a distance, in a straight line, of from twelve to fifteen miles. The chief peculiarities which struck us, on our approach to the town, were two tolerable domes, and a solitary minaret, in different parts of it; but this last, poor as it was, was the more remarkable, as it was the only one we had yet seen in Persia.

The history of Goolpyegan, as related to us by one of the Mollahs, who came to bid us the "Kosh Amadeed," or welcome, in our khan, was thus detailed. In the days of the Prophet, there was a large city here called Nussway, whose inhabitants were all worshippers of fire. Imam Ali, and his son Hassan, marching against it, took the place of the infidels by the edge of the sword. As the city, though already a celebrated one, was still rising in extent and consequence, a great part of its population was employed in making bricks and mortar, and erecting edifices; but such was the consternation occasioned by the approach of the victorious Imam and his son, that the labourers fled in all directions, without staying to wash away the dirt accumulated in

their labours. It was to commemorate this instantaneous flight, we were told, that the old name of Nussway was changed to the present name of Goolpyegan, or Gelpyegan, which, in old Persian, is significant of the event described :—*Gel*, being the name of mortar ; *pye*, the name of the feet ; and *gan*, the completion of the compound ; which, taken altogether, means “ fled away, with the mortar still unwashed from them.”

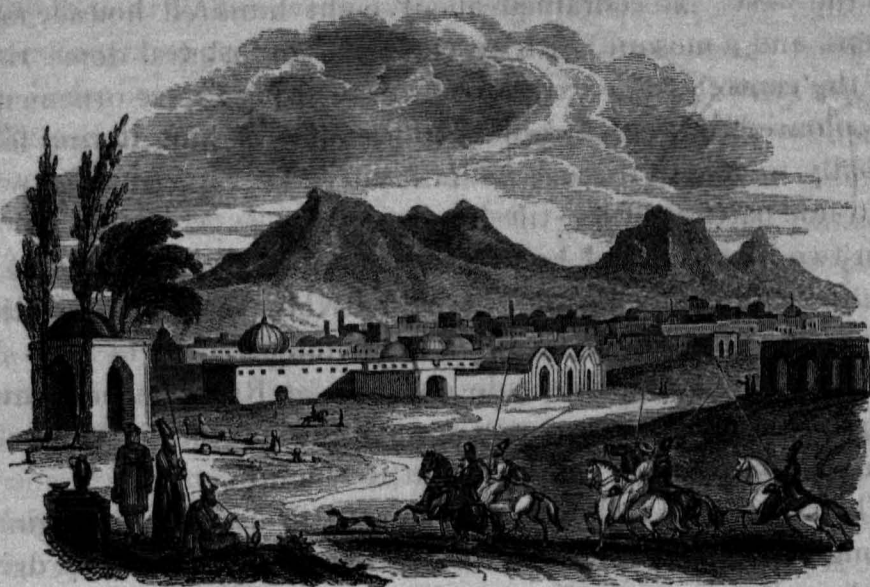
In our passage through this town, I noticed several large blocks of blue stone, with Arabic and Persian inscriptions on them, in characters of a very old form, now broken and scattered about ; and near the khan in which we lodged, were two rude statues, apparently intended for lions, as large as life, but of the worst possible execution. Goolpyegan, for such is the most general way in which the name of the place is pronounced, contains at present about two thousand dwellings, and from five to six thousand inhabitants. The people are all Sheeah Moslems, and there are neither Jews nor Christians resident among them. Here are three poor mosques, a small and dirty bath, five khans, and several long ranges of covered streets where the bazaars are held, and the chief trades carried on. A manufacture of coarse cotton cloth and thread also exists here ; but no other articles are produced, except for the immediate supply of the town itself. The markets are tolerably well furnished with the necessaries of life at a cheap rate ; but the people are in general extremely poor, and their town is of a corresponding appearance.

OCT. 2nd.—We had been stared at by visitors, and questioned and cross-examined as much as if we had been a Chinese party, instead of persons believed to be Arabs. The chief cause of this appeared to be, our having the hardihood to travel alone, and not putting ourselves under the protection of a caravan. It was sufficiently adventurous, they thought, for people of the country to move from one village to another alone ; but no Persian in his senses would go further. To see, therefore, three perfect strangers wandering on by themselves, over such a tract of country, and in

such times as these, excited a suspicion, either that our minds were not perfectly right, or that our motives and intentions in travelling, were not strictly pure. We answered all their enquiries with great patience and civility, though the most common ones, of "Where are you from? whither are you going?" were asked us so frequently, and by such insignificant persons, that it became insufferably tedious. It was in a fit of despair produced by this annoyance, that, thinking of Dr. Franklin's expedient in a nearly similar case, I commanded Ismael to stand up, in front of our recess in the khan, and proclaim with a loud voice what I should prompt to him. He accordingly began:—

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear! Now, be it known unto you, O brethren and fellow men, that the Hadjee Abdallah-ibn-Suliman-el-Masri, the Dervish Ismael, his companion, and the Fakeer Zein-el-Abedeem, their servant, are, all three, true and upright Moslem worshippers of one indivisible God, admitting neither partner nor companion;—for God is great; there is no other God but God; and Mohammed is the Apostle of God! I say again unto you, O ye worshippers in the same faith, that we three, by name repeated, come from Bagdad, and are going to Ispahan, on business which the Lord best knoweth. Praised for ever be his name! We worship no false gods; we bear no enmity to the ruling powers; and we are at peace with all mankind. In the name of God, the Great and the Merciful, and truly for the sake of him, suffer us then to repose in peace! This is all which we can declare of ourselves. Go ye forth, therefore, and declare it to the world; but, since we owe nothing to any man, and desire only peace, ask henceforth no more of us, for more cannot be revealed."

The effect which this harangue produced was that of shame in some, and wonder in others; and while more than one voice exclaimed, "The men are possessed of devils, and are mad;" others replied, in my hearing, "Then it is a very sensible madness; for, in truth, what have ye to do with them?" After this the crowd gradually dispersed.



CHAPTER XI.

FROM GOOLPYEGAN, BY RHAMATABAD, DEHUCK AND CHAL-SEEAH,
TO ISPAHAN.

THE sun had risen before we quitted Goolpyegan, which we did with a large train of boys at our heels, paying us the honours shown to all curious strangers, by the villagers of every country. Our course was now nearly south-east; and on crossing the plain in which this town is seated, we noted three large villages, all within the space of two or three miles, on our left, to the north-east of it. They were called, severally, Khallah Meean, Khallah Baula, and Dey Koocheck; each having many gardens, and each being enclosed by mud walls, with bastions at the angles.

In about an hour and half after our leaving Goolpyegan, we had opposite to us, on the left of our road, a small village called

Sefeeabad, and in another hour we entered the town of Waneshoon. This was seated in a valley, with a lofty hill hanging over it on the west. It contained about eight hundred houses, many gardens, and a mosque, with an octagonal and conical dome rising from the centre. The exterior of this had been once ornamented with coloured tiles, chiefly blue; but the outer coating having fallen gradually to decay, there remained only the interior brick-work with a few patches of the tiles on it.

In two hours and a half from hence, on the same course, we passed a small village on the left, called Khompeach; and in three hours more, going always over a monotonous road of bare slate rock and barren soil, we made our halt at Rahmatabad, leaving the more commonly frequented station of Door, in a valley to the north-north-east of us, distant about four miles.

This village of Rahmatabad was said to have been originally a stronghold of demons, who fled hither when they were driven out of such human bodies as they had haunted. The present inhabitants were happy, however, in the belief that those evil days were now passed, and that Imam Ali had effectually purged the place of all its former impurities. This saint is in such high repute among the people of this country, that instead of the common exclamation of the Turks and Arabs: 'Ya Ullah!' 'O God!' that of the Persians is uniformly 'Ya Ali!' 'O Ali!' an expression of continual occurrence.

The village of Rahmatabad is small, entirely without gardens, and has only a small portion of cultivated land near it, though its water was the best we had drunk for some time. The houses, which are not more than a hundred in number, rise above each other around a steep-pointed hill; and the whole aspect of the place is as dreary and miserable as possible.

My Dervish was here taken seriously ill, having a violent fever, with all its usual accompaniments; and free as he was from most of the superstitious notions of his countrymen, yet he firmly believed in the existence of an intermediate race of genii

both good and bad. It was curious to observe this man, when praying, as he sometimes did, for the sake of preserving our reputation; for though it was clear that he had no firm belief in the religion in which he had been brought up, yet he always saluted his guardian angels, over his shoulder, (which is a part of the ceremony of Mohammedan devotion,) with the greatest respect, and firmly believed that they had a share in all the good or evil that befel him. It was thus that he roused me from a sound sleep before midnight, to tell me of a demon having distorted his limbs, and placed him in such a position that he could not himself distinguish his hands from his feet. It was in vain I assured him that these were among the common symptoms of fever, and that they arose from the disordered state of his blood. He disbelieved all I said, but gave full credit to what had been told him of Rahmatabad having been originally a seat of demons, and insisted that it was one of these who had twisted his limbs into such indescribable postures during the early part of the night.

After this, no sleep was obtained by any of our party. A large fire was kindled, and we waited patiently for daylight, as we all dreaded the cold too much to venture out before sunrise.

OCT. 3RD.—When the day was broadly opened, we knocked out the ashes from our pipes, and put a stop to the long stories that we had each been telling in his turn, over the blazing fire around which we sat; and in half an hour after the sun was up, we were again on our way.

Our course lay about south-east by east, over a desert and rocky road, until in about two hours we came to the village of Dumboo, where we watered our horses at a large pond in the middle of the town, and alighted ourselves to drink. The place was small, poor, and without gardens; but about a mile or two to the westward of it, at the foot of the hills, there was a larger village, called Eshen, seated among cultivation and trees.

Two hours from hence, on a south-east course, brought us

to a small square enclosure of dwellings, with a large walled garden near, called Kaloo; and an hour beyond that, on a more easterly course, brought us to a similar place, with a few poplar trees, called Ali-abad.

Half an hour after this, we passed to the south of a long valley, with many gardens; and in less than an hour more, on the same course, we arrived at Dehuck, where we alighted at the common caravansera.

Our journey throughout the day had been over a bare road of desert soil, with patches of brown slate-rock. The plain around us in every direction was entirely waste, and the horizon every where intercepted by broken and woodless hills. The scenery, on the whole, resembled many parts of the coast of Arabia, on the eastern shore of the Red Sea; and the resemblance was rendered the more striking, by our feeling the want of water here, and seeing many herds of gazelles: both of these peculiarities occurring now for the first time since our being in Persia.

Just before entering Dehuck, we were met by a green-turbaned Seid, on horseback, armed with a lance, who stopped us to enquire the news from Imam Hassan. This man was employed on the holy errand of going round to all the villages in this quarter, stating his intention to set out, on a fixed day, as chief of the Zuvars, or Pilgrims, and inviting all who respect the memory of the Imam, to follow him to his tomb. A certain tribute is exacted, for the supposed protection, for it is not real, which this chief of the Zuvars affords; so that, by the journey, he gains from three hundred to four hundred rupees, and has his expenses paid; while to the pilgrims, whom he leads, it is all expenditure and loss.

These chiefs of the Zuvars are the only persons who commonly carry spears, or lances, in this part of Persia; and as mine was sufficiently long to attract the notice of most of the peasants as we passed, I had several times been taken for one of these chiefs,

and was more particularly so in the present instance, by the Seid himself, who asked me of how many my party originally consisted? and what was about the rough amount of my gains? to both of which I gave but unsatisfactory answers.

At many of the villages in our route from Kermanshah thus far, we had seen stone doors used in the garden walls—being large slabs of blue slate, of which all the hills between Hamadan and this are composed;—so placed, as to turn on a pivot, of a piece with itself, and bolted on the inside by thrusting the hand in through a large hole. Here, however, at Dehuck, we saw these stone doors used in the dwellings of the people, some of them of a considerable size, and one of them with the words ‘Ya Ali’ deeply cut in good Arabic characters. The largest of these doors was one now lying disused, before the entrance to a mosque, to which it might once have belonged. This was nearly six feet square, and six inches thick, in one smooth, solid, and unfractured piece. The common size of those now hung here was larger than of these seen in the Hauran, and at the Tombs of Oom Kais, in Syria; but they were not in general so thick: none of them were well-finished, or ornamented like the former; but they were hung and closed in exactly the same way. The scarcity of wood had in both instances been, no doubt, the principal cause of their use; though here, security was certainly an additional motive, as there were now existing many new as well as old wooden doors, and a sufficient number of poplar trees to furnish the materials for many more.

Dehuck is seated in a dreary and narrow valley, between bare rocky hills. The little cultivatable land about it is better managed than is usual in this country. We saw here, ploughing, harrowing, dressing with manure, turning up with the spade and hoe, and other operations of husbandry, performed as well as in Europe. The town contains a population of about three thousand inhabitants, all Mohammedans of the Sheeah sect. It has a mosque, and a small market-place; but all the necessaries of life

were still dearer than we had found them at any other place before on our way.

OCT. 4th.—We met here a party of horsemen, conveying from Kezzaz to Ispahan a very fine lad of distinction, who was going to meet his father at that city; and, wishing to profit by their company, we set out with them soon after midnight.

Our course was about south-east by east, over a barren tract of land; and in little more than an hour, we passed by the large village of El Hhussny, where, as well as at Door, a station we had seen from Rahmatabad, there is a large khan, like those between Bagdad and Kermanshah, but now falling to ruins for want of repair.

We continued on our way until daylight, when we alighted for prayer,—a ceremony, the public performance of which is deemed indispensable when others are present, though few, even among the Mohammedans, are so punctual in observing it when quite alone.

Our road continued to lie over a barren waste, with blue slate hills on each side, and was mostly on the same course, until we reached a large public khan at the station of Chal Seeah, where we alighted. This was one of the best buildings of the kind that we had yet seen, and was still in excellent order, though the situation in which it stands is a very dreary one, and the small village attached to it consists only of a few huts. The distance from Dehuck to this place is accounted eight fursucks, and we had performed it in about eight hours. We had gone, however, at the rate of about five miles an hour, or considerably faster than the common walking-pace of a man; all our company being lightly mounted, and our horses walking briskly in company. In every other instance in which the number of fursucks from station to station was known, we had never gone at the full rate of a fursuck per hour, though our pace was never less than four English miles. It is true that, among the people of the country themselves, the distances from place to place are very

differently stated, according to the time which they may have themselves employed in performing it, as well as that there are no public marks or posts by which the real extent of the fursuck can be determined ; but all confess that caravans even of mules and asses do not go a fursuck per hour, and that it requires a brisk walking-pace of a light horseman to accomplish it ; so that the Persian fursuck is certainly greater than the English league, and equal, I should conceive, to four English miles at least.

We saw no cultivation during all our last day's route : nothing but barren plains, and rugged hills and mountains bounding them in every direction, without a tree or a bush of any description. We had no water throughout all the way, not even so much as a small pool or rill ; and both the wells of the station we had last quitted, and of that to which we had just arrived, were brackish and disagreeable in the extreme. The scarcity and bad quality of the water, all the way from Kermanshah to this place, had been often felt by us ; the latter indeed was a serious evil, as it materially affected our health, since we had no other beverage, and neither coffee nor any other corrective, except now and then a little burnt bread to use in it. The water of the Kara Soo is so superior to all others of which we had yet tasted in Persia, that it was easy to conceive why the ancient monarchs of the country gave to the Choaspes the distinguished preference which they did, in carrying its water with them even on their distant expeditions

OCT. 5th.—The young lad, with whose party we had come the last day's stage, had evidently been brought up with extraordinary tenderness, and was treated with corresponding respect by his servants, who gratified all his momentary whims without a murmur. He was now so fatigued by a journey of two or three days, though he rode upon a pillowed saddle, that he was unable to go further without a day's halt. As he professed himself to be extremely pleased with our company, and was charmed beyond description by the long stories with which I amused him on the road, re-

specting the Infidels in India, where I professed to have been, he begged of us to retard our journey a day for his sake, and promised to take me to his father, who was a great man at Ispahan, and who, he was sure, would be delighted at the friendship his son had formed for me : on which ground he insisted upon my becoming his guest, and remaining with him for a month or two at least. I urged the importance of my getting to Bushire within a stated time, as the route from thence further on was by sea ; at which the youth expressed great alarm, and entreated me, for his sake, as well as that of my father and mother, never to trust myself upon so dangerous an element. He told me the name of his father, Assad Ullah Khan, with the place of his residence in Ispahan ; begging me not to omit calling to see him on the morrow, when he hoped to arrive after us, as the first thing he should have to tell his father would be of the kind-hearted Hadjee from Egypt, whom he had met on the road. I promised him to do this, though, at the time, without the intention of keeping my word, as it would lead perhaps to a train of circumstances which might much embarrass me ; and, whether there was any thing in my looks or behaviour at the moment, which betrayed my disposition or not, the youth suspected that I was promising what I should not perform, and absolutely wept at our parting, saying, it was more than likely that I should never think of him again. I was not quite unmoved at this unaccountable degree of sensibility towards so perfect a stranger as myself, and knew not what construction I ought to place on such an incident, or how I ought to act on such an occasion. The Dervish Ismael, as well as the Fakeer Zein-el-Abedeem, my constant companions, were however still more affected than myself ; and as to the former, his sympathies and recollections were so powerfully called forth, that he was moved even to tears, and exclaimed—‘ Every word from his divine lips was like a dagger in my heart.’

This was a moonlight scene, soon after midnight,—the hour which we had fixed for setting out ; and though I sang some

fragments of Arab songs by the way, and was as light-hearted and disposed to talk as usual, yet I could scarcely get a word from either of my musing companions.

We went from the khan of Chal Seeah in a south-east by east direction, along a barren road, having a wide plain on our left, bounded by a distant and even range of mountains, faintly seen by the light of the moon; and on our right, a succession of steep, ragged, and detached slate hills, following each other close to, and in the direction of the road. We neither saw a dwelling, nor heard the sound of any living being for nearly five hours, when we passed on our left the little village of Noushirwan, with an apparently new and exceedingly neat khan. From hence we came on cultivated ground, with water and trees, and the day promised to exhibit to us an improved scenery. The opening of the morning was one of the most beautiful I ever remember to have witnessed; while the pale blue light of the moon was yet visible in the west, after her sinking below the horizon, the eastern sky was already warmed with the young pink blush of the sun's approach, at the same time that the zenith showed a deep azure canopy, studded with the brilliant retinue of the Pleiades, Aldebaran, Orion's Belt, and Jupiter, in one lengthened train, beaming in full meridian splendour.

We had now on each side of our road corn-fields of the third crop during the present year; some in all the fresh green of early spring, and others in the mellow maturity of autumn, with gardens and trees in great variety and abundance, all watered by numerous canals leading in every direction.

The ruined outskirts of Ispahan already began to appear, and presented a melancholy picture of desertion and devastation. Long streets, and large buildings, the interior of which preserved all their original freshness, some indeed seeming to have been scarcely ever inhabited, were now abandoned to utter desolation, and were the haunts only of the solitary raven.

We went for nearly two hours through a succession of this

ruined scenery, which could not be witnessed without exciting the most powerful emotions of melancholy. The rising sun presented us, however, a fine and extensive landscape, as its rays gilded the enchanting picture of the plain of Ispahan, with its mountain boundaries, and the world of interesting objects which they enclosed, thus powerfully contrasting the permanent beauties of nature with the more unstable works of man.

Among the peculiar objects which attracted my notice were a number of large circular towers, sloping a little upwards from the base, and finished with ornamented tops, in a style very different from Saracen works, rising in the centre of gardens, and seeming like so many castles. These, I learnt, were edifices erected for the resort of pigeons, who were suffered to feed on the grain, the melons, and the fruits in the neighbourhood, and retire to these towers to roost. The interior of these buildings, as I myself saw, contained some hundreds of separate cells for the birds; and I was assured that they were cleaned out every ten or twelve days, and the dirt carefully preserved as manure for particular fruits, when the fattest of the birds were taken away for sale, the eggs and young carefully attended to, and the whole managed with great punctuality and skill. These establishments are all private property, and belong to the owners of the grounds near; and the occupation is found to be an exceedingly lucrative one, though there are a great number of these establishments in the neighbourhood of each other.

We found the road near the city covered with asses, which were laden with the dirt of the highway, gathered up by scavengers for the use of the gardens near, so that manure is of more than usual value here; and indeed, where three crops of grain are grown yearly—a succession of spring, summer, autumn, and winter fruits kept up—and where the pasture of flocks is so well attended to, that they bring forth their young twice in the year, and produce milk, butter, and cheese, at all seasons—a constant supply of manure and water must be indispensable.

The gate by which we entered the present restricted city of Ispahan was of very mean appearance, exceedingly small, and its passage obstructed by trains of camels of nearly the same kind and size as the Arabian ones. There was also great poverty in the aspect of the few first streets through which we passed, though the space of wall between the shops was whitewashed, and painted with the most grotesque figures—in combat, in the chase, at athletic games, &c.—all very gaudily coloured and badly drawn. After a few winding passages, we came at length to some noble ranges of bazaars, wider, more lofty, and better lighted than any similar places that I had seen, and where the shops were larger and better furnished than those either of Cairo or Damascus.

We met here a funeral procession, which was not of the ordinary Moslem appearance; and indeed I at first thought it to have been a Christian one, until assured of the contrary. In front of the train came eight or ten persons bearing particoloured flags over their shoulders, and chanting hymns; next followed an equal number carrying large wax tapers lighted; and to these succeeded the corpse, borne in a close palanquin, with double poles, or shafts, on the shoulders of men. The friends of the deceased followed this in pairs; and a crowd of spectators of both sexes closed the procession. These rites are peculiar to the Sheeahs, and are held in abomination by the Soonnees; though they are sometimes, as I was told, practised at Imam Moosa, and other Persian quarters of Bagdad, where the Sheeahs are in sufficient numbers to defend themselves from the insults of their Soonnee masters, if they should be attacked.

We found, after some enquiry, a halt of comparative privacy in the khan Mohur Dar Koosh, where there were but few travellers, and these chiefly Bagdad merchants. In this we obtained an upper chamber, and soon made ourselves at ease.

Retired as we had hoped to have been, our room was soon crowded with visitors and enquirers, more particularly from those

Arab merchants, who were waiting with impatience for news from Bagdad, before they set out on their return thither. This, though a sufficient evil at a moment of great fatigue, and on the first arrival as a stranger in a large city, led to the most agreeable results. In the course of those enquiries, which we were justly entitled to make in our turn, we learnt that there was an Englishman halting here on his way to Tabreez. As soon, therefore, as our host of Persian and Arab visitors had dispersed, I dispatched a note to this gentleman, whose name I did not yet know, stating my arrival here, and desiring to learn how far it would be congenial with his own wishes to promote an interview. An answer was speedily returned, saying that Mr. Armstrong would wait upon us in person, accompanied by his friend, Assad Ullah Khan ; and in less than half an hour they came, attended by a suite of servants, to visit us in our humble quarters. Mr. Armstrong was an elderly person, who had been long settled in India as a builder and general director of artificers' work, and had for the last seven years been employed by the Prince Abbas Mirza, at Tabreez in the establishment of an arsenal there, the founding of cannon, equipping them, and setting on foot a variety of useful works of a military kind. His companion, Assad Ullah Khan, the Topjee Bashee, or chief of the artillery, attached to the King's establishment at Teheraun, was the father of the young lad Mohammed Ali, whom we had met on the road, and who was in hourly expectation of the arrival of his son. Our meeting was warm and cordial ; and after the first enquiries were answered, it was insisted on, that I should come and partake of their quarters, at one of the old palaces of Shah Abbas, which had been assigned to them by the Government during their stay here.

The visit of a Frank, attended by a Khan and his servant, to a humble Arab in a public caravansera, raised, as was natural, a thousand conjectures ; but on its being studiously circulated that this Frank was an Englishman, who might at some former period have received attentions from the Hadjee, which he had the

gratitude to feel and repay, all contradictory opinions were reconciled, and general admiration was bestowed on so unusual a character.

It was near evening before we left our quarters at the caravansera to follow our friends to those which they had prepared for us at the palace. We were there lodged in gorgeously magnificent halls, with whole suites of rooms, gardens, and delightful walks, open to us on all sides ; and the pleasure of this change was still augmented by intelligent and kind society, and the comforts of domestic life, in a very high degree.



CHAPTER XII.

ISPAHAN—EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE JEWS—PERSIAN DRAMATIC
STORY-TELLERS AND SINGERS.

DURING a stay of several days which we made at Ispahan, before any safe or convenient opportunity of prosecuting our journey offered itself, my whole time was passed in one unbroken succession of pleasures, during which I was so highly honoured, so constantly delighted, and, in short, so completely surrounded by gratifications of every kind, that I neither had, nor wished to have, a moment of leisure or seclusion, to note the impressions to which all this train of pleasures naturally gave rise. It was only on the day preceding our intended departure, that I was enabled to sit down for a moment to collect together the brief recollections of my stay.

Oct. 6th.—The ancient bath of the celebrated Shah Abbas the Great was prepared for us by express order from Assad Ullah Khan; and his young son, who had arrived on the preceding evening, overjoyed to find me already a guest of his father's, joined our party there. All strangers were excluded; the cisterns were filled with clean water, the bath had been well washed and highly heated, and great pains had been taken to render it as perfect as the fashion of Persia would admit. The style of this bath, which formed a part of the palace in which we lived, and was included within its walls, was similar to the one before described at Kermanshah, except that it was larger, and more richly ornamented. The same general cleanliness in the outer and inner divisions, the same arrangement of the cold fountains and hot cisterns, and the same process in the washing, &c. practised by the attendants, was seen here as at the place mentioned. The same deficiencies too were also observable: the servants of the bath knew nothing of the art of moulding the limbs and muscles; the visitor was led directly from the hot room into the cold, with no other covering than two small coarse blue-checked towels, and his feet suddenly chilled by walking on a cold stone pavement; without slippers or pattens of any kind; no bed was made for his repose on coming out; no person came to dry his body by gentle pressure, and a change of clothes, or to warm his feet by friction on the sole; and though kaleoons were served, there was neither coffee nor sherbet to recruit the exhausted fluid. All this, however, was after the best fashion of the country, and it would have been rudeness to complain. With all its defects, it was productive of welcome refreshment and pleasure after a long journey, and we were therefore content. After dressing in haste, we returned to our own apartments, where a sumptuous breakfast was prepared for us, of which we all partook.

Information of the arrival of an English traveller having been conveyed to Hadjee Mohammed Hussein Khan, the Nizam-el Dowla, or present Governor of the city, we received from him, at

noon, a deputation, who waited on me with congratulations on my safe arrival, an offer of all the services which it was in the power of the Government to grant, and an expression of regret that a messenger had not preceded me with news of my coming, that I might have been met beyond the city by an escort, and all the proper honours due to a subject of so distinguished a nation as England. Nothing could exceed the respect which was shown me, or the politeness of the manner in which it was expressed. I was assured that but for an indisposition of the Governor, which had confined him for several weeks to his house, he would have waited on me himself in person; and I was desired therefore to consider this party, which consisted of five of the most distinguished Khans of the city, and a large retinue of servants, as a visit of the Governor himself.

I was quite at a loss to account for so much distinction being shown to a humble individual like myself, desirous too, as I was, of passing through the country unknown, and having therefore avoided every step which might draw me into notice. Mr. Armstrong, however, explained it, by saying that letters had reached both this place and Shiraz, announcing the intended visit of an English gentleman to both these cities, in the course of his journey to India, which letters, he said, came officially from the British mission at Tabreez, and requested that every attention might be paid to him. As I was personally unknown to any of the gentlemen who composed the embassy at Tabreez, and as they had described the person in question to be a traveller desirous only of amassing information, and observing the manners of the countries through which he had to pass, it appeared probable to me either that this letter of announcement had reference to some other person, or that I was indebted to Mr. Rich of Bagdad for this kind exertion to render my journey agreeable.

The remainder of the day was passed in receiving the visits of other persons of inferior importance, such as a deputation from the Armenians at Julfa, and individuals attached to the English

nation by former services or benefits ; after which we dined together at a late hour, and closed a day of much pleasure.

OCT. 7th.—At the early hour of sunrise, horses were saddled for all our party ; and Assad Ullah Khan, with his son and some of their friends, who were well acquainted with the principal objects of curiosity about the city, were deputed to be our companions and guides for the morning excursion. They were desirous of taking us at once to some of the splendid palaces of the ancient kings ; but as all was submitted to my direction, I proposed another line of march.

Ispahan is thought by Major Rennell to be one of the places to which the Jews were carried in their first captivity, when the ten tribes were taken captive to Nineveh ; for tradition says, that during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, many Jews settled in the quarter called, to the present time, ‘Yahoudeeah.’ Abulfeda says also, that Bochtanser, (or Nebuchadnezzar,) when he destroyed Jerusalem, sent the Jews here, who built a town which they called ‘Yahoudia ;’ that Gajjong was the most ancient of the villages on which Ispahan was built, and that Yahoudia was built at the distance of two miles from it. Also, that though Gajjong decreased, Yahoudia flourished by the accession of Mohammedan tribes, and its name still remained.

As I was particularly desirous of making a minute investigation into the relative state of these quarters, their distance from each other, &c. as their names had been already confirmed to me by report, it was proposed that we should first direct our route to them. A world of ‘wonders’ was expressed at the motive which could induce a visit to such insignificant spots ; and a thousand assurances were made that they contained nothing to reward the trouble of the excursion. No one dared, however, directly to object, so that my original plan was pursued.

Gajjong is the name of the ruined quarter, by which we approached Ispahan, on the day of our first entering it ; and this includes all the space now covered by deserted and demolished

buildings, between the khan of Noushirwan and the present gate of the city through which we first entered. It thus lies on the north-west of the present enclosed town, and has been fully described, on our passing through it. The tradition still held by the people is, that this was the original spot on which Ispahan was founded; and that, even in the time of Shah Abbas, it was enclosed within the city walls. Of this latter fact, there is however no decided proof; on the contrary, there is much more reason to believe that it was in a deserted state, even in Abulfeda's time, and rather formed a suburb, than a quarter of the city.

Yahoudia is, as the Arabian geographer states, distant from Gajjong about two miles, and is seated in the north-east quarter of the town. It is the present residence of such Jews as are here, though a large portion of it is also inhabited by Mohammedans. The present residence of the Governor is in this quarter, called also Jubarrah: and here is seen a portion of the ancient walls of the city, with high round towers, sloping upward from their base, thickly placed, and more completely Saracenic than any similar work that I had yet observed in Persia. This quarter, which is now also in a very ruined state, contains the minarets and domes of some fine old mosques, adorned with Çufic inscriptions, in coloured tiles; a large Maidan, or public square, now nearly built all over with small dwellings, and lines of bazaars, and many other marks of former magnificence. The style of the architecture, both in the private and public dwellings, is of an older date than any thing to be seen in the other parts of Ispahan; and the traditions current among the people are, that this was a place of the Jews' settlement under Bochetenessr, (or Nebuchadnezzar,) and that it is by far the oldest part of Ispahan which is now enclosed within the city walls.

All this was extremely satisfactory, as confirming the conjecture of the able illustrator of ancient geography; but the living picture it presented us was, in another point of view, full of the most melancholy images. Nothing could exceed the misery and

degradation in which the despised Jews seemed to live here. Their habitations were of the meanest kind; and their labours, which seemed to be chiefly in spinning and weaving silk, were carried on in subterranean cells, like the Serdaubs at Moosul and Bagdad, and which are seen in no other part but this, throughout the whole of the city of Ispahan.

In Turkey, many of the Jews rise to distinguished confidence in the service of the Government, and others become reputable merchants. At Acre and Damascus there are two striking instances of the former; and in Egypt many of the latter, both living in affluence and consideration, and distinguished only from the most wealthy Moslems by a graver dress and darker turban. Here, however, and throughout all Persia, the children of Israel are looked upon as the most despicable of human beings, until they are become really debased by their debasement, and now perhaps merit, by their want of every virtue, that which was at first cast on them as an opprobrium on account of their religious distinction only.

In our return from hence, we traversed nearly the whole of the central parts of the town, coming through long lines of bazaars, wide, lofty, well-aired and lighted, and filled with excellent shops of every description. They were as much superior to those of Turkey in their construction, as the shops that composed them were larger and better filled; and all the mechanical arts, whether in metal, wood, or other materials, were more neatly, ingeniously, and durably executed.

At the close of our ride, we came out at the Maidan Shah, one of the largest public squares perhaps in the East; and more extensive than any which I remember to have seen, whether in Europe or elsewhere.* This Maidan is of an oblong form. On one side is a portion of the palace of Tamasp Shah, or, as some say, of Shah Abbas, in which we now lived, with a lofty gallery, supported by pillars, forming a sort of upper portico, on which

* It is at least four times as large as either Grosvenor Square, Russell Square, or Lincoln's Inn.

the monarchs usually sat when they received any crowded processions of embassies, &c. in the Maidan below. Opposite to this is the small but elegant mosque of Lootf Ali Shah. At the southern end is the splendid mosque of the Shah Abbas; and at the northern extremity are the remains of an establishment, founded by this same king, for the Europeans settled in the city, of whom he was a distinguished patron during his reign.

On the walls of the porch beneath this last building, where a gate leads into some large bazaars, and before which is a fountain of fine clear water, are several paintings of that king's time. Among these, the one on the right represents a European feast, in which women, wine, and music, form the prominent objects: it may be considered rather as a picture of what a Persian would conjecture an entertainment must be, where women and wine are not forbidden, than what such an entertainment ever really was among any class of Europeans, except in a brothel.

The country had now been two successive years without its accustomed supply of rain, so that the fountains and canals which usually refreshed and adorned this grand square were now mostly empty. The arched recesses going all around it, which had been formerly used as shops, and filled with the richest merchandise, were now entirely unoccupied; and the chambers of the upper gallery, above these, which had once formed the quarters of the monarch's body-guard, were now falling fast into ruin. The splendid parade of horsemen, and the train of royalty which once filled this noble space, were now replaced by a few solitary Moollahs coming and going to and from the mosques near, and some poor and ragged tents of fruit-sellers which were scattered over its surface.

It was amidst these, that a party of nearly three hundred people had collected round a professed story-teller, who, when we first saw him, was declaiming with all the dignity and warmth of the most eloquent and finished orator. We halted here without a murmur from any of our party, as they seemed to enjoy this

species of exhibition as much as Englishmen would do the pleasures of the drama. It might itself, indeed, be called a dramatic representation; for although but one person appeared on the stage, there were as great a variety of characters personated by this one, as appears in any of our best plays. The subject of his tale was from the wars of Nadir Shah, more particularly at the period that his arms were directed against Bagdad; and in it he breathed forth the haughty fury of the conquering warrior; trembled in the supplicating tone of the captive; allured by the female voice of love and desire; and dictated in the firmer strain of remonstrance and reproach. I could understand this orator but imperfectly, and was unwilling at the moment to disturb the fixed attention of my companions, by soliciting their interpretation; but, as far as gestures and attitudes were explanatory of the passions and incidents on which they were exercised, I certainly had never yet seen any thing more complete. Bursts of laughter, sensations of fear, and sighs of pity, rapidly succeeded each other in the audience, who were at some periods of the tale so silent, that the fall of a pin might have been heard. Money was thrown into the circle by those whose approbation the story-teller had strongly won. This was gathered up by one of the boys, who served the calcoons, without charge, to those engaged in listening, and no money was at any time demanded; though, as far as our short stay there would warrant a judgment, I should conceive the gains of the performer to have been considerable.

A few paces beyond this, we saw another crowd assembled round a little boy of ten or twelve years of age, who was singing, with the notes of the lark, in the clearest and most delightful strain. As we pressed nearer to observe this youth, all were seemingly moved to sympathize in his apparent sufferings. His voice was one of the clearest and most sweetly melodious that the most fastidious ear could desire; but the trill of it, which charmed us so much at a distance, was produced by quick and violent thrusts of the end of the forefinger against the windpipe; while, from the

length of time which some of these notes were held, the boy's face was swelled to redness; every vein of his throat seemed ready to burst; and his fine black eyes, which were swimming in lustre, appeared as if about to start from their blood-strained sockets. Yet, with all this, no one could wish to interrupt such charming sounds. The Arabic music had always seemed harsh to me, the Turkish but little less so, and the Persian, though still softer and more winning than either of these, yet wild and monotonous; but here there was a pathos, an amorous tenderness, and a strain of such fine and natural passion, in the plaints of love which this boy poured forth to an imprisoned mistress, of which I had till this hour thought the music of the East incapable. We all rewarded this infant singer liberally, and admonished him not to exert himself to the injury of his health and powers, for the ears of a crowd, to whom sounds of less angelic sweetness would be sufficiently gratifying.

It was past noon when we returned to the palace, by which time an elegant repast of sweetmeats, fruits, some light dishes, and tea, were served up for us, in the apartments of Assad Ullah Khan, in a quarter of the same palace which we ourselves occupied; and the rest of the day was passed in all the variety of pleasures which our entertainers could procure for us, in the fashion of the country.

OCT. 8th.—The young Mohammed Ali, who had been brought fresh from his mother's lap in the harem, to meet his father here at Ispahan, to-day commenced his military exercises, as it was intended to bring him up to fill the station of Topjee Bashee, which his father now occupied. Two Russian soldiers, who were here as captives on the parole, were employed for this purpose, and their first efforts were directed to teach the young recruit to march. The boy was dressed in a short blue jacket with red cuffs and collar, made after the European mode; but he still retained his full Persian trowsers, with English boots over them, and his black sheepskin cap; a naked sword was placed by his

side, thrust through a waist shawl, so that altogether the lad made a fierce but sufficiently singular figure. The father consoled himself with a hope, however, that when I should send him from Bombay a helmet as worn by our dragoons, and a pair of gold epaulets, the military decorations of his son would be complete; and till then, said he, we must be content with an approximation to perfection. Of the Russians, who were employed to train this youth, one was a trumpeter, and sounded a march on the bugle horn as he walked before the young recruit; the other marched by the boy's side, and directed his infant steps: and in this way they paraded for more than an hour through the gardens and avenues of the palace we inhabited, to the gratification of numerous spectators, who bestowed their applause at every turn.

At the termination of this exercise, so fatiguing to a youth who had perhaps never walked for so long a time at any period of his life before, he was permitted to sit in the presence of his father and several other Khans, at a respectful distance, and we all bestowed our praises on the steadiness of his attitude and the firmness of his step. So successful a completion of this first effort in his military career ought not, said all present, to go unrewarded; and reference was made to the father for the choice of the remuneration to be bestowed, but this was of a nature not fit to be named.

Another excursion was proposed, after our morning's entertainment; and the direction of this being left to my choice, we set out together, with the same party. After going through some of the gardens near our own residence, we directed our course towards Julfa, the quarter occupied by the Armenians, and situated in the south-west part of the city. In our way to this, we crossed the bed of the river Zeinderood, which was now entirely dry. The present want of water was felt throughout the country as one of the most serious evils that had afflicted Persia for many years; and not only was the appearance of every thing changed thereby, but a scarcity and dearth of every species of pro-

visions had followed, which was felt by almost every class of the citizens.

The bridge by which we crossed this river, as well as several others thrown over the stream, and seen by us in passing both on our right and left, was the work of Shah Abbas the Great, to whom almost all the improvements and embellishments of Ispahan are ascribed. None of these works are raised in the centre, as bridges usually are ; they form merely a sort of elevated road, continued in a straight line, and perfect level, across the stream. The foundations and supports to this road are, however, a series of pointed arches, with fine paved platforms between them ; so that while the stream has free passage through the arches, there is great strength secured to the structure, by the raised way that divides them.

The road of the bridge is sufficiently wide to admit the passage of ten horsemen abreast ; it is well paved, has a high wall, adorned with arched recesses on each side ; and beyond these is a covered way for foot-passengers, with small chambers of repose, and fountains for the thirsty, placed at regular intervals. The platform of the basement is constructed of large hewn stones, and the upper part is formed of burnt bricks ; the style of the architecture is Saracenic throughout, though the ornament of coloured tiles is purely Persian. As a whole, whether viewed from a distance, or in passing over it, it seemed to me equal to many of our best English bridges, and was decidedly superior to any similar structure that I had yet seen in the East.

Immediately before us, as we entered on the garden land beyond the bridge, was a high and broken mountain hanging over the quarter of Julfa ; half-way up the side of which, was pointed out a ruined fire-temple of the ancient Persians ; and above this was seen a large excavation in the face of the rock, apparently intended for the site of some extensive work, abandoned before its completion. Still to the westward of this, on another hill, was seen a similar temple of the fire-worshippers of antiquity ; and

above it, on the summit of a pointed peak, a larger work, which was called a fort, but which none of our party could particularly describe.

The view on all sides was beautiful, from the richness of the plain, the profusion of gardens, and the domes and towers of mosques and palaces, rearing their heads from amidst verdant groves of poplars, sycamores, and graver cypresses, of the most noble size ; while the mountain boundaries of this enchanting view gave a grandeur and magnificence to the whole, not to be described.

In about an hour, as we loitered, turned, and halted on our way, to enjoy the scenery by which we were surrounded, we entered Julfa, which we found in a state of as great desertion and decay as all the other outskirts of this declining capital. There was nothing peculiar in the appearance of the place, as the streets were narrow, the houses enclosed within dead walls, and a general air of poverty and dejection prevailed, both over the dwellings themselves, and the countenances of those who inhabited them.

We alighted at the house of the Armenian Bishop, who had been apprised of our intended visit by a messenger preceding us, and we were received by himself and his inferior clergy with every mark of respect. We were first shown into the principal church. This was situated in a secluded court ; in the centre of which, and in front of the church itself, was an open square edifice of three or four stories, the lower ones being used as kiosques, and the upper containing two large bells for summoning the congregation to worship,—a privilege which the Armenians do not enjoy in Turkey. The church, though small, was richly adorned with all the pageantry of Christian state : the walls were covered with inferior paintings of subjects from Scripture ; the pavement of the floor was spread with carpets ; and the dome of the roof was ornamented in the Persian style, with enamelling of gold and colours ; while the effect of the whole was improved by a blaze of light,

surrounding the image of the Saviour, on the altar of their devotions.

This church, we were assured, was the work also of Shah Abbas, who seems, among his other traits of high and noble character, to have been the most tolerant monarch towards those of another religion that ever sat on the Persian throne. To this sovereign the Armenians ascribed their enjoyment of several important privileges, which had been taken from them at his death; and since that period, with the general decline of the empire, and more particularly of its capital, they had been declining in wealth and numbers, till there were now not more than three hundred families left, and these, from constant oppression, were all of the poorest class.*

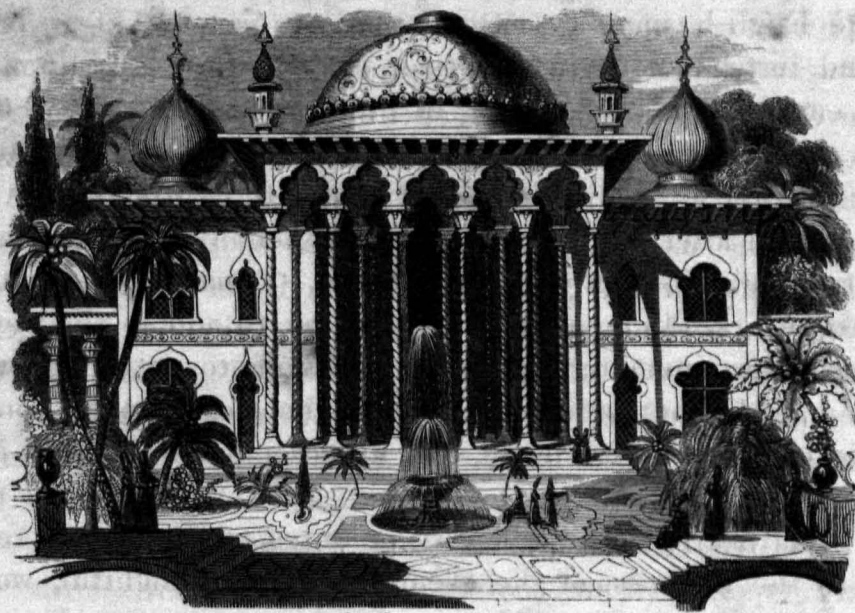
In our reception at the Bishop's house, to which we retired from the church, we were treated, after the Turkish manner, with preserved fruits and sweetmeats, sherbet, caleoons, and coffee, and perfumed with rose-water on our departure. The language of the party was also Turkish, as none of them spoke Arabic, and Persian was not yet so familiar to me as the former tongue.

A certain merchant, named Gulistan, who acts as the agent of

* In Murray's 'Historical Account of Discoveries and Travels in Asia,' the writer says, that the most curious picture he had seen of the character and policy of Shah Abbas was given by Don Garcia de Sylva, in the narrative of an embassy from Goa, then subject to Spain, under Philip III. This account had never been printed, but is still in manuscript in the British Museum. The author gives in this a very entertaining account of his interview with Shah Abbas, and his ineffectual attempt to negotiate with that monarch on the subject of Ormuz, in the Persian Gulf; in which the Shah affected to be seized with religious fervour and devotion; and as he put on the semblance of Christianity whenever it would answer any purpose, so, on this occasion, he persuaded the whole of the Spanish retinue that he was one of the most pious and best of kings. A note appended to this account says, it appeared even that he was at one time formally baptized,—an event to which the Jesuits ascribed all the victories with which his arms were crowned against the Turks and Tartars.—See 'Nouvel Conversion du Roi de Perse, avec la Defaite de deux cens mil Turcs après sa conversion.' Paris, 1606. Also, 'Histoire Veritable de tout ce qui s'est fait et passé en Perse, depuis les cérémonies du Baptême du Grand Sophy.' Paris, 1613.—*Hist. Acc. of Disc. in Asia*, vol. 3, p. 29—45.

the English here, having prepared an entertainment for us at his house, we repaired thither, and were served with a repast nearly in the English manner, except that we partook of it on the ground, instead of having tables or chairs. Bowls of Shiraz wine were emptied and replenished in quick succession, as the Christians of Julfa make as extravagant an use of that privilege of their religion, as in all other parts of the East; and not an hour had elapsed after the sofra or cloth was removed, before many of the party were in highly elevated spirits. A native musician, who played on a kind of guitar, was called on to add to the pleasure of our entertainment; but though he sang to us the amours of Leila and Mejnoun, and some other of the most popular songs of Persia, his strains were harsh, and his accompaniment most inharmonious.

It was nearly sunset when we mounted our horses to return; and as the freshness of the evening air was delightful, we still loitered to prolong our ride; so that we were as tardy in our coming home, as we had been in our going out; the remainder of the evening was passed, in our apartment, in a long theological discussion, of which the Persians seem exceedingly fond, when those of a different religion to their own happen to be present. It was conducted, however, with a good-humour and forbearance, which made it appear to be rather a mere exercise of argumentative talent, than a serious effort to convert any of the hearers from their supposed errors to any particular form of belief.



CHAPTER XIII.

ISPAHAN—VISIT TO THE GOVERNOR OF THE CITY—PERSIAN
ENTERTAINMENT—PALACE—GARDENS, &c.

Oct. 9th.—To-day was fixed on for our returning the visit of the Governor of Ispahan, which he had paid us by deputation, in consequence of his inability to quit his residence; and preparations for that purpose were made at an early hour.

The attention of the Topjee Bashee was taken up, as on the preceding day, in witnessing the military tuition of his son; and as the father was quite as well pleased as before with his tractability, the same reward was bestowed on his success, and the same indescribable scenes took place to-day, as were witnessed in the halls of departed grandeur yesterday, and then mentioned as not fit to be particularly named.

It was about ten o'clock when we mounted at the gate of our palace, forming a party of about thirty persons, including the guards who preceded, the Khans who accompanied, and the servants who followed us. Mr. Armstrong, however, who was busily employed in constructing the model of a corn-mill for the government, and whose useful labours these public attentions shown to me had already interrupted, found means to excuse himself from accompanying us; and, in consideration of the motives which urged it, no one could complain. The route of our cavalcade lay partly through the quarter of Jubarra, or Yahoudia, in which we saw a number of very old and deserted mosques, which had before escaped our attention. The minarets of these were different from any others that I ever remember to have seen: they were extremely lofty, constructed of plain brickwork of the best kind, and rose like colossal pillars from the ground, gradually but slightly tapering from the base, until about two-thirds their height, where a termination was formed in a capital resembling the palm-leaved capital of the Egyptian temples. Above this was placed a smaller pillar, of less height and diameter, completing the other third; so that the whole looked like a small column rising out of a larger one: the first capital probably forming a gallery or the mezzuin or crier; and the second, a higher one of the same kind; as, from the loop-holes or windows in the walls, there was no doubt a winding passage inside up to the top.

These minarets were all lofty, mostly single, and generally of plain brickwork; whereas, in the other quarters of Ispahan, the minarets are all low, and generally placed in pairs on each side of entrance gateways, being also coated over with coloured tiles; besides having a railed gallery, with a roofed covering at the top, in an altogether different manner. The style of architecture in the mosques to which these singular minarets were attached, though Saracenic in its order, was different in its general aspect and details from those of the other quarters of the city, and evidently of a much more ancient date, though, from a want of sufficient leisure

and privacy to examine the inscriptions, their precise date was unknown to me. All, however, concurred in the tradition, that this quarter was by far the most ancient of any now included within the limits of Ispahan; and every appearance indeed supported this belief.*

We reached the palace of the Governor at the hour of the morning divan, and the outermost courts were crowded with the horses and servants of those who attended it. After passing through some agreeable gardens, fountained squares, and dark passages, we at length reached the room of state. There were assembled here a considerable number of persons of distinction, all of whom rose at our entering; and the Governor himself, who placed me immediately beside him on his left hand, pointed to a stick with which he was obliged to support himself while walking, as an apology for his not showing me that mark of respect which he acknowledged as my due. There was in all this, an excess of honourable distinction which I could not understand, and which I still believed must have been destined for another, though all my enquiries led to no satisfactory explanation on that point.

The room in which we sat, opened on a square court, in which were garden-beds, flowers, rows of trees, and overflowing fountains filled with trout. From this apartment led a suite of others behind it, all decorated in the richest way, with mirrors, paintings, and gold and enamelled works, in the Persian style, and of the age of the splendid Shah Abbas. The furniture of these rooms,

* Ispahan is mentioned as early as the age of Kai Kaoos; but of this there is no date, though it must have been much before the period assigned to it by Abulfeda, who speaks of it as being increased by the settlement of Mohammedans among the Jews of Yahoudia, near Gajjong, as noted in Rennell's Illustrations of the Geography of Herodotus,†—*Hist. of Persia*, vol. i. p. 35.

† The term "Turk" is applied, by the author of a Persian work, to a Tartar Prince, though it is in describing an event which must have taken place long before the tribe called *Turks* came into that part of Tartary; so that the name of Ispahan may be so used also.—Vol. i. p. 61.

The description of the taking of Ispahan by Timour the Tartar, and the dreadful massacre there, is very strikingly given in the same work.—Vol. i. p. 460.