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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER VII.

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE IN PERSIA.

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

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

STROLLING MUSICIANS, WITH DANCING MONKEYS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

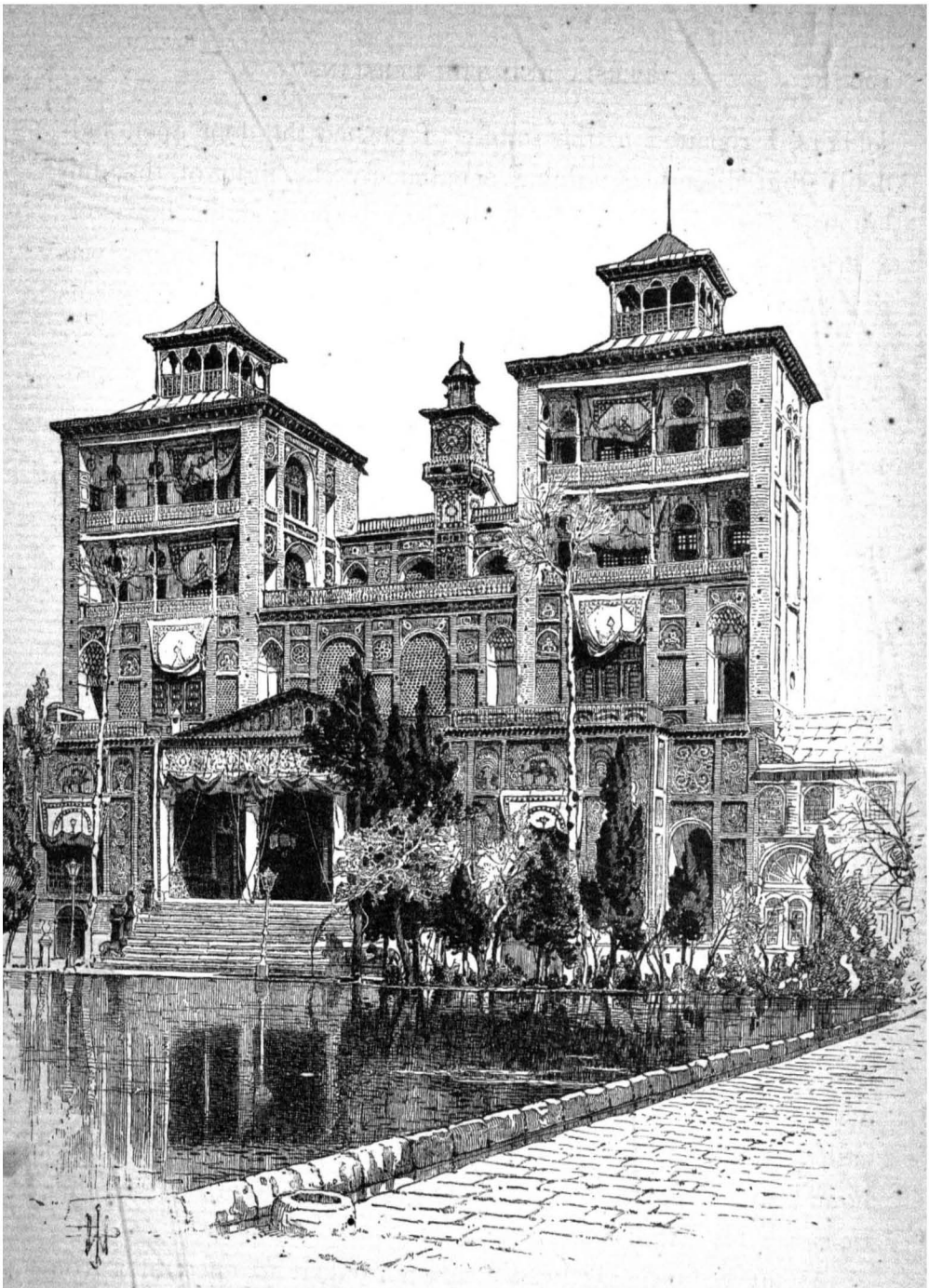
self can touch a hair of his head, while he chooses to remain in that asylum. The origin of this custom is lost in obscurity, but most probably has some relation to early nomadic habits.

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

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

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

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



PAVILION AT THE ARK, CALLED THE SHAMS-EL-IMMARÊT.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Then you must apologize."

"Apologize! what does he mean by apologizing?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

INDOOR COSTUME OF PERSIAN WOMEN.

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

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

CHAPTER VIII.

NASR-ED-DEEN SHAH AND THE ROYAL FAMILY.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

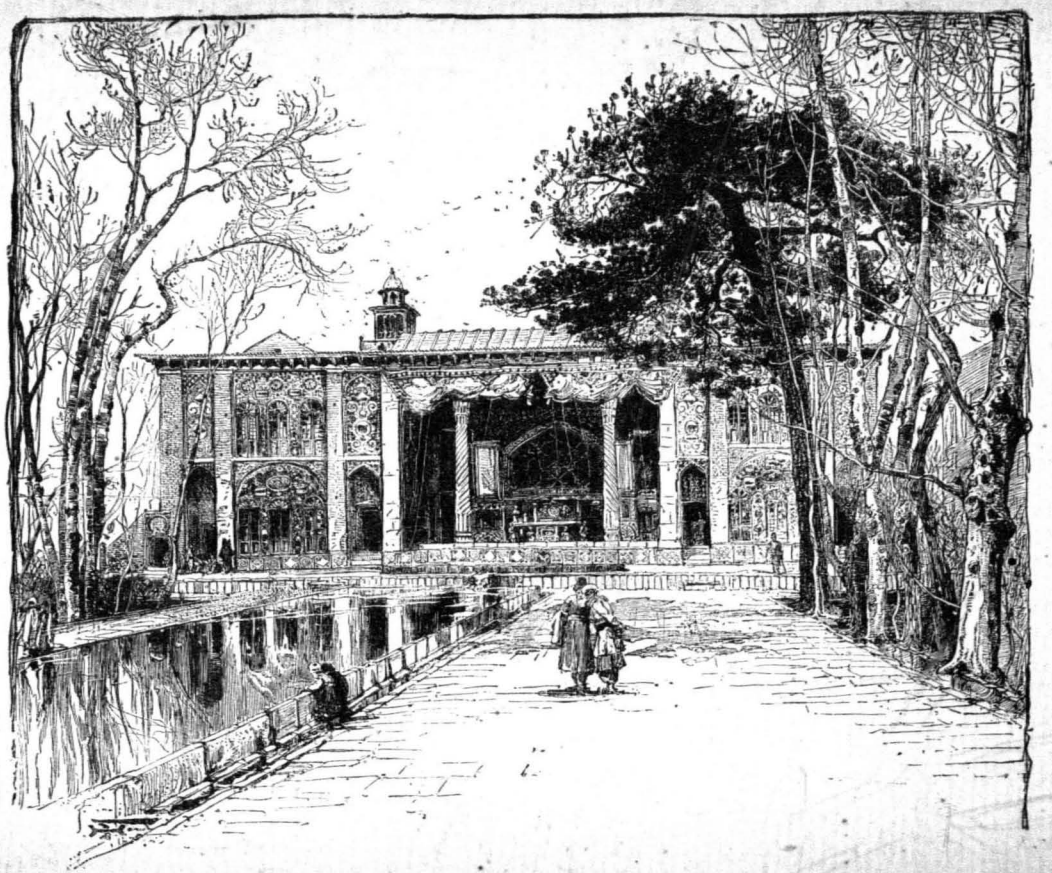
last degree. He has a taste for letters, and has, among other works, published a vocabulary in Persian and English and a geography of the world. His brother, the Moatamêh-ed-Doülêh, is also a man of stately presence, although bent with age. When he was viceroy at Shirâz he established a lasting renown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

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

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

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

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



PAVILION WHERE THE SHAH GIVES AN AUDIENCE AT NO ROOZ.

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

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

[1] A likeness of the Zil-î-Sultân is to be found on page 140.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

and is urbane in manner and of humane disposition. He is reputed by some to be intellectually weak; but from what official relations I have had with him and other sources of information, I am quite sure that if he gives such an impression it is done with a far-seeing purpose. He is also reputed to be a fanatic, and at the same time to favor the pretensions of Russia. It would naturally be his policy to appear to do both; but it is impossible to believe that he can be sincere, at least in the latter respect. To arouse the opposition of the Mahometan hierarchy of Persia by indifference to their power would be simply to add to the difficulties of a succession that is sure to be contested. To appear hostile to Russia would also make her the friend of one of the other Princes; while by making secret concessions to her he secures her assistance to place him securely on the throne. But while it would be perhaps too much to ask of Asiatic human nature to decline the offers of a powerful

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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