

ABOUT
PERSIA
AND ITS PEOPLE.

JOSEPH KNANISHU.







JOSEPH KNANISHU AND FAMILY.

ABOUT PERSIA AND ITS PEOPLE

—A—

DESCRIPTION OF

THEIR MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND HOME LIFE,

INCLUDING

ENGAGEMENTS, MARRIAGES, MODES OF TRAVEL-
ING, FORMS OF PUNISHMENTS, SUPER-
STITIONS, ETC.

BY

JOSEPH KNANISHU,
A NATIVE OF PERSIA.

ILLUSTRATED.

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PREFACE.

While out on lecture tours in this country, I have been asked many questions about the manners, customs, and peculiarities of my own people, the Nestorian Christians of Persia, called by their scholars Assyrian Christians, and abbreviated by the people into Syrians. These questions I have found it very difficult to answer so as to give anything like a clear picture either of the people or the country in the brief time that I had to answer them under such circumstances, and, hence this book which I now present to the public, with the earnest hope that it may find a welcome.

Should it sometimes entertain you and your children; should it succeed in arousing a deeper interest in Christian mission work among the Mohammedan nations; and should it sometimes prompt an earnest prayer on our behalf to the ever present God and Father whom we all try, though it may be in much human weakness and under vastly different circumstances, to love and to serve—then its object is accomplished.

JOSEPH KNANISHU.

Rock Island, Ill.

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MARRIAGES AMONG THE ASSYRIAN CHRISTIANS.

INTRODUCTORY.

Whatever causes operate to facilitate travel and traffic and make communication between long distances quick, easy, and inexpensive, tend also to bring men and women of vastly different tastes, temperments, circumstances, manners, and customs together not only in their business relations but also in the stronger and tenderer ties of friendship and marriage and through this contact their eccentricities, peculiarities, and provincialisms are worn down—each is thereby made like all the rest of the traveling world in manners and customs. All become cosmopolitan.

By just such means marriage alliances are formed in this country that would be unthought of, undreamed of in countries where such circumstances do not exist.

Quite the reverse is true of a country in which travel is slow and tedious, rendering all means of communication equally so, and making business transactions of any consequence exceedingly rare.

The people of such a country naturally settle down in villages and live there from generation to generation, each generation doing things just as their fathers and their grandfathers did. Nothing new comes into the village and nothing goes out of it. Marriage alliances are formed within the vil-

lage or town, as a rule, the people seldom going even to a neighboring village to seek wives.

The language, manners, and customs, the superstitions and traditions of such a people naturally become very interesting and very different from the rest of the world as we see it in this country.

This is especially true of the Asiatic countries in general, and of Persia in particular, being, as it is, an inland and mountainous country, with at present only about twenty miles of railroad and no navigable rivers, and inhabited by a people who have lived there continuously from times pre-historic.

The population of Persia is made up of many different tribes, nationalities and religions, each of which retains its own language, manners, customs, and peculiarities, and refuses to enter into any marriage compacts with the others. At present there are living in Persia Jews, Christians, Mohammedans, and many other tribes of different faiths, but none of them are allowed to inter-marry without exacting concessions from the others that they are unwilling to make. As for instance, the Mohammedans, being the ruling class, a Christian young man is not allowed to marry a Mohammedan girl and, at the same time, remain a Christian. For, although she and her parents may be at heart converts to the Christian religion, they are forbidden by law to change their faith; and, on the other hand, should they be sincere in their religious convictions, they will know that according to the law laid down in their bible, the Koran, no faithful Mussulman is allowed to marry an infidel or a Christian, unless he

should first become a follower of Mohammed and be circumcised.

Christian parents would never even think of giving their consent to the marriage of their daughters to the hated, persecuting Mohammedans, and furthermore they know that they should "not yoke themselves unequally together with unbelievers." Both parties being equally strong in their faith, equally governed by their prejudices, and equally unyielding, such marriages are not allowed to be consummated.

Occasionally a Persian or a Turk will capture and carry off a pretty girl among the Nestorian and Armenian Christians, compel her to become a Mohammedan, and then marry her. With these few exceptions each sect marries within its own bounds.

In some instances a stranger may almost gain the consent of those concerned to marry a beautiful and wealthy girl, but before the negotiations have been completed, her relatives will hear of it and propose one of their sons as a suitor, in order to keep her from marrying a stranger. Such matches are made from purely selfish motives and are seldom happy, hence a saying in Persia, "When cousins marry they are never happy."

In addition to the fact that people are usually little acquainted except in their own villages, there is another objection that weighs with them against having their sons take wives from other villages situated at any great distance from them, and that is the inconvenience of making the journey to and

from the wife's home in a country where there are no railroads and few wogon roads even. In case there is sickness, or death, or any occasion of great rejoicing, the young wife would naturally want to visit her old home, and then the journey would have to be made on foot or on horse back. If the distance were too long to walk and they owned neither horse nor donkey, the husband would be compelled to hire them and thus involve extra expense. These arguments may seem strange to the young people of this country who make their own matches without much consideration at all, except their own inclinations in the matter, but they must remember that in Persia it is really the parents of the contracting parties who make the matches and they weigh well the arguments pro and con, and furthermore the children are noted for their unquestioning obedience to their parents.

As has been stated before, the population of Persia is made up of many different tribes and nationalities and while this description is of the Assyrian Christians of Persia, it should be remembered that many of these customs are common to all the inhabitants of Persia, as for instance, their manner of showing their affection for the girl they wish to marry, their method of finding out whether the girl their parents wish them to marry pleases them, their sending a ring to her, their throwing apples toward her, her riding through the streets on horse back, the inviting of guests to the wedding, etc.

BETROTHALS.

The people of Persia live in towns, villages, and cities, so the boys and girls learn to know each other in their childhood, and form their childish attachments which often ripen into love as they reach the age of maturity.

Children develop very rapidly in the eastern or Asiatic countries, arriving, as they do at their maturity from twelve years old and upwards.

A boy may often love a girl very ardently for years but he is always so bashful that he tries to conceal his feelings which, however, will get the better of him to this extent that he will frequent the places where he is most likely to catch a glimpse of the object of his devotion. This his friends and relatives will notice and they may ask him if he loves that girl or tell him that they think he does when he will blush and deny it most vehemently. Sometimes he will feel so ashamed that he will even cry. The same is true of the girl. When the parents of the boy hear that their son is supposed to be in love with a certain girl, they take the matter under discussion between themselves. Should they dislike the girl or should their circumstances be such that they feel unable to assume this additional expense they will find many ways in which to show the boy their disapproval of his attachment. On the other hand, should they like the girl and her parents, and should they be well-to-do people, they will decide at once to have their son marry her if it is really true that he loves her, and not simply a report. But to ascertain the real state of the case is quite a difficult

task. A few boys may be found who are bold enough to speak truthfully with their mothers about it, but never one who dares discuss the subject of marriage with his father,—they have too much respect for him for that. So, in most cases, the parents will see their boy's most intimate friend, tell him what they have heard about their son and that they approve of his choice and would like to have him marry her. This friend will see their son, discuss the matter with him and report the true state of affairs back to his parents. Such consideration, however, is not accorded to girls. Their wishes in the matter are never consulted. If a girl's parents approve of an offer of marriage made for her, she has to accept it and marry as her parents dictate whether she likes it or not.

Upon hearing this report from his son's friend the father will say, "I may die soon; therefore I will try to associate my son with men before my death." Hence the expression, "Have you associated?" or "are you going to associate your son with men?" Which, of course, means that a young man is a mere boy until he is married, but after that he becomes a man.

Among all the nationalities that live in Persia the marrying of their children is considered a sacred duty, and the marriage of a son is looked upon as the happiest event in his parents' lives, and an occasion of the greatest rejoicing; for an unmarried man is considered the most miserable and wretched of beings. He is compared to a bird sitting on the top of a bush and not knowing where to fly. They have

little sympathy, however, for the marriage of widowers.

In some instances children are betrothed in their infancy by their parents. We have heard of a case where two men were the best of friends and decided between themselves, that if one of them should have a son and the other a daughter, they would marry them in order to perfect and perpetuate their friendship. In due time the two children were born, one a boy, the other a girl; their two cradles were brought together and the marriage ceremony performed.

In cases where children are engaged to each other when they are only a few years old, by their parents, who are good friends and wish thereby to perpetuate their friendship, the marriages are often quite happy. The two little ones as they are growing up know that they are intended for each other and do not allow themselves to think of any one else but grow to love each other from a sense of duty and filial obedience.

A father may try to have his son marry when he has just reached the age of maturity, when he does not love any one. Several girls of his village may be suggested to him and he may not like any of them, but his parents may require him to marry the one they like best. She may dislike him also, but that makes no difference. If her parents wish her to marry him she will have to submit. Sometimes parents may induce their son to marry an intelligent girl who is not beautiful by telling him the following story: "Once there was a king who disguised

himself in the costume of a dervish and went around among his subjects to see if they were happy and if justice was properly administered by his officers. In so doing it happened that once he became the guest of a weaver who had a very beautiful wife. The king was very much impressed by her beauty and repeated his visits so often that both the weaver and his wife discovered that he was not a dervish but their king in disguise, and that he was altogether too much pleased by her beauty. Then the weaver's wife colored some eggs—several of them she died in very beautiful rich colors, and several of them were not so pretty. When the supposed dervish came again she placed all of the colored eggs before him and asked which of them he thought prettiest. He, of course, picked out the pretty bright colored ones. She then asked him to remove the shells from all of them. When he had done so she asked, which are the most beautiful now? He, of course, replied that they are all alike. So it is with women, she told him, some appear beautiful, some do not, but remove their outward adornments and they are all alike—real beauty is in the intellect, the soul. Then the king understood that they had found out who he was and why he came so often, and he respected her wisdom and repented for the evil designs he had cherished with regard to her, and appointed her husband his vizier." So the parents will tell their son, "see to it that you marry for intellectual worth that is enduring and not for beauty, which at best is a fading thing of no real value." Christian parents will quote the words of Solomon, "Favor is deceitful.

and beauty is vain. But a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates."

If the parents of the boy are reasonable, however, they will not force him to marry a girl against his will, but will suggest several other suitable girls in neighboring towns or villages. The son will wish to see the girl before his parents make any arrangements for the engagement. So he will select his shrewdest friend as a companion and they will go to her village presumably on some business errand such as to purchase an ox, or a buffalo, or something of that kind, and coming to her father's house in this or some similar way, he will get a chance to see the girl, and not only see her, but coming thus unexpectedly he will find her in her every day clothes, looking just as he may expect to find her look most of the time in his own home should he decide to marry her. Should he wish to see her closer, he will follow an old eastern custom, and like Abraham's servant, when he went to get Rebekah for Isaac, he will pretend to be very thirsty and ask her for water for them to drink. In this way he will get a good look at her, but only for a moment, and under no circumstances is he allowed to speak with her of love or marriage or to enter into an engagement with her or kiss her as young people do in this country. To kiss a girl in Persia means that you rob her of her beauty, and is considered a great and unpardonable crime. After the two friends have seen the girl in question they will return home where they will at once be asked, "Is it a girl, or a boy?" If the boy

liked the appearance of the girl they went to see, his friend will reply, "It is a boy." If he did not like her his friend will say, "It is a girl." We will suppose that the boy was much pleased with the girl he went to see, and although he had such a plausible reason for going, her parents will in many cases know beforehand, or guess the real mission of his visit, or else they will afterwards find out that the two young men were there to see their daughter.

In case the parents of the boy are not so influential as those of the girl, they will not go immediately to make an engagement lest her parents might refuse their offer and thus disappoint their hopes and make them the subject of ridicule in the community. Sometimes they will consult a fortune-teller first, to find out if her parents will consent to her marriage with their son, and then after having waited long enough not to appear over-anxious about it, they will go to see her parents about the alliance. Her parents in turn may know of a wealthier boy whom they like better, too, and whom they think might become their daughter's suitor in case he finds out that she has another offer of marriage. So they will delay the giving of a definite answer to the parents of the poorer boy until the matter has had time, through the gossips of the place, to reach the ears of the wealthier boy. If the wealthier one becomes a suitor also, that usually settles the matter for the poorer one, unless he is reputed to be very bright and intelligent. In such a case the parents must choose between wealth and wisdom, and these two will be laid in the balance, so to speak. In the judgment of

some parents wisdom and intelligence will outweigh wealth, while with others wealth far out-weighs every other consideration. Hence the song, "O dear! they laugh. If I be poor, they will laugh. If I have knowledge as vast as the ocean but be poor, still they will laugh." Still the wise do entertain hopes that their wisdom may win in spite of the wealth of their rivals, and girls' parents do sometimes change their minds and choose personal worth instead of wealth at the very last moment.

The parents of a rich young man, however, always feel sure that they will not be disappointed when they go to make an engagement with the parents of a girl. They will appoint a certain evening to go to the girl's home, when she will be required to be absent. The boy's father will take with him an influential and highly respected man of the place to be his spokesman in order to gain influence and insure the success of their great undertaking, for this is considered an occasion of great moment in Persia. About eight o'clock in the evening of the appointed day these persons, the father of the boy and his most influential friend will go to the house of the girl's parents. They will sit and talk together for some time on general topics, until finally the friend whom the boy's father has taken as his representative, will come to the object of their visit by saying to the girl's parents, "You do not ask why we have come here." When they will ask why. He will then tell the object of their visit and they will all discuss it together. Finally this representative friend will ask the girl's father if he is willing to unite his

daughter in marriage to the son of this friend of his. If the parents are willing for the union the father will say, "Her mother knows." Then the friend will ask the mother the same question to which she will reply, "I have nothing to say, for my part, I can present her to you as a pair of shoes or a red apple; you had better ask her father." The same question will then be repeated to the father who will say, "I can give her to you as a handmaid." These answers from the father and mother mean that they are willing for the marriage to take place. So the representative rises at once and in a most grateful manner kisses the hands of the girl's parents and sometimes those of her other relatives present also.

The boy's father follows his example, after which they will thank them heartily for their courtesy and for their not having disappointed their hopes and plans. Lastly the consent of the girl herself must be gained, and everywise young man knows all about this. So he has already secured a ring for the girl and has sent it along with her father and his friend to her. She, as we have before stated, is not at home on this occasion. At this point in the proceedings the ring is produced, however, and handed to some old lady, a trusted friend of the girl's family, who takes it together with the one from the other young man whose parents her parents have kept waiting for an answer while they should have time to consider the matter, and goes to the girl wherever she may be stopping. She presents both of the rings to the girl telling her at the same time whose each one is and adding as she hands them to her, "You may

choose now whichever one you wish and put it on your finger and then give it back to me." This, of course, is a mild falsehood required by the customs of the country, just as in this country we always tell our visitors and callers that we are so glad to see them regardless of the facts in the situation. In this case the girl has no choice in the matter whatever, and she knows it perfectly well, so she puts on the ring belonging to the boy whom her parents have previously told her she shall accept after which she returns both to the old lady who takes them and goes back to the accepted boy's waiting father and friend and announces to them which ring she accepted and which one she rejected. In case the girl had but one offer of marriage and consequently but one ring carried to her, then the old lady will come back and smilingly say, "May her face be white! When I presented the ring to her she didn't say a word, but boldly took the ring and put it on her finger and returned it to me." Her putting the ring on her finger means that she is willing to be married to the boy who sent it. His father will then give her a piece of gold which she is to wear around her neck as a symbol of her betrothal. The boy's father gives also as presents, some silver money in a cup of water or wine to the girl's mother and to some of her female relatives.

During all this time the boy in question has been waiting most anxiously for news of his acceptance. In order to bring this news to him a little more quickly a friend of his, a boy of course, will try to be present during the negotiations if he can get into

the house. Usually he can not do this so he will either get up upon the roof of the house, which is flat and listen at the window, which is in the center of it, or else he will go into the house of the girl's next door neighbor, which is often separated by only a single partition wall through which the two families have made a small hole for communication with each other, and at this hole he will listen to their proceedings, going immediately at the close of them with the joyful news to the accepted suitor, who gives him a present according to his ability for this kind office.

The next morning everybody will be talking about the engagement and saying, "See, they have kissed hands and put on the token of the betrothal." This is the first part of the espousal of a girl. If the boy and the girl have been in the habit of speaking to each other heretofore when they had no idea that they should ever be given to each other in marriage that will all be stopped henceforth. The girl will avoid meeting her intended husband as much as possible. If she should see him standing in the street talking with any one in the way she was intending to go, she will turn and go in another direction. Should they through any chance meet, they will not speak, but she will cover her face instead. Whenever she meets any of the boy's relatives she will hide her face in order to show them and the public in general that she no longer cares for any one else. This covering of the face is considered an act of modesty and every self-respecting engaged girl is especially careful to do it in the presence of her intended father.

in-law and mother-in-law to show them that she respects the act of her betrothal and is perfectly satisfied with it.

Soon after the betrothal the boy's mother will send a breakfast to her intended daughter-in-law consisting of several loaves or cakes of bread called "kada." This breakfast is usually sent by some lady with whom the girl may talk. She will sit there and talk quite a while with the girl and the other members of her household. Sometimes she will even talk too much as ladies are reputed to be apt to do in all countries.

Some time after this they will decide upon some evening to spend at the home of the betrothed girl and will prepare and take with them refreshments for the occasion. Some of their most intimate and most prominent friends and a priest will accompany them. After supper different kinds of nuts and raisins will be served among which small lumps of sugar are sometimes found. Each guest upon being served will say, "May she be blessed!"

After the refreshments have been disposed of a ring will be brought, over which the priest will recite a service which is considered a part of the marriage ceremony. This ring is afterwards worn by the betrothed girl. If either of the two contracting parties should try to break the engagement after this they would be considered gross offenders and violators of the law of marriage, which among the Assyrian Christians is regarded most sacred. When this part of the ceremony has taken place the boy's parents will make an agreement as to how much

money they are to give the girl's parents for the purchase of her wedding outfit. They will at the same time fix upon a date when the wedding proper is to take place and the bride be brought to the home of her father-in-law.

After her betrothal the girl will be very busy sewing, preparing articles that are to be taken with her to the house of her future father-in-law.

These articles are all made by hand and consist of clothing, ornaments for the house, purses, and caps, and may cost from ten to thirty dollars according to their circumstances.

The caps particularly are very skillfully and artistically embroidered and all the articles are exhibited to all the invited guests on the last day of the wedding, and are afterwards given by her father-in-law and mother-in-law to their most intimate friends and relatives.

If they are neatly and beautifully made the bride will receive much praise and commendation for them, as the ability to use her needle deftly is considered one of the greatest of womanly accomplishments in Persia.

During the intervening weeks or months or even years between the betrothal and the marriage ceremony the young man will often try to see and talk with his fiancée, but if her parents are strict and conservative in their habits, careful of their good name, and have, as most Persians do, a profound respect for their national customs, they will allow him to see her only once during that time, then for only a few minutes and that too in the presence of her

mother or some other good woman. While making this call he will give her a piece of gold or else three or four dollars.

If, on the other hand her parents are careless and lax in their family government he will be allowed to see her oftener and although nothing more serious comes of it he will be seen going there, and her family will by this carelessness become the talk of the town and a dark blot will be cast upon their reputation, rendering it impossible for them to make advantageous marriage alliance, for their other daughters, should they have more.

Every young man, however, is allowed to send trifles as presents to his affianced bride at different times during the period of their engagement as expressions of his affection for her.

For instance, if he has a little sister he may send by her such trifles as these, a nice red apple stuck all over with cloves to make it fragrant, a little mirror having a small case on the back which he fills with chewing gum or cloves, some black antimony to blacken her eyes with, to beautify them and as a prevention of sore eyes, so prevalent in Persia, some good handkerchiefs, or best of all fifty cents or a dollar in money. These presents as stated before are tokens of his love. This is especially true of those that are sweet smelling, so often mentioned in Persian love songs.

“O that the morning wind would blow,
From the direction that my sweet heart lives,
A sweet fragrance from her to me bring
To cool off this my burning heart.”

A day or two before the appointed day of the wedding several persons, constituting a committee, meet together and appoint some suitable and capable man to be manager of the wedding and several young men to be put under his command and ready for his orders.

This committee also engages a competent old lady who knows how to cook well and economically to attend to that part of the wedding feast. This woman does all in her power to make the feast appear as bountiful as possible with the least possible expense. She has under her direction several other ladies as assistants and some young girls to carry water to the house where the wedding is to take place. This often has to be carried quite a distance.

The committee also decides how many days the wedding is to continue. Weddings usually occupy from one to four days. We will here describe a four days' wedding in order to give a full account.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE WEDDING.

The first day of the wedding is called "Animal killing day" and the evening of it "Steak eating eve." A couple of days before the wedding the father of the bridegroom sends out a number of young men as heralds to his friends and relatives in all the surrounding towns and villages to invite them to the wedding. These heralds put on their holiday costumes and take each one a long thick staff in his hand and set out on their errand. When they enter a house they greet the household by saying "Shla-mal-okoon" or "Sal-am-alakum." Peace be

unto you." They will reply, "Bshana," "Welcome." They then announce that we have been sent to you by Mr. and Mrs. — because they are going to have their son, "Babakhan" married. They wish us to tell you that this occasion of gladness is not theirs but yours, their friends' and relatives'; therefore they invite you to attend the wedding. They will be delighted to see you present, even with your whole family. The wedding will begin on — day next and will continue four days. They will reply "We are very glad of it. May it be a happy occasion from its very beginning to its close. May God make Mr. and Mrs. — very happy and permit them to see many more marriages in their family. May He also bless the young couple with a pleasant life together, and make them fruitful, the parents of many sons and daughters." Among the western Asiatic people, children are considered a blessing from God. Hence, when any one becomes angry with a childless married man he will taunt him with this fact saying that he is a bad man, that he is cursed from above and that is why he is childless.

After the foregoing conversation between the heralds and the head of the house the lady of the house will ask them to sit down and have some dinner, but they will thank her kindly saying at the same time that they must decline her hospitality and hurry on as they have to go to many more places yet. She will then give them as an expression of courtesy and friendship a couple of apples or quinces. As they are leaving the head of the house will tell them to say to Mr. and Mrs. — "May God bless their

wedding. We will try to come." Thus the heralds will go to each family of friends and relatives that are to be invited until they have seen all after which they will return to the bridegroom's father who will ask them how they found his friends and relatives and if they seemed happy and felt pleased about the wedding and if they intend to come. The heralds will, of course, give a correct report.

The parents of the bride to be will also send out heralds to invite their friends and relatives. They perform their errand in much the same way except that they are not quite so bold or happy or noisy as those sent out by the groom's parents. When they enter a house, after having extended the usual greeting, they will say Mr. and Mrs. — have sent us to invite you to come to the departure of their daughter "Parangez." They use the word departure because she will then leave her home and parents to go and live the remainder of her life in another home. They can use the word wedding but this other word in the Syriac language combines both ideas, that of departure and of a wedding.

The answers given are so nearly the same as those given the boy's heralds that we will not repeat them.

The parents of the boy give to each of their neighbor ladies several pounds of wheat flour to bake bread for the wedding. In Persia they bake very soft bread. Each loaf is about two feet long and one foot wide and almost as thin as blotting paper.

When the mother of the boy bakes bread for the

wedding she takes the first loaf she bakes and carefully wraps it up and hides it. The reader will find out by and by what is done with this loaf.

The Assyrian Christians of Persia lay much stress upon having a best man or groomsman and a bridesmaid. The office of these two persons is perhaps as old as their religion.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEDDING CALLED ANIMAL KILLING DAY AND STEAK EATING EVE.

In the afternoon of the first day of the wedding an animal, it makes no difference whether large or small, is provided. When they are going to kill it, two musicians previously engaged for the purpose begin playing, one on a drum, the other on a hautboy, and the groomsman must be present as a matter of course. When the first notes of music are sounded the hearts of the bridegrooms relatives swell with joy. If his parents, brothers, and sisters wish to dance they can do so now to show how very happy they are. If any outsider, however, should dare to take part in the dancing he would be reprimanded most severely by the people because he has no occasion for so great joy, and dancing except by the bridegroom's family and friends on such occasions is considered both to be very wicked and to tend to immorality. Dancing in Persia is quite different from the dancing in this country. There when a woman dances she takes a handkerchief in each hand swaying them up and down, to and fro, accompanying the same with a few simple movements of her body. We are glad to say that even

this comparatively innocent dancing is fast dying out in Persia, for dancing of whatever kind is demoralizing to any nation and should never be indulged in by Christian people. But to return to our subject. After the head has been cut from the animal, if the bridegroom happens to have an old-fashioned and superstitious mother she will at once take the knife used in cutting off the animal's head and close it with the blood still upon it and put it away carefully where she has already hidden the first loaf of bread. At the end of the wedding she will put this bloody knife and the loaf of bread under the pillow of the newly-married couple. She does this to ward off evil, to protect them from their enemies, and to preserve them from an evil eye, from witchcraft, or other magical arts so common in Asiatic countries and practiced among the Mohammedans.

Shortly before sunset of the first day of the wedding two heralds, a young lady and a young man, are sent out to each home in the village to announce that the wedding is beginning. They are followed by the musicians playing in the streets with crowds of children around them. The heralds go from house to house inviting each household by saying, "Mr. and Mrs. — are marrying their son 'Babakhan.' They say the wedding is not for them but for their neighbors, friends, and relatives, and therefore they bid you come." The heralds also tell them that the wedding is to continue through four days and what the arrangements are for each day. They tell them very explicitly when the bride is to be brought forth to go to the house of her father-in-

law. Each family makes the reply, "May God bless the wedding." The lady of the house may treat the young man to some apples, quinces, or nuts. If the village consists of a hundred houses or more the heralds go to each house once each day and repeat the same invitation. Should there be any who have a grudge against the groom's parents the latter will go and ask their forgiveness and give them a special invitation to their wedding. They also extend a special invitation to all the prominent persons of the village, such as the priest or the chief of the village. It makes no difference that these persons have already been invited by the heralds, custom requires that they receive a special invitation besides.

The bride's parents send out the heralds only twice in the village to invite guests to their home. These heralds are not so noisy as those of the groom and their invitation is not so general but is confined to their friends and near neighbors. The guests assemble only twice at the home of the bride's parents during the progress of the wedding.

Any one who is going to make a small present in money to the parents of the groom may go and have both breakfast and supper at their house.

On the afternoon of the first day of the wedding supper is prepared and at about six o'clock the guests begin to arrive. When all are present and supper is ready the manager of the feast asks all to be silent while the priest says grace. As he finishes many of the guests say "Amen, may it be blessed."

For supper each guest receives besides the regu-

lar supper a small piece of beefsteak. Hence the first night of the wedding is called steak-eating eve.

In eating they do not use knives and forks but their fingers instead. Nor do they have tables, but upon such wedding occasions they spread upon the floor a yard wide piece of muslin about twenty or thirty yards long. Upon this the bread and dishes are placed and waiters serve the guests. When all have finished eating the manager again commands silence while the priest returns thanks after which the guests disperse.

In addition to the steak we have already mentioned from two to four other kinds of food are prepared for the wedding feast. Two kinds being usually served at each meal. For instance they cut meat into small pieces, a trifle smaller than pieces of loaf sugar and mix with them either cracked wheat or rice and some onions and a little pepper and neatly wrap each piece in the young tender leaves of the white grape or bits of cabbage leaves. These wrapped up morsels are called "dolma." Grape wine is also served during the entire wedding feast.

SECOND DAY OF THE WEDDING, CALLED NANAGUSHT DAY AND HENNA EVE.

In the forenoon of the second day of the wedding it is customary for the groom's parents to send to the bride's parents some meat, some rice, and several pounds of butter. These things are sent by young men who carry them on their heads and are accompanied by musicians playing music suitable

for the occasion and followed by a crowd of happy people. Upon delivering this gift, called "Nanagusht" to the bride's parents, the bearers of it, the musicians, and the crowd all return again to the home of the groom's parents.

In the evening all the relatives, friends and neighbors of the bride's parents assemble at her home. She is allowed to invite all of her girl friends also and a free supper is served to all of them after which all await the coming of the party from the groom's home. After the guests of the groom's parents have had supper there, many of the men both old and young get ready to go to the bride's home. The young people and the heralds carry with them lighted lamps, tallow candles, and torches made by tying rags dipped in castor oil to wooden handles or sticks. In this way a gay procession is formed and, accompanied by the musicians, goes to the bride's home stopping at short intervals to shout "hurrah." Upon their arrival they are seated in order while the bride's relatives make a paste of the pounded leaves of the "henna." This put upon the hands makes them quite red. The best-man must now give a present of twenty-five or forty cents to the bridesmaid and about ten cents to the musicians whereupon they begin playing and the bridesmaid puts henna upon the bride's hands to make them red as an emblem of joy. In Persia red is considered the emblem of victory and joy, white of purity, and black of sorrow. Upon this joyful occasion the groom's nearest relatives and best friends sometimes indulge in dancing. After the henna has been put upon the

bride's hands the gay party returns to the groom's home where his best man puts henna upon the groom's hands but no more presents are required of him unless the musicians should ask a fee.

THIRD DAY OF THE WEDDING CALLED BRINGING FORTH
OF THE BRIDE TO GO TO THE HOUSE OF HER FATHER-
IN-LAW, AND PRESENT COLLECTING EVE.

On the morning of the third day of the wedding the musicians go upon the roof of the groom's house and play for about half an hour in order to announce to the village that breakfast is about ready and that this is the day on which the bride is to be brought forth from her home to go to the house of her father-in-law. After breakfast is served preparations are made for the bringing out of the bride in the afternoon. At about three o'clock in the afternoon the procession from the groom's home sets out in great pomp led by the musicians playing as loud as they can and the heralds shouting hurrah every now and then as they go to the bride's home. Arriving there quite a company of the relatives, friends, and neighbors of the bride's parents are found already assembled and a lunch is now served, after which the committee holds a meeting to make all further necessary arrangements. At the same time all the intimate friends of the bride are present and the lady who taught her to sew dresses her in a regular bridal costume, placing a wooden ring, about an inch thick and five inches high, upon her head. Over this a fancy veil is placed entirely covering her face and reaching the floor, while a bright red canopy is sus-

pended from the back of the ring completely concealing her form and dress even and making of her simply a beautiful figure. No one can see her face but she of course can see quite a bit through her veil. The wooden ring thus covered is now ornamented with tinsel to make it look like a crown as she is now queen of this occasion. Thus arrayed (if her parents are of the old type, and they usually are,) one lady takes her by the right hand another by the left and lead her close to the oven which is built of clay and is about four feet deep by two and a half feet in diameter. While the musicians play a most doleful tune she is led around this oven about seven times to signify that she is bidding farewell to the home of her childhood and young maidenhood with all of its tender ties, memories, and associations. The oven in Persia, corresponding to the English hearthstone, is considered the dearest and most sacred spot in the home since it is there that they bake and cook and enjoy the blessings which God daily provides for them. This is especially true of the Mohammedans who often swear "by this oven." Having been led seven times around the oven the bride coming in great humility and gratitude kneels at her father's feet and kisses them at the same time both she and her father weep most bitterly in view of their approaching separation. Then her father may kiss her and pronounce upon her a father's blessing, saying, "My daughter may God bless you and keep you and make you happy and successful, the mother of sons and daughters." Usually he will say "the mother of seven sons and two daughters."

Then the bride goes in the same way and takes leave of her mother and the other members of her family, after which the groom's brother binds a girdle around her as an emblem of strength, (for which service a cap is placed upon his head. This custom of pronouncing a benediction upon a bride is very old and may have originated among the descendants of Shem, who continued faithful in the worship of the true and living God for we read in the 24th chapter of the book of Genesis that when Rebekah was ready to depart from her home with Abraham's chief servant Eliezer to meet Isaac "They blessed Rebekah and said unto her, 'Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.'" The custom of veiling the bride is also a very old one, for we read in the same account of the marriage of Rebekah to Isaac that when Isaac went out into the field to meet Rebekah and she saw him and was told by Eliezer that it was Isaac she alighted from her camel and took a veil and covered herself. It is a means of expressing her maidenly modesty and humility and the depth and genuineness of her love. It is no doubt some such scene as this that the Apostle Paul has in mind when he compares the love of Christ and his church to that of husband and wife.

After the girdle has been put upon the bride the musicians continue playing their doleful tune. By this time her father-in-law has a horse ready for her outside the house while the streets and tops of the houses are filled with noisy crowds of people eagerly waiting for the appearance of the bride. Every

bride in Persia must try to ride gracefully for this custom of veiling a bride and having her ride through the streets on horse-back means a great deal to the people there. Thus veiled and seated on horse-back she is presented to the public as a beautiful figure only, and as such excites no feeling of sensuality in the minds of the spectators. The demonstration shows her modesty, humility, and moral purity to the eyes of the public and proves that she has strictly observed all the laws of chastity and is thus found worthy the honor of becoming a bride, of being gorgeously dressed in a bride's costume, of being put upon horse-back and escorted like a queen by a crowd of people, by music, dancing, shouting, hurraing, and shooting of pistols for such honors are never accorded a bad girl in Persia.

The ladies conduct her out but they are stopped at the door by her brother who asks a brother's customary present which is at once given him by the bride's father-in-law. After this she is taken to the horse she is to ride, and a low table is placed under her feet. As she springs upon the horse every eye in the crowd is fixed upon her to see if she rides gracefully. If she does she is greatly praised and admired for it by the crowd of joyful spectators and those who were unavoidably absent ask with much concern if she rode gracefully. As soon as she is mounted the musicians change their tune to a happy and exciting one. Her parents and some of the other members of her family remain at home, however, weeping for although they are glad she is being married they cannot help feeling sad at the

thought that henceforth her place in their home circle will be vacant, she is no longer one of them. This is why the musicians played such a mournful tune.

Her father-in-law now throws some pieces of copper money upon her head to show his liberality and there are always a number of children present to snatch them up as they fall to the ground. One of the bride's relatives accompanies her holding the bridle of her horse. They take off one of her shoes and pass it several times around the horse's neck and then replace it upon her foot. This custom is copied from the Mohammedans who think in this way to avoid a misfortune that might otherwise befall the groom. She then moves on through the streets, the crowds on the house tops, and in the streets follow her, the musicians continue their playing while the whole party are led by the groom's relatives dancing as they go. If there is a superstitious old man, a relative of the groom, in the crowd he will follow the bride's horse watching closely so that no one may tie knots in the hairs of its tail and thereby bring misfortune upon the couple in their married life. When they have gone a little distance one of the groom's maids, (a term and office for which there is no equivalent in English), meets them carrying a little wooden or copper tray on which are placed several loaves of bread and a thin saucer containing some coals of fire upon which she has placed some frankincense. This she hands to the bride lifting her veil as she does so. The bride takes it, smells the sweet odor, places from five to ten cents

on the tray and returns it to the bearer. The bread is emblematic of blessing and the frankincense of good wishes.

When they have gone a little further another lady comes to meet the bride carrying a child two or three years old, a boy of course. She lifts the bride's canopy and places the child in her lap. The bride kisses him, gives him a few pennies and returns him to the lady. The child signifies good tidings. The groom now puts on his costume. Upon the cap that he wears he places a crown made of the red feathers of the flamingo. He also wears a sash and a dagger which represent kingly power. For this occasion his groomsman must also prepare a "Jumlana," that is a piece of wood about two feet square mounted upon a wooden handle about six feet long. This wooden square is bored full of small holes into which wooden pegs are driven. Upon these pegs there are stuck apples, pears, colored eggs and four pomegranates one on each corner and two small wooden doves are perched upon the upper edge. Strings of figs, dates and pop-corn are also placed upon this "Jumlana" and the back of it is covered with a red handkerchief. It then looks like a beautifully ornamented banner and is carried by his comrades along with him as he now goes upon a conveniently located house top and sits there like a king upon his throne to watch his bride approaching.

One of the heralds is given a chicken from the bride's home as a present for the groom. This is called the groom-bird. The bride's father also

sends him some clothing consisting of a coat, a purse a handkerchief and a cap. The latter must be beautifully made for he wears it on this occasion and people look at it very closely to see if the bride can sew nicely. This is also sent by the herald who in turn gives a present to the lady who has taught the bride to sew. A cap, purse, and handkerchief are also sent to the groomsman for which the groom's comrades pay a present of from twenty-five to fifty cents to the herald after which the groomsman wears them. At this time the bride is seen slowly advancing followed by a crowd of spectators on the streets and upon the house tops. Hence a saying in Persia "when there is a wedding three persons are happy—the two who are being married and the one who is crazy in the village." While the bride is passing through the streets some of the spectators upon the house tops throw handfuls of raisins upon her head. These symbolize sweetness and carry with them the wish that the bride may become very sweet-tempered. At this time the groom feels most proud and happy as he sits among his companions upon the top of a high house dressed in his wedding clothes, and sees his bride coming to him upon horse-back dressed in her bridal costume with the glittering tinsel upon her crown and the heralds firing pistols and guns and shouting hurrah at each short distance. Hence they say, "A man is twice happy in this life—when he begins to walk and when he is going to be married."

When the bride approaches to within a stone-throw of the place where the groom is awaiting her

she is stopped and his comrades rise and three times they give him a sip of wine. As he swallows each sip they shout for joy most vociferously and the best man hands him an apple taken from the "Jumlana" which he kisses and throws toward the bride. The wine symbolizes joy and blessing and the apples, love. He may just for fun try to hit the bride with the apples for it would not hurt her to speak of even if he should strike her dressed as she is. In this, however, he seldom succeeds. The apples usually miss their mark and falling to the ground are quickly snatched up by the crowd of children around her. The child who gets the first apple thrown is to be the first one of that group of children to be married. After the apples have been thrown at the bride they will not take her to the house of her father-in-law but to the house of some one of her friends or relatives or those of the groom. Sometimes there are quite a number of families who want to entertain her and each one will try to take her from the others. Sometimes they can not agree as to which one is to have her but will quarrel and even fight over it.

When it is finally decided the bride will move on again to the house of her entertainer still followed by the crowd. Then the musicians will stand by the door and ask a present of her host who will give them about ten cents.

When the bride alights the crowd of children are on the lookout to see who is to take the horse back so they may have fun throwing stones at him on the way. In the meantime the groom has been waiting on the house top entertained by his com-

rades, but now having disposed of the bride the musicians and the crowd will return to the groom whom they now escort to the house of some friend who is to entertain him.

After the musicians have received their fee of about ten cents from his comrades the groom comes down from the house top. As we have mentioned before he is wearing a crown because he is considered a king just now, so his comrades have to form themselves into a body guard for him in order to keep the crowd surrounding and following him from snatching his crown from his head. This they always try to do and when any one succeeds in capturing it the groom's comrades have to pay a small sum of money to the captor in order to get the crown back again for its owner. Having safely reached the home of his host the groom now takes a good bath.

On this third day of the wedding they decorate the ceiling of the groom's house. The houses in Persia have one room only. They are built from thirty to fifty feet square and have near the center of the floor a circular oven four feet deep by about two and a half feet in diameter. This oven has no pipes consequently the smoke escapes into the room first afterwards it is drawn out through the window built near the center of the ceiling and kept open day and night. This window draws out all smoke and impurities from the room and constantly admits fresh air. But the ceiling of course get very black and so on wedding occasions they decorate these black ceilings with spots of white flour making them

look like sections of the firmament thickly dotted with stars.

About six o'clock the heralds followed by the musicians go out to gather in the guests who have come from the surrounding villages to the groom's home. When most of the guests are assembled they go in the same way to bring the bride's father and other relatives and friends assembled at her home. They give the father of the bride a seat among the most prominent guests and upon his entrance into the house they may dance before him to express to him their joy and respect. The groom's father greets him and the other guests by saying, "You are most welcome. By your coming you have brought many blessings here. Every step you have taken in coming here you have stepped upon my eye and my head." The guests will reply, "May your wedding, be a blessed one," or "May God bless your wedding, your son and your daughter-in-law and make them the parents of sons and daughters. May God prolong your life and give you many occasions for rejoicing."

If the groom's father can sing he will now sing for them or else he will get some one else to sing. Then he treats them to a glass of wine each and is very merry with them. But the bride's father sits very quiet and talks very little. Hence the saying when one is sitting in a company but says nothing, "He sits like a bride's father."

All present will be on their best behavior on such occasions for guests are gathered from surrounding places and each village takes pride in being known

in the other villages for its good breeding. Should any one misbehave or act in any way ungentlemanly he is at once cast out of the house.

Wine having been served the musicians play while the manager of the feast places the dishes on the cloth. This done silence is commanded while the priest says grace, then supper is served. A number of young ladies with whom she is allowed to talk carry supper to the bride at the house of her entertainer and sit and talk quite a while with her. Supper is also sent to the groom because this is an old custom, food prepared at the house of the wedding being supposed to taste better than that cooked elsewhere. When supper is over the heralds and musicians go and conduct the groom, his best man and his comrades bearing the "Jumlana" to his home. Upon entering the groom shakes hands with all the guests assembled and then he and his comrades sit in a group together to see who will break the "Jumlana" and to how much the presents will amount. The groom's father then says to the collector of presents, "I present the 'Jumlana' to Mr. —." The collector presents it to the person mentioned saying, "The groom's father has favored you with the 'Jumlana'." He thanks him and says, "I will pay two dollars as present and break it," or else he will indicate some other guest to whom he will present it. In this way it may go to many of the guests. Whenever any offers to break it the collector makes it known to the head of the house who knows from the beginning whom among his guests he considers worthy of breaking it. When any one

offers to break it whom he thinks worthy the honor he will say, "He may have it" otherwise he will say, "May God increase his happiness. Pass by him." For it was an honor only that it was presented to him. When a suitable person for the breaking of the "Jumlana" is found the collector announces it by saying, "May God increase the happiness and prosperity of Mr. — he has promised to give so much for the breaking of the "Jumlana." If the man happens to be stingy he will take it home with him but if he is generous he will strike it against the pillar in the center of the house to break it and allow the eager children to pick up whatever was on it. The breaking of the "Jumlana" is considered quite an event, like the capturing of a banner from an enemy's army. After the breaking of the "Jumlana" the collector of presents brings out one at a time from one to five coats. These coats have been made from material purchased by the groom's father and are now presented to the groomsman and the most prominent relatives or friends who are going to give the largest sums of money as presents on this occasion. These are brought one at a time to the priest and it is announced for whom it is made. The recipient comes forward and presents a few cents to the priest who thereupon recites a service over the coat. The favored one then takes the coat and gives a few cents to the musicians who play while he puts it on. The other coats are presented in the same way. The collector of presents now begins his work going first to the one who it is known will give the most. The collector reports each amount to the

herald who publicly announces it by saying in a very clear and distinct voice, "Mr. — has given so much. May God increase his property so that his place may never be vacant on such occasions." In this way each guest will be seen hence, it is called "collection of presents eve." The head of the house at the same time finds some one who can write and gets him to take down the name of each contributor and the amount given by him. This account is carefully kept when he is invited to the marriage of his guests' sons he will consult his list and take him an equal amount with a few pennies added. Those guests, however, who have no sons to marry will never get back what they give. When the collection is finished it is carefully summed up and turned over to the groom's father, the herald at the same time announcing the whole amount which varies from five to fifty dollars and adding, "May God increase the property of the friends, relatives and neighbors, for they have contributed very liberally. May each soon have a marriage in his own house. We are especially thankful to our ally who has given us a bride worth millions of dollars. May her vacant place in his home soon be filled by a worthy daughter-in-law." In so saying they both honor and comfort the bride's father who feels really sad on this occasion. After this a cap embroidered by the bride is put upon the head of the collector of presents or else he is given the handkerchief which formed the back of the "Jumlana." Then the music begins again which is a signal for the dispersing of the guests. The guests each on leaving take with

them from one to three of the guests who have come from the neighboring villages to stay with them over night.

The groom with his comrades go to visit the bride in the evening. Formerly this was very hard to do as her entertainer would be afraid that the groom might try to kiss her and thereby bring disgrace upon his whole household for kissing even between husband and wife in the presence of a family is considered a shameful thing, while such parting scenes as are witnessed daily at every railway station in this country would not be tolerated in Persia. Usually the bride's host is at the home of the groom when this visit is made and her hostess and the other ladies in the house lock the door to keep the groom and his party out. In such a case they sometimes go up upon the house top and let him down through the window which is near the center of the house to see his bride for a few minutes. This custom, however, is fast dying out and the more sensible one of exacting a promise of good behavior before admitting them is taking its place.

In entertaining a bride once when the groom came to visit her we required him to solemnly promise that he would conduct himself as a gentleman before we opened the door for him. This he readily did so he and his comrades were invited in. The bride still dressed in her wedding costume withdrew to one side of the room. They came in and we all talked together for a few minutes after which they left.

Riding on horseback is the special privilege of a

virgin. A widow who is going to be married is not allowed this honor unless she is to be married in another village when it will of course be necessary for her to ride. Should she marry in her own village a small company of ladies go in the evening and take her directly to the house of the groom. A widower, moreover, never throws apples at his approaching bride, but sometimes, just for fun, they provide him with a couple of onions which he throws at her.

Sometimes it may happen that an old maid who could not marry in her own village is to be married to a man from a neighboring village. In this case the arrangements are the same as those already described. On the second or third day a big crowd comes for her, some riding others walking, while a horse is sent especially for her. If they have come from a distance of fifteen or twenty miles they will have to stay over night and the people of the village will entertain them, two or more in each house, very hospitably so that their village may be well thought of. The next morning the bride mounted on horseback rides on through the village followed by a crowd of people to the village limits. It is customary to give fowls to those who come for the bride consequently those who have many chickens present their guests upon leaving with a hen or a rooster. Each one receiving such a gift carries it with him at the same time feeling very proud of it.

Just as such a bride is crossing the village limits some of the people who want to be funny take out old kettles that can not be used and break them after

the bride. These useless old kettles are symbolical in their minds of the useless old maid. The best way of getting rid of the old kettles is to break them and their breaking them after the bride means that they are likewise getting rid of her.

FOURTH DAY OF THE WEDDING CALLED BRIDE CHAMBER DAY.

In the morning of this day a regular breakfast is not served but a lunch instead. This lunch is also sent from the groom's home to every house in which there are guests of the wedding. Some is sent to the bride and some to the groom also but they must not eat it for it is an old custom that nothing must pass their lips on this day until the wedding ceremony has been performed. At about eight o'clock in the morning of this day the heralds accompanied by the musicians and followed by a big noisy crowd of people go and bring the bride to the house of her father-in-law. All who failed from any cause to see her before try now to catch a glimpse of her, for although they are accustomed to seeing just such sights every year, a new bride never fails to attract a great deal of attention and to excite much curiosity because there are so many unusual things done on such occasions and each one has so much significance attached to it.

The bride is again dressed in her regular wedding costume. She does not ride this time, however, but walks led by two ladies holding her hands, one on either side. The heralds shout "hurrah" at each short distance while some of the groom's relatives

may go just in front of the bride dancing as they go. The groom comes at the same time with his comrades who act as a guard for him so that his kingly crown may not be snatched off. He goes upon the roof of the house and stands right over the doors while the bride enters through it. When the bride reaches the door an old lady takes a little butter and puts it upon the top of the door casing and upon the threshold then she takes hold of the bride's right foot and placing her heel in the butter slips it in the same. This is done that the bride may bring many blessings, or herself be a great blessing in her future home, butter signifying blessing. At the door sometimes a washtub is also placed under her feet for similar reasons.

The groom now returns to the house of his entertainer. He has stood over the doorway as she entered in order to keep himself from becoming burdened for it is seriously believed that as the bride goes through with the different parts of the marriage ceremony marked changes take place in her, the first of which occurs as she is entering the house of her father-in-law. It is the influence or burden of these changes that will oppress the groom unless he stands high up over the doorway while they are taking place. Sometimes as soon as the bride has entered the house they take bread and crumble it over her head as symbols of the blessings which they hope may accumulate and rest upon her making her a blessing in the house. The same crowd that accompanied the bride now goes and brings the groom to his home after which the priest comes to

perform the wedding ceremony. At some, though not at all weddings, they take seven threads of as many different colors, and twisting them together, place them upon the head of the bride as her coronation for she is upon this day considered a queen.

At the beginning of the wedding ceremony the priest takes two threads, one red, the other white, twists them together and places them upon the groom's head, then he takes two shorter ones of the same colors, twists them in the same way and places them upon the bride's head. These threads are emblems, the red happiness, the white of purity, and their being thus twisted together means that whereas the bride and groom were unlike as these two colors. They are now to become one flesh, as Adam said of Eve, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." The longer threads upon the groom's head mean that his hand shall be longer over the bride, that is that he shall exercise authority over her as Paul says in his epistle to the Ephesians, "Wives be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord; for the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the Saviour of the body." The priest also takes a little wine and water and soil from a church and mixes them together in a dish with a cross. The wine and water signifying blessing and mixing as they do indicate that although the bride and groom have heretofore been two distinct elements they will henceforth be united as one and become truly one flesh. When the priest has come to the proper place

in the marriage ceremony he takes this mixture of wine, water, and soil and, having stirred it up thoroughly, with the cross he places the cross upon the head of the groom directly over the twisted threads at the same time giving him the mixture of which he drinks the greater part. Then the priest places the cross upon the bride's head in the same way while she drinks the remainder of the mixture. The soil that is mixed with the wine and water is a mournful suggestion, and means that along with all blessings and happiness there are found blended sorrows also; that while sharing together the former they must also share the latter; that in the midst of life and happiness they must remember death, "For dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return."

The cross in the Nestorian church is a sign of victory, since salvation has been wrought for us through Jesus Christ upon the cross. It is also a banner and in this double sense is used on this occasion as the groom is on this day considered a king and the bride a queen.

There are many superstitions connected with the marriage ceremony. For example, the priest in reading the marriage service says "Amen" at the end of each paragraph, now if any man present should secretly tie a knot as each "Amen" is pronounced it would cause a misfortune to the groom. The samething would occur should any man go upon the house top during the marriage ceremony. Should a man buy a new knife and close it while the bride is riding on horseback that too would bring the same misfortune upon the groom, but upon the

knife's being opened the trouble will disappear. The same thing would happen should a man begin closing a new knife as the priest begins reading the service and shut it tightly as he finishes, or should he begin slowly bending a needle as the priest begins reading the service and stick the point of it into its eye as he finishes. In both cases the spell is removed as the knife is opened and the needle unbent.

Very often it has been found that either the bride or the groom and sometimes, though not often the bridesmaid or groomsman even may have felt very badly for a short time during the marriage ceremony and this fact has led to the belief that there is really a virtue or influence in the marriage ceremony and that it is the burden of this influence that has made them feel badly. Immediately at the conclusion of the ceremony if the groom should put his foot upon the foot of the bride at the same time slightly pressing it this burden would fall upon her, but if she is quick enough and thoughtful enough to do this first she thus places the burden upon him.

A dish prepared by the groom's mother is now given the newly married couple. The priest may also eat a part of this dish. The bride is taken to one side of the room where no one may see her eat and there she eats in company with her maid of honor. The groom eats where he is. This dish is served them just at this point to strengthen them, for it should be remembered that they have eaten nothing this their wedding day until now and furthermore the marriage ceremony is very long lasting almost two hours, so they naturally enough feel

faint by the time it is finished.

Although the Christians of Persia do not believe that marriage is a sacrament they do believe it is instituted by God and is very sacred and produces decided influence upon those entering into its holy bonds.

The groom's parents now come to congratulate him and their daughter-in-law but it is customary for his comrades to require the payment to them of a small present before allowing it. This settled they offer their congratulations. They usually congratulate the groom first and afterwards the bride but the groom's mother is apt to reverse this order of things in her anxiety to see the face of her new daughter-in-law. This she does by lifting up the veil from her face in such a way that no one else may see her face and then kissing her on each cheek. She then kisses the groom, the bridesmaid, and the groomsman in the same way on each cheek. The father kisses the groom and best man and they in return kiss his hand, then he either kisses the bride and her maid of honor upon their foreheads or else he simply places his hand upon their heads instead of kissing them. A young man congratulates them by shaking hands with the groom and groomsman and kissing them, then he places his hand upon the bride's head and either shakes hands with the bridesmaid or else places his hand upon her head also. He may wish to shake hands with the bride too but this he cannot do because her whole person is entirely covered and her hands are not to be seen. Any lady present is allowed to lift the bride's veil and

kiss her and also kiss the bridesmaid but no one else is allowed to see her face. An old lady or a relative of the groom or groomsman may kiss them also, otherwise ladies simply shake hands with them. An old gentleman kisses the groom and best man and either kisses the bride and bridesmaid upon the forehead or else lays his hand upon their heads. Some ladies imagine that girls grow beautiful as they are being married. Such ones come and raise the bride's veil and look at her face and after kissing her say, "She is very pretty, her eyebrows are like the crescent of three nights."

In the afternoon the heralds accompanied by the musicians go out and conduct the guests to the house where the wedding is being celebrated. Then the relatives and friends of the groom and also those of the bride prepare some food which is called "Bride chamber-day lunch" and bring it to the house of the wedding. This food is usually put into something like saucers or sauce dishes and placed upon large wooden trays about four feet long by about one and a half feet wide, or circular brass or copper trays about three feet in diameter and carried by young men upon their heads. Each lady who has prepared food accompanies the young man who carries it and presents it to her husband who shares its contents with those sitting nearest him. When this group have eaten all they wish, he designates to the waiter some other friend or respected person to whom he wishes to have the tray presented, whereupon the waiter places the tray before that person, who, when he and those near him have

eaten, sends it to some one else and in this way it goes its round and what still remains on it is finally put where the other food prepared for the wedding is kept. The bride's people come in the same way with their lunch, and place it before their relatives and friends in just the same way. But custom requires that the bride's mother shall not go in company until forty days have expired after the wedding. It must have been some such wedding as this that our Lord had in mind when he said, "Can the sons of the bride chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them."

Some of the ladies who bring the bride chamber lunch at the same time bring as presents to the bride pieces of cloth two or three yards each. Upon entering the house they go and kiss the bride as has already been described and then place the piece of cloth upon her head. In a few minutes the mother-in-law comes and removes the present from her head and takes care of it. Trays are also presented to the groom and his comrades. After this and quite early in the evening supper is served to all of the guests, and to those who brought lunch also. Supper being disposed of, the musicians play while the lady who taught the bride to sew opens her trunk which has already been brought to the father-in-law's house, and exhibits the presents made by the bride for this occasion. These, as has been stated before, consist of articles of clothing, ornaments for the house, money purses, and caps and are all carefully and neatly made by hand and may have cost from ten to twenty dollars, that depending upon

the circumstances of the bride's parents. When these presents have all been shown and examined the guests say "May her face be white."

Some of these presents may be given to the guests on this occasion while others may be given them a few days after the wedding. The guests now disperse, some of those from the surrounding villages may now return home while others may visit longer in the village of the wedding as the proverb puts it, "If the manger is high guests cannot stay long; but if it is low they can."

In the evening the groom gathers together all of his comrades and all who have done him any service during his wedding and gives them a supper after which this party of ladies and gentlemen join hands forming a circle and jumping or dancing to the music go round and round much as children play in this country. While they are thus going round and round some of the young men of the party may slip pennies into the hands of the musicians as a present. In case the musicians do not play for them two young men sing by turns as follows:—

First young man—"I am the spikenard, the lily, and
the rose."

Chorus—"O sweetheart! oh! (Ey yar aman).

Oh! Oh! (Aman, Aman).

Ravisher, Oh! (Dilbar, Aman).

Oh! Oh! (Aman, Aman).

Second young man—"In this corruptible world I
will laugh no more." Chorus:

First young man—"If my heart would bear all these
diseases I will die no more." Chorus:

Second young man—"Verily, verily I have offended the creator." Chorus:

They keep on with this monotonous singing and jumping or jumping to the music for several hours or until quite late at night after which they take leave of their host and go each to his own home thus ending a wedding among the Christians in Persia.

If during the wedding days the weather has been cloudy they say, "The bride has a sad countenance." If there has been snow or rain they say, "The bride has licked dishes." If it has been bright with sunshine they say, "The bride has a smiling face."

LIFE AFTER MARRIAGE.

A bride wears her wedding costume for a week or longer after her marriage but she does not keep her face quite so closely covered as she did during the wedding for the customs of the country allow her to lift her veil a little now. She stays in the room in which her husband's family live but sits in a place apart from them. Whenever a man enters the house she rises, whereupon he says, "Thank you bride, sit down, your present upon my eye." By rising from her seat she means that she is ready for his service and he appreciating her politeness promises her a present which of course he never means to give. She continues this practice for a week or two. At the expiration of seven days after the wedding the bride's mother sends her a bar of soap and a comb by a lady who gives her a good bath. She now lifts up her veil a little more and begins to do little services about the house, such as sweeping

giving water to the children to drink, etc., and in this way gradually becomes acquainted with the family, its methods, and routine of work. She does not make fires, bake bread, milk the cows or spin, however, for a whole year after her marriage. Her mother-in-law does all of that work in order to keep her well and cheerful and make her become attached to her new home and its inmates and satisfied with her marriage. She does not go out for several months, and in some instances not for a whole year, for so does custom require of her. She does not speak to her father-in-law or mother-in-law except through a third person as for instance a little boy or a little girl may be the means of communication between herself and them. As a form of greeting persons she simply places her hand over her breast and bows before them.

At the expiration of forty days after her marriage the bride's mother is allowed to see her. She in company with her husband and some other relatives go to visit the bride at this time carrying with them some suitable food.

Whenever there is a wedding procession or a funeral procession in the village every bride is instructed to go upon the house top and remain there until the procession has passed so that she may not become burdened by it.

Among the Assyrian Christians it is customary for a bride's parents to send a man to bring her home to visit for two or three weeks at Easter time. A few days after she has gone to her old home her husband follows her to visit there also. Upon his

arrival his father-in-law gives him a present and when the visit is ended he takes his bride with him and returns to his own home. After this she can do some out-door work. If a bride is good-natured and well-bred she will keep on her veil, (Yashmak), and not speak very openly with her father-in-law and mother-in-law and will be highly thought of. But if she is ill-tempered the report will soon be circulated that she has quarrelled with her mother-in-law or has been fighting with her sister-in-law. Of course such a bride will ignore all customs and talk with her mother-in-law, but even such a one will hardly dare to speak much with her father-in-law for he is absolute master of the house and it would be a serious matter indeed to offend him.

When a child is born to a newly married couple, as is usually the case within a year or two, if it happens to be a boy their joy is beyond measure and the young mother is greatly praised and considered a very fortunate woman. Should the child be a girl the rejoicing is not so great but they say, "That is all right. The next one will be a boy and it is good to have a daughter first to grow up to help her mother take care of her younger brothers and sisters." They take just as good care of the girls, however, as they do of the boys. On the same day in which a child is born the mother or some other near relative of the child's mother cooks several eggs in butter and takes them to the young mother who eats some of them.

The services of a physician are seldom called for or needed on such occasions. When a child is seven

days old, a number of ladies come to visit the mother, some taking with them either a dish of food or a piece of cloth about two yards long. The food is eaten by the family. If the child were a girl they congratulate the parents saying, "May the foot of your maid be blessed, (that is may her coming into the world be a blessing), and may God preserve her to you. We hope the next one may be a boy." Should the child be a boy they say, "May the foot of your young man be blessed. May God spare him to you and make him like hair that is never exhausted but grows again when cut or pulled out. May God not think one son enough for you."

The maternal grand-mother brings a cradle and swaddling clothes for her grand-child.

When a child is born it is customary to send from seven to ten "kadas", a kind of pastry something like the pies made in this country, to the gentleman who acted as groomsman for the child's parents. One of these cakes he returns by the bearer according to the customs of the country while the remainder are kept for his own use. The duties of this office of best man among the Assyrian Christians are much more important than those required of the same office in this country. He is never a blood relation of the groom but from the time of his becoming best man until his death he is the best and most intimate friend of the family and is classed among their nearest relations. He with his wife if he is married or with some other female relative if single act as sponsors at the baptism of each child born to the couple whom he served as groomsman,

he himself handing the child to the priest for baptism, and paying him a few pennies as a present for the service afterwards. He must also be present at every funeral in the family. At the end of the year of mourning and on the Easter Sunday coming within the year he must go to the bereaved home to comfort them. The family whom he thus served as groomsman perform the same services for his family and that of the maid of honor. A best man and a maid of honor are never married to each other in Persia as they often are in this country. Because they regard themselves as if they were members of one family and mutually comfort each others families in cases of bereavement going as has already been mentioned to comfort them at the Easter coming within the year of mourning and at the end of the year of mourning, the ladies carrying with them white veils to replace the black ones worn by the women of the bereaved family, and speaking words of comfort to the sorrowing ones. They realize that the only true comfort for a Christian is to be found in Christ, and so they remind them that Christ is indeed risen from the dead, and that He has taken their departed loved ones to be with him in glory. They say, "May God comfort your hearts and add to your own lives and the lives of your children the years of the lives of the departed ones." If it was the child of a young couple they will add, "May God keep you and yours and give you many more children.

I have thus described at length betrothals and marriage among my own country-men for two rea-

sons. Because they are so totally different from anything of the kind in this country, and because my people having come so slightly in contact with the western nations are so primitive in their thoughts and methods and lives, and so wholly governed by their prejudices and their ancient customs that they are even yet practically the same people among whom Christ's life on earth was cast, and so by understanding them well we can the better understand the setting in which we find the life of the Great Teacher who spake as never man spake, and can the better understand his frequent use of the marriage feast as an illustration to make plain some deeper spiritual meaning.

Nor can I leave the subject without reminding each individual reader that whereas to the marriage just described, only the friends and relatives of the bridegroom's father were invited and that they usually belonged to one nationality and were invited for a few days only, there is to be another great wedding arranged by God himself. He has his heralds out now inviting every one who will to come. No matter to what nation, tribe, or tongue they belong. They are asked to lay aside every garment of their own making, such as personal merits and good works, and to cloth themselves in Christ's perfect robe of righteousness and come to this blessed marriage of the Lamb, which shall continue through eternity. For all who thus come there is room and no one thus clad need have any fear of being cast out. All are welcome, "even with their whole families", if they are only thus prepared and once

admitted they are blessed indeed for they thus gain access to all the bounties and glories and happiness of heaven and have the bridegroom always with them. So the heralds have been announcing for almost two thousand years, and so shall they continue to announce this marriage feast and invite the guests until there shall not be any left to teach his neighbor saying, "Know the Lord", for all shall know him. Then shall the heralds make their last announcement, the music shall be sounded, the guests gathered in and the doors closed. May we all be found among the blessed ones inside the father's house when the doors are to be shut. May we also come without being blinded by any narrow prejudice or bigotry that would cause us to miss the blessings that Christ has placed for us all along the way, as the following story illustrates:—Once a man was traveling a long distance and on his way in front of him he saw a bridge that he must cross and he said to himself, "I will see if I can not cross that bridge just as well with my eyes closed." So he closed his eyes and crossed the bridge all right, with them closed. After him there came another man who also had to cross the bridge and who found on it a purse of money. When the first man knew this he was very sorry that he had been so foolish as to purposely shut his eyes while crossing the bridge and thereby miss the money that would otherwise have been his.

* * *

MARRIAGE AMONG THE MOHAMMEDANS.

The Mohammedans of Persia marry very young,

sometimes even younger than the Christians, that is from the age of twelve years and upward. The same conditions that bring this about among the Christians exist also among the Mohammedans, that is, the intimate acquaintance of the children in their childhood, the early age at which they reach their maturity, and the desire on the part of their parents to have them marry as young as possible. Sometimes parents, as has been stated before, in order to perfect a friendship existing between themselves betroth their children while they are quite young, and sometimes a man may notice that a certain family have daughters who are good naturally, both capable and obedient and at the same time healthy and beautiful. He naturally enough wishes to secure the hand of one of these girls for one of his sons, and in order to make sure of this and to make it impossible for any other man to ever set eyes upon her he gets her parents to consent to having them betrothed while they are yet children and when they are grown the marriage is consummated. All these motives are quite common among all the nationalities that live in Persia.

After the engagement has taken place it is customary among the Mohammedans for the affianced boy and girl or their parents to choose each a representative who meet, or else the parents themselves meet, and decide what or how much money the boy shall pay to this intended wife, if at any time after they are married he may wish to put her away by divorce. This money is called "kaben", and the amount varies from ten to one thousand dollars,

that depending largely upon the standing financially of the contracting parties. The sum being fixed, the two representatives or the parents of the engaged couple, as the case may be, go to their priest and have him write two letters of documental testimony, one each for the betrothed couple, in which the fixed amount of "kaben" is stated. These letters, called "kaben letters", are kept by each party to the compact, and whenever the husband grows tired of his wife or dissatisfied with her he simply pays her the stipulated amount of "kaben" for her maintenance and is thereby divorced from her.

This makes it exceedingly easy to be divorced and many evils result from it so that the Mohammedans themselves, experiencing the evil consequences of this lax law, try to make divorces impossible by fixing as "kaben" something that cannot be obtained. For example they sometimes fix upon eight or more pounds of mosquitoes or house-fly wings as the "kaben" a husband must pay his wife if he would divorce her. This he, of course, can not pay.

My brother-in-law lives in a village about one half of whose inhabitants are Mohammedans and the other half are Christians. He writes that in his village there was a Mohammedan woman whose "kaben letters" required that if her husband wished to divorce her he must give her about thirty-two pounds of mosquitoes. In the course of time he began to dislike her and intended to divorce her but it was impossible for him to furnish the stipulated "kaben". He was determined, however, to be free from her and so he began to mistreat and abuse her

until she herself changed her "kaben" from thirty-two pounds of mosquitoes to a piece of vineyard and when he gave her that she was divorced.

Sometimes instead of what has just been mentioned, or a sum of money, or a vineyard, or a field, they will write in the "kaben letters" that if the husband would put away his wife after they are married he must give her an arm or a foot. This also being impossible to furnish, if the husband really wants his wife divorced he will so abuse her that she will be obliged to say, "Kabenem halal. Janim azad." Which means, "I make my 'kaben' legitimate to you. Now let my soul free." She will then be divorced and glad of her escape, even though she receives either nothing or only a small sum of money.

A Mohammedan is allowed to marry four wives. All four marriages are legal and all four of the wives are considered to be on an equality with each other. He is expected to love them all equally well and can divorce any one or all of them at his pleasure. Mohammed to check the frequency of this practice decreed that a wife divorced for three successive times should not be taken back a third time by her husband until she had been married to another man and divorced by him. After that her first husband could marry her again. These four wives just described are all legal and the number of such, that a Mohammedan is allowed to have at any one time is limited to four, but there is another kind of wife or concubine called "seka." To the number of these that a man is allowed to have there is no limit. He

is allowed to have as many of them as he wishes and can get. There are several causes found in their beliefs for these plural marriages among the Mohammedans. They believe it is a sin for any woman to not be under the law of marriage, and according to their religion man is regarded so vastly superior to woman that it is perfectly proper for him to rule over many of them; and dominant over these reasons, whether they recognize it or not, is, no doubt the natural depravity of human nature, making laws both in morals and in religion to suit its inclinations and fitting its beliefs to its desires.

After these "kaben letters" have been written and sealed by the priest a few days are allowed to pass before the parents of the two contracting meet to decide upon the amount of money to be furnished by the bridegroom's father for the purchase of clothes, "Parcha", for the bride and to appoint a day for the beginning of the wedding. All this arranged both parties go to a city where the bride's mother, at the expense of the bridegroom's father buys as much clothing as she can for the bride. The reason the bride's parents have for buying as much as possible for their daughter is that they, or particularly the mother, feels that her daughter is now going to a strange place to live among strangers and that if she should need more clothing in a short time after her marriage she would be too bashful to ask for it. So her mother, now that she has the opportunity, provides her with enough to make her feel happy at the thought of her marriage and to last until she becomes sufficiently acquainted in her new

home to ask for what she needs. After this the bride is busy making her wedding clothes, or "Parcha." Sometimes she calls in her friends to assist her and at the end of two weeks every thing is ready. About two or three days before the appointed day of the wedding the bridegroom's father sends out his heralds to the surrounding villages and towns to invite his relatives and friends to come to the wedding.

It is customary among the Mohammedans to provide the heralds with apples, roses, cloves, and other aromatic things. When they are going to invite a person they first present him with an apple or a clove, and then extend him greetings from the bridegroom's father with much flattery and many embellishments ending with the statement that he sends his love and asks you to come to the wedding. To this he may reply, "Allah mubaraklasen", which means "God bless it, we will try to come." Should the bridegroom's father invite any one who is of higher rank himself such as an official dignitary he would not send heralds to such a one but he would go himself carrying with him a present suited to his rank. This he would present to him and in a dignified and appropriate manner invite him to the wedding. This person of higher rank may then in turn send him a present worth many times more than the one he received and in addition may send a couple of musicians to the wedding to play in his honor.

MARRIAGES AMONG THE HIGHER CLASSES OF MOHAMMEDANS.

We will first describe weddings as they are con-

ducted among the higher and wealthier classes of Mohammedans and afterwards those among the common people, though in many respects they are alike. Here we will speak only of the differences peculiar to the higher classes.

Among the higher classes of Mohammedans who live in cities and are very wealthy, sometimes the weddings continue even over an entire week. They have such long weddings because they are rich and in order to add to their reputation of wealth and superiority. Several male cooks are employed and every one who is invited attends the wedding every day during the whole time, and all are provided with good substantial meals, consisting mainly of rice and meats. Several couples of musicians are hired for the entertainment of the guests. Also some Gypsies to dance and a number of jugglers of superior skill who make sport and amusement for the crowd by their tricks of extraordinary dexterity. Some story-tellers, singers, and players on different kinds of musical instruments are also employed for the occasion. Sometimes prominent wrestlers are also secured. At the time appointed for the wrestling match to take place crowds of people flock to the place from every direction. The musicians play exciting tunes while the wrestling continues. Sometimes they are a very even match and continue wrestling a long time before one of them succeeds in throwing the other. Again it may happen that in only a few minutes one may throw the other whereupon the victorious one receives the prize previously provided by the groom's father.

These performances are all arranged as a kind of program for each day and are given at some place where everyone has the privilege of coming to see



MOHAMMEDAN WRESTLERS.

From T. H. McAllister, Optician, N. Y.)

and hear them. In the evenings they have a display of fireworks for the enjoyment of the crowd. Sometimes in the evening after the guests have had supper they will select one of their number who is eloquent and witty and elect him as president, "beek", and another they elect as head servant, "parash bashi", to execute the orders of the president who is invested with full authority to punish, fine, or flog any one that is present. He may command the

head servant to bring into his presence a certain man, then to ask him what his occupation is and all about his circumstances. All this being reported to the president, he tries to entangle the man, then holds him guilty and commands the head servant to make him dance. If he can dance he does so, otherwise he will be fined or punished. The fine is, of course, only nominal and is seldom really exacted. In this way, and by a thousand other tricks, that they play on the bridegroom's relatives they increase the mirth of the wedding festivities.

On such occasions the women do not appear among the crowds of men to see the performances. Usually they cover themselves and go up upon the house tops to see the out door exercises.

At weddings Mohammedan ladies and gentlemen never mingle together but have separate apartments, one for the men and another for the women. No man is allowed to enter ladies' apartments except the musicians, most of whom are Christians. They are allowed to enter partly because they know that Christians are faithful and pure and can be trusted and partly because they have so little regard for musicians, whether Christian or Mohammedan, that it is not considered a shame for women to dance before them as it would certainly be to dance before other men.

Even when the wedding continues for more than a week the bride is usually brought to the house of her father-in-law on the fourth day. No matter if the bride and groom do live in the same city and no matter how close together their houses are the bride

must still ride on horseback in going there because it is customary to do so.

About the time the bride is going to ride on horseback the streets and house tops are thronged with noisy expectant spectators while the firing of guns and pistols and the notes of exciting music fills the air. For this reason a very gentle horse is secured for the bride, one that will not become frightened at all this noisy tumult. In the afternoon of this fourth day all the musicians and a crowd of people some mounted on horseback, others walking, forming a large procession slowly proceed to the bride's home where they are welcomed upon their arrival by a volley from the guns and pistols. A little feast is now had at the bride's home while the bride herself is in another apartment with all of her female companions. These lady friends dress her in an elegant new bridal costume and cover her with two large square veils called respectively, "Charkat" and "Turma." Charkat is a scarlet veil which covers her entire body except a small space in front which is covered by a beautiful thin white silken veil called "Turma." Those who see her thus covered may suppose that she cannot see at all but that is not so for she can see quite well through the thin silk veil that covers her face. No one can see any part of her except her feet and when she appears on horseback it is simply as a graceful red figure. At this time the streets and house tops are crowded with joyful spectators. When the bride is ready the musicians play a sorrowful tune while she bids farewell to her parents who kiss her and

pronounce their benediction upon her and then weep after her as she is taken and put upon horseback. As soon as she is mounted the musicians change their tune from a doleful to a happy one while another volley from the guns and pistols pierces the air. Her father-in-law throws a handful of copper money upon her head to show his wealth and liberality. It is customary among the Mohammedans to send a lady called "Yedak" along with the bride to take care of her.

The bride's belongings and gifts from home are packed in a trunk and carried by a man on his back after her. A head groom, "Jelodar" holds the horse's bridle.

Some cousins of the bride and groom or else some of their faithful servants accompany her on the way to take care of her and to see that no harm befalls her. One man holds a mirror toward her face on the way, which means may her way through life be bright.

In this way the procession moves on toward the groom's home, while the way is crowded and the house tops are covered with people. Some of them throw candy, and others throw raisins upon the bride's head as she passes to express their wish that she may be very sweet.

The Mohammedan bridegroom does not go upon a house top to throw apples at his approaching bride as the Assyrian Christians do. But instead, while the bride is coming he and his comrades mounted on horse back go to meet her. When they have approached to within a stone's

throw of her the groom kisses an apple and throws it upon his bride or sometimes he may ride up and put the apple into her hand. Immediately after doing this the groom and his party quickly turn and ride away as fast as they can. They are pursued by some of the horsemen of the bride's party who try to catch the groom. Should any one succeed in doing this he would receive a present in keeping with the rank and circumstances of the bridegroom. In some places the groom stands in front of the door or on a balcony and when the bride has approached sufficiently near he throws an apple upon her.

After this the bride is taken to an apartment prepared for her. During this fourth evening of the wedding the bridegroom's father may receive some presents from his friends. The feasting continues through several more days and at the end of the previously fixed time the wedding is considered ended and everything is quiet again.

MARRIAGE AMONG THE COMMON MOHAMMEDAN PEOPLE.

Among the common people the duration of the wedding differs according to the different financial circumstances of the contracting parties. If a man is poor, his wedding may occupy one day only. If he is in moderate circumstances his wedding may continue through two or three days and if his circumstances are good, through four days. Weddings occupying four days are most common, however, among all the different nationalities that live in Persia and are considered most complete.

If a young man marries a girl who lives in an-

other village about twenty-five miles distant, and if his wedding should occupy four days, then he gives meals once or twice a day to all who have come to his wedding and on the third night small sums of money are given as has already been told in our account of marriages among the Assyrian Christians.

The purchasing of the bride's wardrobe and the inviting of friends and relatives are the same as among the higher classes of Mohammedans.

On the second day of the wedding a party of from twenty to forty young people and a few experienced old men set out to bring the bride whose home we will suppose is twenty-five miles distant. Those who have horses ride, while those who have none, walk. Toward evening the bride's people expect them and upon their arrival in the village, music is sounded and the bride's relatives and friends meet them and exchange greetings, then all go to the bride's home. At this time the young people sometimes dance and attract the village people around them and make it look as though there were a wedding in the village.

Of course when the bride's home is twenty-five miles away from that of the groom this party will have to stay over night because it would be too late to return the same day. Many of the village people who are already invited will now come to the bride's home and after having had supper take with them each family, one or two strangers, and entertain them over night. The next morning all again gather at the bride's home and have breakfast. The bride is then dressed in her wedding costume and

having bade farewell to her parents, as has already been described, is taken out and put upon the horse brought for her.

Crowds gather around and follow her to the village limits. Chickens called bridegroom's birds are given to some of the young people of the party as among the Assyrian Christians. These fowls symbolize fondness.

The headgroom "Jelobdar" and the lady "Yedak" accompany the bride. On this way homeward the people of each village or town through which they pass will be found collected together in the streets and on the house-tops to enjoy the passing of the procession exclaiming as they pass "Mubarok, mubarok," Be blessed, be blessed."

Sometimes a poor man in order to get a present from the bride's father-in-law as they pass through his village will take a sheep and place it before the bride's horse pretending that he has brought a sacrifice to offer to the bride. Her father-in-law, understanding the situation gives him a few pennies whereupon he takes this sacrificial sheep and goes his way. In the same manner a musician sometimes takes his instrument and placing himself in front of the bride's horse begins playing and singing with great enthusiasm as though he were paying homage to the bride. He too receives some money and then goes his way.

Perhaps in another village the bride's horse may be stopped by a wrestler who standing in front of it says, "I will wrestle with any one of you who thinks he is strong enough. If he can throw me you may

go in peace, but if I throw him then you must pay me some money." If there is any one in the party who thinks himself strong enough and dares do it they have a wrestling match right there, if not the bride's father-in-law gives him a few cents and that settles the matter.

After they have passed through all the villages on the way one of the mounted men, called for this service "the bridegroom's hat bearer", speeds his horse forward at a rapid gait in order to reach the village considerably in advance of the rest of the party. Upon his arrival he announces in a loud voice to the anxiously waiting bridegroom and those that are rejoicing with him the joyful tidings that all has gone well and the bride will soon be there. A shawl is then put around the neck of his horse as a symbol of intrepidity. The bridegroom and his comrades now get ready to go and meet the bride. Occasionally the groom and his comrades walk to meet the bride, but that is exceptional, as a rule mounted upon horseback they ride to meet her and the groom either going close enough puts a red apple into her hand or else he kisses it and throws it at her, turning quickly afterward and riding away as fast as he can because it is quite a common thing among villagers to stone the bridegroom after he has thrown the apple. The bride is now taken to an apartment accompanied by the lady "Yedak." From ten to twenty of the young people standing in the groom's yard or in the middle of the street in front of his house join hands forming a semi-circle while the man at the head of the line takes a handkerchief or two in

his hand. The music starts up and they all dance to the music, slow or fast as the music goes, while the head man waves his handkerchiefs in the air and leads them in a circle. During this performance the head man or some of the other men who are dancing occasionally slip a penny or two into the hands of the musicians whereupon they exclaim in a loud voice, "Mr. — has given us a dollar, or a large sum of money. May God bless him and increase his happiness and his property!" As the musicians and the men dancing become excited they move very rapidly attracting around them all the people of the village. The position of head man is considered quite a distinction because all follow him and so it sometimes happens that others become jealous of him and try to take his place. This goes so far at times that it even results in fights for the honor of being head man.

In the evening of this day supper is served after which each one gives his present in money just as among the Assyrian Christians. The wedding thus ended everything is again quiet.

Among the Mohammedans it is customary to try if possible to have the bride and groom meet on Friday night, since Friday is to them what Sunday is to Christians. The lady "Yedak" is present at this time. If the bride is found to be a true virgin and to have violated none of the laws of maidenly chastity there is great rejoicing over the fact. But if the reverse is found true of her she is covered with a dirty carpet and, followed by a crowd of people dancing as they go, is taken back in disgrace to her

father's house.

A bride is not allowed to speak with her mother-in-law or father-in-law or any member of the family who is older than herself and very little with their neighbors. Neither she nor her husband ever address each other, except when quite alone, by their names. Nor do they ever speak of each other in that way but use the personal pronoun instead, as "he" and "she."

At home a bride must have her head covered with a veil about two square yards. One end of which covers her mouth close up to the nose and is called "yashmak." When she goes out her entire person must be covered.

If asked anything by her father-in-law or mother-in-law she must answer them either by signs or else if her husband or a small child is present she may speak to them and they repeat her answer to the person who asked the question. Neither is she allowed to eat with her father-in-law or mother-in-law but must serve them as a waiter, not that they regard her as a slave but because the customs of the country require it. When they have finished eating she will eat either alone or with some of the younger members of the family. She is also allowed to eat with her husband. In this way every bride must live for a few years, after which she becomes more familiar and is allowed to talk with a good many persons with whom conversation was forbidden before. After several years she may even speak with her mother-in-law but never with her father-in-law.

SOCIAL LIFE IN GENERAL.

MAGICAL ARTS, WITCHCRAFT, AND SORCERY.

To the superstitions connected with marriages and engagements among all the nationalities and sects that live in Persia and particularly among the Mohammedans there is no end.

Should it happen that a husband does not love his wife, then either she or her mother will go to a magician who will write her a prescription and tell her in what part of her clothes to sew it. Also one for her husband which she must secretly sew in his clothes and this will make him love her. Or else he may tell her to cut some hairs from her head and a few from her husband's head and having burnt them together put the ashes into a little water and have her husband drink it and that will make him love her. Of course they do different things for different persons and the magicians do not all work the same spells.

For example, a magician may write a prescription for a woman whose husband does not love her and tell her to put it under the hinge of the door of their house and as much as the door is opened and shut so much will her husband's love grow toward her.

Another magician may write some magical words upon an egg which of course contains vital energy. This spell lasts for forty days but after that it must be renewed again.

Another may write some magical words upon a nail which the lady is instructed to place close to

the stove or oven where it may become heated. Just as the nail grows hot in the same proportion does her husband's love grow warm toward her. This spell is considered very good and lasts for a whole year. Magicians are in great demand for in cases of sickness also the people apply to them as they do to doctors in this country.

In cases of sterility women also apply to the magicians who in such cases fill a copper bowl with water and build a small fire. The magician then requires the lady to sit close to this while he takes a large sheet and covers himself and her, while the smoke fills the space. He now utters some incantation in the Arabic language which means that he is calling out the devils. The lady now looks upon the water which by some extraordinary spell he makes to move in the bowl. This the lady sees and at the same time he rubs together some needles that he has with him or some thing else that produces a chirping sound like a bird. This the lady hears and verily believes that devils are now present. After this he writes a prescription and instructs her what to do with it and tells her that sometime in the future she will dream that she sees a man coming to her and giving her a red apple. That is to pre-
sage the birth of a child. In order to make her doubly sure that this is to take place he tells her that she will find a birthmark upon the face or some other part of its body. She returns home expecting that year and next and the next and so on to become the mother of a child, but of course never does.

When a child is born to a bride they stick needles

in her clothes and let them remain there for forty days so that no demons may approach or touch her. Should the child get sick or feel badly they suppose that an evil eye has beaten him. Should they suspect any person who is supposed to have an evil eye they will try secretly to get a small piece from his clothing and burn it under the child. In so doing the evil eye is supposed to be put out.

Formerly when a child was born they would not carry with them a coin or piece of gold because that would make the child become sallow.

When the children of a family become fretful they suppose that an evil eye has touched them. Then they take a little piece of dough and cast it into the oven. As it swells and bursts they think the evil eye is put out.

In the clothing of Mohammedan children can be found various prescriptions which are bound in a triangular form. On them are written some words from the Koran or from some other magical books. These are supposed to protect the children from bad spirits and other dangers.

Around the necks of children beautifully polished agate stones are suspended with different things engraved upon them such as; "There is no god but God", or "There is no god but God and Mohammed is his prophet", or the names of the grandsons of Mohammed, "Hassen and Hussein." Some old people even carry such amulets with them because they believe that any thing on which is written the name of God or that of Imams has wonderful protecting power against all great calamities.

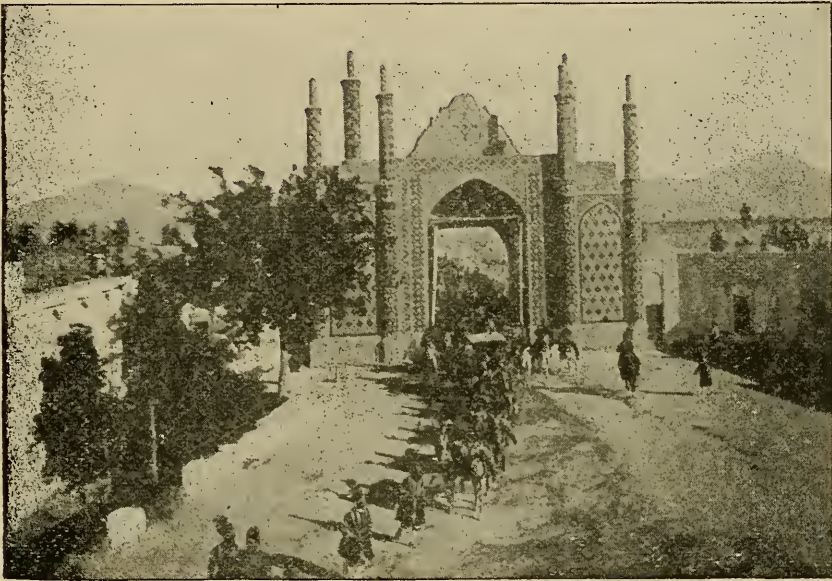
They do not keep records of the births of their children consequently there are millions of Persians who do not know how old they are. Should parents be asked their children's ages some of them who have wonderfully good memories may be able to tell the exact age but others will mention certain noted events that took place either in the same year in which their child was born or several years before or after he was born. Now they are beginning to keep such records, however, because many of them can read now, formerly this was not the case.

CITIES, WALLS, AND GATES.

The custom among Asiatic people of building walls and gates to their cities is as old as their civilization. They stand in the bible as prominently as Mount Zion. They were the protection of ancient cities even as they are in this day. They are looked upon with much veneration and their strong walls give much comfort to the inhabitants. Hence Isaiah uses the expression, "Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation and thy gates Praise." In the twenty-first chapter of Revelations the walls of the New Jerusalem adorned with all manner of precious stones and the twelve gates are spoken of. David addresses them saying, "Lift up your heads O ye gates: And be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors: And the King of glory shall come in."

Most of the cities of Persia are surrounded by high mud walls so that no one may enter except through a gate. There are several gates for each city and each gate has a special name.

The walls are built from twenty to twenty-five feet high. Cities are built principally of sundried brick and mud. Very few of them are built of burned brick, while wooden houses are unknown in most parts of Persia.



A GATE OF THE CAPITAL CITY, TEHERAN.

(From T. H. McAllister, Optician, N. Y.)

The best and most majestic view one gets of eastern cities is upon approaching them when the gates are seen with their colored tiles and their pillars beautifully ornamented with color and built high above the common top of the gates and the domes, minarets and steeples of the Mohammedan mosques or temples inside the enclosure of the city. At each side of the gates small towers are built with small windows or openings in them. In times of danger soldiers or gate-keepers sit in these towers and

watch the enemy and fire upon them if they approach too near.

By the side of the gates there are sometimes rooms for the storing of arms belonging to the gate-keepers. There are also places for the latter to sit. During the day city gates are kept open and very often people congregate there to enjoy themselves, because it is cool there in summer, and to see the people coming in and going out of the city. Sometimes the gates are crowded with people who assemble there for the transaction of public affairs or out of curiosity to see a parade, or a procession, or the punishment of a criminal, or to hear a proclamation.

The gates of cities are kept open until ten o'clock in the evenings. At that time they are shut and locked so that no one can enter into the city and no one can go out of it. The law requires that after ten or eleven o'clock in the evening every one must lock his door and sit in his own house and not go out, while the policemen with their dogs walk the streets all night. If they find any one on the streets after the appointed time, he is promptly arrested. Should he try to escape the policeman will set a dog upon him and in this way catch him. When anyone is arrested the policeman will ask him if he knows the password for that night, which can always be obtained at the police station during the day. If he knows the password the policeman will let him go, if not, he will keep him and maltreat him until the next morning. If the policeman finds out that he is a good man he will accept a present from him and

let him go, but if he is a bad man such as a thief, the policeman will abuse him in order to exact a present from him, and on the next morning will punish him and let him go. In this way order is kept in their cities during the nights.

Most of the city streets are crooked and too narrow to admit a carriage. The business part of cities



SPICE SELLER.

(From T. H. McAllister, *Optician, N. Y.*)

is built of burned or red brick and consists of rows of arched corridors with stores opposite each other, the space between them being about fifteen or twenty feet. There is only from about three to five feet

between those on the same side. So when one goes to buy anything he is called to by shop-keepers on either side of him. When shop-keepers have no customers they sit each one in front of his own store and talk together.

In the picture can be seen how a spice-seller sits with all his wares before him. When a customer comes to buy any thing he simply reaches out his hand and gets whatever his customer wants without rising from his seat. He seldom gets up to get anything.

Every trade has its own quarters, for instance one quarter is for dry goods, one for shoes, one for groceries, one for grain, one for blacksmithing, etc.

As one walks in the streets of a city he sees only dry mud walls with no windows facing the streets and all of the same color. In these mud walls ugly cracks are formed in drying to which a Persian poet has compared laughing lips saying, "laughing lips are like cracks in the walls." In the cracks of these high walls sparrows build their nests and children are often seen climbing up ladders and capturing the young sparrows from their nests. Sparrows are considered magical food.

As the houses in this country are surrounded by fences, so the houses in Persia are surrounded by mud walls from ten to fifteen feet high, so that people in the streets can not see into their outer court or yard.

Since so few of the people can read there is very little demand for newspapers. There is one weekly, however, published in the capital city, Teheran.

Whenever an edict is issued by the governor or the Shah some men having very strong voices are employed, the edict is put into one or two short sentences and these men are sent out to proclaim it in the different quarters of the city and sometimes at the gates. They proclaim the edict in a very clear loud and distinct voice so that every one may hear it.

They also do the same thing when they have property lost. For instance if a Mohammedan should lose a black donkey, then he would employ such a man who goes through the streets crying as loud as he can, "Two dollars reward to any one who has found a black donkey!" He continues in this way until the lost donkey is found.

Any thing like the waterworks to be seen in this country are unknown in Persia. There water is led from the rivers through small canals running through each yard in the city, and in the center of each yard there is a small pool for the family's use, in which they wash their hands and faces and even feet when necessary, also clothing, etc., thus making the water quite dirty. For such purposes cold water is used and little or no soap. Those who happen to live near the source from which this water is taken have comparatively clean water for such uses but the further away they live the worse the water becomes. For drinking and household uses they have especial places where pure clean water may be had.

In large cities there are people who like to have their daily supply of water furnished regularly and without any trouble to themselves. Such persons

employ water carriers like the accompanying illustration. The water carrier has a bottle made of skin on his back. This he fills through the opening



WATER-CARRIER.

(From T. H. McAllister, Optician, N. Y.)

where he holds his hand. He probably has several customers to whom he furnishes so many bottles or skins of water every day. Having fulfilled his contract each day he again fills his bottle of skin and goes through the streets crying, "Who wants water? Who wants water?" Then those who need water

call him in. Possibly they want only half a bottle of water, in such a case he slowly loosens his hold on the neck of the bottle and allows the water to gently flow out until the bottle is half empty, then he tightens his grasp and the water stops. For half a bottle of water he may receive one cent, for a whole bottle, two cents.

These bottles of skin are mentioned in the bible over twenty-five times. For example, Gen. xxi-14, "And Abraham rose up early in the morning and took bread and a bottle of water and gave it unto Hagar putting it upon her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away."

I Sam. xxv-18. "Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves and two bottles of wine."

Judges iv-19. "And he said unto her, (Sisera to Jael), give me I pray thee a little water to drink for I am thirsty; and she opened a bottle of milk and gave him drink."

Matthew ix-17. "New wine into new bottles."

Ps. Lvi-8. "Put thou my tears into thy bottles."

Thus we see that bottles of skin were in use four thousand years ago and they are still using them in Persia for the same purposes for which they were then used. They fill them with water, wine, milk, butter, cheese, and honey. They are especially serviceable to the nomadic tribes who live in the stony mountainous regions and move from place to place. They load their furniture on the backs of animals and the bottles of skin are particularly convenient at such times because they are not easily broken.

HOUSES.

The wealthy people of Persia who live in the cities have elegant palaces containing different apartments for harems and for servants.

But the houses in general for the masses are built of mud and consist of one room only, from thirty to forty feet square, and have a door in one end.

They build their houses in this way. They first dig a foundation. Then they dig up earth and put water in it thus making mud. Then the laborers take off their shoes and stockings and roll up their trousers above their knees and get into this mud and tramp it with their feet, turning it about twice as they do so. By this time it will be all right and will stick together very nicely. They then build a wall of this about four feet high and from three to four feet thick. It will require four or five days for this to dry. When it is dry they build about as much more on top of it and continue in this way until it is the desired height. Of course such houses never burn down as houses do in this country and the walls of some of them will last from fifty to seventy years. When the walls are ready they cover the house by putting first a long heavy beam across the center of it, the ends resting upon the walls while it is supported in the center of the house by one or two pillars. Timbers about eight inches in thickness are now placed from this beam or sill to the wall on either side. These are something like joists and are placed about two feet apart. Upon these joists are placed pieces of wood something like laths, about two inches in thickness and two feet long

Over all this first reeds and then grass are placed and afterwards mud about six inches thick is put over the whole. The mud they carry up on their backs and then tramp it down thoroughly with their feet in order to make it stick well and become smooth. Upon this mud they plaster with the best kind of clay mixed with very fine straw chaff to keep it from cracking. Roofs are made almost flat but sloping slightly toward on side in order to make the water run off when it rains. This is conducted off by means of a spout. Once every year or two they replaster the roof. On some of them different kinds of green grasses grow during the rainy season in the spring and then they look very beautiful but the summer heat soon comes and withers them prematurely. Hence David finds this expression to use against those that hate Zion; "Let them be as the grass upon the house tops which withereth afore it groweth up." Ps. cxxix-6.

Thieves very often come in the night and dig holes through these mud walls, and come in and steal. For breaking through they use wooden hammers and iron chisels mounted upon wooden handles. Upon the handle of the chisel they fasten a piece of felt to keep it from making any noise to waken the owner of the house while they are striking it with the hammer. It is to this effect that our Lord says, "But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up." (Or digged through). Math. xxiv-43.

The walls on the inside of the houses are plastered over with clay also, mixed with as much straw chaff as is necessary to make it bind or stick together well in order to make it durable and to prevent cracks on the inside of the wall.

The floors are simply hard clean smooth earth floors. One half of the floor is covered with a kind of reed matting over which carpets are spread. When one enters a house he takes off his shoes on the earth floor, then steps upon the carpeted part and sits down with his feet under him. In this country people take off their hats when they enter a house but in Asiatic countries they take off their shoes instead.

They have an especially constructed wooden frame upon which they hang their bed-clothes during each day. At night they take them down and make their beds and in the morning hang them on the frame again.

A Persian stove or oven looks like a cylinder. It is built of clay and is about four feet deep by two and a half feet in diameter. It is built in the ground near the center of the house, the top of it being on a level with the floor. They make fire in it only once a day and at that time they do their cooking and baking. In most parts of Asia wood is very scarce so their principal fuel is dried manure. This is used for fuel only and the ashes from it are put upon the fields afterwards for fertilizers. There are no pipes to carry out the smoke, hence it comes first into the house and afterwards escapes through the window in the ceiling directly over the oven. The smoke

smells while they are making fires but in a short time after the fire begins to burn well, it together with all other impurities in the house are drawn out through the window which is open day and night. The houses are thus thoroughly ventilated all the time and they have plenty of pleasant fresh air to breath although the ceilings grow quite dark of course. They make big hot fires in these ovens so that the sides of the oven grow to a white heat while the coals of fire still remain at the bottom.



WOMEN BAKING BREAD.

They make bread with yeast which they keep on hands for the purpose, and having kneaded it they set it aside to rise just as people do in this country.

Afterwards they make it out into small balls about as large as ordinary biscuits.

The lady seen at the right of the picture has a rolling-pin in her hand. She takes these balls of dough one at a time and placing them on a bread-board rolls them out as thin as blotting paper. As she finishes each one the lady at the left of the picture takes it and spreading it over something made for that purpose puts it down into the oven as far as her elbow and sometimes the whole length of her arm then slaps it against the side of the oven which is quite hot. The dough adheres to this and is quickly baked. It is removed as soon as it is baked and more put in its place. In this way they keep on until the baking is all done. For large families they usually bake every day or every other day while some bake only once or twice a week. The cakes of bread when finished are about a foot and a half or two feet long by one foot wide.

During the winter they spread carpets or matings around the oven, then having taken off their shoes on the earthen floor they sit around it and warm themselves. Or else they place a square table over it and spread a carpet or large quilt over this to keep the heat in and then sit, a whole large family half under it quite cosily. The coals of fire remain at the bottom of the oven all day, sometimes all night even, because manure as fuel holds fire for a much longer time than wood or coal even.

The window which they always have near the center of the ceiling of their houses besides admitting light and ventilating the houses serves for many

odd purposes.

When it rains they have to place a pan under the window for the water falls directly into the house



FAMILY WARMING THEMSELVES.

(From T. H. McAllister, Optician, N. Y.)

through the window which always stands open day and night. It may have been from such houses that some of the Old Testament writers have taken the figure of God's opening the windows of heaven to send rain upon the earth.

Since the houses are close together and their tops are flat people often go upon their neighbors' houses and speak to them through the window. When thieves come to a house if the owner of it has a good well-trained dog it will go at once upon the house

top and bark through the window to waken the family. Sometimes a dog may become so excited in its efforts to arouse the family that it may come too close and fall right into the house through the window.

Some meddlesome persons who like too well to know their neighbors' business sometimes steal softly upon the house top and sitting close by the window listen to the private conversation of the family circle beneath.

When a hen crows it is considered to be either a good or a bad omen and in order to find out which kind of an omen it is they take the crowing hen upon the house top and blind-folding her they drop her down through the window into the house. If she goes toward the corner of the house it is a good omen, but if she goes toward the door it is a bad one and they kill her at once.

Swallows make their nests during the summer in these windows and sit there and sing. Late in the fall they migrate to Arabia, returning again every spring. It used to be believed that the swallows knew where the tomb of Moses was and that on their return from Arabia they brought with them a little dust from it for the foundation of their nests. The people are very kind to the swallows and allow them to build their nests inside of their buildings because they are such good harmless birds. Their nests are often found in Mohammedan temples and Christian churches while sparrows as a rule build outside in the cracks of the mud walls. David speaks of both in his eighty-fourth psalm; "Yea, the sparrow hath

found her a house, and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young. Even thine altars O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God!"

Some years ago the most important service the window did was in cases of theft. For instance, if a man had from ten to twenty dollars stolen from him and he was sure that some one of his neighbors had taken it, then everybody would be talking about it and different ones would be suspected but no one could be absolutely sure who took it. Now in order to have justice done easily and to keep the case from going into court thus injuring the reputation of the good along with the bad the whole community would agree that upon a certain evening when it was dark they would all go upon the top of the house in which the man lived whose money was stolen and each one throw a little dirt down into the house through the window.

Upon the appointed evening every man and woman in that neighborhood would go to the house from which money had been stolen each one carrying with him in some part of his clothing a little dirt. Then the door of the house would be locked and everybody would go upon the house top. One would now go and throw down through the window the dirt he brought and return to his place, then another, and another, and so on until all had gone and cast in some dirt. In this way the one who stole the money would be obliged to throw it in with the dirt for he would know that he is suspected and if he should keep the money he might be accused in the court and get into great trouble and have his repu-

tation ruined. But if he throws it in with the dirt no one can see it and he can appear in the community afterwards as innocent as any one. After all have cast in their dirt the owner of the house goes in and finds his money. This was done only when they were sure that the money was stolen by some bad neighbor and not by a stranger.

On Saturday evening before Easter Sunday it is customary among all the Christians of Persia to color eggs for Easter. In the evening while they are coloring eggs in every house, persons often go to different parts of the village and let down by a cord through the window small baskets made of straw or else stockings. The people inside see it but do not know who is at the other end of the cord. If they are kind, generous people they will put an egg or two into the basket or stocking, after which it will be drawn up by the person on the house top who let it down. In this way they may visit a number of houses walking from one house top to another as they would walk on the street, and each one gathering a number of eggs in this way. This they call, "Daladelpé."

Sick persons upon their death beds often fix their eyes upon these open windows. Many of them even speak of what they see through the windows, hence the people believe that they do really see just before their departure the heavenly messengers God has sent to conduct their spirits home. Eastern people always think of their own ideas associated with their windows when they read Jeremiah IX-20-21. "Yet hear the word of the Lord, O ye women, and

let your ear receive the word of his mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbor lamentation.

For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets."

They have their looms and cotton-gins in the room in which they bake, cook, eat, and sleep, but



A WIDOW SPINNING.

they love order and respect virtue and so everything goes on harmoniously in their homes.

Both men and women weave. The men weave

cotton goods and the women weave carpets, rugs and such articles. Spinning is the especial work of women. Very often it happens that a man has three or four married sons and then their wives will all sit and spin in the same room. Sometimes they get up about four o'clock in the morning and sit and spin all day.

During the winter months widows spin from early in the morning until late in the evening. A woman receives about twenty cents for spinning one pound of cotton, but she must work very hard in order to spin as much as a pound a day. If a man works very hard at the loom all day he may be able to weave as much as ten yards of cotton.

HOW THEY EAT.

If a man has for instance four sons and they are all married and some of them have children, that of course is a large family and when they eat they will either put bread and food in a wooden tray which is made like a sink and is about three or four feet long by a foot and a half wide, or in a copper one about three feet in circumference, or else they will simply spread a table cloth on the floor which serves them as a table to place the food upon. Then the men will sit around it according to their ages. For instance, the father who is absolute master of the house sits before it in the place which is considered the best and of the highest rank, and next to him his oldest son, then the second son and so on according to their ages. When there is such a large family the women usually sit in a separate place because

the young brides in the family are not allowed, according to the customs of the country, to eat in the presence of their father-in-law or even mother-in-law.



A RESTAURANT.

(From T. H. McAllister, Optician, N. Y.)

For them to see the lips of a bride move would be something unheard of. They never use knives and forks to eat with, but their fingers instead, and if these get wet they lick them. Many people think that food tastes better when eaten in this way. The main part of every meal is bread. When they have meat they usually make a soup and put vegetables in it. Onions especially are considered indispensable. They think nothing tastes so good without

onions as it would if it had onions in it. They also put a little red pepper into soup to make it look red and beautiful and appetizing. We have already described their bread, how large the cakes are and as thin and soft as blotting paper. This they break up in their soup and when it gets moist eat it. They also eat clabber, butter, milk, and cheese. The latter is well salted, then pressed into a pitcher and buried in the ground for a long time, even a whole year often. It then gets a little strong and has an excellent flavor. This is eaten with bread broken in small morsels. Sometimes they also eat onions, pickled green peppers, and some other vegetables with cheese.

Those who have onions growing in their yards take the green tops and wrapping them around pieces of bread eat it with great relish. They also make a dish which they call "aash" by cutting up beet tops and celery and cooking them together in butter-milk. This they eat with spoons. The common people eat very little rice but the rich eat a great deal of it. From this they make the two different dishes called "dolma" that have already been describe in our account of the marriage feast.

It sometimes happens that guests come unexpectedly and there is not enough bread in the house to serve them. In such cases they borrow of their neighbors so many loaves and when they bake again pay them back. To this effect we have the words of our Lord, "And he said unto them, which of you shall have a friend and shall go unto him at midnight and say to him lend me three loaves for a

friend of mine is come to me from a journey and I have nothing to set before him." Luke XI-5-7.

HOUSE TOPS

During the summer everybody in the cities, towns, and villages sleeps upon the flat roofs of their houses under the open sky. They have bed clothing but no bed-steads. People are not afraid to sleep on the house tops on account of rain or lightning because there is very little of either during the summer season. Persia is a dry country and has a very dry, pure, light, bracing atmosphere. The moonlight there is exceedingly bright so that people often eat their suppers upon the tops of their houses with no other light than that. Neighbors while thus sitting, each family on their own house top often chat back and forth and are quite sociable while most of the village people can hear them quite well.

MILKING AND MAKING BUTTER.

They milk cows, buffaloes, and sheep. Cheese is made chiefly of sheep's milk. Buffaloes give the largest quantities of milk and butter made from it is as white as snow. Women do all the milking for it is considered a great disgrace for a man to be seen milking a cow. They milk twice a day as in this country. When they have finished milking in the morning they heat the milk almost to the boiling point, then remove it from the fire and let it cool a little, after which they add about a table spoonful of sour milk to it. This will make it coagulate, so that by the next morning it is clabber ready for breakfast. With a little molasses added it is con-

sidered a good breakfast. It is used much as rolled oats and the different wheat breakfast foods of this country are and is a common article of food. In Persia they can never make butter from cream or sweet milk but have to sour it as has already been explained, and then churn it.

They keep a little sour milk from time to time to be used for curdling milk. When a family through



CHURNING IN A SHEEP SKIN.

neglect has none they borrow from some one of their neighbors, Those who live in villages make butter in large earthen pitchers called "meta" while the

nomadic people who live in tents make it in a sheep's skin.

They fill the sheep's skin with clabber mixed with some water. In winter they warm the water of course. Then they hang up the sheep skin upon some timbers as seen in the picture and shake it until the butter is separated from the clabber. Butter made in this way is as pure and clean as the creamery butter made in this country. They eat butter for breakfast when it is fresh, but not every morning, and sometimes a little for dinner. Since they have very little of it they use it very sparingly. They never eat salted butter as butter, but of course they have to salt it right away in the summer to keep it from becoming rancid. When a lady has as much as ten or twenty pounds of butter she boils it well thus making an oil out of it and then it will keep a long time. All the impurities settle to the bottom and the oil is poured off into earthen pitchers. It will then keep for a year or two, and should they have no cow, sheep, or buffaloes to milk the next year they will still have this boiled butter or oil for cooking. When kept a long time it gets to look like candied honey.

HAND MILLS.

Primitive people beat their corn in mortars, or putting a little at a times upon a flat stone pounded it with a stone hammer. Afterwards hand mills came into use. All three methods are still used in Persia. Mortars are now used only for groats or for threshing wheat and pounding salt and pepper. Grinding with a stone hammer upon a flat stone is

used very little now-a-days but the bread baked from such flour is most excellent.

In Persia water mills are usually located near the source of the streams and those living near them grind their corn on them, but many of the people live on the declivities of the mountains and in dessert places where there is no water, and furthermore many of the streams go dry in summer. All this renders the hand mills an absolute necessity all over



A HAND MILL.

(From T. H. McAllister, Optician, N Y.)

Asia. There are other things also that have to be ground by hand.

The picture represents ladies grinding. The hand mill consists of two stones each about two feet in circumference and three inches thick. They are placed upon a smooth level surface. Near the outer edge of the upper stone, a hole is drilled and a handle inserted. Two and sometimes three ladies take hold of this handle and make the upper stone revolve as rapidly as possible upon the lower one. One of the ladies has the wheat by her. Every minute or two she puts a handful of wheat into the hole running through the center of the upper stone. In this way they may grind about five pounds of flour in an hour. This work also belongs especially to women although it sometimes becomes necessary for men to grind too, but it is very tedious work that most men do most reluctantly.

Bread made from this kind of flour is very good. During the Old Testament times every family had one of these hand mills in their house. No one was allowed to take it as a pledge. The sound of a mill in a village indicated abundance of blessing, peace and prosperity. The sound of the mill is mentioned in that connection in Jeremiah XXV-10. "I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, and the sound of the millstone and the light of the candle.

CULTIVATING THE GROUND.

Persians use oxen or buffaloes to draw their plows but buffaloes are preferred for this work because they are so strong and can stand such hard work. Horses are never used for plowing in Persia, because the

plows they use are very old-fashioned and poor, and the ground is so very hard that it is impossible for horses or mules to do the work. When they use a



FARMER'S AT WORK.

(From T. H. McAllister, *Optician, N. Y.*)

pair of oxen for plowing they make a very shallow furrow. If they use two buffaloes it can be made much better, but even then the furrow is not deep enough to be really good. The depth they plow depends upon the size of the plow-share they use, and this again must be adapted to the strength of the team they are using. The plows they use with a single team of either oxen or buffaloes throw the soil up on both sides of the furrow. The best and in every way most satisfactory plowing they do is when four farmers, each owning a pair of buffaloes, club together and do their plowing. Then they get

a very large plow with a big plow-share and hitch the eight buffaloes, or four teams to it. One man drives each team, sitting on it to do so, while a fifth



PLOWING WITH TWO BUFFALOES.

man guides the plow. Those that sit on the buffaloes and drive them sing a buffalo song which they are supposed to enjoy to such an extent that it makes them work nicely. Although buffaloes are such monsters in size and strength, in capacity for eating and working, they are at the same time very gentle and domestic animals. During the summer they like to lie in water. Usually their owners give them a good bath once or twice each day in the warm weather. In winter they are kept in warm stables and given a good bath once or twice a week. About twice during each winter their whole bodies are rubbed with a kind of naphtha to allay their itch-

ing and heal the wounds and bruises they have received by being whipped and beaten while at work for their terrible slowness.



PLOWING WITH EIGHT BUFFALOES.

Boys take them to pasture, riding on their backs to do so, and still sitting there while the buffaloes graze. Sometimes the boys will even lie down on the buffaloes' backs and go to sleep while the buffaloes eat.

Mosquitoes and flies annoy buffaloes a great deal so they go and lie down in muddy places in order to cover themselves with mud to keep these insects from worrying them. Buffaloes are not afraid of any animals to speak of except lions and other buffaloes. There are many stories current in the country about fights among these animals. For ex-

ample, once a lion and a buffalo met. The moment they caught sight of each other the buffalo rushed upon the lion, knocked him down and shoved him on the ground until he died. The buffalo then left the lion but in a few minutes his own heart broke and he died too, showing how terribly frightened he had been. When two stranger buffaloes meet they fight most fiercely for hours, even for half a day sometimes, until finally one of them gives up and runs away pursued by his enemy for a mile or two.

Once there was a man who kept two very large buffaloes. One day one of them was out in a field grazing when a wolf came suddenly up and springing upon him ran his sharp teeth into the thick skin of the buffalo's hip. But the skin was so thick and tough that the wolf could not tear it as it could the skin of an ox, so it hung there by its teeth while the buffalo, terribly frightened ran home as fast as he could, the wolf hanging behind him adding to his fright. When the owner of the buffalo saw him and understood the situation he spoke to him to quiet his fear and then shot the wolf and afterwards removed his teeth from the buffalo's skin.

PERSIAN MUSIC AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

Persians play on different kinds of stringed and wind instruments and also sing. There are three different kinds of stringed instruments in common use among the people. They are the "Saaz," the "Taar," and the "Kamanja." They learn to play by ear and not by note. They learn to play very well in this way. Their tunes are characteristically sweet and mournful. They always try to play and

sing such tunes as may move the hearts of their hearers to a mournful ecstasy. To them accustomed to it there is nothing so sweet and so charming as their music, while to the people of this country who are unfamiliar with it, it is nothing but a monotonous noise, not at all appreciated.



PERSIAN PLAYING ON THE SAAZ.

The instrument seen in this picture is a "saaz" It is made of mulberry wood and consists of the table or flat surface, the body made of eight or ten

ribs that make it look like a melon, the neck having several stops or divisions, and the head on which the screws for tuning are inserted. They strike the strings of this instrument with the right hand in playing, while with the left they press the stops. Men play and sing both in public and in private and at times sing and play in the streets to attract a crowd around them. Then they play and sing for a long time, when they are going to stop they put down their musical instruments and relate a most thrilling little story about somebody ending it by saying that the hero of it is now poor and sick and in prison. His listeners then take up a collection, some giving only pennies while others put in silver money even, for this poor friendless hero and give it to the musician. For the songs that they sing they depend entirely upon their memories because they have no written music. Of these memorized songs, however, every musician has quite a store so that he can sing for three or even five days without exhausting them or having to repeat any. Such singers learn a great many songs by hearing them only once. The following are specimens of the different kinds of songs they sing:

A Wordly Song.

“O ignorant gardener,

Enter not the garden.

The whole garden is dressed red.

I heard that our sweet-heart

Is coming to us.

The whole road is arrayed in red.

Thou hast pulled Karam's tooth.

His whole tongue is dressed red."

Karam was a Mohammedan who was so in love with a Christian girl that he wrote thirteen camel's loads of love-songs about her. Once he went so soundly to sleep with his head in her lap that seven of his teeth were pulled without his feeling it, hence the allusion.

An Ethical Song.

"Sheiktaye son of Kanber,
 I'm indebted to a master.
 Linder will come and ask payment,
 I cannot deny it, what shall I do?
 From heaven two angels came down,
 One could speak, the other was dumb.
 I answered the one that could speak
 But with the dumb I can not speak,
 What shall I do?"

Linder is God the giver of the soul, the two angels are the angels of death. The one who has speech is supposed to be merciful, while the one that is dumb is supposed to be unmerciful and will hear none of man's arguments. So the best thing to do is to deliver the soul at once to him when he asks for it.

An Elegiac Song.

"O Masters, three things I fear,
 One is poverty, one separation, one death.
 How many kings have ye dethroned!
 How many rosy cheeks have ye paled!
 How many have ye sent by unretraceable
 paths!

O ye three; poverty, separation and death."

The "taar" has sometimes five, sometimes six strings. In shape as well as name it is something



PERSIAN PLAYING ON THE TAAR.

like the guitar. The body of it is made from a single piece of mulberry wood hollowed out on the one side and having stretched over this concave surface a material taken from the surface of the buffalo's heart, something like very thin parchment, only thinner and very tough and strong. On the neck

of it there are about fifteen stops, made of thread, that can be moved up or down to get the proper tone. There are screws on the end for tuning it. The strings are struck with the right hand while the left is used for pressing the stops. It has a much louder and clearer sound than the guitar. It is used chiefly by the higher classes of Mohammedans.

The "kamanja" is also made of mulberry wood because the Persians think there is no other kind of wood that produces such clear, loud notes. The body of this instrument like the "saaz" is made melon-shaped and hollowed out on the front side. An iron rod is run through this body from the lower end through the upper end of it, extending several inches beyond. Upon this end of the iron rod the neck of it, having three screws for tuning, is fastened very firmly and in this all the pieces are held tightly together. Across the concave surface a thin skin is tightly drawn. The outside of this melon-shaped bowl is inlaid with the flexible ribs of the camel which are ornamented with small pieces of glittering metal and mother-of-pearl. The whole instrument is made entirely by hand. The player sits on the floor and rests his "kamanja" on the lower end of the iron rod just mentioned, and plays it with a bow like that used for violins. Most people like the "kamanja" better than the "saaz" or the "taar" and upon it they can play all kinds of tunes and melodies. In tone it is very similar to the violin though louder and clearer and we think sweeter.

Many of the Nestorian Christians suppose that the harp of David was like the "kamanja" because

in their old Syriac version of the Bible it is mentioned under the name of "kenara" which is much like the Hebrew "kinnar." In the modern Syriac version it is called "kamanja" both words meaning the same thing. When the spiritual songs are well rendered on the "kamanja" they are very impressive. For instance when they play and sing the one hundred and thirty-seventh psalm with the halelujah as follows:

"By the river of Babylon, there we sat down
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Glory be to the Lord.

"Yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Glory be to the Lord.

"We hanged our harp upon the willows in the
midst thereof.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Glory be to the Lord."

Then they feel as if they were actually beholding the groups of captive Israelites as they sat forlornly under the shadow of the willow trees around Babylon.

But if they should sing the one hundred and third psalm:

"Bless the Lord, O my soul;
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Glory be to the Lord.

"And all that is within me, bless his holy name.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Glory be to the Lord.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul,

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Glory be to the Lord.

“And forget not all his benefits:

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Glory be to the Lord.”

Then their hearts would swell with inexpressible joy. Sometimes they even weep for gladness. The



PERSIAN PLAYING ON THE KAMANJA.

“kamanja” is one of the oldest and best musical instruments in the East.

The Assyrian Christians of Persia do not allow

any kind of musical instruments to be played in their churches. Neither have they any that are fit for church use. The "saaz", "taar", and "kamanja" are all rather too small, while pianos and organs are not yet made there and it too expensive and difficult to have them imported as yet, since there are no railroads or even wagon roads. Some Europeans who reside there, and some wealthy Persians have brought a few organs and pianos into the country but it has cost them a great deal.

My grandfather, Moratkhan, was a very skillful player on the "saaz" and used to sing a great many worldly songs. He was always a firm believer in the Christian religion but before he was really converted he thought it no sin to play and sing such songs. When he was converted, however, he threw down his "saaz" and kicked it to pieces and never again played on it to the end of his life thus sacrificing his worldly pleasure to his conception of his religious duty. Christ accepted the offering, however needlessly made as we may think, and rewarded him with a peaceful happy life and a triumphant death.

CONDITION OF THE LOWER CLASSES.

The lower classes are farmers and day laborers and they are in a most deplorable condition because all the land in the kingdom of Persia is owned by khans or landlords. Very few of the lower classes have even a little piece of land consequently most of them are extremely poor. Some of the khans own from thirty to sixty villages. The lower classes who live in these villages belonging to a khan have in the

first place to buy a lot from their khan and build a house on it. Then every year they have to pay tax on the house. If they keep cattle they must pay tax on every female buffalo, sheep, mare, cow, and donkey. Every house has to furnish to the khan annually two chickens and a certain number of eggs and about one hundred and fifty pounds of fuel which must be of timber. This is, of course, very scarce in most parts of that dry barren mountainous country. Many of the peasants have no timber at all and have to buy it to pay their khan. The people in general burn dry manure and kindle it with small twigs of brush wood.

Each adult man has to work regularly two days out of every year for the khan besides the occasional jobs that he is required to do without pay. When a young man marries he must also pay a fee to his khan or master. The khan furnishes the land while the peasants have to furnish everything else that is necessary to produce and take off their crops of wheat, barley or millet, and make the grain ready for use, then they are allowed to keep one third of it while the other two-thirds they must give to the khan for the use of the land. Besides all these things they have to pay the government taxes which are not only double but sometimes more than double the amount they have to pay to the khan.

A common laborer receives about twenty-five cents a day for his work which makes it exceedingly hard for him to support a family and pay the exorbitant taxes. When the collectors come to a village many of the men will run away because they

have no money at hand to pay their taxes. When a khan or lord returns from a journey and comes to visit his village, the peasants all prepare to meet him at a certain distance from the village. They take with them an animal. At their meeting with their khan they cut its head off in the road then place its head on one side of the road and its body on the other, which means, "O master, may the lines of thine enemies be thus broken or cut asunder before thee!"

Upon his arrival his peasant subjects bring him eggs, chickens, and fruit, and he and his servants feast at the expense of his poor down-trodden subjects. Those that are in at all good circumstances he will try to find fault with and then punish and fine them.

The khans are especially cruel to the Nestorian Christians who are a defenseless people with whom the khans can do just about as they please. The khan levies a poll-tax upon every adult Christian and instead of waiting until they reach a certain age and then taxing them, they watch their people and as soon as a boy is large enough so that he begins to do a little work the khan adds his name to the tax lists. When he comes to collect the taxes he calls the boy's father and tells him that it is time for his son to begin paying poll-tax. The first year he is required to pay only half of the amount assessed, the khan generously (?) giving him the other half, but after that first year he must pay his poll-tax as long as he lives. The khan puts this poll-tax into his own pocket just as a man who owns sheep and

has them sheared takes the money for the fleece as his own. This is the way in which the Nestorian and Armenian Christians of Persia are treated. They are ground down and oppressed by cruel laws and still more cruel masters who act as though they had a divine right to take from them whatever they can by any pretext get of their hard-earned savings, then require them, every subject, to stand erect and bow down before them as they pass by. Nor is that even, bad as it is, the worst treatment that our people receive at their hands. The wicked khans as they pass through the Christian villages see the beautiful daughters of the Christians and where there is one that pleases their wicked fancy they lie in wait for her until they find her out alone or unprotected then seize her, dishonor her and carry her off to their harems in the cities. There she is kept, the poor helpless inexperienced girl, in an elegant harem and shown beautiful dresses and plenty of gold and silver and in this way induced to accept the Mohammedan religion. If her parents should complain of the matter to the authorities it will not help matters at all for Christians can not have justice done them and furthermore they know, the poor broken-hearted parents, that she is lost forever from the flock of Christ. Yea, that she is ruined body and soul for both time and eternity, or do they yet hope that their prayers may still be heard at the throne of grace and their wronged and erring loved one may be granted mercy and re-united to them where such cruel separations and sin are unknown?

The khans also punish their Christian subjects in

a most cruel and brutish manner because they regard them as wicked beings who deny that Mohammed was the prophet of God. Nor is their anger appeased by punishing them, not at all, not until they have exacted a fine also. This expression, "what shall we do, did they not scourge Christ also?" is very common among these poor persecuted Christians. When they are over taxed they say to each other "Our 'Meshika' (Christ) had to pay tax too." No language can express the cruelty that has been inflicted upon them for centuries, yet they have borne the galling yoke of Mohammedanism with a wonderful amount of fortitude and Christian patience, following, to the very letter, the teachings and example of their master "Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

Not only are they devoured by brutal khans but their property, money, and daughters are made a prey to their Mohammedan neighbors in such ways as the following: If a Mohammedan becomes angry with a Christian he will wound his own head so that the blood runs down upon his own clothes, then he will assume an expression as frightened as if he had fought with dogs, and in this miserable condition he will go before the magistrate and accuse the Christian of wounding his head. The magistrate knows at once that the man is bearing false witness, but he nevertheless dispatches his officers immediately to arrest the Christian and bring him into his presence. This is at once done and a fine is imposed upon the Christian. He is also required to pay a fee to the officers

who arrested him. He will thus lose without and cause whatever on his part more than he can earn by several months of hard labor.

Another one may accuse a Christian before the court of having reviled the Mohammedan religion, when it will again go hard with him.

Another one may lay claim to a Christian's property by saying that this property once belonged to my grand-father or some other relative. When the case comes before the magistrate he will soon find that the Mohammedan is in the wrong and has no case at all. He then settles the matter by requiring the Christian to pay a fee to himself, to his secretary, and to some of his other officers for their services.

Again a worthless Mohammedan young man will come and hang around a Christian village to see if he can not dishonor some Christian girl and then make a Mohammedan of her. This they consider a most heroic and meritorious act because they believe that the converting of a Christian to their religion saves that person's soul and insures them a great reward regardless of the means employed for its accomplishment.

In the cities Christians are not allowed to sell anything that is watery or liquid, as molasses, butter, and such articles. If a Christian's hands or clothes are wet he must not touch a Mohammedan for that would defile the Mohammedan. If by mistake a Christian should drink from an earthen-ware vessel belonging to a Mohammedan the latter can never again use it so the Christian must pay him the cost of the vessel thus defiled. Mohammedans

give water to Christians to drink in vessels of copper or glass because they think that these materials do not retain filth as earthen-ware does. Mohammedans will never eat the flesh of an animal whose head was cut off by a Christian, nor will they buy its skin. Hence when Christians are going to sell meat they get a Mohammedan to kill it for them and then they can sell it without any trouble. Mohammed told his followers that they must not eat bread baked by the hands of Christians or infidels. The Christians consider this command a great blessing to themselves for they say if the Mohammedans ate our bread yet they would truly leave us nothing for they are like hungry wolves who eat, and eat, and are never satisfied. When they sit at the table of Christians they eat as though they were almost starved.

If two persons get into a fight and one inflicts a wound upon the person of the other, the wounded man will take the case before a magistrate who will command a servant of his to find a surgeon and take the wounded man, and the surgeon before a priest to whom the surgeon will describe the character of the wound, how deep it is, etc. Whereupon the priest will write a letter stating how much money the man who inflicted the wound shall pay to the wounded man. The man who inflicted the injury will then have to pay the designated amount to the injured man besides paying a fine to the magistrate, a fee to the surgeon, and a fee to the priest.

If a Mohammedan should wound a Christian, very little attention would be paid to the case because in their sight it is nothing if a Christian be

wounded by a Mohammedan. But if a Christian should wound a Mohammedan it is considered a dreadful thing—for a wicked inferior being to raise his hand against one of “Allah’s” (God’s) own people. Then the punishment and fine will go far beyond the merits of the case.

The price of the blood of a Christian is fixed in the book of their law at sixty dollars while that of a Mohammedan is a thousand dollars, or as they say, the price of the blood of a Mohammedan is infinite because he is one of God’s people, whereas a Christian is an inferior ungodly being whom it is all right and in perfect conformity with the teachings of their holy book to kill. For the Koran teaches that infidels, that is Christians, must be put to death.

The Mohammedans acknowledge, however, that while they steal from the Christians and rob them of their property, fine and hate them there are still left among them more blessings than they ever have among themselves. They also acknowledge that while everything is in their hands and the Christians are hated and despised by them yet there is more real genuine happiness among these despised followers of the “Meek and lowly Jesus” than is ever known among them, the arrogant disciples of Mohammed.

The Nestorian Christians have rather a dark complexion and very dark eyes and a strong robust constitution. They are diligent, energetic and very religious but unfortunately very superstitious and ignorant. In the long school of trials and sufferings through which they have passed and are passing, they have learned to be submissive and patient and

are well accustomed to hardships and privations. They are good and trust-worthy friends, reliable and faithful in business, kind and hospitable to stran-



A NESTORIAN CHRISTIAN WOMAN OF OROOMIAH.

gers, naturally bright and ingenious. Were they not continually oppressed and down-trodden by the tyranny of the khans much might be expected of them. But can any one wonder that they are primitive in their methods, poor and ignorant; rather let them wonder that they still have so many good points, so many admirable traits of character after all these centuries of worse than Egyptian bondage.

MODES OF TRAVELING.

In the whole kingdom of Persia there is only twenty six miles of railroad. Six miles run from the Capital City, Teheran, to Shah-abdel-azem the summer resort of the Shah. Neither are there any regular public roads over which hauling could be done, therefore all the exports and imports of the country are carried upon the backs of animals. Certain persons who have each so many camels, or horses, or donkeys, or mules, club together and form a caravan. They each load their beasts of burden with merchandise and travel together for their mutual protection against highway robbers. Many travelers hire horses of these caravans and travel with them because that is the safest way to travel in that country. The caravan men lead the way and take care of travelers in their company to the very best of their ability. When a caravan assumes the responsibility of carrying travelers no matter who they are they are very faithful to their trust. Should any one try to molest a traveler thus under their protection the head man of the caravan promptly attends to the matter telling the intruder that he is the man to be dealt with in that caravan. Certain caravan men have quite a reputation for conducting travelers safely for they make that a business and thoroughly understand it.

Camels are liked best for this business on account of their great strength for bearing burdens, their great ability to endure hardships such as hunger and thirst, and their gentleness, and on account of their being so easily kept. A few persons only can

lead a caravan of fifty or one hundred camels. The camels are all bound together and go on the road one behind the other like the coaches of a very long train. Bells are hung upon the camel's necks. While traveling they tinkle continually and if during dark nights highwaymen should stop a camel the sound of the bells would be interrupted. The caravan men's ears are so accustomed to the sound of these bells that they at once detect it if one goes wrong and they are equally prompt to see what the trouble is and right it. The city of Tabriz is the center of commerce, so all kinds of caravans pass through it daily. The jingling of the caravan bells



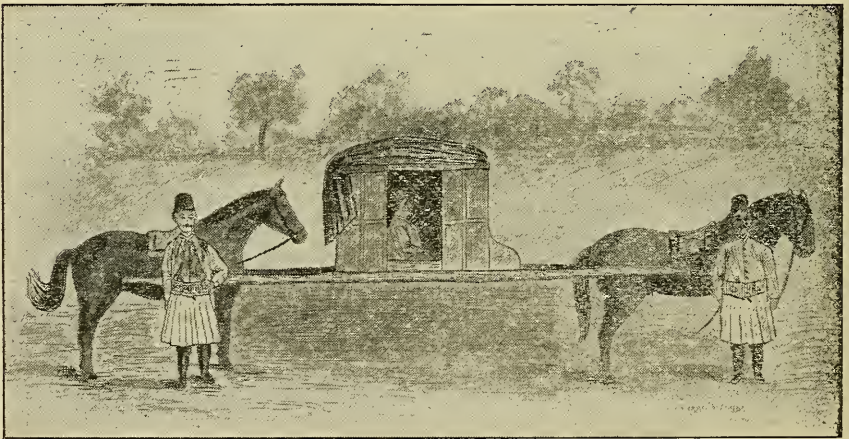
BURDEN BEARERS

(From *T. H. McAllister, Optician, N. Y.*)

is as noticeable and characteristic there as is the rattling of wagons and vehicles in American cities.

The greater part of Persia is a mountainous and rugged country, and as has already been said, wagon roads of any kind are few and unimportant. There are consequently very few vehicles of any sort to be met with in country or town.

Since there are no wagons to speak of with horses to them it becomes necessary for people to carry heavy loads of all kinds of things on their backs for long distances. These load carriers are called "hamals" and correspond to the city expressmen of this country. It is very common to see these persons carrying heavy loads of hay, fruit, wheat, furniture, fuel, earth, manure, ashes, and so forth on their backs. They carry goods on their backs to any desired point in the city, even for very long distances and charge for the service only a few pennies.



TRAVELING IN TEKTARAVAN.

It is not that they are naturally so strong that they can carry such heavy loads but because they accustom themselves to this kind of work from their childhood.

The higher classes of men in Persia travel on horse-back, the shah himself rides for hundreds of miles in this way. But for ladies belonging to the upper classes the "tektaravan" is used. It is somewhat similar to the sedan. It rests upon two poles and is carried by horses and used by wealthy people only. The "tektaravan" is often seen passing through the streets accompanied by the jingling of the bells on the horses necks. It is followed and



TRAVELING IN THE KAJAVA.

(From T. H. McAllister, Optician, N. Y.)

surrounded by a number of servants and attendants. While it is thus passing by with so much splendor few people know what ladies are in it unless they

should happen to know whose servants are accompanying it because it is covered. Persian ladies very much enjoy traveling in this way just as American ladies enjoy their Pullman parlor cars.

Next in point of comfort to the "tektaravan" is the "kajava" for ladies to travel in. It is used by the middle classes and by some of the higher classes also, and consists of two cages or boxes made of wood and bound together. These have their fronts open



LOWER CLASSES TRAVELING ON DONKEYS.

(From T. H. McAllister, Optician, N. Y.)

and are fastened securely on the backs of horses or mules. One lady sits in each while the articles they have with them are placed with the lighter lady in order to balance the "kajava" and prevent it from swinging too much. Some ladies who are not much accustomed to it become quite dizzy from traveling

in this way, though most ladies enjoy it. When they are starting out of a city on a journey or are coming in they cover the front of these boxes so that no one may see the ladies occupying them, but when they get outside the city walls they open them for the enjoyment of the ladies who are thus journeying. The "kajava" is always guarded by servants or "charvadars." They travel long distances in this way and it is a very common mode of traveling throughout the whole of Persia.

The lower classes or villagers do what little traveling falls to their miserable lot on foot or upon the backs of donkeys, seldom upon horse-back. Donkeys are the animals most generally used among the lower classes, both for riding and bearing burdens, and while all the modes of traveling in Persia are very slow and tedious this one is especially noted for its slowness. Consequently those who travel in this way must have an extraordinary amount of patience. This is found among the Mohammedans who are naturally a very slow people so they and their donkeys work together very harmoniously while the Christians of Persia use them very little because they are naturally quick and strong and hard workers so the donkeys are too slow for them. They prefer to do the work themselves and would rather walk as a rule than to ride a donkey.

The donkey, however, is to the Mohammedan what the American railway system is to the American. It is equally indispensable and stands for his civilization. Of course it would not be quite as bad to kill a donkey among the Mohammedans as to

wreck a train in this country but it may at least be compared to it.

THE WORK OF THE LOWER CLASSES.

Common laborers work from sunrise to sunset. There being no machinery all work is done by hand. They dig with spades and build mud walls for houses and around vineyards and gardens and even sometimes around fields. Irrigation is about the most important and indispensable work they do because there is not sufficient rain to keep the ground fertile. Hence they must irrigate the land that they sow or they would have no crops at all and would starve as a consequence. During the winter great quantities of snow fall upon the many mountains of Persia and in the spring when it melts it runs down into the valleys like rivers. Then the people who live in these small plains and valleys conduct it from the river into their fields by means of small canals that they dig. The basin around Oroomiah is a network of such canals. Sometimes water is very scarce and then the people quarrel as to which one is to have it.

MOHAMMEDAN WOMEN.

It is the policy of the Mohammedans not to open too wide the eyes of women consequently they have no schools for girls. Among the higher classes even, very few ever teach their daughters to read consequently there are millions of Mohammedan women who during their whole lives can never take up a book and read or sit down and write a letter to their friends. Sometimes it happens that a woman's husband has to reside for a time several hundred miles distant from her. In such a case should she wish to

write to him she will cover her face and go to a priest and tell him what she wants to have written to her husband. He then writes the letter for her and she pays him for it. When she receives a letter from



A MOHAMMEDAN LADY.

(From T. H. McAllister, Optician, N. Y.)

her husband she again has to go to the priest or some one else that can read and has them read it for her. This shows how very ignorant they are and no wonder then that they are so superstitious. When they go out it is customary for them to cover their entire body with a large blue wrap, while a linen veil, with

small holes in it for the eyes, is worn over the face. These wraps they wear are nearly all of the same color and the same material so that when they are out walking many of them cannot be recognized by their own nearest relatives even. Rich and poor appear just the same. When they go to a party, or ladies' reception we might call it, they paint their faces with a red substance, and blacken their eyes, eyelashes and eyebrows with black antimony. Many of them color their fingers and finger nails and even their feet red with henna. They dye their hair also with henna and plait it in many long braids. They wear necklaces and chains around their necks and bracelets and glass bangles on their arms. Quite a number of them smoke pipes. Most of the ladies of the higher classes are very idle. They invite each other to parties by turns. Often ten or fifteen of them may be seen in the streets attended by servants, going to parties. Where women are gathered no men appear, and where the men are no women come.

Fashions among Mohammedan women do not change as they do among ladies of this country. There a costume that was worn by a lady twenty or more years ago is just the same as those worn by their ladies of today. I dare say that I have seen more changes of styles in the ladies' dress of this country during my short residence here than all the records of Persia in that line could show, were such records kept, from the time of the resting of the Ark on Ararat to the present day. The Mohammedan ladies cover their person when they go out, but the ladies of this country wear hats upon their heads in-

stead. Mohammedan women are never seen bare-headed, and their voice must not be heard in the streets and their mouths must not be seen moving to eat anything. If two ladies wish to speak to each other in the streets they must step aside where they cannot be seen by the passers-by.

Women of the lower classes work very hard. Peasant women rise early in the morning and do their milking and general house-work. Then they take their sickles and cut grain in the harvest fields, or their short handled hoes and cut weeds in the cotton fields. In the evening when they come home there will be seen on their backs a five foot square canvas filled with fresh grass for the cows and buffaloes and their young. This they feed them in the evenings so that they may have plenty of nice milk the next morning. Widows do harvesting, weeding, sewing, weaving and spinning. During the wheat harvest they go to the fields and glean but they are seldom allowed to follow the reapers. They glean after the wheat is stacked gathering the heads one by one they take them home and thresh them and in this way add to the store of grain for the winter. Dish washing is a very small item with them for they use very few dishes. After some meals there are none to wash. They very seldom wash clothes either. When they do a certain plant and the bark of the soap tree are used for it and very little soap.

It is the women of the middle and some too of the lower classes that have made Persia famous all over the world for her elegant rugs, carpets and shawls. They spin the yarn and dye it at home in the excel-

lent colors that hold their own as long as a piece of it remains. It takes a long time to make these rugs, however, for every particle of the work is done by



LADIES WEAVING RUGS.

(From T. H. McAllister, *Optician, N. Y.*)

hand. It requires from three to four months to make a single rug but when finished it is not only beautiful but will also last for over twenty years thus making Persians rugs celebrated not only for their beauty but for their durability as well.

MOHAMMEDAN GIRLS.

Every Mohammedan father considers the birth of a daughter as a great misfortune but comforts himself with the hope that his next child may be a boy. If a second one happens to be a girl also he will up-

braid his wife most severely, but no matter how many girls he has he must keep and take good care of them all. At a very early age little girls collect



MOHAMMEDAN GIRL.
(From T. H. McAllister, *Optician, N. Y.*)

numbers of pieces of different kinds of cloth from which they make dolls to play with. In that country there are no ready-made dolls to be bought for children so they must make their own. In this way they learn their first lessons in sewing. They also take old stockings and ravel them and save the yarn to make balls out of and then play games of ball upon the house tops in the fall of the year.

Mohammedan girls learn very early to paint their faces and darken their eyes, eyelashes and eyebrows. In order to make their hair very dark they dye it several times in succession with henna. Then it becomes as black as desired and very glossy and they braid it in many long braids, some times as many as fifteen. They also pierce each others' ears with needles, afterward inserting thread greased with butter to keep the holes open until they are healed. These holes will then remain open for life for the wearing of ear-rings. They also tattoo each others' faces and hands and sometimes their feet by pricking a wound the size and shape they wish and then filling it with black antimony. This also will remain black for life. Christians there do the same thing. They also dye their hands and particularly their finger nails red, and sometimes their feet also, and in every way, little girl-like, imitate the example of their elders. They carry with them pocket looking glasses, but boys and young men never do so for it is considered a great shame for a boy to carry a mirror and if he were seen with one in his possession he would at once be called a girl.

Quite young daughters of the middle and some of the lower classes are taught to weave rugs and carpets and to make some ornaments for the house and some articles for their weddings. Girls in general are strictly forbidden the company of boys and are not even allowed to speak to them. As has already been stated the boys and girls never mingle together but are always kept separated, girls associating with girls and boys with boys. There are no occasions

whatever when both sexes may be gathered together.

Once I was irrigating a field that lay close by a Mohammedan village and while I was working at it about half of the ladies of the village came out with their earthen jars on their backs to get water for household use in their different homes as it is customary to carry water every morning and evening for daily use in their homes. These ladies spoke to me and thanked me for the good water I had brought through the canal and then talked quite pleasantly and freely with each other and with me. They are not afraid to talk with Christians because they know that Christians are pure and faithful and then they have so little respect for Christians that it makes no difference. While they were filling up their jars and talking a Mohammedan young man came along and immediately they stopped talking and covered their faces, every one of them. The young Mohammedan said, "They were talking with you but as soon as they saw me they stopped because the Mohammedan is wicked—he has a salty eye." Such are the relations existing between Mohammedan boys and girls.

One way of getting water for irrigation and daily use has already been explained, that is through canals connected with rivers. From these girls or ladies carry the water in earthen jars. During the summer season most of the rivers dry up and then wells are dug. In most parts of Persia the wells are very poor and pumps for them are unknown. There are several millions of Mohammedans in Persia and while they are the ruling class and as such could introduce improvements, they are a very dull and slow-

going people. It has not occurred to them either to make or try to make such a thing as a pump. The native Christians are enterprising enough but they are so few and they are so oppressed by their Mohammedan rulers that when they would introduce anything new they are looked upon with envy and it is said of them, "These dogs are going mad or crazy." In this way their freedom is checked but they have never-the-less done much for the enlightenment both spiritually and temporally of their cruel fanatical Mohammedan neighbors, but pumps they have not yet introduced and so the people still pull up water from the wells by means of a wooden pole about two inches thick and as long as the well is deep. In one end of this pole a hole is bored and an earthen vessel is fastened. This they let down into the water and when it is filled pull it up again. Ropes are also used for this purpose. If they only had artesian wells what a blessing they would be for drinking purposes, for household use and for irrigation! Persia with its naturally fine climate might become a rich and fertile country instead of the dry barren one it now is.

They have still another method of getting drinking water called "kaharez", which is as follows: At intervals of about every sixty feet more or less a well about twelve feet deep is dug. These wells are connected by an underground passage about three feet wide and four feet high. These underground passages something like small tunnels run under hills and elevated lands and are from ten to fifteen miles long. In making such water subterranean passages

they often strike small veins of water which are led through the passages from well to well, to the villages, cities and fields. The work of making these passages is very slow, tedious and expensive. Occasionally they cave in and have to be repaired which adds still more to the expense. Their object in getting water in this way is to have it flow continually and furthermore in some places this system is an absolute necessity because they cannot get water in any other way. During the hot seasons of summer



CHRISTIAN GIRLS CARRYING WATER IN EARTHEN JARS.

crowds of ladies are seen every day, some going others returning with earthen jars on their backs from the places where "kaharez" waters are to be had. There the ladies have a good chance of meeting each other and chatting together every day.

MOHAMMEDAN BOYS.

The news of the birth of a boy is the source of great joy and happiness to the father. When several sons are born in succession their mother receives much praise and honor at the hands of her husband for these great blessings.



MOHAMMEDAN PRIEST AND HIS PUPIL.

(From T. H. McAllister, Optician, N. Y.)

At the age of five or six years they play games with sling-bones and nuts instead of the marbles in which the boys of this country delight. There are no public schools in Persia except some parochial schools in connection with the mosques or temples and taught by Mohammedan priests. Very few vil-

lage boys go to school at all but most of the boys who live in the cities go to school and learn to read and write. When boys go to school they usually sit in two rows. One row sits along one wall books in hand and the other row along the opposite wall while the teacher sits in the center of the room. They do not use chairs but sit on the floor which is covered with a reed matting. When they are studying their lessons they sway their bodies backward and forward as though they were in a rocking chair and read in a sing-song style as though they were chanting, sometimes so loud that they can be heard for quite a distance. They have neither blackboards nor slates but use paper and reed pens for learning to write. They put their left knee on the floor and set their right one up for a desk to rest the paper on. They use the Arabic alphabet and read and write from right to left instead of left to right. They also begin their books at the back reading forward. In their schools they learn to read some tales and traditions of the Koran and some poetry but do not study much mathematics or geography and no science but plenty of astrology. When they have finished school they become secretaries, shopkeepers, merchants, priests, jewelers and bankers.

Mohammedans practice circumcision. This is done when they are small boys only a few years old. Barbers make contracts with two or three villages to come statedly once every week or once every two weeks to shave the men. They carry with them in a skin belt or girdle worn around their waists, razors, scissors, whet-stones, a little mirror and a comb.

When they come to a village they find a number of men in the streets and at once begin shaving them taking them in regular order. Others they find at home and still others at work. The barber shaves them wherever he happens to find them whether at home or in the street. He shaves the head but leaves a tuft of hair on the top and behind each ear. He also shaves the faces of young men but not of old men, and he never shaves off a man's mustache for the people would laugh at a man without a mustache and call him a girl. To soften the hair for shaving they do not use soap but simply cold water. At the same time that the barber is in the village shaving the men he also circumcises the boys. They then receive their names. For giving a girl her name they simply call in an old woman who speaks the girl's name aloud in her ear.

Among Mohammedan children and even among old people cursing is very common. They say "May 'Alah' kill your children or burn your house, or may your father be burned" and such things. They swear by "Allah" who created everything from nothing. A Mohammedan may swear to a falsehood in the name of "Allah" but his faith in God who created everything out of nothing is true and sincere. Along with the truth that they have there is a great deal of falsehood and error mixed, making their doctrine and belief a very weak pillar for the support of the great structure of their religion and so its destruction along with that of every other false or heathen religion is surely coming, and upon its ruins may yet be planted the standard of the cross. When

they begin to understand the truth the truth shall make them free and instead of cursing their fellow man they may begin to understand something of the principle underlying the injunction that we should bless them that curse us. Let us hope that when that time comes they may then as now have no infidels among them as there are in this country but that all may be true believers.

THE HIGHER CLASSES OF MOHAMMEDANS.

The higher classes of Mohammedans are the khans or landlords of whom we have already spoken. They hold in their possession almost all the lands in the kingdom of Persia besides controlling all the government affairs. In consequence they are very rich and live an easy life. Since their religion allows polygamy they marry several wives whom they are abundantly able to support and spend much of their time in their harems with their wives. When ever they wish to divorce one and marry another they can do so without any difficulty for there is no disgrace whatever attached to such an act. But it is considered a great shame for a man to speak of any of his wives when in company with other men. They may speak of everything else but never allow their conversation to turn to their own domestic affairs. At their gatherings the subject they best like to discuss is their religion and next to that is politics which they talk about with great enthusiasm. They know very little of history and their knowledge of art and philosophy is also quite limited. What little they do know of these latter subjects they have learned from the Europeans who are teachers and

instructors in their principal cities and especially in their capital city Teheran. They have one weekly newspaper published in Teheran which they of course read. If any one among them can quote or recite poetry in the course of their conversation he is much admired for they are great lovers of poetry. In this respect they think the Persian language excels every other tongue. So musical is it and rich in idioms, rhymes and vowel sounds that Mohammed once said that he would ask that their language might be the language of Paradise.



KHANS SMOKING.

When a prominent man comes to visit certain persons that are gathered together, if he is of higher rank than they, as he enters they will all rise and continue standing until he is seated. Then they

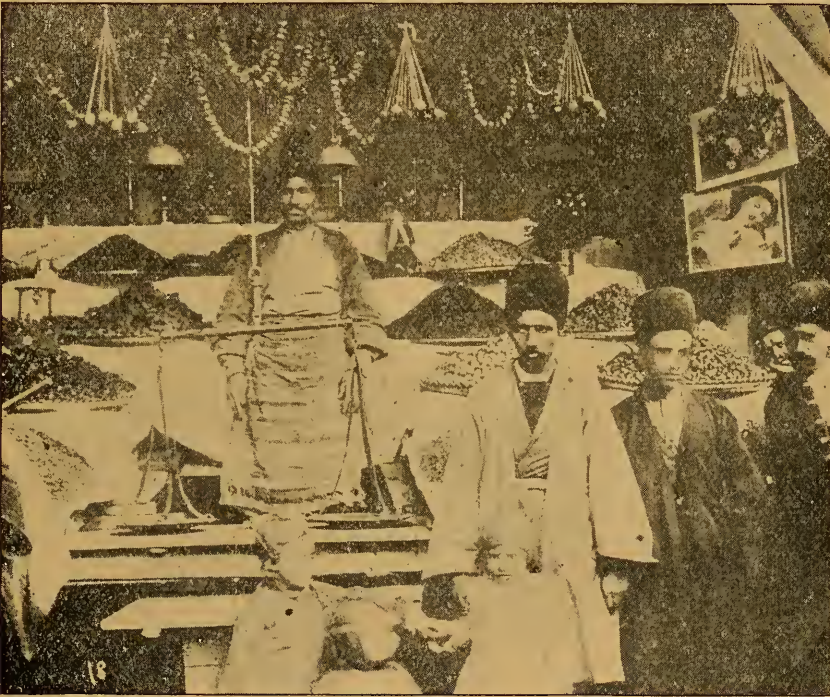
resume their seats and the visitor exchanges greetings by bowing to each one present according to his rank. Immediately after this a water-pipe for smoking is presented to him. Their pipes are so arranged that the smoke goes through water first which purifies it before it is taken into the mouth. One pipe is used for several persons. When one has finished smoking, he passes it to the one who sits next to him and so on until all have smoked. When all have finished smoking, tea, coffee, or fruit may be served. But suppose a dinner consisting of rice is to be served, then it is brought in on small copper trays. They begin eating at once, using all five fingers in doing so. Of course it is not at all uncommon among the people of that country to eat with their fingers, but to see a Mohammedan grasping whole handfuls and eating it is quite a sight. They use all five fingers because they say God has made them all and it is a sin to use some and not all of them. When they have eaten a servant will come with warm water, and, going to the person of highest rank, will hold an empty vessel before him in one hand, while with the other hand he will pour water upon the hands of the guest. When the guest of honor has thus washed his hands, the servant goes in the same way to another and so on until all have washed their hands. Rice cooked as the Persians cook it is very much liked by the Turks and Arabs as well. But they detest the Persian way of eating it. Mohammedans who can read and write always have a pair of scissors in the ink-case that they carry with them in their pockets. When they write a let-

ter, they always trim the margins of it, for a tradition is current among them that if they did not cut the margins of their letters their wives would be untrue to them. Having put their letters into envelopes with their edges properly trimmed, they always seal them with a seal that most of them carry in their purses.

There is even more immorality among the higher classes of Mohammedans than among the lower. because these have both the money and the unoccupied time to carry the wicked practices licensed by their religion to a greater and consequently a more debasing extent. They are ever ready to speak of the prostitutions of the "European infidels", but we have only to remind them of the terrible vices of which they are guilty right in their own homes. They also speak of the drunkenness of European Christians, and then we remind them of their own deceit and total lack of truthfulness. Their own remarks bear witness against them in this, for they are often heard to say, "A Mohammedan by mistake may speak the truth," or "If a Mohammedan were a piece of gold, and you should find it, don't put it into your pocket for it will make a hole in your pocket and get away." Lying and deception are characteristics not only of those who are careless about their religion, but also of those who are the most devout disciples of their system, the priests themselves not being an exception to the rule. So common are these characteristics that it is very hard for them to trust their own friends and neighbors even. Such traits are the natural results of a religion founded upon falsehood.

PRODUCTS AND METHODS OF DISPOSING OF THEM.

Dates, figs, pomegranates, peaches, apples, pears, plums, apricots, grapes, and nuts grow in abundance in Persia. The first grapes or fruit of any kind that ripens is taken by the gardner or servant to his master as a gift, whereupon his master gives him a present saying, "May the Almighty bless you and make



GROCERY STORE.

(From T. H. McAllister, *Optician, N. Y.*)

you attain the first fruits that you desire." The first fruits are emblematic of new life.

In the grocery stores may be found honey, molasses, cheese, butter, oil, clabber, peas, beans, and rice together with all the fruits before mentioned, but no canned goods. All such stores are in the

hands of the Mohammedans because Christians are an abomination of them so they will not buy any liquids handled by Christians. Should a man go to a shop-keeper early in the morning to buy something that cost only a few cents, the shop-keeper will refuse to take his copper money because he believes that if he should take copper money at the very beginning of the day he would have bad luck all day. On the other hand if he should be offered silver money early in the morning, he would be very happy because he believes that it will bring him good luck all day.

In the western provinces of Persia, about forty different kinds of the best grapes grow, but they are not quite equal to the grapes that grow along some parts of the Tigris and Euphrates valleys. The grapes, figs, and dates that grow there are not equalled anywhere. The best kinds of honey are also exported from these valleys to all parts of the world, and are used for medicines, but unfortunately this interesting land that served as the cradle of the human race and from which the good tidings of salvation and peace through Christ has spread all over the world is now in the hands of the terrible Turk, who sends out curses instead of blessings. Fine grapes grow in most parts of Persia, but they cannot be exported fresh because there are no railroads. They can be carried for about forty miles on horseback, but when they have been thus carried they soon spoil. From grapes they make both wine and molasses, but the most of them are dried, making raisins. They cover a terrace or side hill with plaster made of clay mixed with chaff and upon this they

spread the ripe grapes to dry in the bright sunshine. When dry they export them by means of caravans to Russia. When persons are gathering grapes, the passers by greet them by saying, "May God give you blessings in your vineyard." When they pass by a man who is plowing they say, "May God give you strength." To both these greetings the laborers reply, "Welcome" or "Thank you." They raise very good wheat, barley, and millet. In order to tell if their wheat is good any year, they chew a few grains to see if it expands and becomes elastic. If so it is good wheat and dough made from it will also expand and rise nicely. But if it does not expand when chewed it is poor wheat.

Watermelons and muskmelons are also raised there, but they require a great deal of work. When a muskmelon is about twice the size of an egg, they bury it while it is still on the vine. By and by it grows so as to come on the surface again and is again buried and so on until it stops growing. They then lay it in the sun until it gets sweet and ready to be eaten.

Tobacco as all know is among the most prominent products of Persia, so the Persians too have that very injurious habit of smoking, though to their credit be it said they never chew and they use very little snuff. This is the story circulated among them as to the first use of tobacco: Once many, many years ago there was a very sick man whom the doctors could not cure of his terrible disease, so he was cast out by his relatives into a lonely place where they hoped that he might die, and they in this way

would get rid of him. He of course became very hungry, but there was nothing for him to eat. He found a plant, however, growing there, and that he ate because he was so desperately hungry that he could eat anything. By and by he began to like the taste of it, and he felt better too, so he kept on eating it until he was entirely cured of his disease. He



TOBACCO PLANTATION.

then returned home to his people, who were astonished to see him in perfect health and asked him what had cured him. He showed them the plant, which was tobacco. It is frequently mentioned in their old legends and songs, showing that while America claims the honor (?) of its introduction into civilized life, yet this noxious weed was known and used in Persia long before the discovery of America and the days of Sir Walter Raleigh.

Every smoking man in Persia must have not only a pipe, but also a piece of flint, a piece of steel, and a supply of punk, or tinder in his pocket to start a fire to light his pipe. This primitive method of starting a fire is still in use there because matches are not yet manufactured there, and when they have to be imported they are more expensive than the punk. If a man who smokes should happen to have no tobacco and should meet a Turk and ask him for a smoke, the Turk if he himself smokes would at once ask him to show his pipe, flint, steel, punk, and tobacco bag. Should he find the man in possession of all these things, he would know at once that he is a professional smoker and would give him some tobacco. But if all these things are not found with him the Turk knows that he is only an occasional smoker and promptly tells him to go away or to put it literally he says, "Johanamal," "Go to hell."

THE TURKISH WOLF AND THE AMERICAN FOX.

The Turks are a most brutal people, coarse in language and inhuman in feeling. There is a proverb in Persia something like this: "There are foxes that cunningly eat or gnaw off the heads of people as well as wolves that do it openly." By wolves let us designate the Turks, by foxes the American liquor dealers. Little attention has been paid so far to the foxes, but lately the eyes of the whole civilized and semicivilized world have been turned to the devastations made by the bloodthirsty wolves upon the defenceless Christians living under their tyrannical rule. This cruel bloodshed they have been repeating over and over again ever since

their capture of Constantinople in the year 1453. Their whole history has been one of shame and



SCENE FROM THE ARMENIAN MASSACRE,
(From Riley Bros., N. Y.)

bloodshed ever since its beginning. But the massacre of one hundred thousand Armenian Christians that began in 1894 has been more widely known than any of their previous acts of cruelty because there is at present more and quicker communication between all the nations of the earth than at any other time in the history of the world, and we hope now that God may soon raise up friends for his poor persecuted people, in these eastern lands, powerful enough to

deliver them from the terrible hands of their oppressors and slayers.

It is impossible for us to describe the outrages practiced against the Nestorian and Armenian Christians by the ferocious and barbarous Kurds employed by the merciless Turks for the extermination of the Christians in their midst. The Kurds often shoot a Christian just for sport to prove their skill



KURDS FROM THE KURDISTAN MOUNTAINS.

as marksmen and to see how a human being dies. Yet they profess to know "Allah, the Creator of the universe whose judgments are righteous and believe that He will be merciful to them for thus destroying infidels as they call Christians.

Usually in the fall when the corn and fruits have been gathered in these Kurds invade the territory of the Nestorian Christians in the Kurdistan moun-

tains and of the Armenian Christians in Armenia They sweep right down upon the Christian villages on their fiery steeds and should anyone dare oppose them they would shoot him down on the spot. Then they take off the cattle and carry away corn and fruit enough to last them during the whole winter, leaving the poor Christians who have toiled so hard for it destitute of the very necessaries of life and compelling them to live on roots and herbs during the winter, while the government complacently looks on.

Before coming to this country I had heard much of it as a free and Christian country, and the thought of it made my heart swell with joy, not so much on account of its liberty as its Christianity which had made its liberty possible. For after all it is the gospel of Christ that lays the foundation for all true human freedom. I am thankful indeed to the kind Christian friends who have helped me to come to America and live here for a time, to become acquainted with the language and the people of this country and to enjoy its freedom. I acknowledge that it is the best country in the world, and its government is a living example and a wonder to all the natives of the earth. But during the years of my sojourn here I have been pained to see the destruction that is being made upon the very life of the country by these sly American foxes. Through their obedience to the erroneous teachings of the Mohammedan religion, the Turkish wolves plunder the Armenian Christians, and destroy their happy homes and leave their families in a most miserable condi-

tion. But the American foxes through their love of the almighty dollar distill and through the saloons deal out to the people the liquors that just as surely destroy the happy homes in this country, leaving their families hungry and destitute and finally killing their victims. The Turkish wolves kill thousands of innocent victims, but their victims have a sure hope of the life to come, while the victims of the American foxes are destroyed body and soul, for time and for eternity. Which of the two are the worse? I have read the statement that from sixty to seventy-five thousand people die annually in this country from the liquor habit. If this is true, then just as the Turkish government is responsible for the lives, property, and happiness of its subjects, so is the government of this country responsible for the lives, property, and happiness of its people. The people of this country should require their government to "take the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines," before the whole vineyard has been laid waste.

NOMADIC PERSIANS.

Over a million of the population of Persia live in tents. Some of them live in separate, isolated regions, and have their own chiefs who are responsible for them to the Persian government. Others of them pitch their tents together, forming a community or village and live quite an honorable life. Cattle raising is their principal occupation. From the wool of camels and sheep they make carpets, rugs, sacks, and tents. The latter are usually made of black or brown wool. They do a great deal of milking and

sell large quantities of cheese, butter, and milk. They do not milk the camels, but eat their meat instead. The price of a camel among them varies



TENT DWELLERS.

(From T. H. McAllister, *Optician, N. Y.*)

from thirty to one hundred and fifty dollars, the price depending upon the size and quality of the animal. They keep very fierce, cross dogs to defend them from the ravenous wolves that infest the country. During the dry season of summer, they move with their herds to places where they can find plenty of water and grass. In the fall they come back to their old tenting place again. Their dishes are made principally of copper because that will not break in moving from place to place. Bottles of skin are also indispensable to them. Their oven or fire-place consists simply of a hole in the ground in the center of

the tent. They bake their bread upon a concave plate of copper about two feet in diameter. The concave side is placed over the coals of fire, while upon the convex or outer side they bake very thin, but very delicious loaves of bread. Instead of a table they simply spread a cloth upon the ground.

Hand-mills are common among them, and sometimes small metal mortars are found in their tents. For lighting they use tallow candles, castor oil, and kerosene. Some of them have elegant tents curtained off into several rooms. The smell of smoke is however, always present in them all. These nomads are unusually strong and healthy. They are kind, generous, and hospitable when kindly treated or when not ill treated, but woe to the man who offends them or mistreats them. For when wronged they are cruel and revengeful beyond all reason. They carry with them the memory of an unavenged wrong for years, seeking an opportunity to avenge themselves. They always carry swords with them, and never think of going out without a good substantial club in their hand. They also use guns, and many of them are excellent hunters. They are especially skillful in fighting with clubs. When employed in the military service they always distinguish themselves. Their women, too, are very strong and courageous. In case of necessity they can take clubs and fight also. They are exceedingly fond of jewelry and ornaments, and wear many charms and glittering trinkets. They frequently tattoo their faces, hands, and feet. Few of their numbers are able to read. There are very few in-

telligent ones among them. As a rule they are ignorant, superstitious, and stern in character. They revere above all other men doctors of medicine. This is possibly due to the fact that they see so few of them. Their principal musical instrument is the flute, which is very common among them. They sing love songs, accompanying their singing with the most barbarous tunes on the flute.

Most prominent among them in point of bravery and enterprise are those who raise camels. They lead the caravans of camels from one end of the country to the other without the least fear. Should their caravan be attacked by highwaymen who would rob them of their load, these caravan men simply have their camels kneel down, forming a breastwork for them while they stand behind shooting the robbers. Should the robbers shoot they would strike the camels, which would be of no service to them. This they seldom do for there is no use in killing the dumb animals. The camel has been called the "ship of the desert." With equal propriety the caravan might be called a "fleet."

These tent dwellers do most of their traveling and moving through the mountains in the night time when it is cool. To them the mountains are their dwelling houses, and the deserts their courtyards. Their love of this mode of life is born in them, and their methods are as old as the human race. They regard their manner of living vastly freer and happier than that of those engaged in agriculture, or in any other pursuit for that matter.

PERSIAN SNAKE CHARMERS.

Snake charming has been known and practiced for thousands of years. In western Asia at present it is practiced by the Mohammedans, who believe that it is done through the spirit power. They are especially proud of their knowledge and skill, and regard it as a gift imparted to them through their religion, and practiced through the aid of some spirits or genii. They boast that Christians do not



SNAKE CHARMERS.

(From T. H. McAllister, *Optician, N. Y.*)

possess such power. The Christians in turn believe that this power is derived from the devil himself.

Some claim that this strange power is hereditary in certain families, and that snakes never bite them. The Mohammedans ascribe nearly all magical power to their religion.

Snake charmers are a very cruel, savage, hard-hearted class of people. They curse, and swear, and revile, using the coarsest and foulest language imaginable. By their very wickedness they seem to exercise an influence in overcoming the ugly reptiles.

Sometimes these charmers find snakes that do not want to hear their voice. So David speaks of the wicked, "They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent; they are like a deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. Ps. lviii. 3-5. As an instance, a large, red snake once came into a house, and no one could kill it. A charmer was summoned, who spoke for a long time to the snake, but could not make him obey. Finally he went very close to the snake, whereupon the snake bit the charmer, who died instantly. Another charmer of superior power was then called. He put a piece of thick felt around his body so the snake could not bite him. He then spoke to the snake for a long time without any apparent effect. Finally the snake yielded and the charmer took it in his hands. It at once became very obedient. The charmer then killed it.

Some snakes, however, are very easily charmed. For instance if a charmer sees a hole in which he supposes there is a snake, he will stand over the hole and utter some incantation in the Arabic language,

whereupon the snake will come out. The charmer will then pick it up in his hand and put it in his bosom. The snake will do him no harm.

In the public squares of Persian cities charmers may often be seen with a great number of different kinds of snakes in boxes. He will talk about them taking up one snake at a time and telling the characteristics of each, how it bites, how it lives and where it lives. The Mohammedans regard a snake charmer as a holy man whom even the venomous snakes, the universal enemies of mankind, obey. Therefore superstitious people who have been sick believe that snake charmers can cure them by their magical power which has been imparted to them by the Imams or Mohammedan pontiffs. I have seen them come to a snake charmer who took a poisonous red snake and held it close to the nose of a sick man and told it in plain language to take blood from the nose of the sick man but not to infuse any poison into it ending his instructions to it by saying, "Snake if you put poison into him, by Allah, I will kill you." Then the snake took hold of the nose of the sick man and gave it a few gentle jerks, so that the blood came, and then let go without infusing any poison into it. After that the charmer took a knife and opening the snakes mouth struck its fangs with the blade telling it at the same time to cast its poison. The snake obeyed casting its poison on the blade of the knife, whereupon the charmer licked it off with his tongue and spit it out saying to the spectators as he did so, "See, it does not hurt me." The sick man then paid him his doctor bill of two cents, but of course he was

not cured at all.

Charmers sometimes tie a chicken's feet and put it into a box with a lot of snakes over which he exercises his power. Then he tells the snakes that they must not bite that chicken and none of them then dares do it. After he has talked awhile to demonstrate his power over them he will say to one of the snakes, "Now snake you must bite that chicken." His commands are at once obeyed by the snake designated and the chicken immediately dies.

The snake charmers talk to snakes as if they were talking to human beings.

I have seen a charmer take a piece of iron and making it red hot, and uttering some incantation, place it upon his tongue without its burning him. Some suppose that he puts some chemicals upon his tongue to prevent its burning but this can not be because they are totally ignorant and have no knowledge of drugs. Such doctors among the Mohammedans have neither medicine nor any knowledge of it.

Magical arts and the communication with evil spirits do much for the promotion of the Mohammedan religion. Christians, however, in all lands know that such powers are not God-given and that such practices are always harmful and never helpful.

Snake charming as practiced in this country is entirely different from that of Asiatic countries. In this country they either use snakes that never bite anyhow or else they drug them or extract their fangs rendering them harmless.

DERVISHES.

Dervishes, or Mohammedan monks indulge wild and extravagant notions of religion and believe that through the mortification of the body they will win



DERVISHES, OR MOHAMMEDAN MONKS.

(From T. H. McAllister, Optician, N. Y.)

the favor of God. To these fanatics this present material body has no value because it is destined after death to become a prey to worms. The inflicting of wounds and the deadening of the body to pain is considered by them to be of great merit. Asceticism is a praise-worthy part of their virtuous life. Much honor and praise are accorded them by men for this commendable (?) mode of life, and they are very similar in their motives and character to the Pharisees whom our Lord mentions as loving to stand and

pray on the corners of the streets that they may be seen of men. Upon certain days these fanatical dervishes appear upon the public squares of the city and whirl round and round with a wonderful rapidity until they are excited to the highest degree. They are then supposed to be inspired by the divine spirit and spectators gather all around them. One of them may then be seen to take the sharp point of a dagger and strike it upon his naked stomach. Although he seems to strike very hard it apparently does not hurt him and he thus pretends that he is protected by an invisible power. Another one may stick pieces of metal into his naked body, especially into his breast hoping thereby to obtain atonement for his sins. They think there is no better way to secure the salvation of the soul from the guilt of sin. Another one may beat upon his breast with a large piece of chain in a most incredible manner until the blood gushes from it.

It is very hard for the spectators to understand how any human being can stand such horrible self-imposed and self-inflicted torture.

Others of them take large pieces of stone and pound upon their naked breasts until they are black and blue. Some sing a chant and cry, "Ya hak! Ya Allah!" "O righteous! O God!" and renew their exercises with greater violence than before and holding each others hands dance in a most grotesque and astonishing manner until they become thoroughly excited. Then they begin whirling again and mutilating their bodies in various ways peculiar to them. Then some of them fall down upon the ground and

spin about like a wheel and finally get to foaming at their mouths until they become entirely exhausted, and then lie as though they were half dead. They are then rewarded for this meritorious per-



FANATICAL MOHAMMEDANS.

(From T. H. McAllister, *Optician, N. Y.*)

formance by a collection taken up among the spectators. No ladies are to be seen on such occasions.

In Persia there are no opera houses, or theatres, or theatrical performances except such as have just been described and for these the streets and public squares serve them as stages.

MODES OF PUNISHMENT.

The following modes of punishment are practiced in Persia at the present time:

1st. By poisoning. This is the form of capital punishment inflicted by the shah or king of Persia upon his officers of highest rank, such as princes, prime-ministers, and governors. When such an one has been unfortunate enough to be convicted of a certain crime which calls for the infliction of capital punishment the shah simply sends him a glass of some deadly poison by the hand of one of his officers. When this is presented to him by an officer of the king there is nothing for him to do but to take it, drink it and die right on the spot. Formerly they used to pluck out the eyes of a convicted man as a punishment.

2nd. By beheading. This is a very common method of inflicting capital punishment. The royal family are of course endowed with full authority to put a criminal to death in whatever way they see fit. But to other officers that the shah appoints, such as governors of the different states or provinces, whom he wishes to authorize to inflict capital punishment, he gives a peculiarly made knife which is the symbol of their power to behead criminals such as murderers and highway robbers. Every one who has such authority vested in him has to find one or two executioners who are most cruel and have no natural human feelings, who can cut off the heads of human beings as they would cut off the heads of chickens. These executioners are easily recognized because they have to wear red clothes. The people look upon them with a great deal of horror, and they are indeed hard men. Some blame them for their inhuman character while others say they serve a good

purpose for by disabling thieves and robbers and exterminating murderers they make it possible for people to live in peace and safety.

When the sentence of death has been pronounced by the chief governor upon a criminal, then a captain accompanied by a band of his soldiers will go to the filthy prison of the doomed man, who since his



A PRISON SCENE.

imprisonment has not had a bath or his clothes changed, a shave or his hair cut. Thus deprived of everything that could make him look at all respectable, it is no wonder if he looks uncanny and horrible. The band of soldiers surround him, the cruel executioner with his red clothes on and a bloody knife in his hand leads the way as they march to the city square where a crowd of curious spectators have already assembled. After the soldiers have made the

crowd retreat a few paces, the condemned man with his hands chained is made to kneel down and the executioner with his keen knife severs his head from his body. Once I heard that in the city of Oroomiah when an executioner had beheaded a Kurd in this way while his body lay there lashing the ground in dying his head kept jumping up and falling down beside it for quite a while.

The death sentence is thus publicly executed, not to gratify the curiosity of the populace, nor yet from a lack of human feeling but in order to frighten those who would otherwise be criminals into leading honest lives. When there are many thieves, highway robbers, and murderers and one is caught and beheaded the governor will command that the body be left for two or three days in the public square so that every one that passes by may see it and be afraid to do wrong.

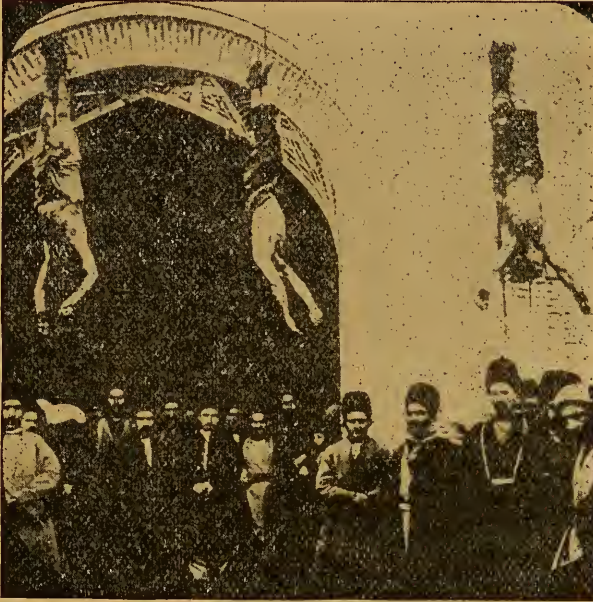
Some years ago a number of thieves were captured and beheaded in the city of Oroomiah and the governor ordered their bodies to be severed in two and a piece hung over each gate of the city so that every one who came into the city or went out of it should see this and be afraid to do wrong.

3rd. By blowing to pieces by a cannon. This method of inflicting punishment expresses the heinousness of the crime and the swiftness of vengeance upon such. The criminal is brought and bound securely to the mouth of a cannon and then an artillery man fires it; thus blowing the criminal to atoms.

4th. By hanging. This sentence is executed much as it is in this country. The gallows consists

of two posts with a cross beam on top from which the criminal is suspended by means of a rope fastened around his neck.

5th. By vaults. These are built of brick in the



PUNISHMENT BY HANGING.

(From T. H. McAllister, Optician, N. Y.)

shape of a barrel and as deep as a man's height. A man who is sentenced to this form of punishment is brought and placed in the vault with his head exposed. He is then plastered down with mortar all around him. This hardens and he is squeezed to death.

6th. By cutting off the hands. A bad thief when caught for the first time may have one of his hands taken off. Should he not stop stealing then and should he be caught a second time his other hand may be cut off. When the governor has pro-

nounced this sentence upon a criminal the soldiers will conduct him to the city square led by the executioner carrying his knife in his hand. A quantity of butter will also be boiled and made ready and the place will be surrounded by a crowd of curious people eager to see the proceedings. As soon as the executioner has cut off the thief's hand, he dips his arm several times into the boiling butter to make it stop bleeding. Afterwards the thief is set at liberty. The executioner then goes to all the shop-keepers one after another. Each shop-keeper will give him a penny or two for his heroic act of cutting off the hands or the heads of the thieves or murderers thus disabling evil-doers and exterminating the murderers of the country thereby insuring them peace.

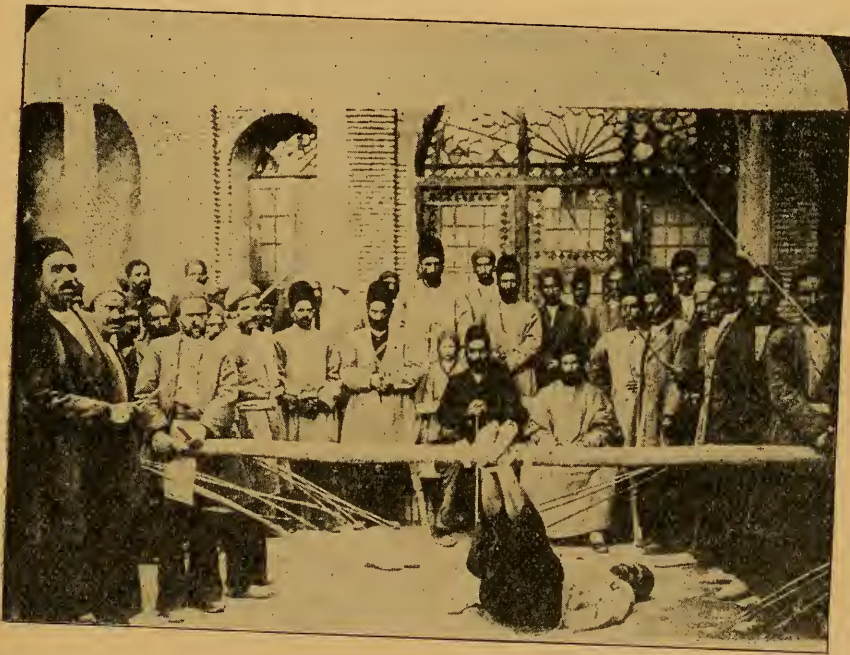
7th. By cutting off an ear. This is a very simple and insignificant form of punishment, inflicted also by the executioner.

8th. By torturing. In order to exact a confession of guilt or have a prisoner turn states evidence this punishment is employed. For instance, once there were a number of robbers who dug a hole through the sun dried brick wall of the residence of a wealthy Mohammedan and carried off a great part of his costly furniture. Shortly afterwards one of them was captured and imprisoned. Once every day the officers of the government used to take him out into the market place and standing all around him they beat him with thick whips at the same time telling him to give them the names of his accomplices. Upon his refusal to do so they struck him all the harder and faster but still he refused. So

they kept on for an hour or so when he fainted and was taken back to prison. In this way he was treated for many days but still refused to tell and then they beheaded him.

Some years ago they used to drive sharp pieces of dry reed under the finger nails of criminals or deprive them of sleep until they would confess their crimes and give the names of their accomplices.

9th. By the bastinado. This is the most common form of punishment in Persia and one that al-



THE BASTINADO.

most every one is liable to receive at some time or other. There are different kinds and sizes of bastinados in different places but the most common and simplest one consists of a beam-like piece of timber which is raised about two feet above the ground. When the magistrate has given orders to have this

punishment inflicted upon some offender, for instance upon some one for striking another and hurting him, or may be for using bad language, then the magistrate's servants take the offender and laying him down take off his shoes and stockings and bind his feet to the piece of timber. Then one servant standing on the right side and another on the left, each with a flexible stick in his hand, begin striking the soles of the offender's bare feet by turns. Whether this punishment is mild or severe depends entirely upon those who execute it. If they are naturally cruel they will strike very hard so that the criminal's cries rend the air and the blood gushes from his feet, but if they are naturally kind and merciful they will raise their hands very high and pretend to strike very hard while in truth they are doing it as lightly as they can. Still the soles of the feet hurt badly enough any way. When they have administered this punishment for a while some one may intercede for the offender, whereupon he will be fined and released.

This punishment when properly administered does good in many instances. Often it humbles bad, obstinate persons and makes them reasonable and obedient.

10th. By whipping. In this they lay the criminal down. One man holds his feet, another, his head while one stands on each side of him and beats him on his back by turns. When their switches break they take others, for there are always a supply of them kept in the magistrate's court yard in a pool of water to keep them soft. When they have

whipped the criminal long enough to satisfy their ideas of justice they fine him and let him go.

When they are whipping a person on the back each stroke hurts worse than the one before, but when it is the feet they are striking they become rather dull or numb and less sensitive to pain with each stroke. After a day or so, however, they grow quite painful.

A good many of these methods of punishment have been softened a little lately but at the same ratio the fines and bribes have increased.

For the punishment of women there are three methods in common use varying in severity according to the crimes of which they are guilty. Women, however, do not very often have to be punished but when they do their punishments are both cruel and humiliating as most punishments are.

When the death sentence has been passed upon a woman she is placed in a sack which is tied shut above her head just as if it were filled with grain. In this shape she is taken out into the place of execution and stabbed with spears or daggers until she dies.

Another form of punishment is inflicted particularly upon very bad girls or young women by putting them into sacks as has already been described and then having them beaten with sticks.

Still another form is inflicted by shaving all the beautiful long hair on which the women of that country pride themselves, from the head of the woman to be punished then painting her face black they compel her to ride through the streets on a donkey

sitting with her face turned backward.

INCONSISTENT MOHAMMEDANS.

The Mohammedans are very careful as to what they eat. As has been stated before very few of them will eat bread baked by the hands of Christians while thousands of them would consider it a sin to even touch the bread of Christians but they regard it no sin whatever to cheat a Christian or steal from him anything they can lay their hands on for they do not know the Christian's commandment, "Thou shalt not steal."

In Asiatic Russia two Mohammedans once met two Armenian Christians on the road. Unwittingly one of the Mohammedans greeted the Armenian Christian as if he were a Mohammedan saying, "Salam-Alakum," "Peace be unto you." When he discovered his mistake he was angry beyond all expression and demanded that the Christian should give him back his salutation because they never greet Christians as they do their own number. Of course this was impossible, the Christian could not return to him his words. Still the Mohammedan kept telling him to do so until the Christian became so angry that he took his club and began using that on him. Then the Mohammedan fled and the Christian told him that now he had his greeting back.

In Asiatic Russia near the dividing line between Russia, Turkey, and Persia where the Mohammedans are powerless, once an Armenian Christian was driving a herd of swine for a long distance. In the evening he reached a village half of whose inhabitants were Christians and the other half Moham-

medans consequently there was a Christian church and a Mohammedan mosque, or temple. He put his drove of hogs into the ruins of an old uninhabited house for the night. After the people of the village had all gone to bed and every thing was quiet the hogs began to feel dissatisfied with their lodging place, in regular hog style, and began wandering about the streets of the village hunting for better quarters when accidentally they came to the Mohammedan temple and finding the door open they went in and made themselves quite at home there for the remainder of the night. Early the next morning a Mohammedan priest came to the temple to worship and was shocked to find it full of hogs. He smote his head and cried aloud and the people gathered around him and drove the hogs out of the temple. The Mohammedans, however, would never use the temple any more but razed it to the ground and built a new one in its stead.

There is nothing so abominable to Mohammedans as hogs because it is said that once Mohammed was sleeping out doors and one of these filthy animals came around him. Turning over he got the filth it left on his clothing. When he awoke he found his clothes all dirty and vile, and for this he cursed the hog in general. Since then the hog has become to all Mohammedans the most hateful of animals and as a consequence there are no hogs in Persia. The Christians being so few in number cannot keep them. Whenever it is talked of the Christian natives of Europe coming and building railroads in Persia, the Mohammedan priests oppose it most bitterly saying

that if the European infidels come they will bring with them their terrible hogs and defile us and our religion.



GROUP OF MOHAMMEDAN PRIESTS.

The Mohammedans who live under the Russian government gather in their temples crying and praying that "Allah" may deliver them from the infidel Russian rule. There are many among them, how-

ever, that really like the Russian government.

Once a number of wild hogs came down from the mountains to a little mountain and half of the people of my village went after them and finally succeeded in killing one. When it was brought to the village everybody was out to see what kind of an animal it was but the people thronged the streets so that all could not see. Then a man took it and went upon a house top and held it down in the street so that everybody could see it. That was the first time I ever saw a hog. Many of the people got about an ounce each of its fat for medicine. The Christians there use lard for the cure of rheumatism. They rub it well into the affected part and then lie in the sunshine.

Sometimes when the Mohammedans get angry with any one who has been in Europe they say, "Get away, you dirty thing, you have gone to Europe and eaten pork." According to their law a Mohammedan must be punished very severely if he should eat pork and they would call him an infidel Christian, but if he should rob or kill a Christian he is all right, there is no sin in that. And if he should take a Christian woman by force and dishonor her, that is no sin. Once a Mohammedan Kurd saw a Nestorian Christian asleep in the hot sun and made a shadow fall upon him saying, "Mohammed has so commanded. Let him lie still and rest because the rest will make him the stronger to work for the Mohammedans."

During the massacre of the Armenians in Turkey the Persian Mohammedans saw that the Christian

nations of the world took no steps to punish Turkey for her atrocity, so they said, "The Turks killed so many thousands of Christians yet the European infidels did nothing to the Turks. If we should kill these Armenian and Nestorian dogs what would they do to us?" They held many meetings in their mosque to discuss the question of exterminating the Christians in their land, too, but after all decided not to because as they said, "These Christians are our sheep." Whenever a Christian dreams of being bitten by a dog he interprets it to mean that in the morning a Mohammedan will give him trouble. Mohammedans ask Christians questions thus trying to entangle them and get them into trouble. When a Christian on his way meets a Mohammedan whom he knows to be a bad man and in consequence does not salute him, then the Mohammedan if he wishes to annoy him will say, "Why did you not greet me?" With this for a pretext the Mohammedan will hold him guilty and give him some blows. Sometimes they go so far as to say that if a Christian riding on horseback should meet a Mohammedan he should dismount and salute the Mohammedan and after the latter has passed by the Christian may be allowed to ride on his way again. This of course is only claimed but they cannot enforce such an absurd thing. It is claimed upon the basis that the Mohammedans are such vastly superior beings because they are Allah's own people while the Christians belonging to such an inferior order of beings should pay them homage.

When traveling it may often happen that Chris-

itans and Mohammedans may meet at the same brook or spring of water to eat their dinner. In such a case the Christians must always sit below and the Mohammedans at a safe distance up the stream so that the Christians may not defile the water for them.

SOME MOHAMMEDAN SUPERSTITIONS.

When a man is very sick they bathe him in order to make the angels pass by him.

When a number of persons are sitting together if one should start to walk around them they will say, "Do not walk around us for if you do our calamities will fall upon you."

You must not eat bread with girls for if you do no beard will ever grow on your face.

If you lick dishes your sweet-heart will be beautiful.

When a child is born they throw a man's trousers upon him so that the devils may not take him away.

When children have whooping-cough they say, "Give them donkey's milk to drink."

They never leave children alone for if they do devils will nurse them.

Take a dead snake by the tail and throw it behind you. If it falls upon its back then either your mother or your wife will give birth to a girl, or to a boy if it falls with its back up.

If you pass over an instrument of any kind it will become heavy and not work well.

If you whistle during the night devils will come and choke you.

Do not taste food while you are cooking it for if

you do it will not taste good afterwards.

During the night when you get up to drink water put your hand upon your head because devils will butt you.

Take a little flat stone and write upon it the names of yourself and your mother, your sweetheart and her mother, and cast it into the fire. As it grows hot so will your love and your sweetheart's grow hot toward each other.

Mohammedan shoe-makers never make an odd shoe because if they did their wives would die.

If ladies are sitting on either side of the road a Mohammedan man will never pass between them for he would fall into a ditch if he did.

If you wish to keep a cat so that it will never leave you take a little stick and measure its tail then place the stick in the air duct of the oven and the cat will never leave your premises.

When you have a blister on your tongue rub your hand upon the head of a first born child. That will cure the blister.

Bind a horn upon the handle of your churn and you will get much butter.

In the early spring when people see for the first time a stork coming from Arabia to Persia they look down. If they find a white hair it means that they will not die until they have reached a good old age. If they find a black hair they will die young.

They say when dogs howl it is because they see angels.

If a man should eat the loaf of bread that is baked first his wife will die.

They say it is a sin to blow out a lamp.

They cut the tails of their dogs to make their necks grow thick .

SAYINGS AND SUPERSTITIONS OF THE ASSYRIAN OR NESTORIAN CHRISTIANS.

You must not drink water on Sunday evening before the lamp is lighted because then no one would give water to your dead friends.

If you rub dust from a church upon a wart it will disappear.

On Sunday evenings Christians light the lamps in their houses very early because they think it is a sin if the corners of their houses become dark on Sunday.

Every time the Nestorian Christians light a lamp in their houses they say, "Glory be to God and Christ!"

To make a man stop hiccoughing they say to him, "You have stolen church tapers."

When they see a cat washing her face they say that guests are coming to them.

When guests have eaten they thank their host by saying, "May God increase your riches. May God bless your table and may his blessings be in it. May it be as the table of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. May it increase and not decrease."

When any one receives anything or eats a meal and does not return thanks for it, they call him a Kurd or a Mohammedan.

They say, "First cook your words in your heart, then speak them."

When anyone is cracking nuts and finds one with

two kernels they say, "Your mother or your wife will have twins."

When two Nestorian Christians have been angry with each other and their friends have urged them to become reconciled and they agree to it and shake hands their reconciliation is not considered genuine, but if they kiss each other it is thought to be genuine.

If a disagreement should arise between two brothers when they are going to separate and divide their property, then to bring about peace between them they will tell them the following story: Once there were two brothers who were going to separate and divide their property. One of them was married, the other single. In their threshing floor they had a quantity of wheat which they had divided equally between them. Afterwards the married brother thought to himself, "now my brother is just going to start a new house so he will need more than I." Then at night he went and took a quantity of wheat from his own share and put it upon his brother's. The single brother thought, "My brother is married and has a family to support and so he needs more wheat than I do." So in the darkness of the night he went to the threshing floor and took a quantity of wheat from his own part and put it upon his brother's share. God who saw the sincerity of their love for each other was much pleased and increased the property of both the brothers.

When they are dealing with a greedy person they will say, "Do not be like the adz and always cut toward yourself. Sometimes be like scissors and cut on both sides."

When they dream that one of their teeth is pulled they believe that one of their relatives will die.

When they dream of seeing a bier it is considered a good omen.

When they dream of eating meat they believe that some one has been back-biting them.

When they dream of winding yarn they say that some of their relatives in a foreign country are coming home.

To dream of eating raisins signifies whisperings.

Seeing bees in a dream indicates riches.

To dream that one is carrying a load of hay also indicates riches.

To dream of eating grapes presages sorrow and the flowing of tears.

To dream of buffaloes fighting means that angels will come for the soul of some member of the family. (The noise of the crowds when buffaloes fight is dreadful—as bad as the sound of the fire alarms in this country.)

To see a child in ones dreams fortells good tidings.

When they dream of being bitten by a dog it means that the Mohammedans will give them trouble.

PRAYER AMONG THE MOHAMMEDANS.

Prayer is the pillar of the Mohammedan religion and the power by which the gates of paradise are to be thrown open to the faithful. They must pray five times each day according to the precepts laid down in the Koran, nor must they ever allow anything to distract their thoughts to such an extent

that they forget their prayers at the set time.

I once heard a Persian dervish who was in company with an Arabian dervish, say that if from any cause the Arabian dervish should allow the set time for his prayers to pass by without praying he would cry like a child. This he does of course to show what a good Mohammedan he is. There is probably no other religion at present that has so much hypocrisy and external show mixed in with it as the Mohammedan religion. If the Jews have lost any of their laws for purification the Mohammedans have surely found them. Many of their forms for purification and ablution are somewhat similar to those of the Jews because Mohammed in many respects imitated the teachings of Moses. He said to his followers, "O true believers, no matter where you are when you prepare yourselves to pray wash your faces and your hands up to your elbows and rub your heads and your feet up to the ankles; then turn your faces toward the holy temple of Kaaba at Mecca." Mohammedans always remember this and at whatever place they are, they find out immediately in what direction Mecca is located and then turn their faces toward it when they pray. Mohammed no doubt got this idea from the Old Testament with which he was quite well acquainted. Every one who reads this will doubtless recall how during the long captivity of Judah, Daniel had the windows of his chamber looking toward Jerusalem opened and always when he prayed turned his face toward the holy temple.

Mohammedans do not use bells upon their tem-

ples but at the regular hours for prayer their priest goes up upon the roof of their mosque and putting his right fore-finger into his right ear he cries with a very loud and dreadful voice saying, "God is great! God is great! Come to prayer! Come to the house of refuge!" This crier is called the Muezzin. When Mohammedans hear this they put their hands upon their faces and say, "Glory be to God!" Those that are near the mosque go there to worship. Usually there is a fountain of water in their temple court. Every one stops there, turns back the wide sleeves of his coat to the elbows and putting his right hand into the water repeats the name of "Allah." Then he washes his hands and arms up to the elbows, his face and the insides of his ears and then his feet. It is customary for every one to take off his shoes at the door and enter the mosque bare-footed. Almost every worshipper has a seal of Mecca which is about the size of a half dollar and is made of clay. This inscription is found on it, "There is no god but God." The worshipper turns his face toward Mecca, places his seal on the floor in front of him, stands erect opens his hands and raises them to his head. After uttering a few words he kneels down and presses his brow for a few moments upon his seal, at the same time uttering some short petition. Then he kisses his seal and stands erect. Afterwards he puts his fore-fingers into his ears, then bends forward putting his hands upon his knees and again he stands erect. He then makes some other gestures repeating at each gesture some short petition or sentence of praise. It should also be stated

here that they use rosaries in their devotions.

In the midst of their prayers they often stop for a few minutes to speak a few words to those standing nearest them. For instance, if the worshipper happens to be fond of smoking he may make some remarks about tobacco or smoking to his friend near by and then continues his prayers right where he left off.

They perform these gestures or genuflections in a very skillful manner partly because they repeat them so often that they become natural to them and partly because there are always so many spectators and they wish "to be seen of men" and therefore pay more attention as to how they appear to men than as to how they appear to "Allah" whom they claim to be worshipping. This is especially true when there are Christians among their spectators. For example, there was a Mohammedan dyer who lived in my native Christian village. During the summer all the village people slept upon their house tops. Then this Mohammedan would go upon the top of his house and pray so that the whole village might hear him. Part of his prayer he used to sing, part he used to chant, and a part he repeated in a low tone. After a few months he borrowed money from some of the village and then he disappeared. Thus one cannot help seeing that their prayers are merely for outward show and do not come from the heart "in secret to the Father who seeth in secret" as do those of true Christians.

A murderer or a thief will stand in the citysquare and pray in order to make people believe him as in-

nocent as an angel, but those that know him will be all the more afraid of him because they believe that he is only on the look out for a chance to steal. When such a one is praying it makes no difference what is going on around him. It will not in the least interrupt him. Their customs require him to appear to be devout and he is afraid that it may show his own consciousness of his guilt if he should in any way appear to be conscious of his surroundings. Very often they pray out of fear of each other to divert suspicion.

MOHAMMEDAN FUNERALS.

When a Mohammedan dies his whole family mourns for him. The women wear black and darken their eyes, while the men leave their breasts uncovered. If the dead man was prominent and wealthy his servants will be sent around to bring some ladies who can recite poetry and sing songs of lamentation. All the relatives and friends and even many outsiders will be present. The ladies will sit around the corpse and sing songs of lamentation appropriate to the circumstance of the deceased man. They sing by turns using such sorrowful tunes as to make every one shed tears. This occasion of lamentation will continue at least one hour. The corpse will then be taken to a temple or mosque and the lamentations continued in the presence of all the relatives, friends and acquaintances of the dead.

The lamentations are sometimes accompanied by music. When this starts up with their awful funeral tunes their sorrow is beyond measure. The body is washed and ornamented by painting the eyes and

eyebrows black, the feet and hands red. It is then placed in a coffin. I once asked a Mohammedan why they thus ornament the bodies of their dead. He replied, "In order that the deceased may appear beautiful and clean before God."

They place the coffin on a ladder and four men carry it upon their shoulders- the people following and the priest leading the procession by reading, singing, chanting, and reciting poetry descriptive of the final judgment. The corpse is then placed in a brick vault. After the burial they give to each one present a piece of bread and sometimes a handful of raisins also. Then every one returns to his own home except the priest who remains by the vault until all are gone so that no one may see or hear him and then he speaks to the dead man calling him by his mother's and not by his father's name, because they do not know if he was his father's son but they are absolutely sure that he was his mother's son. Some say that the priest tells him that he must give a good account of himself at the last judgment. Some of the native Christians, however, claim that when the priest stands alone there with the dead he tells him that we have denied Christ in this world, but you must not deny him in the world to come for he is the Lord and Saviour.

If the deceased man was not able during his life to make a pilgrimage to any holy place, then before his death he will bequeath a certain sum of money that is to be used by his sons or other near relatives for the carrying of his body to the city of Karbella. Should his relatives not want to go themselves, they

will make a contract with some one who is going on a pilgrimage to carry his bones with them for the bequeathed amount so that they may rest in the holy city of Karbella.

Then they dig up the body and separate the flesh from the bones, dry the latter and pack them in a box and carry them or have the man who has contracted for it carry them to Karbella. I have often heard of Mohammedans saying that the carrying of a man's bones for such a long distance on horseback is a very tiresome job for the journey to Karbella and return requires five months. So it is said that very often those who carry skeletons take them a little distance and then either cast them into a river or else dig a hole and bury them there. Upon their return they say, "Yes, we have carried them to the holy city Karbella.

Sometimes when a man whose father and grandfather were poor accumulates riches he makes a vow to send the bones of his father and his grandfather to Karbella, even though they may have been dead thirty or forty years. He will at the same time make the pilgrimage himself to the holy places.

I have asked about the object of these disgusting ceremonies and have been told by some that it was nothing only the moving of the bones from one grave into another. Others say that it is an honor to the deceased man to have his bones rest in the same place as those of the great prophets, Hassen and Hussein, the grandsons of Mohammed in the holy city of Karbella.

There is said to be a hole there in which all the

skeletons are placed and that afterwards camels come and take them away.

Such is the condition of all those that follow a false religion. It curses its people and burdens them with rites that are unsatisfactory to the human soul. It places the conscience in a state of perplexity so that it can never find that peace and satisfaction for which the human soul yearns.

Many Mohammedans acknowledge that the Christians are happier and more hopeful than they. So it is that a Mohammedan with all of his alms, pilgrimages and prayers five times a day fails to find peace. But when he is converted to Christianity and believes in the only true son of God then he finds the peace that he has been seeking in so many wrong ways, then is he satisfied.

All the purifications, offerings and sacrifices of the Jew under his theocratic government only served to point him to his everlasting hope, the sacrifice of the innocent lamb of God which by their prophetic vision his prophets saw, and rejoiced to see.

All of the three hundred gods of the Hindo cannot satisfy the longings of his soul even though he sacrifice his children to them. But when he is converted and becomes a follower of the Lord Jesus, then is he satisfied and then does his mind begin to develop and his views become broadened for, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."

In this way all the religions of the world have been tested. All ungodly infidels have been heard, and one after another has fallen and perished. All

have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. So shall the false religions of the present day perish in the years to come. It is only the structure of our religion with Christ as the corner stone that has been able to stand against all the assaults of her enemies from within and without and shall continue to stand until time shall be no more. Many who are now the enemies of Christ's church shall come to take refuge under the shadow of her wings; she shall go on from victory to victory until she overcomes at last because her king is the King of Kings who is victorious and whose subjects when they awake in his likeness shall be satisfied.

* * *

THE KING AND HIS COURT.

In order to better understand the present royal family of Persia we will briefly give a few facts from the life of the Shah, Nasr-ed-Din, the father of the present shah, or king of Persia. Shah Nasr-ed-Din, the fourth king of the Kadjar dynasty was the son of Shah Mohammed and the great-grandson of Fattaly Shah, the founder of the dynasty. Fattaly Shah was a man of fine physique and very proud of his broad shoulders and his long black beard reaching to his waist. To him Teheran is indebted for many of her fine buildings and the many bas-reliefs of him, sculptured on rocks all around the city, and the portraits of him found in every one of his palaces. In his youth he had been a very wise and intelligent king, but being unsuccessful in his wars with Russia he spent most

of the remainder of his life in his harems with his seven hundred wives and six hundred children. Of course the finances of Persia could not permit the supporting of such a numerous royal family in royal style and so it happened that many of the blood royal are now as poor as the poorest of the shah's subjects. It is said that Fattaly's descendants now



SHAH NASR-ED-DIN-

number over five thousand persons. Although the father of such a numerous progeny Fattaly Shah was succeeded upon the throne by his grandson, Shah

Mohammed whose father, Fattaly's eldest son, had died before the old monarch. Shah Mohammed was a very weak and indolent ruler but his son Shah Nasr-ed-Din, who ascended the throne in the year 1848 at the age of eighteen, holds an honorable place among the rulers of the world. He visited the European courts at three different times. The two most important improvements introduced by him into his country were the construction of telegraph lines in the years 1869-1876, and the establishment of a postal service in 1877. The last important service he rendered his country was the founding of a university called Darinal-funum, or place of science, at the capital city, Teheran. Most of the teachers employed in this institution are either Frenchmen or Englishmen. By these means Nasr-ed-Din made communication between himself and his people easier and brought himself in touch with the European nations in spite of the prejudices of his Mohammedan priests who hate and oppose everything that tends to bring Persia in contact with the nations of Europe.

The government of Persia is an absolute monarchy, and since its establishment two hundred and fifty-five kings have reigned over its people.

Nasr-ed-Din was not only an absolute monarch in civil affairs, but in matters of religion as well, being exempt from all the laws and requirements of the Mohammedan religion. He could also marry as many wives as he pleased and divorce them at pleasure. He had forty wives but only four of them were legal. Besides these forty wives that were

kept in the harem every now and then some influential man who had a beautiful daughter would send her as a present to the king. The king would marry her for a short time and then divorce her. After that she could marry some one else. A man would often present his daughter to the king in order to gain influence and reputation. Such were always presented on Friday. It used to happen sometimes that several maidens were sent at the same time in this way. Then they would be brought to a certain place and the king riding upon horseback would come into the midst of the group. Then each one would present herself eager to become the king's wife no matter for how long or how short a time. In this way he would have a chance to see them all and if there was any one among them that pleased his fancy he would put his handkerchief upon her head and then leave them. Afterwards his eunuchs would take her to his harem.

Upon his return from his last trip to Europe at the city of Tiflis the capital of Georgia situated on the river Kur in the Caucasian mountains and now belonging to Russia, two young maidens of celebrated beauty and belonging to the Caucasian race were presented to him. He accepted both of them, had them brought to Persia and added to his bevy of beauties in the harem. All these women of the harem were most voluptuously kept, elegantly dressed, bountifully fed, but governed by the strictest discipline. No man could appear in the harem except the family officers and the eunuchs who have always been especially empowered to guard the harem and

preserve peace among the women, for naturally enough among such a large family of women brought from so many different families and with little to occupy them, disputes and quarrels often arise.

When ever the king would go on a journey or go out into the fields for sport he would take along with



ZELLE SULTAN.

him as many of his wives as he wished while some of the eunuchs always accompanied them as a guard.

Since Nasr-ed-Din had so many wives one might

suppose that he must have had many children also, but such was not the case. He had only four sons. The eldest son, Zelle Sultan, is much like his father and is a very intelligent prince. Muzafer-ed-Din, the present shah, is three years younger than his brother, Zelle Sultan, but succeeded his father nevertheless because in Persia only a son whose mother is a legal wife of the shah can ascend the throne. Zelle Sultan's mother not being a legal wife of Nasr-ed-Din disqualified him for heirship to the throne. He is now governor of one of the



KNANISHU MORATKHAN'S SCHOOL.

provinces. The two other sons of Shah Nasr-ed-Din hold high offices in the kingdom of Persia.

Nasr-ed-Din was a friend of the poor and oppressed. He was especially favorable toward the Nes-

torian Christians as being his most faithful, industrious and useful subjects. He used to call them his beloved people of the Nazarene. Christians in Persia are always called by the Mohammedans the followers of the Nazarene because Mohammed himself so called them.

My father, Knanishu Moratkhan, a native Nes-



KNANISHU MORATKHAN'S SCHOOL.

torian Christian, has been engaged for the last twenty-five years in educational work among our own people, the Nestorian Christians living around lake Oroomiah. He has established and maintains three schools there. Having visited this country in the year 1888, his face in the three accompanying illustrations may be familiar to some of my readers.

The Shah Nasr-ed-Din in recognition of the value

of his services as an educator conferred upon him in the year 1892 the degree of "Milet Basshi," Head of the Nation. This title however, does not mean as much there as the English translation of it would indicate.



KNANISHU MORATKHAN'S SCHOOL.

All this kind feeling on the part of the shah, however, only increased the animosity of his Mohammedan priests toward the Nestorians. The priest-hood is very powerful in Persia. The priests, the khans or lords, the governor and the Mohammedan people it is who inflict so much cruelty upon the Nestorian and Armenian Christians in Persia and most of it never reaches the ears of the shah.

The kings of Persia have always been very careful to observe the forms of their religion. They say their prayers at the appointed hours. Since it is the

custom of the Mohammedans to do this in public any neglect of it would excite notice and nothing would tend more to weaken a king's authority than a belief among his subjects that he was irreligious.

The Shah Nasr-de-Din was a very enlightened and religious man. He especially favored missionaries, never being prejudiced against them as the cruel Sultan of Turkey, because he was wise enough to know that they had come to do good and not evil.

The present shah is equally kindly disposed toward missionaries.

The following denominations and nationalities are engaged in doing missionary work in Persia: First in importance and influence is the Presbyterian mission supported by that denomination in this country. The Roman Catholics are also doing some missionary work there. There is an English mission supported by the state church of England; a Swedish mission sent out by the Mission Friends of Sweden; and a German mission under the auspices of the Lutheran church of Germany. Lately the Greek Catholic church of Russia has established a mission there also, and considerable trouble has resulted between it and the other missions already established.

It may also be interesting to state that while all the above mentioned missionaries are working among the native Christians it is the native Christians themselves who are doing missionary work among the Mohammedans, but the process is very slow.

On the first of May 1896, the Shah Nasr-ed-Din, having just gone through with the forms of religious

worship in a Mohammedan shrine, was coming out of the door when he was shot by the hand of an assassin and killed instantly. His murderer was one of his subjects, Mirza Riza of Kerman, who belonged to the peculiar sect of Babesim that is found in Persia and that differs from the Mohammedan religion.

THE PRESENT SHAH.

The present shah, Muzafer-ed-Din is especially known from his early youth to be a most zealously



SHAH MUZAFER-ED-DIN.

religious man. All the princes of Persia learn very early all the forms of their Mohammedan religion.

At the age of three or four years they can repeat a few short prayers and are perfect in their genuflections and manner of holding their hands when praying. They are also most carefully instructed in all the forms of etiquette that a prince should know. They are taught how to make their obeisance to a superior and how to behave to a person of equal rank or an inferior. Also how they are to stand in the presence of their father, the king, how to be seated if desired and how to retire. All these forms are of great consequence at a court where everything is regulated by ceremony, and it is not unusual to see a child five years old as mature in his manners and as grave in his deportment in a public assembly as the oldest person present. When a young prince is between the ages of seven and eight years he begins to learn the Persian and Arabic languages. He learns to read the Koran in the latter language. After this he is instructed in the essential tenets of his religion. He is early imbued with the importance of those doctrines which distinguish the faith of the Shiite sect of Mohammedans to which the Persians belong from the Sunnite sect to which the Turks belong. He is taught to regard the Sunnite faith with abhorrence. When he is considered well grounded in religion Persian books are put into his hands. The works of Sadi are expected at once to give him a taste for fables and poetry and to inspire him with a desire for a worthy fame. He is also given a superficial course in grammar, logic, sacred law, and philosophy. His progress in these higher branches of a Persian education depends largely upon his own disposition.

or bent of mind and his ability to learn. Usually he does not accomplish more than to read and write with ease and fluency. But superiority in his attainments as a scholar always adds greatly to his reputation and influence. Thus the present shah Muzafer-ed-Din is well versed in all the branches of religion and science belonging to Persia. He can also read and speak the French language and in that way has become well acquainted with western ideas and the subjects taught in western schools. At present Shah Muzafer-ed-Din is using his utmost power for making improvements in his country, such as the building of railroads, opening of mines, building of asylums and schools, for freedom of the press and the introduction of a new code of laws to bring about a civilization in Persia something like that of Europe which shall tolerate all kinds of religion. Such are his ambitions as a ruler. He has absolute power to appoint and remove his own ministers of state at pleasure. He has a number of wives and they are kept in a beautiful palace, at the Capital City, Teheran, which is guarded day and night by sentinels. He is very fond of out-door sports and is known as a good marksman. Almost every day he goes out escorted by a number of horsemen followed by the bearers of gold and silver clubs who shout, "Berum! Berum!" "Get out! Get out!" Then every one that is in the street will stand on either side of the street and bow before him while he passes by.

His executioners attend him, always dressed in red uniforms and carrying with them their instruments of torture and death. It is not an unusual

thing for petitioners to come with petitions to present on such occasions. In such cases the petitioner simply stands there holding his written petition on his head. In this way it will be noticed and some one of the king's rear guard will take it and give it to the king afterwards. He will read it at his leisure. In such splendor the king of Persia always appears before his subjects and it makes a great impression on them.

THE COURT OF PERSIA.

"In no court is there more rigid attention paid to ceremony. The looks, words and even the movements of the body are all regulated by the strictest forms. When the king is seated in public his sons, ministers, and courtiers stand erect with their hands crossed and in the exact place belonging to their rank. They watch his looks and a glance is a command. If he speaks to them, you hear a voice reply and see the lips move but not a motion or gesture betrays that there is animation in the person thus addressed. He often speaks of himself in the third person as "The king is pleased. The king commands." His ministers address him with high-sounding titles giving expression to the popular sentiments with regard to him. For instance he is called, 'The object of the world's regard,' 'Kiblah i alam,' or 'Point of the Universe,' 'King of kings,' and 'The lord of the Universe.'

They are as particular in forms of speech as in other ceremonies and superiority and inferiority of rank in all their graduations are implied by the terms used in the commonest conversation. Noth-

ing can exceed the splendor of the Persian court on extraordinary occasions. It presents a scene of the greatest magnificence regulated by the most exact order. To no part of the government is so much attention paid as to the strict maintenance of those forms and ceremonies which are deemed essential to the power and glory of the monarch; and the highest officers to whom this duty is allotted are armed with the fullest authority and are always attended by a number of inferiors who carry their commands into the most prompt execution.”*

The Persian Mohammedans have two festivals. One is called Ed-al-Fits, or the festival after abstinence, and commences the day after the fast of Ramaza. The second is called Ed-al-koorban, or the feast of sacrifice which begins on the tenth of the month of Zulkada and is instituted in commemoration of Abraham's offering up of Isaac. This tenth day of Zulkada is also the day appointed for the slaying of victims by the pilgrims at Mecca.

There is also another great festival called New Rooz, or new day and is the feast of the vernal equinox, 21st of March. This is the greatest festival observed by the Persians and was introduced by Jemshed, a Persian king who ruled many centuries before the Christian era. It was he who introduced into Persia the reckoning of time by the solar year and ordered the first day of it to be celebrated by a splendid festival which is to this day observed with as much joy and festivity as Thanksgiving day or Christmas in this country. On this day the bazaars in the cities are decorated in Persian style and il-

* Malcolm's History of Persia.

luminated in a gay manner. The king marches out of his capital attended by his ministers, nobles, and as many of his army as can be assembled, remaining out as long as he desires. Upon this day he confers vestments of honor upon his nobles and officers and receives presents from them. The feast is kept for an entire week with equal demonstrations of joy in every part of the kingdom. The first day, however, is the most important. Upon that day all ranks appear in their newest apparel. They send presents of sweetmeats to each other and the poor are not forgotten. In the streets of the cities and upon the country roads crowds of people are seen, some going to visit friends, others returning, carrying with them bundles and packages of sweetmeats or presents. Indeed this is the day of joy and gladness throughout the kingdom, a national holiday observed by all of the shah's subjects. They think of it with a great deal of pride and look forward to it with the pleasantest anticipations.

“There are persons who bear the name of storytellers around whom are often seen crowds of people in the public squares or other places which are suitable for their entertainments. Although Persians are passionately fond of public exhibitions, still they have none that deserve the name of theatrical entertainments; but though strangers to the regular drama their stories are often dramatic; and those whose occupation is to tell them sometimes display so extraordinary a skill and such varied powers that we can hardly believe while we look on their altered countenances and listen to their changed tones, that

it is the same person, who at one moment tells a plain narrative in his natural voice, then speaks in the hoarse and angry tone of offended authority, and next subdues the passions he has excited by the softest sounds of feminine tenderness. The art of telling stories is attended both with profit and reputation. Great numbers attempt it but few succeed. It requires considerable talents and great study. None can arrive at eminence except men of cultivated taste and retentive memory. They must not only be acquainted with the best ancient and modern stories but be able to vary them by introducing new incidents which they have heard or invented. They must also recollect the finest passages of the most popular poets to aid the impression of the narrative by appropriate quotations. Kings of Persia used to have especially such a story teller whose office it is to amuse his majesty with those stories. His tales are artfully made to suit the disposition and momentary humor of the monarch. Sometimes he recites a story of the former sovereign, or of the love of some wandering prince, often the story is of coarser materials and the king is entertained with low and obscene adventures.”*

The Persian kings have always attached great importance to having a good band of musicians for their own enjoyment and the present shah is not an exception to that rule. Indeed his band is claimed by some to be the best in the world.

The princes, nobles, ministers and public officers of high rank imitate the king in many ways. All the respect they pay to him they exact from their in-

* Malcolm's History of Persia.

feriors. Each in his rank has a petty court of his own with about the same forms and regulated in about the same manner and by officers bearing the same official names as those who attend the monarch. Every chief or officer of high station has his harem, his secretaries, his officers of ceremonies, his master of horse and sometimes even his poet and jester. In his house there is as strict attention to exactness of conduct as in the palaces of his sovereign. Sensible of the conditions by which they are surrounded these persons appear as desirous of obtaining money and as eager to spend it lavishly for their own pleasure as do those of the same rank in other countries. Women, horses, rich armour and elegant clothing are the principal objects of their desires. Their splendid apartments are furnished with rich Persian carpets and are generally so situated as to be perfumed by flower gardens and refreshed by fountains. One of their chief pleasures is to sit in these elegant apartments and enjoy their tea, coffee, and tobacco and feast their friends. Their meals are always abundant, even sumptuous. Nor does it mar this enjoyment in the least to know that they have all their wealth at the expense of their poor oppressed people whom they lord it over. Many officers in the kingdom take bribes and fines from the poor in order to accumulalte large fortunes and then go to the capital city and give so much as a bribe to this prince and so much to that minister in order to be introduced to the king. Then he gives a large sum as a present to the king who in turn confers upon him a title and in this way he be-

comes a great man and adds to the power that he already has for the oppression of his inferiors. Merchants and trades-people who secure titles for their children by means of the fortunes they have made in trade are not by any means the only class who get titles without and deeds of heroism. There are many such in Persia whose sole title to greatness is the power to oppress and over-tax.

When there are three or four men standing the one on the other's shoulders the one on top has an easy time of it, the one next a comparatively easy time and so on down the column but how about the one at the bottom? So it is in Persia the whole weight of the government and all the splendor that those in the highest ranks enjoy falls upon the poor lower classes who constitute the great majority of the people.

* * *

SOME INTERESTING FEATURES AND LEGENDS.

Persia, the land of the "Lion and the Sun," the country from which the ancestors of the European nations emigrated, may very properly be called the cradle of the white race, while that part of it lying adjacent to Armenia together with Armenia may with equal propriety be called the cradle of the whole human family. In it the immediate descendants of the three great ancestors of mankind, Shem, Ham, and Japheth lived. From it they emigrated first to India, Europe and Africa and afterwards to every inhabitable part of the earth. None of the Hamitic people are found there now, but true types

of the Shemites and Japhethites are still living there.

This interesting historic country lies in the western part of the continent of Asia, and is bordered on the north by Asiatic Russia and the Caspian sea; on the east by Afghanistan and Beloochistan; on the south by the Arabian sea and the Persian gulf; and on the west by the Turkish Empire, with Mount Ararat rising up conspicuously to the northwest of it.

Its territory extending nine hundred (900) miles from east to west, and seven hundred (700) from north to south, embraces an area of about six hundred thousand (600,000) square miles.

It is divided into twenty-four (24) states or provinces.

The greater part of it consists of dry, barren, mountainous deserts and small plains.

All of its lakes are salt, so salt that no fish can live in them.

There are some few small plains, however, that are very fertile and well watered. These produce different kinds of fruits, grains, and flowers in abundance and it is upon these that the thriftiest classes of the Persians live. Doubtless Sadi, the Persian poet, was inspired by the great beauty and fertility of these when he called Persia "A Paradise."

MOUNT ARARAT.

The word Ararat means highland. The noted mountain known by this name stands as the dividing point between Russia on the north, Persia on the east and Turkey on the west. It is situated on the fertile plateau of northern Armenia with the Black

sea on the northwest and the Caspian sea on the east, each equally distant from it, and Iran or Persia on the southeast, from which the European nations derive their name of "Aryan." The plateau on which it stands is surrounded on the south, by the Kurdistan mountains; on the east, close to the Caspian sea, by the Elburz mountains, and the north



MOUNT ARARAT.

(From T. H. McAllister, *Optician, N. Y.*)

by the Caucasian mountains. It is, however, isolated from all surrounding mountains and rises quite alone slightly north of the center of this plateau. It rears its venerable head in a majestically beautiful manner high up into the clear blue sky of Aremnia. The sight of it is an inspiration to the people who live around it and regard it with a certain amount of awe and reverence. After it rises to a certain height it divides itself into two cones, the

higher one called Great Ararat, is about eighteen thousand feet above the level of the sea; while the lower one, called little Ararat, is about twelve thousand feet above the sea level. The top of Great Ararat is covered with snow all the year round and the people living about it have for centuries been carefully watching it to see if all the snow on it should ever melt for around its sides and base the weather is quite warm during the summer. But it never has, consequently the snow of centuries gone by still makes its venerable head hoary. In 1840 a small portion of the mountain was thrown down by an earthquake, completely burying the entire village of Aukura which was situated at the foot of it on the eastern side.

It is upon the Great Ararat that the people suppose Noah's ark rested. My home as many of my readers may know is in Iran or Persia, about one hundred and fifty miles south-east of Ararat. The Persians, one of the oldest branches of the European races, who are still living at this first home or cradle, so to speak, of the European nations call this mountain "Kuhi-Nuh" which means Mountain of Noah.

The traditions among the inhabitants of Armenia and a part of Persia about this Mount Ararat being the same one mentioned in the eighth chapter of Genesis are very fresh and vivid. The inhabitants of the city of Nakh-che-van which is only a few miles distant from Ararat actually believe that when Noah came down from Ararat he settled on the spot where Nakhchevan now lies and planted the vineyards by which Nakhchevan is at present

surrounded. Many even claim that it has derived its name from Noah, the word Nakhchevan meaning residence of Noah. At any rate the city of Nakhchevan is very old, possibly the oldest in the world.

The steepness of the highest cone has made it very difficult or quite impossible to ascend. Probably the people for centuries back have tried in vain to reach its summit just as the people now living around it have done and that their repeated failures to accomplish this object has led the inhabitants surrounding it to believe that God has designedly made it impossible of ascent. The people even believe that if a person should climb half way up its peak one day and go to sleep there over night he would find himself at its base the next morning when he awoke.

Many tourists have visited this mountain but it would be safe to say that none of them have ever set foot upon its dome of eternal snow and ice. A cousin of mine living about seven miles from Ararat has told me that the Russians have tried repeatedly to reach its top but failed on account of the steepness of it. They have posted a cross at the highest point reached by them.

Rev. Yohanan once told me that there is another mountain called Ararat not very far from the land of Shinar, south of Armenia. Upon this pieces of very hard wood have been found which were supposed to be remains of the genuine ark. There is also a village at the foot of this mountain called "Hasht" which means eight, having reference as they think to the number of persons composing Noah's family

who lived there and afterwards built another village a short distance from Hasht, then spread into the land of Shinar. It was then while the whole earth was of one language and one speech that they began to build the tower of Babel. This tradition, however, is limited to the people who live in that vicinity while that associating the Ark with Mount Ararat in northern Armenia is spread among many nations of the earth.

THE POPULATION OF PERSIA.

Persia was formerly much more thickly populated and well cultivated than at the present time. Proofs of this are found all over the land in the waste spots showing the ruins of what was once thriving cities and villages.

There is not one-fourth of the wealth or population in Persia today that there was there three centuries ago, and not one-tenth as many people as she had in the times of Cyrus the Great. Since the invasion of Persia by the Arabs in the year 632 of the Christian era and the introduction of the Mohammedan religion the kingdom has been growing weaker and weaker and its people more and more oppressed. The doleful chants of the Mohammedan priests have been, as it were, the nation's lamentations over the fading of its past glory, for its glory has been waning ever since the horrible cries of the Muezzin have been heard from the Mohammedan mosques.

In the reign of Cyrus the Great the inhabitants of Persia numbered about forty millions (40,000,000.) At present no census is taken and its population is variously estimated by different ones. We

estimate its present population at about seven millions (7,000,000), made up of the following nationalities and sects: about forty thousand (40,000) Armenian Christians, thirty thousand (30,000) Assyrian or Nestorian Christians, twenty thousand (20,000) Jews, fifteen thousand (15,000) Parsees or Fire-worshippers, and the remaining six million nine hundred and ninety-five thousand (6,995,000) are Mohammedans composed of Persians, Arabs, Kurds and Turks.

THE ANCIENT RELIGION OF PERSIA.

“According to Moshin Frani the primeval religion of Persia consisted in a firm belief in one supreme God, who made the world by his power, and governed it by his providence; a pious fear, love and adoration; a reverence for parents and aged persons; a fraternal affection for the whole human species; and a compassionate tenderness even for the brute creation. This belief was followed by a worship of the host of heaven or the celestial bodies; to this worship succeeded that of fire, which was introduced by Zoroaster (Zaradusht) who was born about 500 B. C.”* Perhaps in the city of Oroomiah in the province of Azerbaijan, throughout which are found ineffaceable traces of the temple of these Fire-worshippers.

The sacred fire that was kept burning day and night for centuries upon these altars has formed veritable hills of ashes. These ashes are at present being used to fertilize the now barren fields that once furnished timber to keep up these fires that were never permitted in those days to go out or burn low

*Malcolm's History of Persia.

on their altars. This element, fire, on account of its great brilliancy and its purifying power was regarded as a symbol of God, and the adherents of this re-



FIRE-WORSHIPPERS.

(From T. H. McAllister, Optician, N. Y.)

ligion believed that Zoroaster brought this fire with him from heaven when he was allowed to visit heaven in order to bring down to earth the Zendavesta (Avesta) or scriptures of the ancient Parsees.

LEADING DOCTRINES OF ZOROASTER.

“Zoroaster taught that God existed from all eternity and was like infinity of time and space. There were, he declared, two principles in the universe—

good and evil; the one was termed Ormazd, the presiding agent of all good; the other Ahriman, the lord of evil. Each of these had the power of creation, but that power was exercised with opposite designs; and it was from their united action, that an admixture of good and evil was found in every created thing. The angels of Ormazd, or the good principle sought to preserve the elements, the seasons and the human race which the infernal angels of Ahriman desired to destroy; but the source of good alone, the great Ormazd was eternal and must therefore ultimately prevail. Light was of the good, darkness of the evil spirit; and God had said to Zoroaster 'My light is concealed under all that shines.' Hence the disciple of that prophet, when he performs his devotions in a temple, turns toward the sacred fire that burns upon its altar; and when in open air towards the sun as the noblest of all lights and that by which God sheds his divine influence over the whole earth; and perpetuates the work of his creation."*

The religion as set forth by Zoroaster was originally a simple monstheistic faith but afterwards was so changed as to become a most complicated system.

In 632 the Mohammedans conquered Persia and abolished the religion of the Fire-worshippers by the sword establishing Mohammedanism in its stead. Some of the Fire-worshippers fled into India where about twenty thousand (20,000) of them are found at present, still true to their ancient religion, still keeping up the perpetual fires upon their altars.

In Persia about fifteen thousand (15,000) of them are still found prizing their religion above all things

*Malcolm's History of Persia.

and never marrying outside their own faith. They are noted for their beauty, generosity, faithfulness and industry. No one familiar with Moore's Lalla Rookh can be unfamiliar with this interesting people.

They abhor the Mohammedans but love the Christians and greatly appreciate their religion.

Zoroaster, we are told was a great astrologer and from his knowledge of the heavenly bodies could calculate nativities and foretell events. He foretold the birth of our Lord and it is on account of this that we have given the foregoing brief outline of his introduction of Fire-worship into Persia.

The two following lists of the names of the wise men from the east who went to worship the infant Saviour together with Zoroaster's prophecy of his birth are my translations from old Syriac manuscripts still preserved among my people the Assyrian or Nestorian Christians of Persia. The names I have spelled in English as nearly like they are pronounced in my language as possible.

Milkoo, who took gold.

Casper, who took frankincense.

Bagdasar, who took myrrh.

Others say that there were twelve wise men in the party that journeyed to Bethlehem. They give the names as follows:

Dervander son of Juartish.

Hoormuzdar son of Cetarog.

Gushnap son of Gunadnapar.

Aershak son of Meharook.

Zheroondar son of Waroaz.

Aerehoo son of Khoosroo.

Artaxerxes son of Koolkad.

Aishtabdoon son of Shirvanash.

Mezrook son of Koohem.

Ahasuerus son of Sapkhan.

Sardalek son of Bedarn.

Mroodak son of Beldan.

According to the Assyrian or Nestorian church fathers the holy prophet Zoroaster thus taught the Persians concerning the birth of Christ: When a fixed period has come and the time has been fulfilled a Saviour will come to the world. He shall be the invisible God and it shall be wonderful on the earth at that time. A sign shall be seen in that day which shall be unique and incomprehensible for it shall not be from this world. A luminous bright star shall arise which shall exceed in brilliancy the sun and the moon and shall resemble a woman carrying a child in her bosom. When this star shall appear the sun shall not be able to hide it nor the stars to conceal it for it shall shine everywhere.

Keep my words in your hearts, teach them to your children, your children to their children until he comes. When this sign appears in this likeness to your sons, let them take in their hands three offerings to his glory:

Let them offer gold to him as king—for gold is the tribute paid to kings.

Myrrh also as suited to his humanity shall they offer.

Frankincense shall they offer in honor of his divinity—for this is the symbol of sacrifice to God and

he shall indeed be the God of gods.

The land in which this shall appear shall see many mighty works. He shall be crucified. He shall be brought into life. He shall vanquish the destroyer death. He shall rise again on the third day. He shall ascend to the height of his excellence. In the fullness of days he shall come to execute judgment upon all flesh.

See, this have I commanded you. Take heed to it, both ye and your children that when he comes ye disregard him not, that your end may not be perdition, for he is the Lord of the kings and rulers of both the heavens and the earth. Reject not this my speech.

And so the people kept these sayings in their hearts and taught them to their children and children's children and used to even go up upon the mountains and watch for the star that was to be the herald to them that a Saviour, the Prince of Peace had come. Finally the star appeared and these very people to whom this tradition had been handed down from one generation to another saw it. It shone there clear and bright away off in the distance over the little town of Bethlehem and while their wise men thanked God for this divine revelation of himself and taking their rich gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh went to worship him many another devout and aged person among these very people felt like the aged Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

"For mine eyes have seen thy salvation. Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people. A

light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel.”



THE WISE MEN OF THE EAST.
(From T. H. McAllister, Optician, N. Y.)

STORIES FROM PERSIAN HISTORY.

(CONTRIBUTED.)

CHEDORLAOMER.

One of the first great conquerers we read of in history came from Elam that is southwestern Persia. His name was Chedorlaomer. He allied himself with three other kings and conquered the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and three other kings of that region and made them pay him tribute. After twelve years of servitude these kings rebelled. Chedorlaomer came again and gained a great victory and carried off a rich booty. Even Lot who dwelt in that region was carried off. Abraham with his 318 trained servants and some confedates fell upon Chedorlaomer by night and surprised him and rescued the captives. What became of Chedorlaomer afterwards is not known.

THE LOST TRIBES.

The great Assyrian monarchs conquered the northwestern part of Persia which was inhabited by the Medes, a sister people to the Persians. They also extended their conquests to the westward and conquered Syria and Samaria. They carried off the "Ten Tribes of Israel" into captivity and settled them in the land of the Medes, the regions about Lake Oroomiah, and no doubt the descendants of the "Lost Tribes" dwell in that part of Persia to this day.

EARLY HISTORY OF MEDIA.

Under king Cyaxares the Medes threw off the Assyrian yoke, and allying themselves with Nabopolassar, the father of the great Nebuchadnezzar, they captured and destroyed Nineveh in the year 606 B. C. They then extended their conquests westward into Asia Minor. Here they ran up against the Lydians, who then held Asia Minor. Many fierce wars were fought between the Medes and the Lydians. During one of these battles the sun was suddenly eclipsed, and the day turned into a dark night. This so terrified the superstitious combatants that both parties were eager to conclude peace. The river Halys in Armenia was made the boundary line, and the peace was cemented by a marriage between the daughter of the Lydian King and Astyages the son of King Cyaxares. This Cyaxares had some years before given his daughter, Amytis, in marriage to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Upon the death of Cyaxares his son Astyages succeeded to the throne of Media, and about the same time the celebrated Croesus succeeded to the Lydian throne. Thus the three great monarchs of that day, Nebuchadnezzar, Astyages, and Croesus were brothers-in-law and formed a sort of triple alliance against the rising power of Persia.

CYRUS THE GREAT.

Cyrus the great was the son of Cambyses, king of Persia, and Mandane, daughter of Astyages, king of Media. Of his childhood the following story is told: King Astyages had a remarkable dream which his soothsayers interpreted to mean that his

grandson born of Mandane was destined to become king of Media. Astyages, fearing that his grandson might dethrone him, decided to have the child put to death. Accordingly he secured the child and handed him over to Harpagus his most trusted servant with instructions to have him put to death without fail. Harpagus promised, but dared not carry out the order himself. He handed the child to a mountain shepherd with strict orders to put the child to death and to show the dead body to his servants as evidence that the deed had been done. The shepherd took the child to his home. His wife who was mourning the death of her own child persuaded her husband to expose their own dead child and to keep the royal child as their own. This was done. The servants of Harpagus were shown the dead body of the shepherd's son and reported to Harpagus that the child had verily been put to death for they had seen the body exposed.

After ten years the children of the village were playing one day and choose this shepherd's son (Cyrus) to be their king. One of the sons of a nobleman refused to obey the king's orders, and the boy-king accordingly had him severely scourged. The boy as often happens ran crying to his father who at once complained to King Astyages. He summoned the boy-king Cyrus and inquired why he had presumed to scourge the son of a nobleman. Cyrus replied, "When your subjects refuse to obey your orders what do you do?" "I punish them of course," replied the king. "And that is what I did," said Cyrus. "The boys choose me king and I simply en-

forced the king's orders." The beauty, talents, and intelligence of the boy showed plainly that he was not the son of the herdsman. Upon inquiry the truth was made known to Astyages, who feared greatly and would have put Cyrus to death, but the soothsayers persuaded him that he need not fear, for Cyrus had already been king, and the dream perhaps had no other or deeper meaning.

The king accordingly spared his life and became very fond of him. Cyrus grew up at the King's court and became a brave and popular youth, excelling in all manly sports. His grandfather, Astyages, was much given to drinking and feasting. On one occasion Cyrus was to serve as his butler and hand him his wine. As Cyrus handed the king the cup he neglected to touch it with his lips as the custom was. The king asked for the reason of this omission. Cyrus replied, "There is poison in the cup." The king in great agitation asked him how he knew that. "Because," said Cyrus, "yesterday I saw you drink the same poison until you were unable to walk and you spoke very foolishly." The king, however, was not afraid of that poison.

THE FALL OF MEDIA AND LYDIA.

Upon the death of his father Cambyses, Cyrus returned to the little kingdom of Persia and became its king. Upon invitation of some of the Medes, he marched against his grandfather, Astyages, and, as had been predicted, dethroned him and united the two sister kingdoms and became the first king of the Medes and Persians and the founder of the Medo-Persian Empire.

Croesus, king of Lydia, now felt it his duty to avenge the wrongs of his brother-in-law, Astyages, and if possible restore him to his throne. He accordingly prepared to make war upon Cyrus. But anxious to know what the result of such an undertaking might be, he sent to inquire of the Delphic Oracle and received the reply that if he made war upon Cyrus, he would destroy a great kingdom. Interpreting this ambiguous answer favorably, he marched against Cyrus and was defeated and captured in his own capital city of Sardis. When he complained that the oracle had deceived him, he was asked whether he had not destroyed a great kingdom.

Herodotus tells us that Cyrus was about to burn the captive king, when Croesus called out, "Solon! Solon!" Wishing to know the meaning of this exclamation, Cyrus enquired and received the following reply: "Many years before, the wise Athenian, Solon, had visited the court of Croesus and seen all the wealth and glory of this the richest of kings. Croesus thinking that Solon was especially impressed with his wealth and magnificence asked him whom he considered the happiest person in the world. Solon named some person that had died doing his duty. Croesus, surprised and disappointed, asked him whom he considered the second happiest man in the world. Solon now named a similar case. Croesus, disappointed and angered, asked, "And do you not regard me happy?" Solon replied, "Count no man happy till you know the manner of his death."

This story impressed Cyrus so forcibly that he changed his purpose and made Croesus his friend and adviser.

Thus was the Persian power extended to the westernmost end of Asia and to the very doors of Europe by Cyrus the Great.

THE FALL OF BABYLON.

The next kingdom to fall under the great Persian monarch was Babylon. The great Nebuchadnezzar who had carried the Jews into captivity had now been dead over twenty years. Upon his throne sat a man of a different family named Nabonadius, who associated with him in the kingdom his son Belshazzar. Nabonadius, it appears, was out on the open plains fighting Cyrus while Belshazzar was left in charge of the strong-walled city of Babylon. "And Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone."

But in the midst of this wicked revelry, the king beheld with terror a handwriting upon the wall. "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," were the words writ-

ten. These were interpreted by captive Daniel to mean. "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

"In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain."

THE PROCLAMATION OF CYRUS.

Cyrus was not an idolater. The Persians were Zoroastrians and believed in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth. Cyrus found among the various tribes of Babylon a peculiar people who likewise were no idolaters. Upon inquiry he learned their history, and moved by the Lord he issued the following proclamation:

"Thus saith Cyrus King of Persia, the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

"Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God) which is in Jerusalem.

"And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the free will offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem."

Thus by the order of Cyrus the Great were the Jews after their long captivity allowed to return to their land and to rebuild their temple. Later kings confirmed this order and also gave orders for rebuild-

ing the city walls. The Jews then remained subject to the Persian kings until the Persian Empire fell under Alexander the Great two hundred years later.

DEATH OF CYRUS.

The latter part of the life of Cyrus is wrapped in obscurity, and the manner of his death is not known. but Herodotus tells us that the following story is most worthy of credit. Having decided to make war upon the Massagetæ, a fierce tribe that dwelt on the north of Persia, he marched against them with a large army. The Massagetæ had no king but were ruled by a queen named Tomyris, a woman of great courage and might, and cunning and wise exceedingly.

During the night before the great battle Cyrus had a dream in which he saw his cousin Darius the son of Hystaspes with two immense wings upon his shoulders. With the one wing he overshadowed Asia and with the other Europe. At first Cyrus was inclined to suspect that his cousin was plotting against him, but he was warned that he was approaching his end and that Darius should be king of Persia.

In the great battle that followed Cyrus was slain, and Queen Tomyris ordered his head to be severed from the body, and throwing it into a skin filled with blood she told him to drink his fill now of what he had so thirsted for during his life time. Be this story true or not, the body of Cyrus was taken to Pasargadae and there buried in sacred ground and his tomb may be seen to this day.

CAMBYSES.

Cyrus was succeeded by his oldest son Cambyses, who added Egypt to the kingdom of Persia. We are told that he sent to the pharaoh of Egypt and asked him for his daughter in marriage. The pharaoh not daring to disappoint so powerful a monarch, and at the same time unwilling to send his only and beloved daughter to a strange land and a strange people, hit upon the dangerous expedient of sending a beautiful girl of royal blood, but not his daughter. The deception was discovered by Cambyses and he invaded and conquered Egypt in consequence.

If we are to believe Herodotus Cambyses acted like a madman while down in Egypt. But Herodotus had all his information from the Egyptian priests who of course hated the Persians, and made out a bad story. Having heard of the Longlived Ethiopians who dwelt to the south of Egypt he desired to conquer their country too. He accordingly sent spies into their country with presents to the king. These spies having arrived in that country and delivered the king's presents they addressed the king as follows: "Cambyses, King of Persia, desirous of becoming your friend and ally, has sent us, bidding us confer with you, and he presents you with these gifts, which are such as he himself most delights in." But the Ethiopians, knowing that they came as spies replied. "The King of Persia has not sent you with these presents to me because he values my friendship, and you do not speak the truth for you have come here as spies. Neither is your king a just man for if he were he would not desire any other ter-

ritory than his own, nor would he reduce people into servitude who have done him no harm. However, give him this bow, and say these words to him: "The King of the Ethiopians advises the King of the Persians, when the Persians can thus easily draw a bow of this size, then to make war upon the Long lived Ethiopians with more numerous forces; but until that time, let him thank the gods, who have not inspired the sons of the Ethiopians with a desire of adding another land to their own."

The Ethiopians were a very strong and powerful race of men, reputed to live to the age of one hundred and twenty years. The bow very few Persians were able to draw at all.

When Cambyses heard the reply from the king of the Ethiopians, he was filled with rage, and rash and impulsive as he was, he ordered his army to be set in motion at once without waiting to make the necessary preparations. It was not long before the supplies all gave out. The country through which they passed was a desert and starvation or a retracing of their steps were the only alternatives.

The king finally ordered a retreat. When he reached Egypt again, he found all the people rejoicing on every hand. The priests had announced that their god Osiris had appeared among them—a calf had been found bearing the marks of the god upon it, the incarnation of the god—hence the rejoicing. Cambyses was in a bad mood and took it into his head that they were rejoicing over his misfortune. He was told of the cause of their joy. He demanded to see the god. When the priests brought Apis, the

Calf-god, into the presence of the king, Cambyses drew his dagger and stabbed the calf in the thigh so that it died. Then bursting into a fit of laughter, he said, "Ye blockheads, are there such gods as these, consisting of flesh and blood, and sensible of steel? This truly is a god worthy of the Egyptians."

Shortly after this Cambyses was informed that a usurper, who pretended to be his brother Smerdis, had ascended the throne of Persia. Now Cambyses had out of jealousy and fear put his brother Smerdis to death. The usurper was a Magian priest who had assumed the scepter, established the Magian fire-worship, and even issued an order stopping the building of the temple at Jerusalem. Cambyses immediately set out for home. On mounting his horse one day he accidentally stabbed himself in the thigh. The wound was more serious than he supposed. Mortification set in. His physicians told him that he would die. But he steadily refused to believe it for he said that it had been told him by an astrologer that his death would occur at Ecbatana. He had therefore studiously avoided going to Ecbatana, the capital of Media. He firmly believed in the prediction. After a few days, however, he was unable to go further. He was compelled to halt in a little village in Syria. He asked where they were and was told that the village was named Ecbatana in Syria. He now saw the fulfillment of the prediction and knew that he must die. He confessed the murder of his brother and charged his officers to put down the usurper and restore the government to the royal family. The Egyptian priests believed that the un-

timely death of Cambyses was a punishment for the sacrilege he had committed against their god Osiris, and pointed to the manner of his death as an evidence—a wound in the thigh.

DARIUS HYSTASPES.

Darius Hystaspes put down the imposter, restored order and the Zoroastrian religion, gave orders to resume the work on the temple of Jerusalem, and reorganized the empire. He then entered upon a European campaign. Having collected a large army he crossed the Hellespont into Europe. He built a bridge across the lower Danube and crossed over into what is now southern Russia. He was making war upon the Scythian hordes. They had sent all their women and children and the greater part of their herds and flocks northward for safety. As Darius advanced they moved forward, never stopping to give him battle, always moving from place to place, and Darius pursuing from day to day.

Finally Darius lost all patience and sent them word if they were men they should halt and give battle. The chief of the Scythians replied that they were not fleeing before Darius. They were doing now as they always do, moving from place to place. If Darius desired to follow them as he was doing they had no objection to it. As to fighting they had nothing to fight for, except the tombs of their ancestors. Come and find them and then see if the Scythians can fight.

After some time Darius had spent all his supplies and was in a great strait. The Scythians hearing of the situation sent a herald to Darius bearing

as gifts a bird, a frog, a mouse, and five arrows. These he delivered to Darius with the remark that if the Persians were wise they would discover the meaning of the gifts.

The Persians consulted together. Darius was of the opinion that the Scythians meant to surrender to him—the mouse meaning the land, the frog the water, the bird the air, and the arrows the arms. All this the Scythians would deliver to Darius. But Gobryas, one of the seven foremost princes of Persia gave it as his opinion that the Scythians would say to the Persians, “Unless you fly away through the air like a bird, or hide in the earth like a mouse, or dive into the lakes like a frog we will shoot you to death with our arrows. His opinion prevailed among the Persian chiefs.

Darius then decided to return. Now he had given orders to the Greeks who kept the bridge to destroy the bridge if they saw fit to do so if he were not back in sixty days. The time was up and he had not returned. If the Greeks should have destroyed the bridge he would be at the mercy of the Schythians who hotly pursued him. To his great joy he found that the bridge had been preserved. He thus succeeded in making his retreat without loss or disaster.

THE IONIAN REVOLT.

Shortly after the Scythian campaign the Greek cities of Asia Minor with Miletus in the lead revolted from Darius. The Greek states of the continent of Europe failed to send aid to their struggling kinsmen with the exception of Athens and a little city of

Euboea. The struggle began with the burning of the Persian capital of Asia Minor, Sardis, and ended with the burning of Miletus. The Greek cities were all reduced under Persia again. After the revolt was put down the king inquired as to who the Athenians were and when told that they were only a little city state he was greatly enraged that so small a state should presume to interfere with his subjects. He appointed an officer whose duty it should be to arise at each meal and exclaim "O King, remember the Athenians."

The king made preparations for punishing the insolent Athenians and to reduce all the Greek states. He sent heralds to Macedonia and the Greek cities demanding earth and water as tokens of submission. Macedonia and the Greek cities gave the earth and water except Athens and Sparta. The Athenians cast the heralds into a pit, and the Spartans, in true Spartan fashion cast the heralds, who demanded the earth and water, into a well and told them to help themselves.

XERXES.

Darius sent two expeditions against Greece both of which proved miserable failures. Before he could prepare for a third expedition he died and was succeeded by his son Xerxes. Xerxes was at first inclined to abandon his father's plan of conquering Greece, but was finally prevailed upon to take up this work. He ordered every province of his mighty empire to furnish supplies in men and equipments from Egypt in the west to India in the east and from the mountains of Armenia and Kurdistan to the Ara-

bian desert and the Indian ocean. Several years were spent in these mighty preparations. In the spring of 480 all the contingents were to meet in the western part of Asia Minor and prepare for the passage into Europe. Perhaps there never was so great an army or concourse of people under one command before or since in the whole history of the world. Some have estimated that there were in all men, women, children, soldiers, sailors, servants, as many as five million. These figures are of course exaggerated. Each nation had its own peculiar uniform and weapons of warfare. Xerxes had employed skillful architects to connect the two shores of the Hellespont by a bridge. But no sooner was the work finished than a storm arose and shattered the whole work. When Xerxes heard of this he was exceedingly indignant and commanded that the sea should be stricken with three hundred lashes with a scourge, and that a pair of fetters should be let down into the sea. He is also said to have sent instruments to brand the sea. He charged those who flogged the waters to exclaim to the sea, "Thou bitter water, thy master inflicts this punishment upon thee, because thou hast injured him. The king will cross over thee, whether thou wilt or not. It is with justice that no man sacrifices to thee for thou art both a deceitful and briny sea." He also ordered the heads of the architects and builders to be struck off. Other engineers were then employed to bridge the strait the second time.

THE CROSSING OF THE HELLESPONT.

Xerxes had ordered a lofty throne of white mar-

ble to be erected at Abydos, which he ascended to view his immense army and fleet before crossing over into Europe. As he stood there surveying the countless hosts, stretching as far as his eyes could reach, and then on the other hand the immense fleet covering the bosom of the sea, his eyes sparkled with pride and satisfaction. Suddenly he looked over the strait into Europe and his eyes filled with tears. His uncle, Artabanus, who stood near him asked the meaning of this sudden change of feeling, and the king replied: "When I saw this mighty armament and all these thousands and thousands of people all subject to my smallest wish I was filled with exultation, but when I looked over to the other side of the strait and reflected how short this glory lasts and that in one hundred years not one of these shall be living my heart was filled with pain and sorrow and my eyes with tears."

They now made preparations for the passage. The next morning as the sun arose they burnt all manner of perfumes and strewed the road with myrtle branches. Xerxes poured a libation from a golden cup into the sea and offered up a prayer that no accidents might attend him and prevent him from subduing Europe. He then threw the golden cup and a golden bowl and a sword into the sea perhaps as a peace offering, having repented that he had cursed and scourged the sea before.

When these ceremonies were performed the passage across the bridge began. This passage lasted seven days and seven nights. Xerxes is said to have crossed over last of all.

AT THERMOPYLAE.

The forces collected by the Greeks to oppose this immense horde were inexcusably small. A mere handful of men under the heroic Leonidas of Sparta were stationed at the pass of Thermopylae. When the intrepid Leonidas was told of the countless numbers of the enemy and that their arrows would fly so thick as to obscure the sun he replied: "So much the better, we can then fight in the shade." When Xerxes heard that a few hundred or thousand men were stationed in the pass to oppose his passage he regarded them as madmen who would come to their senses when they beheld the immense hosts of the enemy. He sent orders to Leonidas to deliver up his arms. Leonidas in Spartan style replied: "Come and take them."

Xerxes ordered a chosen body of Medes to advance against the presumptuous foes and bring them into his presence. The Medes fought bravely, but to no purpose. After the battle had lasted several hours, resulting in heavy losses to the Persians, Xerxes sent out his ten thousand "Immortals." But they were no more successful than the Medes. Xerxes is said to have leaped three times from his seat on a lofty throne when he beheld the repulse of his troops and especially of his immortals.

The attack was renewed the next day but with no better success. The king was beginning to despair of success when a treacherous Greek pointed out to the Persians a secret path across the mountains. Most of the Greeks now abandoned their posts, but the devoted Spartans, who must never de-

sert a post, and a few of the others remained and were cut down to a man. A monument was raised to them bearing the inscription:

“Go, stranger, and to Lacedemon tell
That here, obedient to her laws, we fell.”

RETURN OF XERXES.

Athens was soon laid in ashes, and thus the wrongs done Darius were avenged, but in the great naval battle of Salamis the greater part of the great Persian fleet was annihilated and Xerxes in great fear fled precipitately from Greece across the Hellespont into Asia, leaving to his general Mardonius the task of reducing the rest of the Greeks.

In the great battle of Plataea the following year the rest of the Persian army was defeated and utterly routed, and thus ended the great expedition of Xerxes which had cost so much treasure and so many lives. Xerxes returned to his palace and never again attempted an expedition against the Greeks. He spent the rest of his life in luxury and idleness. He is in all probability the Ahasuerus of the bible as that is the Hebrew name corresponding to the Greek Xerxes. His character too seems to accord well with that of Ahasuerus.

DARIUS AND ALEXANDER.

The last of the kings of the old Persian Empire was Darius Codamanus. He was one of the best and at the same time one of the most unfortunate of Persian kings. He had the misfortune of being a contemporary of Alexander the Great. For under that great leader Europe was to return the visit that Asia had made to her under Darius and Xerxes near-

ly two centuries before.

What a contrast between the crossing of the Hellespont by Xerxes and Alexander the Great; and what a contrast between the results of the two crossings. Alexander crossed with only a few thousand cavalry and thirty-five thousand foot soldiers. He quickly reduced all Asia Minor and then met and utterly routed Darius in the celebrated battle of Issus, (333 B. C.) Darius fled leaving his mother, his wife, two daughters, and a little son as captives in the hands of Alexander.

That evening as Alexander was dining with his friends, a loud cry of lamentation was heard from the tent of the captive queens and princesses. Upon inquiry Alexander learned that the captives had received the royal mantle which Darius had thrown off in his hurried flight, and supposing that the king had been slain, they gave expression to their great sorrow and distress. Alexander sent them the comforting assurance that Darius had escaped unhurt and the following day in company with his most intimate friend, Hephaestion, he made a visit to the royal captives. Sysigambis, the mother of Darius, arose and bowed herself before Hephaestion thinking that he was Alexander as he was taller and looked more like a king than Alexander. Being informed of her mistake she feared greatly, thinking that she had mortally offended the king, and tried to atone for her error. But Alexander comforted her saying, "My good mother, you were not mistaken, for Hephaestion is also an Alexander." He then told the queen-mother that she could select as many of

the noble Persian dead as she desired and have them buried in Persian style at his expense. The good woman could not find words to express her surprise at his magnanimity nor her gratitude for his kindness. She availed herself of his offer very sparingly, for she did not wish to impose upon his liberality.

ALEXANDER IN JERUSALEM.

While Alexander was besieging Tyre he sent to the Samaritans and the Jews demanding them to surrender to him and to send him supplies. The Samaritans complied with this order, but the Jews replied that they had taken an oath of fealty to the Persian king and would remain faithful to their oath. After the fall of Tyre, Alexander set out for Jerusalem to punish the insolence of the Jews, as thoroughly as he had punished the Tyrians.

In this imminent danger Jaddus, the high-priest sought the Lord, and gave orders for the offering up of public prayers for safety and protection. In the night he was directed in a vision to strew the city with flowers, to set open all the gates, and go clothed in his pontifical robes, with all the priests dressed in their vestments, and all the people clothed in white to meet Alexander. This direction was punctually obeyed.

The neighboring peoples expected that the wrath of Alexander was so great that he would certainly punish the insolent high-priest and destroy the city of Jerusalem as he had done with Tyre. Flushed with joy on that account they waited in expectation of feasting their eyes upon the calamity of a people to whom they bore a mortal hatred.

When the Jews heard of the approach of Alexander they marched out in solemn procession to meet him, led by their high-priest. As Alexander approached he was struck with the appearance of the high-priest, on whose mitre and forehead a golden plate was fixed, bearing the name of God upon it. As soon as the king saw the high-priest he advanced to meet him with every mark of respect, bowed his body, and adored the God whose name he saw, and saluted him who wore it with religious veneration. The Jews surrounded Alexander, raised their voices into a great shout, and wished him every kind of prosperity. All spectators were seized with inexpressible surprise. Parmenio recovered himself from the astonishment and asked why he whom everybody adored should adore the high-priest of the Jews. But Alexander replied: "I do not adore the high-priest, but the God whose minister he is; for while I was at Dia in Macedonia, my mind wholly fixed upon the designs of the Persian war, as I was reflecting upon the means of conquering Asia, this very man, dressed in the same robes, appeared to me in a dream, exhorted me to banish every fear, bid me cross the Hellespont boldly, and assured me that God would march at the head of my army, and give me the victory over that of the Persians.

Josephus adds that the high-priest conducted the king into Jerusalem and showed him the book of Daniel and the prophecy in which Daniel declares that a Greek should destroy the empire of the Persians. Alexander was greatly pleased, and on the following day bade the Jews ask what favors they

pleased of him. The high-priest desired that they might enjoy the laws of their fathers, and might pay no tribute on the seventh year. He granted them all they desired. He also granted the same privileges to the Jews in Babylon and Media.

THE DEATH OF DARIUS' WIFE.

After Alexander had conquered Egypt and set out upon his march for new conquests in Persia news was brought him that the wife of Darius had died. He went at once to the tent of mourning. He found the queen-mother and the two young daughters of Darius bathed in tears. He consoled them in so kind and gentle a manner as to show that he himself was deeply afflicted. He caused the funeral obsequies to be performed with the utmost splendor.

The news of this death was carried to Darius by a eunuch, who succeeded in making his escape. Darius was deeply afflicted by this sad news, and especially as the queen could not receive the funeral rites befitting her rank. But when he was informed that her funeral had been performed with all possible magnificence, and when he learned of all the kindness of Alexander, he is said to have lifted his hands to heaven and to have offered the following prayer: "Ye gods, who preside over the birth of men and who dispose of kings and empires, grant that, after having raised the fortunes of Persia from its dejected state, I may transmit it to my descendants with the same lustre in which I received it, in order that, after having triumphed over my enemies, I may acknowledge the favors which Alexander has shown in my calamity to persons who are most dear

to me; or, if the time ordained by the fates has at last come, or it must necessarily happen, from the anger of the gods, or the ordinary vicissitudes of human affairs, that the Empire of Persia must end; grant that none but Alexander may ascend the throne of Cyrus.”

THE DEATH OF DARIUS.

Another great battle followed on the plains of Arbela east of the Tigris. Darius was again put to rout and fled with a part of his army into the eastern provinces of Persia. Alexander marched down into the heart of old Persia and left his captives at Susa, their old home, where they were no longer captives.

After organizing the government and appointing governors, he once more set out in pursuit of Darius. By this time Darius was himself a captive in the hands of one of his generals who had rebelled against him. Bessus the traitor general was pursued by Alexander into Hyrcania. Here Darius refused to follow any further. He would rather fall into the hands of Alexander. He was accordingly dispatched by the traitors and left covered with wounds.

A Macedonian soldier coming up found the dying king, who had still strength enough to ask for water. It was at once brought him. Somewhat revived by the drink he was able to speak. He felt happy to know that there was some one near who could understand him and receive his dying words. He died in Alexander's debt, and sent him a multitude of thanks for all the kindness he had shown his mother,

his wife, and children, whose lives he had not only spared, but restored to their former splendor. He prayed that Alexander might be victorious and become the monarch of the whole world. "Give him thy hand," he said to the Macedonian, "as I give thee mine, and carry him in my name the only pledge I am able to give of my gratitude and affection." Having said this he breathed his last.

Alexander came up a few minutes afterwards, and seeing the prostrate body of the king, he shed generous tears over his fallen foe. He ordered the body to be embalmed and sent it to Sysigambis in order that it might be interred with the honors due to deceased kings of Persia, and be entombed with his ancestors.

ALEXANDER AT BABYLON.

After his conquest of all the eastern lands up to and including northwestern India, Alexander came to Babylon and established his capital there. He married the daughter of Darius and encouraged in every way the fusion of the Greeks and the Persians.

But in the midst of his busy life, in the midst of his improvements, and new plans for conquests, he suddenly died, at the early age of thirty-three and his kingdom was soon divided. The eastern half including Persia proper soon fell under the Parthians who ruled it until the third century of our era.

CHOSROES II.

The new Persian Empire was established by Ardashir, or Artaxerxes, who claimed to be a descendant of the ancient royal family of Persia. It was

against these princes of the Sassanidae dynasty that the old emperors of Rome and Constantinople were constantly warring. The most celebrated of these rulers was perhaps Chosroes II, who wrested from the emperor of Constantinople province after province, captured Antioch and Jerusalem, and carried off from the latter place the fragments of the true cross which the mother of Constantine had found and placed in the church at Jerusalem. Chosroes also reduced Asia Minor and established his camp within sight of Constantinople itself.

After these conquests he retired for a time to enjoy the luxuries of his palace at Dastagerd beyond the Tigris. "Six thousand guards successively mounted before the palace gate; the service of the interior apartments was performed by 12,000 slaves; and the various treasures of gold, silver, gems, silk, and aromatics, were deposited in a hundred subterraneous vaults. The voice of flattery, and perhaps of fiction, is not ashamed to compute the 30,000 rich hangings that adorned the walls; the 40,000 columns of silver, or more probably of marble and plated wood, that supported the roof; and the 1,000 globes of gold suspended in the dome, to imitate the motions of the planets and the constellations of the Zodiac.

"While the Persian monarch contemplated the wonders of his art and power, he received an epistle from an obscure citizen of Mecca, inviting him to acknowledge Mohammed as the prophet of God. He rejected the invitation and tore the epistle. "It is thus," exclaimed the Arabian prophet, "that God

will tear the kingdom and reject the supplications of Chosroes." (Gibbon).

The predictions of Mohammed were soon fulfilled. Heraclius the Emperor of Constantinople suddenly roused himself and in three glorious campaigns regained all the provinces which he had lost during the early part of his reign. And shortly after the death of Mohammed all Persia was overrun by the forces of the Caliphs and from that time to this the rulers of Persia have been followers of the Prophet of Mecca.

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TALES FROM PERSIAN LITERATURE.

(SELECTED.)

THE JUDGMENT OF A KING.

I have heard, that a certain monarch having commanded a captive to be put to death, the poor wretch, in a fit of despair, began to abuse and reproach the king, in his own language; according to the saying, "Whosoever washeth his hands of life, uttereth whatever is in his heart." "A man without hope speaketh boldly; as a cat, when driven to despair, seizeth the dog; in the time of need, when it is impossible to escape, the hand graspeth the sharp-edged sword." The king asked, "What doth he say?" One of the viziers, who was of a benevolent disposition, replied, "O, my Lord, he said, the Almighty befriendeth him who stifeth his anger, and is merciful to his fellow creatures." The king had compassion on him, and spared his life. Another

vizier, of a contrary temper said, "It becometh not persons of our rank to speak anything but truth in the presence of monarchs; that man reviled the king, and spoke indecently." The king was displeased at his speech, and said, "I am more satisfied with that falsehood, than with this truth, which you have uttered: because that was well intended, and this is founded on malignity; and the sages have declared, that falsehood mixed with good advice, is preferable to truth tending to excite strife."

A BANDIT.

A gang of Arabian robbers had assembled on the top of a mountain, and blocked up the road of a caravan. The inhabitants were distressed by their stratagems, and the troops of the sultan overpowered; because the thieves, having possessed themselves of a fortress on the summit of the mountain, made this stronghold their fixed residence. The counselors of the king's party consulted together how to remove this grievance; because if they were suffered to continue any time in this state, they would become too powerful to be subdued. The tree that has only just taken root, may be pulled up by the strength of a man; but should it continue some time in that state, it could not be eradicated even by a windlass. It is possible to stop the course of a spring with a bodkin, which when formed into a full stream, cannot be forded by an elephant. They came to the determination to send one as a spy, to watch the opportunity when the thieves should be gone to attack a tribe, and the place evacuated. They detached a party of approved men, who concealed

themselves in the pass of the mountains. In the evening, when the robbers returned from their expedition with their plunder, they laid aside their weapons and deposited their spoil. The first enemy that attacked them was sleep. The gallant men sprang out of their ambush, and pinioned the robbers one after another. In the morning they were brought to the palace, where the king gave orders for them all to be put to death. There happened to be amongst them a lad, the freshness of whose cheeks resembled a rose-bud in early spring. One of the viziers kissed the foot of the king's throne, and bowed his head to the earth in intercession, saying, "This boy hath not, like the rest, tasted the fruit of the garden of life, nor even enjoyed the harvest of the season of youth; I therefore hope from your Majesty's known clemency, that you will oblige your servant, by sparing the lad's blood." The king looked displeased at these words, as they did not accord with his enlightened understanding, and he observed that an evil root will not thrive in a goodly shade. "To educate the worthless, is like throwing a walnut upon a dome; it is better to eradicate them altogether; for to extinguish the fire, and suffer a spark to remain; or to kill the snake, and preserve the young, is not acting like a wise man. Though the clouds should pour down the water of life, you would never gather fruit from the branch of the willow. Waste not your time on low people, for we can never obtain sugar from the reed." When the vizier heard these words he reluctantly approved of them, and praised the king for his just observation, saying, "May the

king live forever! nothing can be more true than what my lord hath pronounced, that if he had continued with these wicked wretches, he would naturally have fallen into their evil courses, and would have become one of them; but your servant entertains hopes, that this boy, by associating with men of probity, will receive instruction, and imbibe virtuous sentiments; for being but a child, his principles cannot be tainted with the lawless and inimical disposition of that banditti. Lot's wife associated with the wicked, and his posterity forfeited the gift of prophecy; but the dog of the companions of the cave, by long converse with the virtuous, became a rational creature." The vizier having thus concluded his speech, some of the courtiers joined in his petition, till at length the king spared the life of the youth and said, "I grant your request, although I disapprove of it. Know you not what Zal said to Rustam? Consider not an enemy as weak and contemptible. I have frequently seen water issue from a small spring, which so increased in its course, that it carried away the camel with his load." The vizier then took the youth into his family, and educated him with kindness and attention. An able master was appointed his tutor, who taught him how to ask a question, and return an answer with elegance, together with all the accomplishments requisite for court, so that his manners met with general approbation. Once when the vizier mentioned to the king some particulars of the youths disposition and manners, and was saying that wise education had made an impression on him, and that his

former ignorance was rooted out of his mind, the king laughed at those expressions, and said, "The wolf's whelp will at length become a wolf, although it be brought up along with men." Two years after this conversation, a set of vagabonds of the town entered into a conspiracy with him, and taking an opportunity, he killed the vizier and his two sons, carried off an immense booty, and succeeding his father as head of the gang, became an avowed offender. The king upon being informed of this exclaimed, "How can anyone form a good sword out of bad iron? O ye philosophers, it is impossible to convert a worthless wretch into a good man. The rain in whose nature there is no partiality, produces tulips in the garden, but only weeds in a barren soil. A sterile soil will not yield spikenard; waste not then seed upon it. To show favor to the wicked, is in fact doing injury to the good."

A BOY ON SHIP-BOARD.

A king was sitting in a vessel with a Persian slave. The boy having never before seen the sea, nor experienced the inconvenience of a ship, began to cry and lament, and his whole body was in a tremor. Notwithstanding all the soothing things that were offered, he would not be pacified. The king was much annoyed, but no remedy could be found. A philosopher, who was in the ship, said, "If you will command me, I will silence him." The king replied, "It will be an act of great kindness." The philosopher ordered them to throw the boy into the sea, and after several plunges, they laid hold of the hair of his head and dragging him towards the ship, he clung to the

rudder with both his hands.

When he got out of the water, he sat down quietly in a corner of the vessel. The king was pleased, and asked how this was brought about. The philosopher replied, "At first he had never experienced the danger of being drowned; neither knew he the safety of a ship." In like manner, he knoweth the value of prosperity who hath encountered adversity.

SUBJECTS WHO FEARED THE KING.

They asked King Hormuz, "What crime have you found in your father's ministers, that you ordered them to be imprisoned?" He replied, "I have not discovered any crime, but perceiving that they fear me greatly in their hearts, and do not place full reliance on my promise, I was alarmed, lest, out of apprehension for their own safety, they might attempt my ruin; and therefore I have followed the advice of the sages, who say, 'Fear him who feareth you, although you be able to cope with an hundred such. Dost thou not know, that the cat when desperate teareth out the tigers eyes with her claws? The snake biteth the foot of the peasant, from the dread of having its own head dashed against a stone.' "

THE IMPROVIDENT DERVISH.

I heard of a king who spent the night in jollity, and when he was completely intoxicated, he said, "I have never in my life experienced a more pleasant moment than the present, for I have no thoughts about good or evil, and am not plagued with any one." A naked dervish, who had been sleeping without in the cold, said, "O king there is none equal to thee in power. I grant that you have no sorrow of

your own; but what, then, hast thou no concern about us?" The king was pleased at this speech, and threw out of the window a bag of a thousand dinars, and said, "O dervish, hold out your skirt." He answered, "Whence shall I produce a skirt, who have not a garment?"

The king the more pitted his weak estate, and in addition to the money sent him a dress. The dervish having consumed the whole sum in a short time came again. Riches remain not in the hand of the pious, neither patience in the heart of a lover, nor water in a sieve. At a time when the king had no care about him, they related his case. He was angry and turned away his face from him. Whosoever watches not a fit opportunity, must expect nothing from the king's favor. Till you perceive a convenient time for conversing, lose not your own consequence by talking to no purpose. The king said, "Drive away this insolent extravagant fellow, who has dissipated such an immense sum in so short a time. The blockhead who burns a camphor candle in the daytime, you will soon see without oil in his lamp at night."

THE WICKED TAX-COLLECTOR.

I heard of a collector of the revenues, who desolated the houses of the subjects, in order to fill the king's coffers; regardless of the maxim of the sages, which says, "Whosoever offendeth the Most High to gain the heart of a fellow-creature, God will make that very creature the instrument of his destruction. The burning flame from wild rue raises not such a smoke as is occasioned by the sighs of the afflicted

heart. They say that the lion is the king of beasts, and the ass the meanest of animals; but the sages all agree, that the ass that carries burdens is preferable to the lion that destroyeth mankind. The poor ass, although devoid of understanding, yet, on account of carrying burdens, is very valuable. The laboring ox and the ass are preferable to men who injure their fellow creatures."

The king, on hearing some part of his base conduct, ordered him on the rack, and tortured him to death. You will not obtain the approbation of the king, unless at the same time you strive to gain the hearts of his subjects. If you wish that God should be bountiful to you, do good unto his creatures.

AN AFFLICTED KING.

A certain king had a terrible disease. A number of Greek physicians agreed that there was no other remedy for this disease, but the gall of a man of some particular description. The king ordered such an one to be sought for, and they found a peasant's son with the proprieties which the physicians had described. The king sent for the lad's father and mother, and by offering a great reward gained their consent and the Cazy gave his decision that it was lawful to shed the blood of a subject for restoring the health of the monarch. The executioner prepared to put him to death, upon which the youth turned his eyes toward heaven and laughed. The king asked, "What could there be in his present condition which could possibly excite mirth?" He replied, "Children look to their parents for affection; a suit is referred to the Cazy; and justice is expected from the monarch

Now my father and mother, seduced by vain worldly considerations, having consented to the shedding of my blood, the judge having sentenced me to die, and the king, for the sake of his own health, having consented to my death, where am I to seek refuge excepting in the high God, unto whom shall I prefer my suit, since it is against you that I seek justice?" The king's heart being troubled at these words the tears stood in his eyes, and he said, "It is better for me to die, than that the blood of an innocent person should be shed." He kissed the youth and embraced him, and after bestowing considerable gifts, set him at liberty. They say also, that in the same week the king was cured of his disease.

This recalls a saying rehearsed by the elephant driver on the banks of the Nile, "If you are ignorant of the state of the ant under your foot, know that it resembles your own condition under the foot of the elephant."

THE UNGRATEFUL WRESTLER.

A person had arrived at the head of his profession in the art of wrestling; he knew three hundred and sixty capital sleights in this art, and every day exhibited something new; but having a sincere regard for a beautiful youth, one of his scholars, he taught him three hundred and fifty-nine sleights, reserving, however, one sleight to himself. The youth excelled so much in skill and in strength, that no one was able to cope with him. He at length boasted, before the Sutan, that the superiority which he allowed his master to maintain over him was out of respect to his years, and the consideration

of having been his instructor; for otherwise he was not inferior in strength, and was his equal in point of skill. The king did not approve of this disrespectful conduct, and commanded that there should be a trial of skill. An extensive spot was appointed for the occasion. The ministers of state, and other grandees of the court, were in attendance. The youth like a lustful elephant, entered with a percussion that would have moved from its base a mountain of iron. The master being sensible that the youth was his superior in strength, attacked with the sleight which he had kept to himself. The youth not being able to repel it, the master with both hands lifted him from the ground, and raising him over his head, flung him on the earth. The multitude shouted. The king commanded that a dress, and a reward in money, should be bestowed on the master; and reproved and derided the youth, for having presumed to put himself in competition with his benefactor, and for having failed in the attempt. He said, "O king, my master did not gain the victory over me through strength or skill; but there remained a small part in the art of wrestling which he had withheld from me, and by that small feint he got the better of me." The master observed, "I reserved it for such an occasion as the present; the sages having said, 'Put not yourself so much in the power of your friend, that if he should be disposed to be inimical, he may be able to effect his purpose. Have you not heard what was said by a person who had suffered injury from one whom he had educated? 'Either there never was any gratitude in the world,

or else no one at this time practices it. I never taught any one the art of archery, who in the end did not make a butt of me.”

THE JUDGMENT OF A SAGE.

A vizier went to Zool-noon of Egypt, and asking his blessing, said, “I am day and night employed in the service of the king, hoping for some good from him, and dreading his wrath.” Zool-noon wept, and said, “If I had served God as you have feared the king, I should have been reckoned in the number of the just. If there was no expectation of reward and punishment, the foot of the dervish would be on the celestial sphere; and the vizier feared God as much as he dreads the king, he would be an angel.”

AMEEN AND THE GHOOL.

The natives of Isfahan, though not brave, are the most crafty and acute people upon earth, and often supply the want of courage by their address. An inhabitant of that city was once compelled to travel alone and at night through the dreadful valley of the “Angel of Death.” He was a man of ready wit and fond of adventures, and, though no lion, had great confidence in his cunning, which had brought him safely through a hundred scrapes and perils that would have embarrassed or destroyed your simple man of valor.

This man whose name was Ameen Beg, had heard many stories of the ghoos of the valley, and thought it likely he might meet one. He prepared accordingly, by putting an egg and a lump of salt in his pocket. He had not gone far amidst the rocks, when he heard a voice crying, “Hallo, Ameen Beg

Isfahanee, you are going the wrong road, you will lose yourself; come this way, I am your friend Kerreem Beg, I know your father old Kerbela Beg, and the street in which you were born."

Ameen knew well the power the ghoos had of assuming the shape of any person they choose, and he also knew their skill as genealogists, and their knowledge of towns as well as families; he had therefore little doubt that this was one of those creatures alluring him to destruction. He, however, determined to encounter him, and trust to his art for his escape.

"Stop, my friend, till I come near you," was his reply. When Ameen came close to the ghool, he said, "you are not my friend Kerreem, you are a lying demon, but you are just the being I desired to meet. I have tried my strength against all the men and all the beasts of the natural world, and I can find nothing that is a match for me. I came therefore to this valley in the hope of encountering a ghool, that I might prove my powers upon him."

The ghool, astonished at being addressed in this manner, looked keenly at him and said, "Son of Adam, you do not appear strong." "Appearances are deceiving," replied Ameen, "but I will give you a proof of my strength. There," said he, picking up a stone from the rivulet, "this contains a fluid, try if you can squeeze it, that it will flow out." The ghool took the stone, but after a short attempt, returned it saying that the thing was impossible.

"Quite easy," said Ameen, taking the stone and placing it in the hand in which he had before put

the egg; "Look there!" The astonished ghool, while he heard what he took to be the breaking of the stone, saw the liquid run from between Ameen's fingers, and all this apparently without an effort.

Ameen aided by the darkness, placed the stone upon the ground while he picked up another of a darker hue. "This," said he, "I can see contains salt, as you will find if you can crumble it between your fingers." The ghool looked at it, and confessed that he had neither knowledge to discover its qualities, nor strength enough to crush it.

"Give it to me," said his companion impatiently, and having put it into the same hand with the piece of salt, he instantly gave the latter all crushed to the ghool, who seeing it reduced to powder, tasted it and remained in stupid astonishment at the skill and strength of this wonderful man. Neither was he without alarm lest his strength should be exerted against himself, and he saw no safety in resorting to the shape of a beast, for Ameen had warned him, that if he commenced any such unfair dealing, he would instantly slay him; for ghools, though long-lived are not immortal.

Under such circumstances he thought his best plan was to conciliate the friendship of his new companion, till he found an opportunity of destroying him. "Most wonderful man," he said, "Will you honor my abode with your presence; it is quite at hand; there you will find every refreshment; and after a comfortable night's rest you can resume your journey."

"I have no objection, friend ghool, to accept your

offer, but mark me, I am, in the first place, very passionate, and must not be provoked by any expressions which are in the least disrespectful; and in the second, I am full of penetration, and can see through your designs as clearly as I saw into that hard stone in which I discovered salt; so take care you entertain none that are wicked, or you shall suffer."

The ghool declared that the ear of his guest should be pained by no expression to which it did not befit his dignity to listen; and he swore by the head of his liege lord, the Angel of Death, that he would faithfully respect the rights of hospitality and friendship.

Thus satisfied, Ameen followed the ghool through a number of crooked paths, rugged cliffs, and deep ravines, till they came to a large cave, which was dimly lighted. "Here," said the ghool, "I dwell, and here my friend will find all he can want for refreshment and repose." So saying he led him to various apartments, in which were hoarded every species of grain, and all kinds of merchandise, plundered from travelers who had been deluded to this den.

"This will be sufficient for your supper, I hope," said the ghool, taking up a large bag of rice; a man of your prowess must have a tolerable appetite."

"True," said Ameen, "but I ate a sheep, and as much rice as you have there before I proceeded on my journey. I am consequently, not hungry, but will take a little lest I offend your hospitality." "I must boil it for you," said the demon; "you do not eat grain and meat raw as we do. Here is a kettle,"

said he, taking up one lying amongst the plundered property. "I will go and get wood for a fire, while you fetch water with that," pointing to a bag made of the hides of six oxen.

Ameen waited till he saw his host leave the cave for the wood, and then with great difficulty he dragged the enormous bag to the bank of a dark stream which issued from the rocks at the other end of the cavern, and after being visible for a few yards disappeared under ground.

"How shall I," thought Ameen, "prevent my weakness being discovered; this bag I could hardly manage when empty, when full it would require twenty strong men to carry it; what shall I do? I shall certainly be eaten up by this cannibal ghool, who is now only kept in order by the impression of my great strength. After some minutes reflection he thought of a scheme, and began digging a small channel from the stream, toward the place where his supper was preparing.

"What are you doing?" vociferated the ghool, as he advanced towards him; "I sent you for water to boil a little rice, and you have been an hour about it. Cannot you fill the bag and bring it away?"

"Certainly I can," said Ameen. If I were content, after all my kindness, to show my gratitude merely by feats of brute strength, I could lift your stream if you had a bag large enough to hold it; but here," said he, pointing to the channel he had begun, "here is the commencement of a work in which the mind of man is employed to lessen the labor of his body. This canal, small as it may appear, will carry

a stream to the other end of the cave, in which I will construct a dam that you can open and shut at pleasure, and thereby save yourself infinite trouble in fetching water. But pray let me alone till it is finished," and he again began to dig.

"Nonsense," said the ghool, seizing the bag and filling it; "I will carry the water myself, and I advise you to leave off your canal, as you call it, and follow me, that you may eat your supper and go to sleep; you may finish this fine work if you like it tomorrow morning."

Ameen congratulated himself on this escape, and was not slow in taking the advice of his host. After having eaten heartily of the supper that was prepared, he went to repose on a bed made of the richest coverlets and pillows, which were taken from one of the store-rooms of plundered goods. The ghool, whose bed was also in the cave, had no sooner lain down than he fell into a sound sleep. The anxiety of Ameen's mind prevented him from following his example; he rose gently, and having stuffed a long pillow into the middle of his bed, to make it appear as if he were still there, he retired to a concealed place in the cavern to watch the proceedings of the ghool. The latter awoke a short time before daylight, and rising, went, without making any noise, towards Ameen's bed, where not observing the least stir, he was satisfied that his guest was in a deep sleep, so he took up one of his walking sticks, which was in size like the trunk of a tree, and struck a terrible blow at what he supposed to be Ameen's head. He smiled not to hear a groan, thinking he had de-

prived him of life; but to make sure of his work, he repeated the blow seven times. He then returned to rest, but had hardly settled himself to sleep, when Ameen, who had crept into the bed, raised his head above the clothes and exclaimed, "Friend ghool, what insect could it be that has disturbed me by its tapping? I counted the flap of its little wings seven times on the coverlet. These vermin are very annoying, for though they cannot hurt a man, they disturb his rest!" The ghool's dismay on hearing Ameen speak at all was great, but that was increased to perfect fright when he heard him describe seven blows, any one of which would have felled an elephant, as seven flaps of an insect's wing. There was no safety, he thought, near so wonderful a man, and he soon afterwards arose and fled from the cave, leaving Ameen its sole master.

When Ameen found his host gone, he was at no loss to conjecture the cause, and immediately began to survey the treasures with which he was surrounded, and to contrive means for removing them to his home.

After examining the contents of the cave, and arming himself with a matchlock, which had belonged to some victim of the ghool, he proceeded to survey the road. He had, however, only gone a short distance when he saw the ghool returning with a large club in his hand, and accompanied by a fox. Ameen's knowledge of the cunning animal instantly led him to suspect that it had undeceived his enemy, but his presence of mind did not forsake him. "Take that," said he to the fox, aiming a ball at him from

his matchlock, and shooting him through the head; "Take that for your not performing my orders. That brute," said he, "promised to bring me seven ghoos that I might chain them, and carry them to Ispahan, and here he has only brought you, who are already my slave." So saying, he advanced towards the ghoos; but the latter had already taken to flight, and by the aid of his club bounded so rapidly over rocks and precipices, that he was soon out of sight.

Ameen having well marked the path from the cavern, to the road, went to the nearest town and hired camels and mules to remove the property he had acquired.

After making restitution to all who remained alive to prove their goods, he became, from what was unclaimed, a man of wealth, all of which was owing to that wit and art which ever overcome brute strength and courage.

ABDULLA.

In a sequestered vale of the fruitful province of Khorassan there lived a peasant called Abdulla. He had married a person in his own rank of life, who, though very plain in her appearance, had received from her fond father the fine name of Zeeba, or the beautiful; to which act of parental folly the good woman owed the few seeds of vanity that mixed in her homely character. It was this feeling that led her to name her two children Joseph and Fatima, conceiving, no doubt, that the fortunate name of the son of Jacob would aid the boy in his progress through life; while there could be no doubt of her

little girl receiving equal advantages from being named after the daughter of Mohammed.

With all these family pretensions from high names, no man's means could be more humble or views more limited than those of Abdulla; but he was content and happy; he was strong and healthy, and labored for the khan, who owned the land on which his cottage stood—he had done so from youth, and had never left nor desired to leave, his native valley. The wages of his labor were paid in grain and cloth, sufficient for the food and clothing of his family and himself; with money he was unacquainted except by name.

It happened, however, one day, that the khan was so well pleased with Abdulla's exertions that he made him a present of ten piastres. Abdulla could hardly express his thanks, he was so surprised and overjoyed at this sudden influx of wealth. The moment he could get away from his daily labor he ran home to his wife:—"There my Zeeba," said he, "there are riches for you!" and he spread the money before her. The astonishment and delight of the good woman was little less than that of her husband, and the children were called to share in the joy of their parents. "Well," said Abdulla, still looking at the money, "the next thing to consider is what is to be done with this vast sum. The khan has given me tomorrow as a holiday, and I do think, my dear wife, if you approve, I will go to the famous city of Meshed. I will pay my devotions at the shrine of the holy Imam Mehdee, and like a good Mohammedan deposit there two piastres, and then

I will go to the great bazar, and purchase with the remanider every thing you, my dear wife and children, can wish; tell me what you would like best."

"I will be moderate," said Zeeba; "I want nothing but a piece of handsome silk for a dress." "Bring me," said the strudy little Joseph, "a nice horse and a sword." "And me," said his sister, in a softer tone, "an Indian handkerchief and a pair of golden slippers." "Every one of these articles shall be here tomorrow evening," said Abdulla, as he kissed his happy family; and early next morning, taking a stout staff in his hand, he commenced his journey towards Meshed.

When Abdulla approached the holy city his attention was first attracted by the cluster of splendid domes and minarets, which encircled the tomb of the holy Imam Mehdee, whose roofs glittered with gold. When arrived at the gate of the sacred shrine, he stopped for a moment in silent awe, and asked a venerable priest, who was reading the Koran, if he might proceed, explaining at the same time his object. "Enter, my brother," said the old man; "bestow your alms, and you shall be rewarded; for one of the most pious of the caliphs has said—Prayer takes a man half way to paradise; fasting brings him to its portals; but these are only opened to him who is charitable."

Having deposited, like a good and pious Musulman, the fifth of his treasure on the shrine of the holy Imam, Abdulla went to the great bazar; on entering which his senses were quite confounded by the novel sight of the pedestrian crowd hurrying to

and fro. He gazed with open mouth at every thing he saw, and felt for the first time what an ignorant and insignificant being he had hitherto been.

Entering a shop where there was a number of silks, such as he had seen worn by the family of the khan, he inquired for their finest pieces. The shopman looked at him, and observing from his dress that he was from the country, concluded he had a good customer. With this impression he tossed and tumbled over every piece of silk in his shop. Abdulla was so bewildered by their beauty and variety, that it was long before he could decide; at last he fixed upon one. "I will take this," he said, wrapping it up, and putting it under his arm; "What is the price?"

"I shall only ask you, who are a new customer," said the man, "two hundred piastres." Abdulla stared, replaced the silk, and repeated in amazement — "Two—hundred—piastres! you must be mistaken; do you mean such piastres as these?" taking one out of the eight he had left in his pocket, and holding it up to the gaze of the astonished shopkeeper. "Certainly I do," said the latter; "and it is very cheap at that price." "Poor Zeeba!" said Abdulla. "Poor who?" said the silk-merchant. "My wife," said Abdulla, "I will tell you all: I have worked hard for the khan of our village ever since I was a boy; I never saw money till yesterday, when he gave me ten piastres. I have given, like a good Mussulman, a fifth of my wealth to the Imam Mehdee, and with the eight remaining piastres I intend to buy a piece of embroidered silk for my good wife, a horse and

sword for my little boy, and an Indian handkerchief and a pair of golden slippers for my darling daughter; and here you ask me two hundred piastres for one piece of silk. "Get out of my shop!" said the enraged vender of silks;" "here have I been wasting my valuable time, and rumpling my choicest goods, for a fool and madman! Go along to your Zeeba and your booby children."

Abdulla muttered to himself as he went away, "No doubt this is a rascal, but there may be honest men in Meshed; I will try amongst the horse-dealers." After much bartering he decided upon a smart little grey horse, with head and tail in the air. The delighted peasant conceived Joseph on his back, and in a hurry to realize his vision, demanded the price. "Any other person but yourself," said the man, "should not have him for one piastre less than two hundred; but as I trust to make a friend as well as a bargain, I have persuaded my brother to take only one hundred and fifty." The astonished Abdulla stepped back—"Why you horse-dealers," said he, "who I thought were such good men, are as bad as the silk-merchants!" He then recapitulated to his friend the rise of his present fortune, and all that had occurred since he entered Meshed. The man had hardly patience to hear him to a close; "And have I," said he, "been throwing away my friendship, by an over-zealous honesty to please a fool of a bumkin! Get along to your Zeeba, and your Joseph, and your Fatima."

So saying, he went away in a rage, leaving Abdulla in perfect dismay. He thought, however, he

might still succeed in obtaining some of the lesser articles; he however met with nothing but disappointment; the lowest priced sword was thirty piastres, the golden slippers were twenty, and a small Indian handkerchief was twelve, being four piastres more than all he possessed.

Disgusted with the whole scene, the good man turned his steps towards home. As he was passing through the suburbs he met a holy mendicant exclaiming, "Charity, charity! He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord; and he that lendeth to the Lord shall be repaid a hundred-fold." "What is that you say?" said Abdulla. The beggar repeated his exclamation. "You are the only person I can deal with," said the good but simple peasant; "there are eight piastres—all I possess; take them, and use them in the name of the Almighty, but take care that I am hereafter paid a hundred-fold, for without it I shall never be able to gratify my dear wife and children." And in the simplicity of his heart he repeated to the mendicant all that had occurred.

When Abdulla came within sight of his cottage, they all ran to meet him. The breathless Joseph was the first who reached his father: "Where is my horse and my sword?" "And my Indian handkerchief and golden slippers?" said little Fatima, who had now come up. "And my silk dress?" said Zeeba, who was close behind her daughter. Abdulla shook his head, but would not speak a word till he entered his dwelling. He then seated himself on his coarse mat, and repeated all his adventures, every part of which was heard with temper till his last act, that of giv-

ing his piastres to the mendicant. Zeeba loudly reproached him with his stupidity and folly in thus throwing away the money he had obtained by the liberality of the khan, to whom she immediately went and gave information of all that had occurred. The enraged squire sent for Abdulla: "You block-head," said he, "what have you been about? I, who am a man of substance, never give more than a copper coin to these vagabond rascals who go about asking charity. Here," said he to the servants near him, "seize the fellow, and give him a hundred stripes!" The order was obeyed as soon as given.

Early next morning Abdulla was awakened by a message, that the khan wanted him. Before he went he had forgiven his wife, who was much grieved at the punishment which her indiscretion had brought upon her husband. He also kissed his children, and bid them be of good heart, for he might yet, through God's favor, make amends for the disappointment he had caused them. When he came to the khan, the latter said, "I have found a job for you, Abdulla, that will bring you to your senses; here, in this dry soil, I mean to dig for water, and you must toil day after day till it is found." Upon the third day, when about six cubits below the surface, he came upon a brass vessel full of round white stones, which were beautiful from their smoothness and fine lustre. He tried to break one with his teeth, but could not. "Well," said he, "this is no doubt some of the rice belonging to the squire which has been turned into stones; I am glad of it—he is a cruel master; I will however take them home—they are

very pretty; and now I recollect I saw some very like them at Meshed for sale. But what can this be, said Abdulla to himself, disengaging another pot from the earth—"Oho! these are darker, they must have been wheat—but they are very beautiful; and here!" cried he, "these shining pieces of glass are finer and brighter than all the rest; but I will try if they are glass;" and he put one of them between two stones, but could not break it.

Pleased with this discovery, and believing he had got something valuable, but ignorant what it was, he dug out all he could find, and putting them into a bag carefully concealed it even from his wife. His plan was, to obtain a day's leave from his master, and go again to Meshed, where he had hopes of selling the pretty stones of various colors for as much money as would purchase the silk dress, the horse, the sword, the slippers, and the handkerchief.

After some weeks hard labor at the well water was found. The khan was in good humor, and the holiday was granted. Abdulla departed before daylight, that no one might see the bag he carried; when close to Meshed, he concealed it near the root of a tree, having first taken out two handfuls of the pretty stones, to try what kind of a market he could make of them. He went to a shop where he had seen some like them. He asked the man, pointing to those in the shop, if he would buy any such articles? "Certainly," said the jeweler, for such he was; "have you one to sell?" "One!" said Abdulla, "I have plenty. A whole bag full. Look here!" said Abdulla, taking out a handful, which so surprised the jeweler that

it was some time before he could speak. "Will you remain here, honest man," said he, "for a moment," trembling as he spoke, "and I will return instantly." So saying he left the shop, but re-appeared in a few minutes with the chief magistrate and some of his attendants. "There is the man," said he; "I am innocent of all dealings with him: he has found the long lost treasure of Cyrus; his pockets are filled with diamonds, rubies, and pearls, in price and lustre far beyond any existing; and he says he has a bag-full." The magistrate ordered Abdulla to be searched and was then desired to show where he had deposited the bag, which he did; all were carefully sealed, and carried with Abdulla to the governor, by whom he was strictly examined. He told his whole history from first to last. But notwithstanding this, Abdulla, his family, and the treasures he had found, were a few days afterward despatched for Ispahan, under a guard of five hundred horsemen.

During these proceedings at Meshed, extraordinary events occurred at Ispahan. Shah Abbas the Great saw one night in a dream the holy Imam Meh-dee, clothed in green robes. The saint, after looking steadfastly at the monarch, exclaimed, "Abbas, protect and favor my friend!" On the following two nights the same vision appeared, and the same words were pronounced. The monarch threatened the chief astrologer and others with death, unless they relieved the anxiety of his mind before the evening of the same day. While preparations were making for their execution, the couriers from the governor of Meshed arrived, and the vizier, after perusing the

letters, hastened to the king. "Let the mind of the refuge of the world be at repose," he said; "for the dream of our monarch is explained. The peasant Abdulla of Khorassan, who, though ignorant and poor, is pious and charitable, and who has become the chosen instrument of Providence for discovering the treasures of Cyrus, is the revealed friend of the holy Imam Mehdee, who has commanded that this good and humble man be honored by the protection and favor of the 'king of kings.'"

The mind of Shah Abbas was quite relieved, and he ordered all his nobles and his army to accompany him a day's march from Ispahan to meet the friend of the holy Imam. Shah Abbas made the camels which carried Abdulla and his family kneel close to him, and aided, with his royal hands, to untie the cords by which the good man was bound, while others released his wife and children. A suit of the king's own robes were directed to be put upon Abdulla, and the monarch led him to a seat close to his throne: but before he would consent to be seated, he thus addressed his majesty.

"O King of the Universe, I am a poor man, but I was contented with my lot, and happy in my family, till I first knew wealth. From that day my life has been a series of misfortunes: folly and ambition have made me entertain wishes out of my sphere, and I have brought disappointment and misfortune on those I loved best; but now that my death is near, and it pleases your majesty to amuse yourself with a mock-honor to your slave, he is satisfied, if your royal clemency will only spare the lives of

that kind woman and these dear children. Let them be restored to the peace and innocence of their native valley, and deal with me according to your royal pleasure."

Abbas was greatly moved. "Good and pious man," he said, "I intend to honor, not to slay thee. Thy humble and sincere prayers, and thy charitable offerings at the shrine of the holy Mehdee, have been approved and accepted. He has commanded me to protect and favor thee. Thou shalt stay a few days at my capital, to recover from thy fatigues, and return as governor of that province from which thou hast come a prisoner. A wise minister, versed in the forms of office shall attend thee; but in thy piety and honesty of character I shall find the best qualities for him who is destined to rule over others. Thy good wife Zeeba has already received the silk dress she so anxiously expected; and it shall be my charge," continued the gracious monarch, with a smile, "to see Joseph provided with a horse and sword, and that little Fatima shall have her handkerchief and golden slippers."

The manner as well as the expressions of the king dispelled all Abdulla's fears, and filled his heart with boundless gratitude. He was soon after nominated governor of Khorassan, and became famous over the country for his humanity and justice. He repaired, beautified, and richly endowed the shrine of the holy Imam, to whose guardian care he ever ascribed his advancement. Joseph became a favorite of Abbas, and was distinguished by his skill in horsemanship, and by his gallantry. Fatima was mar-

ried to one of the principal nobles, and the good Zeeba had the satisfaction through life of being sole mistress in her family, and having no rival in the affection of her husband, who continued to cherish, in his exalted situation, those ties and feelings which had formed his happiness in humble life.

AHMED THE COBBLER.

In the great city of Ispahan lived Ahmed the cobbler, an honest and industrious man, whose wish was to pass through life quietly; and he might have done so, had he not married a handsome wife, who, although she had condescended to accept of him as a husband, was far from being contented with his humble sphere of life.

Sittara, such was the name of Ahmed's wife, was ever forming foolish schemes of riches and grandeur; and though Ahmed never encouraged them, he was too fond a husband to quarrel with what gave her pleasure; an incredulous smile or a shake of the head, was his only answer to her often told day-dreams.

It happened one evening, while in this temper of mind, that she went to the Hemmam, where she saw a lady dressed in a magnificent robe, covered with jewels, and surrounded by slaves. This was the very condition Sittara had always longed for, and she eagerly inquired the name of the happy person. She learned it was the wife of the chief astrologer to the king. With this information she returned home. Her husband met her at the door, but was received with a frown; nor could all his caresses obtain a smile or a word; at length she said:

“Cease your caresses; unless you are ready to give me a proof that you do really and sincerely love me.”

“What proof of love,” exclaimed poor Ahmed, “can you desire, which I will not give?”

“Give over cobbling; it is a vile, low trade, and never yields more than ten or twelve dinars a day. Turn astrologer; your fortune will be made, and I shall have all I wish, and be happy.”

“Astrologer!” cried Ahmed, “astrologer! Have you forgotten who I am—a cobbler, without any learning—that you want me to engage in a profession which requires so much skill and knowledge?”

“I neither think nor care about your qualifications,” said the enraged wife; “all I know is, that if you do not turn astrologer immediately, I will be divorced from you tomorrow.”

The cobbler remonstrated, but in vain. The figure of the astrologer’s wife, with her jewels and her slaves, had taken complete possession of Sittara’s imagination. What could poor Ahmed do? he was no astrologer; but he was dotingly fond of his wife, and he could not bear the idea of losing her. He promised to obey; and having sold his little stock, bought an astrolabe, an astronomical almanac, and a table of the twelve signs of the zodiac. Furnished with these, he went to the market-place, crying, “I am an astrologer! I know the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the twelve signs of the zodiac; I can calculate nativities; I can foretell every thing that is to happen!”

It so happened that the king’s jeweler was passing by. He was in great distress, having lost the

richest ruby belonging to the crown. The jeweler no sooner heard the sound of the word astrologer, then he went up to Ahmed, told him what had happened, and said, "If you understand your art, you must be able to discover the king's ruby. Do so, and I will give you two hundred pieces of gold. But if you do not succeed within six hours, I will use all my influence at court to have you put to death as an imposter.

Poor Ahmed was thunderstruck. He stood long without being able to move or speak. Full of sad thoughts, he exclaimed aloud, "Oh woman, woman! thou art more baneful to the happiness of man than the poisonous dragon of the desert."

The lost ruby had been secreted by the jeweler's wife, who, disquieted by those alarms which ever attend guilt, sent one of her female slaves to watch her husband. This slave, on seeing her master speak to the astrologer, drew near; and when she heard Ahmed, after some moments of apparent abstraction, compare a woman to a poisonous dragon, she was satisfied that he must know everything. She ran to her mistress, and, breathless with fear, cried, "You are discovered, my dear mistress, you are discovered by a vile astrologer."

The jeweler's wife, hastily throwing on her veil, went in search of the dreaded astrologer. When she found him, she threw herself at his feet, crying, "Spare my honor and my life, and I will confess everything!"

"What can you have to confess to me?" exclaimed Ahmed, in amazement.

“Oh nothing! nothing with which you are not already acquainted. You know too well that I stole the ruby from the king’s crown. I did so to punish my husband, who uses me most cruelly; and I thought by this means to obtain riches for myself, and to have him put to death. But you, most wonderful man, from whom nothing is hidden, have discovered and defeated my wicked plan. I beg only for mercy, and will do whatever you command me.”

An angel from heaven could not have brought more consolation to Ahmed than did the jeweler’s wife. He assumed all the dignified solemnity that became his new character, and said, “Woman! I know all thou hast done, and it is fortunate for thee that thou hast come to confess thy sin, and beg for mercy before it was too late. Return to thy house, put the ruby under the pillow of the couch on which thy husband sleeps; let it be laid on the side farthest from the door; and be satisfied thy guilt shall never be even suspected.”

The jeweler’s wife returned home, and did as she was desired. In an hour Ahmed followed her, and told the jeweler he had made his calculations, and found by the aspect of the sun and moon, and by the configuration of the stars, that the ruby was at that moment lying under the pillow of his couch, on the side farthest from the door. The jeweler ran to his couch, and there, to his joy and wonder, found the ruby in the very place described. He came back to Ahmed, embraced him, called him his dearest friend and the preserver of his life, gave him the two hundred pieces of gold, declaring that he was the first

astrologer of the age.

Ahmed returned home, thankful to God for his preservation. His wife ran up to him, and exclaimed, "Well, my dear astrologer! what success?"

"There! are two hundred pieces of gold; I hope you will be satisfied now, and not ask me again to hazard my life, as I have done this morning." He then related all that had passed. "Courage! courage! my dearest husband. This is only your first labor in your new and noble profession. Go on, and prosper; and we shall become rich and happy."

In vain Ahmed remonstrated, and represented the danger; she burst into tears, and accused him of not loving her, ending with her usual threat of insisting upon a divorce.

Ahmed's heart melted, and he agreed to make another trial. Accordingly, next morning he sallied forth with his astrolabe, his twelve signs of the zodiac, and his almanac, exclaiming, as before, "I am an astrologer! I know the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the twelve signs of zodiac; I can calculate nativities; I can foretell everything that is to happen!"

While everybody was gazing at him, a lady passed by veiled. She was the wife of one of the richest merchants in the city, and had lost a valuable necklace and ear-rings. She was in great alarm, lest her husband should suspect her of having given her jewels to a lover. She went up to Ahmed, and mentioned her loss; saying, "A man of your knowledge and penetration will easily discover my jewels; find them, and I will give you fifty pieces of gold."

The poor cobbler was quite confounded, and looked down, thinking only how to escape without a public exposure of his ignorance. The lady, in pressing through the crowd, had torn the lower part of her veil. Ahmed's downcast eyes noticed this; and wishing to inform her of it in a delicate manner, he whispered to her—"Lady, look down at the rent." The lady's head was full of her loss, and she was at that moment endeavoring to recollect how it could have occurred. Ahmed's speech brought it at once to her mind, and she exclaimed in delightful surprise—"Stay here a few moments, thou great astrologer. I will return immediately with the reward thou so well deservest." Saying this, she left him, and soon returned, carrying in one hand the necklace and earrings, and in the other, a purse with the fifty pieces of gold. "There is gold for thee," she said, "thou wonderful man! to whom all the secrets of nature are revealed. I had quite forgotten where I laid the jewels, and without thee should never have found them. But when thou desiredst me to look at the rent below, I instantly recollected the rent near the bottom of the wall in the bath-room, where, before undressing, I had hid them."

After these words she walked away, and Ahmed returned to his home, thankful to Providence for his preservation, and fully resolved never again to tempt it. His handsome wife, however, could not yet rival the chief astrologer's lady in her appearance at the Hemmam, so she renewed her entreaties and threats to make her fond husband continue his career as an astrologer.

About this time it happened that the king's treasury was robbed of forty chests of gold and jewels, forming the greater part of the wealth of the kingdom. The high treasurer and other officers of state used all diligence to find the thieves, but in vain. The king sent for his astrologer, and declared, that if the robbers were not detected by a stated time, he should be put to death. All their search had proved fruitless, and the chief astrologer had quite resigned himself to his fate, when one of his friends advised him to send for the wonderful cobbler, who had become so famous for his extraordinary discoveries. Two slaves were immediately despatched for Ahmed, whom they commanded to go with them to their master.

On entering the palace of the chief astrologer, he was thus addressed: "The ways of heaven, most learned and excellent Ahmed, are unsearchable. The high are often cast down and the low are lifted up."

His speech was here interrupted by a messenger from the king, who, having heard of the cobbler's fame, desired his attendance. Poor Ahmed now concluded that it was all over with him, and followed the king's messenger, praying to God that he would deliver him from this peril. "Tell me, Ahmed," said the king, "who has stolen my treasure?"

"It was not one man," answered Ahmed, after some consideration; "there were forty thieves concerned in the robbery."

"Very well," said the king; "but who were they? and what have they done with my gold and jewels?"

"These questions," said Ahmed, "I cannot now answer; but I hope to satisfy your majesty, if you will grant me forty days to make my calculations."

"I grant you forty days," said the king; "but when they are past, if my treasure is not found, your life shall pay the forfeit."

Ahmed returned to his house resolved to take advantage of the time allowed him to fly from the city where his fame was likely to be his ruin. "Well, Ahmed," said his wife, as he entered, "what news at court?"

"No news at all," said he, "except that I am to be put to death at the end of forty days, unless I find forty chests of gold and jewels, which have been stolen from the royal treasury."

"But you will discover the thieves by the same art which discovered the ruby and the lady's necklace."

"The same art!" replied Ahmed. "Foolish woman! thou knowest that I have no art, but I have had sufficient skill to gain forty days, during which time we may easily escape to some other city, and, with the money I now possess, and the aid of my former occupation, we may still obtain an honest livelihood."

"Will thy cobbling, thou mean, spiritless wretch! ever enable me to go to the Hemmam like the wife of the chief astrologer? Hear me, Ahmed! I am determined thou shalt not escape; and shouldst thou attempt to run away, I will inform the king's officers, and have thee taken up and put to death, even before the forty days are expired."

The poor cobbler was dismayed at this speech; but resigning himself to his fate, he said, "your will shall be obeyed. All I desire is to pass the few remaining days of my life as comfortably as I can. You know I am no scholar, and have little skill in reckoning; so there are forty dates; give me one of them every night after I have said my prayers, that I may put them in a jar, and, by counting them, may always see how many of the few days I have to live are gone."

Meanwhile the thieves who had stolen the king's treasure, had been kept from leaving the city by fear of detection and pursuit. One of them was among the crowd before the palace on the day the king sent for Ahmed; he ran in a fright to his comrades, and exclaimed, "We are all found out! Ahmed, the new astrologer, has told the king that there are forty of us."

"There needed no astrologer to tell that," said the captain of the gang. "This Ahmed, with all his simple good nature, is a shrewd fellow. Forty chests having been stolen, he naturally guessed that there must be forty thieves; and he has made a good hit, that is all; still it is prudent to watch him. One of us must go tonight, after dark, to the terrace of this cobbler's house, and listen to his conversation with his handsome wife; for he will, no doubt, tell her what success he has had in his endeavors to detect us."

Soon after nightfall one of the thieves repaired to the terrace. He arrived there just as the cobbler had finished his evening prayers, and his wife was

giving him the first date. "Ah," said Ahmed, as he took it, "there is one of the forty."

The thief, hearing these words, hastened, in consternation, to the gang, and told them that the moment he took his post he had been perceived by the supernatural knowledge of Ahmed, who immediately told his wife that one of them was there. The spy's tale was not believed by his hardened companions, and it was determined to send two men the next night at the same hour. They reached the house just as Ahmed, having finished his prayers, had received the second date, and heard him exclaim, "My dear wife, tonight there are two of them!"

The astonished thieves fled, and told their still incredulous comrades what they had heard. Three men were consequently sent the third night, four the fourth, and so on. Being afraid of venturing during the day, they always came as evening closed in, and just as Ahmed was receiving his date; hence they all in turn heard him say that which convinced them he was aware of their presence. On the last night they all went, and Ahmed exclaimed aloud, "The number is complete! Tonight the whole forty are here!"

Even the captain now yielded, in spite of his incredulity, and declared his opinion that it was hopeless to elude a man thus gifted; he therefore advised that they should make a friend of the cobbler, by confessing everything to him, and bribing him to secrecy by a share of the booty.

His advice was approved of; and an hour before dawn they knocked at Ahmed's door. The poor

man jumped out of bed, and, supposing the soldiers were come to lead him to execution, cried out, "Have patience! I know what you are come for. It is a very unjust and wicked deed."

"Most wonderful man!" said the captain, as the door was opened, "we are fully convinced that thou knowest why we are come, nor do we mean to justify the action of which thou speakest. Here are two thousand pieces of gold, which we will give thee provided thou wilt swear to say nothing more about the matter."

"Say nothing about it!" said Ahmed. "Do you think it possible I can suffer such gross wrong and injustice without complaining, and making it known to all the world?"

"Have mercy upon us!" exclaimed the thieves, falling on their knees; "only spare our lives, and we will restore the royal treasure."

The cobbler started, rubbed his eyes to see if he was asleep or awake; and being satisfied that the men before him were really the thieves, he assumed a solemn tone, and said—"Guilty men! ye are persuaded that ye cannot escape from my penetration, Your timely repentance has saved you. But ye must immediately restore all that ye have stolen. Go straightway, and carry the forty chests exactly as ye found them, and bury them a foot deep under the southern wall of the old ruined Memmam, beyond the king's palace. If you do this punctually, your lives are spared; but if ye fail in the slightest degree, destruction will fall upon you and your families."

The thieves promised obedience to his commands, and departed. Ahmed then fell on his knees, and returned thanks to God for this signal mark of his favor. About two hours after the royal guards came, and desired Ahmed to follow them. He said he would attend them as soon as he had taken leave of his wife, to whom he determined not to impart what had occurred until he saw the result. He bade her farewell very affectionately; she supported herself with great fortitude on this trying occasion, exhorting her husband to be of good cheer, and said a few words about the goodness of Providence. But the fact was, Sittara fancied, that if God took the worthy cobbler to himself, her beauty might attract some rich lover, who would enable her to go to the Hemmam with as much splendor as the astrologer's lady.

The good man stood before the king, who said, "Ahmed, thy looks are promising; hast thou discovered my treasure?"

"Does your majesty require the thieves or the treasure? The stars will only grant one or the other," said Ahmed, looking at his table of astrological calculations. "Your majesty must make your choice. I can deliver up either, but not both."

"I should be sorry not to punish the thieves," answered the king; "but if it must be so, I choose the treasure."

"And you give the thieves a full and free pardon?"

"I do, provided I find my treasure untouched."

The king and all his nobles followed the cobbler

to the ruins of the old Hemmam.

The king's joy knew no bounds; he embraced Ahmed, and immediately appointed him his chief astrologer, assigned to him an apartment in the palace, and declared that he should marry his only daughter.

The young princess, who was more beautiful than the moon, was not dissatisfied with her father's choice; for her mind was stored with religion and virtue, and she had learned to value beyond all earthly qualities that piety and learning which she believed Ahmed to possess.

As Ahmed did not return to his house, Sittara only heard of his elevation from common rumor. Her husband was chief astrologer—the very situation she had set her heart on; but he had married a princess. Her envy was excited by the accounts she daily heard of Ahmed's happiness, and of the beauty of the princess; and she now became anxious only for his destruction.

An opportunity of indulging her revengeful feelings was not long wanting. The king of Seestan had sent an emerald of extraordinary size and brilliancy as a present to the king of Iran. It was carefully enclosed in a box, to which there were three keys, and one of them was given in charge to each of the three confidential servants employed to convey it. When they reached Ispahan, the box was opened, but the emerald was gone.

The king heard the story with astonishment, but was unable to find any clue by which he might ascertain the truth. The report spread through the city; and Sittara thought she had now the means of

working her husband's ruin. She solicited a private audience of his majesty, on the plea of having a communication of importance to make. On entering the royal presence she threw herself at his feet, exclaiming, "Pardon, O king! my having so long concealed the guilt of my husband Ahmed, whose alliance is a disgrace to the royal blood. He is no astrologer, but an associate of thieves, and by that means alone did he discover the royal treasure. If any doubts are entertained of my speaking the truth, let his majesty command Ahmed to recover the emerald which the servants of the king of Seestan have stolen."

The king, who loved his son-in-law, was grieved by this information. Still he resolved to put Ahmed to the test. He therefore sent for Ahmed, told him what had happened, and added, "I give you twenty days to discover who stole the emerald. If you succeed, you shall be raised to the highest honors of the state. If not, you shall suffer death for having deceived me."

Poor Ahmed was by nature as sincere as he was pious and humble. He related, therefore to the princess without concealment or disguise, every event of his past life; and concluded with these words: You must see, from what I have said, how incapable I am of doing what your father enjoins. My only consolation is, that I shall, in twenty days, relieve you from a husband, whom from this time you must despise."

"I only love you the better, my dear Ahmed, for your sincerity and truth," said the princess. "One,

who has been so favored by Heaven, must be dear to every pious heart. Be of good cheer; I will turn astrologer this time, and see whether I can find out the thief."

The princess immediately invited the messengers from the king of Seestan to her palace where she entertained the strangers for several days, and conversed with them freely. The princess turned the conversation one evening on wonderful occurrences; and after each had related his story, said, "I will now recount to you some events of my own life. I am my father's only child, and have therefore been a favorite from my birth. I was brought up in the belief that I could command whatever this world can afford. I thought my power of doing good, and making everybody happy, was as unlimited as my wish to do so. When I was eighteen I was betrothed to my cousin. On the morning of my nuptials I went to walk in a garden near the palace, where I had been accustomed to spend some hours daily from my childhood. The old gardener, with whose cheerfulness I had often been amused, met me. Seeing him look very miserable, I asked him what was the matter? He evaded a direct answer; but I insisted upon his disclosing the cause of his grief, declaring at the same time my determination to remove it.

"'You cannot relieve me,'" said the old man, with a deep sigh.

"My pride was roused, and I exclaimed, 'I swear--'

"'Do not swear!' said the gardner, seizing my hand.

"'I do swear,' I repeated, 'I will stop at nothing

to make you happy; and I further swear, that I will not leave this spot until you reveal the grief which preys upon you.

“The old man, seeing my resolution, spoke with tremulous emotion as follows: ‘Princess, you know not what you have done. Behold a man who has dared for these two years to look upon you with an eye of admiration; his love has at length reached such a pitch, that without you he must be wretched forever; and unless you consent to meet him in the garden tonight, and become his bride instead of that of the prince, he must die.’

“I would have sacrificed my life a hundred times, sooner than stain my honor by marrying this man; but I had made a vow in the face of Heaven, and to break it seemed sacrilege. I told the gardener his desire should be granted, and that I would be in the garden an hour before midnight.

“A little before midnight I contrived to dismiss my attendants, and, arrayed in my bridal apparel, which was covered with the richest jewels, I went towards the garden. I had not proceeded many yards, when I was met by a thief, who, seizing me, said, ‘Let me strip you, madam, of these unnecessary ornaments; if you make the least noise, instant death awaits you.’ In my state of mind such threats frightened me little. I wished to die, but I wished, before I died, to fulfill my vow. I told my story to the thief, beseeching him to let me pass, and pledging my word to return, that he might not be disappointed of his booty. After some hesitation, he allowed me to proceed.

“ I had not gone many steps, when I encountered a furious lion, which had broken loose from my father’s menagerie. I dropped on my knees, repeated my story, and assured him, if he would let me fulfill my vow, I would come back to him as ready to be destroyed as he could be to make me his prey. The lion stepped aside, and I went into the garden.

“ I found the old gardener all impatience for my arrival. He flew to meet me, exclaiming I was an angel. I told him I was resigned to my engagement, but had not long to live. He started, and asked what I meant. I gave him an account of my meeting with the thief and the lion. ‘Wretch that I am!’ cried the gardener; ‘how much misery have I caused! but bad as I am, I am not worse than a thief, or a beast of prey; which I should be, did I not absolve you from your vow, and assure you the only way in which you can now make me happy, is by forgiving my wicked presumption.’

“ I was completely relieved by these words, and granted the forgiveness desired. On leaving the garden, the lion met me. ‘Noble lion,’ I said, ‘I am come, as I promised you.’ I then related to him how the gardener had absolved me from my vow, and I expressed a hope that the king of beasts would not belie his renown for generosity. The lion again stepped aside, and I proceeded to the thief, who was still standing where I left him. I told him I was now in his power, but that, before he stripped me, I must relate to him what had happened since our last meeting. Having heard me, he turned away, saying, ‘I am not meaner than a poor gardener, nor more

cruel than a hungry lion; I will not injure what they have respected.'

"Delighted with my escapes, I returned to my father's palace, where I was united to my cousin, with whom I lived happily till his death."

The princess paused, and turning to one of them, asked, "Now which, think you, showed the greatest virtue in his forbearance—the gardner, the thief, or the lion?"

"The gardener assuredly," was his answer" to abandon so lovely a prize, when so nearly his own."

"And what is your opinion?" said the princess to his neighbor.

"I think the lion was the most generous," he replied, " he must have been very hungry; and in such a state it was great forbeaance to abstain from devouring so delicate a morsel."

"You both seem to me quite wrong," said the third, impatiently; the thief had by far the most merit. Gracious Heavens! to have within his grasp such wealth, and to refrain from taking it! I could not have believed it possible, unless the princess herself had assured us of the fact."

The princess now, assuming an air of dignity, said to the first who spoke, "You, I preceive, are an admirer of the ladies;" to the second, "You are an epicure;" and then turning to the third, who was already pale with fright, "You, my friend, have the emerald in your possession. You have betrayed yourself, and nothing but an immediate confession can save your life."

The guilty man threw himself at her feet, ac-

knowledged his offence, and gave her the emerald, which he carried concealed about him. The princess rose, went to her husband, and said, "There, Ahmed, what do you think of the success of my calculations?" She then related the whole circumstance, and bade him carry the jewel to her father.

Ahmed took the emerald in silent astonishment, and went with it to the king, who dazzled by its brilliancy and size, loaded his son-in-law with the most extravagant praises. Poor Ahmed, conscious how little he deserved such praise, threw himself at the king's feet, and begged that he might be allowed to speak the truth, as he was readier to die than to continue imposing on his majesty's goodness.

After he had finished, the king summoned his vizier and chief counsellors, and desired that his daughter also might attend, and when they were all assembled, he spoke as follows: "Daughter, I have learned the history of thy husband from his own lips. I have also heard much in confirmation of the belief I have long entertained, that thy knowledge and goodness are even greater than thy beauty. They prove that thou art born to rule. I will resign my power into thy hands, being resolved to seek that repose which my declining years require. As to thy husband, thou wilt dispose of him as it pleases thee."

The princess knelt to kiss her father's hand, and answered, "May my father's life and reign be prolonged for his daughter's happiness, and for that of his subjects! If my humble counsel is listened to, my father will continue to govern his people. As to

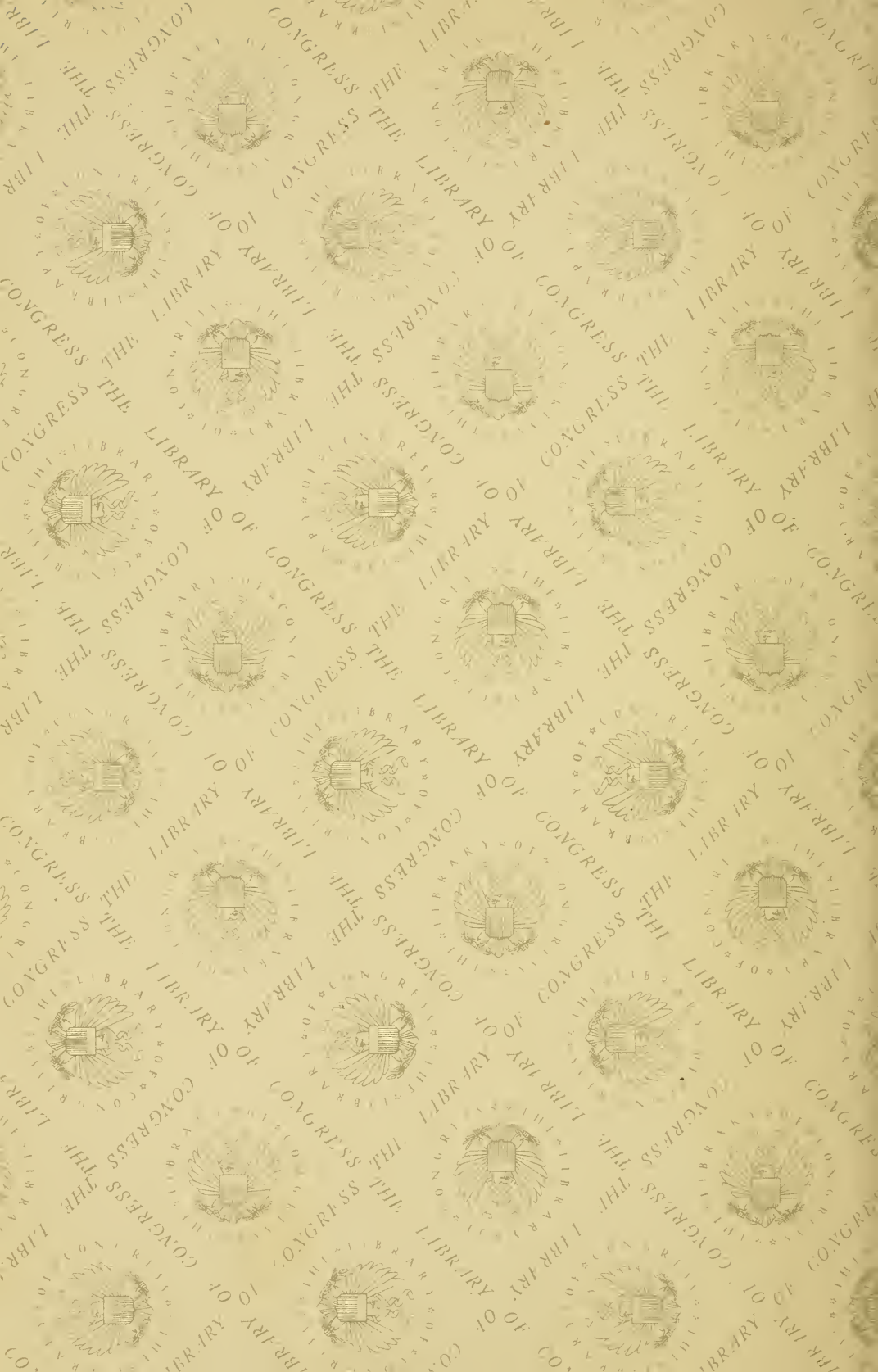
Ahmed, I love and esteem him; he is sensible, sincere and pious, and I deem myself fortunate in having for my husband a man so peculiarly favored and protected by Heaven."

"The king was delighted with his daughter's wisdom and affection. "Your advice," he said, "my beloved daughter, shall be followed."

The good cobbler was soon afterwards nominated vizier; and the same virtue and piety, which had obtained him respect in the humblest sphere of life, caused him to be loved and esteemed in the high station to which he was elevated.

The designs of Sittara were discovered, but her guilt was pardoned. She was left with a mere subsistence, a prey to disappointment; for she continued to the last to sigh for that splendor she had seen displayed by the chief astrologer's wife at the Hemmam; thereby affording a salutary lesson to those who admit envy into their bosoms, and endeavor to attain their ends by unreasonable and unjustifiable means.







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