FROM SHIRAZ TO YEZD

in a manner at once costly and uncomfortable; and while he had, as he informed me, paid the servant who accompanied him from Bushire to Shiraz the exorbitant sum of 8¼ tumanis for eleven days’ bad service, he became involved in a lengthy, violent, and unprofitable altercation with the boy who had brought him from Khwām-‘Abd about a trifling present of a krum. The consequence of this was that all the post-house people were against him, and my shagird-chadqdır, well pleased with his reward, assured me that I should have the best and the Parsee the worst of their horses on the morrow.

Next morning, after a cold and uncomfortable night, I was off before 6 a.m., but, for all the fair words of the shagird-chadqdır, there fell to my lot the most miserable and ill-conditioned beast that ever it was my lot to bestride. So bad were all its paces, and so rough and steep the road, that it was past mid-day when I finally alighted at the telegraph-office of Dihbid. Needless to say how anxious I was to learn news of my patient, or with what heartfelt thankfulness I heard from Mr and Mrs Blake, who welcomed me at the door, that she had taken a turn for the better, and was now practically out of danger. When I had eaten and rested a while, I visited her, and found that it was even as they had said: the crisis was past, and all that was left for me to do was to watch over the period of convalescence, which, fortunately, was short. Day by day I had the satisfaction of seeing a marked improvement in her condition, and it was only as a matter of precaution, and at the request of my host and hostess, that I remained for twelve days at Dihbid, at the end of which time she was already able to walk out in the garden.

Dihbid is one of the loneliest and bleakest spots that I saw in Persia. The village, so far as I recollect, consists of not more than fifteen or twenty hovels, a dilapidated caravansaray, the post-house, and the telegraph-office. This last is a spacious and comfortable dwelling, with a fair-sized garden attached to it; but its remote and solitary situation, and the severe cold of the winter season, must render it a very undesirable station to inhabit for a period of any length. The time which I spent there, however, passed pleasantly enough, for my host and hostess were kindness itself, and the surrounding country, though desolate, was not altogether devoid of interest. The worst feature of the place, indeed, in my estimation, was the complete lack of educated Persian society, the villagers being, without exception, poor peasants and quite illiterate. Such as they were, however, I saw a good deal of them; for of course it very soon became known that I was a “bakşem”; and not from the village of Dihbid only, but from the neighbouring hamlets of Kašr-i-Ya’qūb, Kushk, and Khurrami, the lama, the halt, and the blind flocked to consult me. Indeed, though I had no wish to practise the healing art, I soon found myself in the position of “le médecin malgré lui,” for it would have been cruel and churlish to refuse these poor folk such service as the paucity of drugs and appliances at my disposal, and my own lack of practical experience, permitted me to render them. So every day, after I had attended to my own special patient, and sat for some time conversing with her, playing with her pet mongoose (a charming little animal), and hearing how the Persian wise women who had been called in before my arrival had treated her with what one can only describe as “tincture of Al-coran” (made by writing a text from the sacred volume on the inside of a cup or saucer, and then dissolving it in water), I used to hold a sort of reception for my Persian clientele. The cases about which I was consulted were of the most miscellaneous character, varying in gravity from corneal opacities to cardiac disease, and from soft corns to epilepsy; but I do not propose to inflict on my readers any account of their symptoms, diagnosis, or treatment. Two of them, however, from a certain element of pathos which they seem to me to possess, are perhaps deserving of a brief mention.

The first of them was a little boy, aged twelve, named Khán Mirzá, who was suffering from paralysis and wasting of the arms
and legs. When I had completed my examination of him and heard the history of his sickness, I knew that I could do nothing for him, and, as gently as possible, told his father and mother, who had brought him to me, that I was powerless to help them, adding that I was doubtful whether the best physicians in Farangistán, with the best appliances at their disposal, could restore him to health.

“Shaheb,” they asked, “we know that you can cure him if you like. We are only poor peasants, and we cannot reward you as you have a right to expect, but tell us what sum of money will satisfy you, and if possible we will obtain it.”

I told them that to cure their child it was not money I wanted, but the power of working miracles.

“You are not a believer,” I concluded, “when I tell you that I would rejoice to help you if I could, but that it is beyond my skill, and not mine only, but that of the greatest physicians of our country? I neither desire nor would consent to accept your money, but I have no right to deceive you with false hopes. Surely you must understand that there are diseases which no physician can heal, and that, for instance, when the ejel comes, Jambilâs and Bukrât themselves have no resource but to cry, ‘there is no strength and no power save in God the Supreme, the Mighty’.”

“You speak truly,” answered the father; “but that only holds good of death.”

“How, then,” said I, “does it come to pass that even amongst the rich there are blind and deaf and halt and dumb persons, who would give any price to be restored to health if they could find one to cure them, but who go down to their graves unhealed?”

1 I.e. the appointed time to die.
2 I.e. Galen and Hippocrates, who still to the Persian typify the perfection of medical skill.
3 “Læ bawda wa lik khywatt išâ bîilîbîl ‘Ăğîyl ‘Ăzîm,” a form of words used by the Muhâmmadâns when all hope is gone, and only a miracle can avert disaster.

“...” replied the man. In the face of such faith what could one do but make up a prescription which, if it were not likely to do much good, could at least do no harm?

The other case to which I have alluded was a poor old man, called Mashhâdi Khûdâ-Râhm, who lived at some distance from Dihbâd. The first time he came was late one afternoon, when I had seen all my other patients, and was resting after my labours. My servant (whether out of consideration for me, or to emphasise his own importance) refused to let him see me or to inform me of his arrival. The poor old man thought that he had been turned away because he had not brought a present, and when he returned and was finally admitted to me, he had in his hand a couple of fowls as a propitiatory offering. These he begged me to accept, promising that in the morning he would bring me a lamb; and it was with great difficulty that I succeeded in making him understand that I had no wish to deprive him of any portion of his scanty possessions. I found that his son had gone down to the turbulent and lawless town of Abarkhûth some two months previously, and had there been stabbed in a quarrel about a girl to whom he was attached. Since then the old father’s eyesight had been gradually failing “through much weeping,” as he said; and it was for this that he had sought me. I did the best I could for him (which, I fear, was not much), and he went on his way and was no more seen by me.

Of the country round about Dihbâd I need say but little. Hard by the village stands a ruined tower, with enormously thick walls built of dried clay, which the country-folk believe to have been one of the seven hunting-palaces of Bahirâm Gûr. I was

1 “Bi-jibât-i-dakî misl-i-chamâ behânî gîr-əštân namî-dâyêd.” The expression gîr dûmadan (to be got hold of), though not, I think, found in classical, is common in colloquial, Persian.
2 “The bašt yunâh” of Bahirâm (or Varâhân) V., surnamed “Gûr” (the “wild ass”), from his fondness for chasing that animal, are familiar to every student of Persian literature. The king in question reigned from A.D. 420
informed by one of the inhabitants that coins and ornaments had been dug up in its vicinity. Round about the tower are some curious rocks, looking like dried masses of mud. Many of these are hollowed out into caves, in which the wandering tribesmen take up their abode in summer. The stream which flows past Dihbíd, crossing the main road a few yards south of the telegraph-office, runs in a south-westerly direction to Kār-i-Ya’kūb ("Jacob’s Castle"), where, as I was told, it forms a lake, in which are fish of considerable size. Some distance to the east of the stream, and about two and a half or three miles south-west of Dihbíd, stands a solitary withered tree hard by a ruined and deserted village and graveyard known as Mazra’i-Sabz. This tree, as I was informed by Mr Blake, is said to be haunted by a white-robed woman. I could learn no particulars about the legend connected with this ghost, and only mention it because it is the sole instance of this type of apparition which came to my knowledge in Persia. To the north and north-west of Dihbíd lie the hamlets of Kushk, Ḥuseyn-ābād, and Khurram, which I did not visit, and which are, I believe, places of but little importance. The whole plateau is, as I have said, of considerable elevation, and owing, I suppose, to the rarefaction of the air, one is liable when walking to experience a certain curious and unpleasant shortness of breath.

It was 29th April when, my patient being convalescent and able to take the air in the garden adjoining the telegraph-office, I finally quitted Dihbíd and turned my face eastwards towards Yezd. After the somewhat monotonous though pleasant fortnight which I had spent at Dihbíd, I looked forward eagerly to the excitement of a journey through country far wilder and less known than any which I had hitherto traversed. I had some to 438. At Shīrāz I was told by Ḥājī Naṣrullāh Khán, the ⅚-Khán, that the sites of all these seven-hued palaces were known to him. He gave me a list of them, but I did not write it down at the time, and only remember that he identified the Kār-i-zard or "yellow tower" with Kushki-zard, on the Sar-Fudd (or high-level) road to Shīrāz.

difficulty in obtaining animals for the march, but at length succeeded in hiring a mare for myself, and two donkeys for my servant and baggage, for which I was to pay the moderate sum of seven tummans (rather more than £2), it being understood that the journey to Yezd was to be accomplished in six or seven days. A fine handsome young man named Bābā Khán was to act as guide, and to take charge of the animals. This arrangement, satisfactory enough to myself, was very distasteful to Ḥājī Sa’far, who was greatly incensed at being expected to ride a donkey, and was only pacified with some difficulty.

We left Dihbíd about 7.30 in the morning, as our intention was to push past the caves of Hanishk (where two or three musket-men are stationed as a guard, and where it is possible to halt for the night) and reach one of the flourishing villages which lie like islands of verdure in the sandy desert of Abarḵūh. The Yezd road quits the main road from Shīrāz to Iṣfahān close to the Dihbíd caravanary, and runs in a north-easterly direction towards the tail of the mountains above Hanishk. These we reached about 10.30 a.m., and then began the long descent towards the plain. The sides of the narrow ravines through which our path wound were abundantly decked with flowers, concerning which I questioned Bābā Khán, who turned out to be a very intelligent and agreeable companion. There were tall, hyacinth-like spikes, with white blossoms and very thick succulent stems, called Kuroghli; fine large mountain chrysanthemums, called Dīdī; abundance of wild rhubarb (Rūzī); and a little ill-smelling plant with orange-brown flowers, named Mūr-gyāb (snake-grass). After passing a beautifully green grassy spot called Gūshī, well watered by a stream which ran down the ravine, where some peasants were pasturing their cows and donkeys, we came, at 11.15 a.m., to a point where the valley opened out somewhat and allowed us to see for the first time the great sandy plain (kaffī) of Abarḵūh spread out at our feet. This plain, which at its narrowest point (where we proposed to cross it) is about
FROM SHIRAZ TO YEZD

fifteen parasangs (fifty-two miles) in width, runs, roughly speaking, from north-west to south-east, and is bounded on both sides by mountains, the highest of which, behind which lies Yezd, were streaked with snow. The plain itself is a dreary, sandy waste, encrusted here and there with patches of salt; yet notwithstanding this (or perhaps partly because of this), the villages which lie on its western border—Ismin-âbâd, Mihr-âbâd, Shîrâz, and the larger town of Abarkûh—present a singularly fresh and verdant appearance. Near to the town of Abarkûh, and to the east of it, is a line of black jagged hills, rising abruptly from the plain, and crowned with ruins of some size, amongst which a dome called Gunbudh-i-‘Alî is particularly conspicuous.

At 11.30 we reached Hanishk, and halted for lunch. There are no buildings here, but only a few caves in the rock, which serve the infanqânis (musket-men) there stationed for a dwelling; a couple of fine mulberry-trees, under which we rested; a stream; and a spring of clear, cool water. Leaving Hanishk again at 12.45, we continued our descent, and finally, at about 2.15 p.m., emerged from the narrow jaws of the ravine into the plain, which from this point slopes but very slightly downwards towards Abarkûh. At 3.30 we passed a ruined cistern (ab-anbâr) covered by a dome, and at 6.30, just as the sun was setting, reached the beautiful green oasis formed by the gardens of Mihr-âbâd, where we were to halt for the night. Round about these, enclosed within a high outer wall to keep off the drifting sand, lay fields of corn and of the white poppy (for opium is largely produced in this district); and I was amazed to see what the skilful irrigation of the Persians could do for even so unpromising a soil. It is more irrigation, not railways and factories, that Persia needs to increase her prosperity; and were the means for this forthcoming, many a dreary desert might yet blossom with the rose and the poppy.

There is, of course, no post-house at Mihr-âbâd, nor, so far as I know, a caravansaray; but I was far from regretting this, as

FROM SHIRAZ TO YEZD

I obtained a much more delightful resting-place in a beautiful rose-garden near the gate of the village. I was, it is true, obliged to sleep in the open air; but, apart from the lack of privacy which it involved, this was a luxury rather than a hardship, the temperature in this low hill-girt plain being much higher than at Dühbâd that I seemed to have passed in one day from early spring to midsummer. In a sort of alcove in the high mud wall a carpet was spread for me, and here I esconced myself, ‘Îjahî Safar taking up his position under the opposite wall. Tea was soon prepared, and while I was drinking it the gardener brought me two great handfuls of loose rose-leaves—a pretty custom, common in this more eastern part of Persia.

Needless to say, visitors soon began to arrive; and, as none of them thought of moving till midnight, I had plenty of opportunity of observing their characteristics. In several ways they appeared to me to differ very widely from any type of Persian which I had hitherto seen, notably in this, that they manifested not the least curiosity about my business, nationality, or religion. Sullen, independent, quarrelsome, and totally devoid of that polished manner which characterises most of their countrymen, they talked for the most part with one another, and appeared to take little interest in anything except sport, horses, fire-arms, spirits, and opium. The only occasion on which Darâb Khân, the son of a local magnate, addressed me with any appearance of interest was when he demanded whether I had with me any strong drink. I told him I had not. “You lie,” replied he; “all Firangis drink.” I then recollected that I had a little pocket-flask half-filled with whisky. “Well, I have this small quantity,” I said, “in case of emergencies.” “Let me see it,” said he. I handed it to him, whereupon he unscrewed the top, sniffed at the whisky, and finally put the flask to his mouth, drained it at one gulp, and threw it back to me with a grimace. I asked him what he thought of it. “Poor stuff,” he said—“no better than our ‘arak, if as good. You are certain you have no more?”
I told him I had not another drop, and thereat he ceased to pay any further heed to me.

Dārāb Khān had with him a very handsome page; another most savage-looking attendant named Huseyn, with enormously long drooping moustaches, which gave him somewhat the appearance of a Chinaman; one or two younger brothers; and several friends. They all sat together, servants and masters, without distinction of rank; they were nearly all armed to the teeth; and they nearly all smoked opium and drank as much spirits as they could get.

As we had made a long stage on the first day, and as the heat was now considerable, Bāhā Khān decided to await the approach of evening before starting to cross the desert. In consequence of this I saw plenty of Dārāb Khān and his dissolute companions, who kept coming and going from 8 a.m. onwards. One, Ja'far Khān, also came to consult me with symptoms of indigestion and disordered liver. Having received a blue pill, he became communicative, and entertained me with a panegyrical on a certain Mūllā Ghulām Rīzā of Taft (near Yezd), who was highly reputed for his medical skill, and a dissertation on Persian pharmacology. Drugs, he explained, were primarily divisible into two classes: “hot” (used for combating “cold” diseases), amongst which the most efficacious were bābīn, afzantin-i-Rūmī, and gūl-i-gāz-gāzān; and “cold” (useful for the treatment of “hot,” maladies), of which rish’é-i-khafthe (hollyhock root), rish’e-i-kāsān, and rish’é-i-kadā enjoyed the highest reputation. This interesting dissertation was unfortunately interrupted by the arrival of two or three of Dārāb Khān’s younger brothers (so, at least, I judged them to be from their likeness to him), who forthwith began to pull about my effects and examine my clothes and bedding. One of them, seeing Ḥājī Şafar smoking a cigarette, plucked it out of his mouth and began to smoke it himself, whereupon he was, to my great delight, seized with such violent a fit of coughing that he had to retire. The relief afforded by his absence was, however, of short duration, for he soon came back, accompanied by a man who complained of that most usual of Persian ailments “pain in the loins” (dārd-i-kāmar). This latter I declined to treat, whereon he said, “Since you will not give me any medicine, I will have a cigarette.” I accordingly made him one, which he smoked rapidly, but without much apparent enjoyment, for he suddenly threw it away and departed hastily without a word. It was evident that cigarettes were a novelty in the plain of Aarkanāh.

I was now left for a while in comparative peace; for my host, after amusing himself for a while by firing bullets with his long Shīrāz gun at the birds on the garden wall, turned Dārāb Khān’s troublesome young brothers out of the garden and shut the door. At 3.30 p.m. the animals were laden and ready to start. Ḥājī Şafar gave the owner of the garden five krāms (about three-and-sixpence), with which he was evidently well satisfied, for he came and showed me the money, remarking, “This was not necessary, nor so much.” He then gave me a large bunch of roses as I was about to mount, and walked beside me to the outskirts of the village, where he bade us farewell. As soon as he had gone, Ḥājī Şafar began to abuse the people of the village roundly for their churlishness, adding that one of the boys had stolen a pair of goloshes and other articles out of my baggage, but that he had recovered them. “I should like to have given him a good thrashing,” he concluded, “but I thought you would not like it.” Prudence, I imagine, had something to do with his self-restraint, for the Aarkanāhis are not the kind of people one would care to anger.

Our course at first lay nearly due north, towards the fantastic, jagged hills which rise abruptly from the sandy plain close by the city of Aarkanāh. As we passed between two ridges of these, I could plainly see the ruined domes, minarets, and walls which crown their summits. The largest dome stands at the northern end of the northern ridge, and is called Gandhāb-e-i-‘Abbās. I should
greatly have liked to explore these ruins, and to see something of the city of Abarkûh, which Ja'far Khán declared to be "the oldest city in Persia, except Sâlakh" (by which, I suppose, he meant Ifstakh), and to be full of ancient monuments; but unfortunately this was impossible. Emerging from between these rocky ridges, we found ourselves once more in the open sandy plain, and could discern at a short distance several small villages. In a little while we passed one of them, called Shârzâz, just beyond which the road bifurcated, the left-hand or more northerly branch (for we had now again turned nearly due east) leading to Shams-âbât; the right or more southerly one to Hakim. We followed the latter, and reached Hakim about 6.45 p.m. as it was getting dusk. Here we found a small caravan of donkeys, laden with wheat for Yezd; and, learning that this was not to start till the moon rose, we halted in the plain for rest and refreshment.

After supper I lay gazing at the starry sky till sleep overcame me. About midnight Háji Şâfar awoke me, and soon afterwards we started at a good pace (for these caravans of donkeys travel faster than ordinary caravans) on the long desert stage which was to bring us to Châb-Begî, the first habitable spot on the Yezd side of the desolate plain. Bare and hideous as this desert is by day, seen in the silver moonlight it had a strange weird beauty, which produced on me a deep impression. The salt-pools and salt-patches gleamed like snow on every side; the clear desert air was laden with a pungent briny smell like a sea-breeze; and over the sharply-defined hills of Yezd, towards which we were now directly advancing, hung the great silvery moon to the right, and the "Seven Brothers" (baft birddarān), or Great Bear, to the left. I kept in advance of the caravan, and watched with a keen pleasure the stars "beginning to faint on a bed of daffodil sky," till first the "caravan-killer" (kâravân- or chârâvādîr-khûh) and then the morning star dissolved in the rosy flush which crept upwards from behind the eastern mountains, and suddenly, like a ball of fire, the sun leaped up over their serrated summits, scattering the illusions of the night, and bringing into view chains and ridges of low hills which had hitherto seemed to form part of the main mass.

As it grew light, a man carrying a large wallet over his shoulders, and walking rapidly, came up with me. I saluted him, and entered into conversation. He was, as I gathered, a kâšîd, or courier, with letters from Abâdê for Yezd. He told me that he had been a soldier in one of the Zillû's-Sultân's regiments till these were disbanded. He did not like a soldier's life, and had once deserted, walking from Işfâhân to Abâdê (about 130 miles) in two days. He had also walked from Yezd to Mashhad by the desert road in twenty days, and from Teherân to Mashhad in the same time. He asked me many questions about England and its government, and complained bitterly of the heavy taxation to which the Persian peasantry were subjected. The tax on a donkey was, he said, two tâmûds (about 13.5) a year, and on a sheep three tâmûds (nearly ½). He further informed me that bread was dear at Yezd, costing three pandûhs (one and a half krâns, or about 1¾d.) the man; and that during the great famine about sixteen years earlier it had risen to sixteen krâns (about 1½r.) the man, and that the people were in some cases driven to eat human flesh to appease their hunger. As we approached Châb-Begî we passed numerous tamarisk-bushes (gor), which, as my companion told me, had formerly been much more abundant, till they were cut down by order of the Government, because they afforded a harbour to highway robbers of the Bakhtiyyâr and other nomad tribes. He gave the people of Abarkûh a very bad character, declaring that fatal quarrels were of constant occurrence there.

We reached Châb-Begî, a miserable walled village, containing a few sordid and quarrelsome inhabitants, a little before 7 a.m., and alighted at the dilapidated caravansaray, in front of which stood several sickly trees. I spent the whole day in the large, dusty, ruinous chamber allotted to me; sleeping, eating, washing
to the very limited extent permitted by the surroundings, and writing up my diary, being the only resources available for passing the long, hot day. A certain excitement, which can hardly be described as pleasurable, was produced from time to time by the appearance of sundry large and offensive insects; first a tarantula (rotyel, or khoby-gez), which was killed on the wall where it sat by a kick from Bábá Khán, who informed me in an encouraging manner that they had just killed another one outside, and that, as these were probably a pair, there was nothing to apprehend. I failed to see the conclusiveness of this reasoning, and (as I had left my bedstead at Shíráz, and was therefore obliged to spread my bedding on the floor) continued to keep a good look-out, for which I was presently rewarded by seeing a large black creature, shaped something like a gigantic wood-louse, emerge deliberately from a cranny in the wall. I threw half a brick at it, and it vanished with a horrid splash. After this I felt little inclination for sleep, but after supper fatigue overcame me and I fell into a deep slumber, from which I was aroused about an hour after midnight by Hájí Šáfar.

It was with sincere delight that I quitted this detestable spot about 1.30 a.m., and found myself once more on the road in the cool, clear moonlight. Having nothing else to do, I watched and timed the changes in the sky which heralded the dawn. At 3.30 a.m. the “False Dawn” (Subh-i-Kalbli) appeared, a little to the north of the point whence the sun subsequently arose. At 3.45 a rosy tinge was perceptible in the sky. At 4.0 the morning star began to shine over the hills. At 4.30 it was quite light, and at 4.55 the sun rose; but it was not till 6 a.m. that the day began to grow warm. An hour later we entered the village of Bāghistán, where the road bifurcated. Taking the right-hand branch, we presently passed the castellated village of Irán, situated on a small hill, and, at about 8 a.m., reached a beautiful village named Gūd-i-Shírdán or Sharif-ábād, which, with its shady lanes, rippling streams, and verdant trees, reminded me more of my native land than anything I had seen for many a long day. Here we halted; and in one of the well-kept gardens which gave to the village so flourishing an appearance I spread my bed under a yellow rose-tree, and slept for a while till tea was ready. I then found that the little streamlet beside me had been diverted into another channel for the irrigation of another part of the garden, and, as it now threatened to inundate my resting-place, I was obliged to alter my position. Just as I had effected this, and was preparing to go to sleep again, a deputation of the principal inhabitants of the village and the neighbouring hamlet of Dih-i-Pā’ín was announced. Of course they wanted medical advice; but, needless to say, they did not touch on the business which had brought them till they had exhausted all other topics of conversation. Amongst other things they informed me that two men had lately been put to death by the new Governor of Yezd for drinking wine. I expressed surprise, adding that if the Governor of Shíráz were to take it into his head to deal thus harshly with wine-drinkers, he would soon have no subjects left to govern. “Yes,” replied my informant, “but, thank God, this is not Shíráz.”

Other persons gradually joined the group which had gathered round me, amongst these being a respectable-looking, though poorly-clad, man, who had joined our caravan at Hákim. Presently one of those present asked me if I knew Russian. “No,” I said, “why should I? A great distance separates the English from the Russians.” “One man only intervenes between them,” remarked my fellow-traveller. I looked at him in wonder. “You are not a Russian,” I exclaimed. “I am a Russian subject, at any rate,” he replied, “though a Musulmán; my native place is Eriván.”

At length my visitors began to approach the object which had brought them. “Was it true?” they asked, “that I had some knowledge of medicine?” I answered in the affirmative. “Would I visit a woman in their village who was stricken with a grievous sickness?” they continued. I asked whether she could not come
FROM SHIRÁZ TO YEZD

and see me, but they told me that she was too ill, adding that their village was quite close at hand. It proved to be about two miles off, and on my arrival there the whole population (some twenty or thirty souls) turned out to stare at me, and followed me into the sick-room. The patient, a middle-aged woman, was lying on the floor in the middle of the room, and was evidently very ill; though, owing to the impossibility of making a careful examination, and the distracting effect of the eager crowd of onlookers, who kept up a continual buzz of conversation, I was unable to satisfy myself as to the nature of her complaint. When I had prescribed such medicines as appeared to me most likely to afford her some relief, I was called upon to examine several other sick persons, and it was only with much difficulty that I was able to get away. As I was leaving, one of the principal inhabitants of the village presented me, as a reward for my trouble, with a saddle-cover, which I bestowed on Bábá Kháñ, who had come with me to carry my box of drugs and instruments. Háji Şafar was greatly annoyed at what he called the meanness of the people, declaring that I might have gained a hundred támínas in fees since I left Dibbíd but for my lamentable weakness in giving advice gratis.

We left Göd-i-Shirízd about 4.30 next morning, it being then quite light; but though it was mid-day before we reached Sunjí, our next halting-place, we did not suffer any inconvenience from the heat, as we were again ascending into a cool and mountainous region. The wheat-laden donkeys had started at an earlier hour, but the Erivání, whose acquaintance I had made on the previous day, had preferred to wait for us, and I had a good deal of conversation with him. I found him a pleasant and intelligent companion, for he had travelled widely, and spoke, besides his own Caucasian Turkish, Ottoman Turkish, Russian, Persian, and Arabic. He told me that it was now three years since he had left Eriván, whence he had journeyed to Tabríz, Ţeherán, Isfahán, Kirmánsháh, Bagháíd, Bushire, and Shiráz. He was now pro-

ceeding to Yezd, having come with a caravan northward bound as far as Dibbíd, where he had been detained for ten days ere he could find means of continuing his journey. He had heard at Dibbíd that I was going to Yezd, but had hesitated to join me, not knowing what manner of man I might be. "Yesterday, however," he concluded, "I watched you with those people in the garden, and saw that you were not wanting in 'crop,' for you never once showed any irritation at their absurd and impertinent questions, but continued to answer them with a smile and a jest." I asked him whither he was bound, and when he expected to return to his home. He replied that from Yezd he intended to go to Mashhad, and thence through Afghanistan to India; and that it would be two years at least ere he again reached Eriván. I asked him if he did not fear to trust himself amongst the treacherous and cruel Afghans, but he answered, "No, with patience and courage a man can go wheresoever he will on God's earth."

The road which we traversed this day was singularly beautiful, and the country looked prosperous and well cared for. We passed two villages, however, one on the right and another on the left, named AZYad-ábd and 'Abbás-ábd respectively, which had been deserted owing to the failure of their water supply. The trees in their gardens were still for the most part green and luxuriant, but already the fragile mud walls were falling into ruin; and, meditating on this process of rapid decay, I ceased to wonder at the many Persian towns and villages mentioned by early geographers and historians of which no trace remains, and which it seems impossible to identify. At a considerable distance to

1 Dáb, properly the crop of a bird, or the stomach of an animal, is commonly used in Persian in the sense of patience, evenness of temper, or capacity for withstanding insults or annoyances. So a short-tempered or impatient man is described as tám-báwša. Thus Náṣiru'll-Dín Sháh says in one of his poetical compositions—

"Dášt na-báyad: ef dášt dar gilab háchád; Mard na-báyad ki tám-báwša báxhad."

"Friend should not complain of friend; a man should not be short-tempered."
the right (north), on a low conical hill, the Castle of Bunáft, with the village of the same name below it, was clearly visible; and, farther east, the precipitous black crag called Kašt-i-Zard ("the Yellow Castle"), which, as Bábá Kháñ informed me, is only accessible by one path, and at the foot of which lies the village of Bakhšt-ú-Guríz. Farther on we passed the village of Kátrú (also on the right), by which runs the direct road from Yezd to Bawánárt, and soon afterwards turned the northern end of the vast pile of cliffs which forms this western face of the Shír-Kúh, and, following a ravine to the left, down which rushed a clear, cool mountain stream, presently reached the beautiful Alpine village of Suníj, a mass of gardens and groves situated amidst the grandest rock-scenery. A more charming spot for a summer residence could hardly be conceived, and the people of Yezd are fortunate in being able to retreat so easily from their baking, sandy plains to this and other equally delightful highland resorts.

I succeeded in obtaining a very comfortable lodging, past the door of which ran a stream of beautiful clear water. In the afternoon I was visited by a number of the inhabitants, who were of the true Yezdí type, fair-skinned and gray-eyed, with loosely-coiled bluish turbans, and the curious sing-song drawl which always characterises the speech of Yezd. This accent reminded me strongly of the south Northumbrian in English, the modulation of the voice in both cases being very similar; it is generally much laughed at in Persia, but to me it always seemed soothing, and at times rather pretty. My visitors, of course, were very inquisitive, and asked me more than the usual number of questions, chiefly about my religion and the business that had brought me into a region so seldom traversed by Europeans. "Was it true," they asked, "that Europeans accounted the flesh of the pig a lawful food?" "Had we fixed ablutions and prayers?" "How were marriages celebrated in Europe, and what were the regulations as to dowry?" Presently a comical-looking old man broke in, declaring that as for his business, he had no doubt that

FROM SHÍRÁZ TO YEZD

I had come "to effect disruptions in Church and State" (vakhtí dar din a manlakat kardan), else how did I come to know the geography of the country, and to be so anxious for information as to the names of all the villages, mountain-peaks, and streams in the neighbourhood? Here the Erívání interposed, saying that all the Europeans, even the children, learned geography by means of maps such as I possessed. Thenceupon my map was at once called for and exhibited to an admiring crowd, some of whom, however, expressed great disappointment that I had not also a microscope (khurdí-bún), so that they might by its aid see what was going on in the streets of Yezd!

Next day we were off about 5.30 a.m., many people assembling to witness our departure. Amongst these was the old man who had regarded me with such suspicion on the previous evening, but he seemed to have changed his opinion of me for the better, for, in bidding me farewell, he begged me, should I again pass that way, by no means to omit a visit to the ancient castle of Shawwází, situated ten parasangs away, in the direction of 'All-ábád. Our host accompanied us till we were clear of the village and on the road to Taft, his little son following us somewhat farther, plaintively calling out to Hájí Šafír in his childish Yezdí drawl, "Ye tá námham na-kardí!" ("Thou hast not given me one kiss")—a remark to which Hájí Šafír only replied with an outburst of mirth and mimicry, which caused the boy to turn petulantly away.

The road which we followed was again singularly picturesque, for it led us almost immediately below the rugged and precipitous cliffs of the Shír-Kúh, rent and shattered on every ridge into fantastic towers and needles. We were now again descending towards the plain of Yezd, and in a valley to the left could discern amongst several others the village of 'All-ábád, through which passes another road from Yezd to Abarákúh. The conversation of my Erívání friend did much to dispel the monotony inseparable from even the most picturesque march. Amongst other things,
he told me a rather clever variation of the well-known, though probably fictitious, anecdote concerning the interview between the poet Ḥáfiz and Tīmūr-i-lang, the Tartar conqueror, better known as Tamerlane, who, as the story runs, angrily demanded of Ḥáfiz how he had dared, in one of his poems, to say that he would give Samarkand and Bukhārā for the black mole on his beloved's cheek. According to the usual version of the tale, Ḥáfiz replied, “Yes, sire, and it is by such acts of generosity that I have been reduced to the poverty in which you see me”; whereupon Tīmūr laughed, and ordered a sum of money to be given him. According to my companion's account, however, the poet effected his deliverance by an ingenious emendation in the obnoxious line. “Bakhsam Samarkand u Bukhārā-rā!” (“I would give Samarkand and Bukhārā”) he exclaimed; “those are not my words! What I wrote was, ‘Bakhsam si man kand u du khurāk-rā’ (“I would give three stone of sugar and a couple of dates”), and some ignorant scribe has altered it into this!”

We reached the large and flourishing village of Taft about mid-day, two hours and a half after passing another prosperous and pretty village called Khurāshē. Taft was looking its best on that fine May morning, the luxuriant green of its gardens being pleasantly varied by the bright red flowers of the pomegranates in which they abound. A wide, sandy river-bed, at this season devoid of water, divides it into two parts, whereof the northern is inhabited by the Zoroastrians and the southern by the Muḥammadans. We followed this river-bed, which appeared to serve also as a road, for some distance, till we came to a point where the houses were more abundant and the gardens fewer. Here we halted, and began to look for a lodging, which I finally obtained in a sort of pavilion in the middle of a large square. Four rooms, raised somewhat above the level of the ground, opened out of the central hall of this pavilion, which was surrounded by a few trees, and appeared to offer desirable and comfortable quarters. Unfortunately, these rooms were

lighted by iron-barred windows opening on to the square, and I soon found myself an object of interest to a crowd of blue-turbaned, bearded men, and fair-faced, gray-eyed boys, who watched me using a knife and fork to eat my lunch with uncontrolled delight and amusement. They were perfectly well-behaved, and evidently had no desire to annoy me; but I never before realised what the lions in the Zoological Gardens have to put up with!

Later in the afternoon I went for a short walk down the road-river with my Erivānī friend, after extricating myself with some difficulty from a crowd of people with sore eyes and other ailments for which they desired treatment. In the course of our walk we were accosted, to my great delight, by two of the yellow-robed Zoroastrians, whom I now saw for the first time in the raiment which in Yezd and Kirmān serves to distinguish them, even at a distance, from their Muhammadan fellow-citizens, but which in other parts of Persia they are permitted to lay aside. The Erivānī asked them what was their religion, to which they proudly replied, “Zardnūshī, Kiyānī” (“Zoroastrian, Achemenian”), whereat he laughed not a little. On returning to my lodging, I found a handsome clever-looking man waiting to see me. From his talk I had little doubt that he was a Bábī, for he enquired very minutely into the Christian belief as to the advent of the Messiah, adding, “Perhaps He has come, and you have not recognised Him,” and presently, “Have you heard news of the Manifestation?” But when I asked him point-blank whether he was “of that sect” (az ḍī ḍīfā), he only replied “Khudā dānī” (“God knows”), and soon after left me.

Next morning (Saturday, 9th May) we started about 5 a.m., so as to reach Yezd before the day grew hot. Our road sloped continuously, but gently, downwards towards the city, which was in view almost from the beginning of the march. As we were leaving Taft, a little boy came up and presented me with a rose, and farther on an old man who was working in a field near the
road offered me the like attention, neither of them expecting or receiving any reward for what, in these parts of Persia, which have not yet been spoiled by Europeans, is an act of pure kindliness and courtesy towards strangers. We passed successively the large and flourishing villages of Mubaraké and Chamr on the right, and Zeyn-abád on the left, while on a low spur of the mountains to the south of the road the white dukjumé or “tower of silence” of the Zoroastrians was plainly visible. Leaving these behind us, we presently entered the sandy plain wherein lies the ancient city of Yezd, towards which we wound our way through gardens and cornfields. As we approached it, I was much puzzled as to the nature and function of numerous tall chimney-like structures, the like of which I had not hitherto seen. Knowing that Yezd gloried in the title “Dánr’t-i Ibádát” (“the Abode of Devotion”), I was for a moment disposed to regard them as a new variety of minaret; but I soon learned that they were really bad-girs or wind-chimneys, designed to collect and convey into the interiors of the better class of houses such breaths of fresh breeze as might be stirring in the upper regions of the air which lay so hot and heavy over that sun-parched plain. It was still comparatively early in the day when we passed through the city gates, and, after some enquiry, alighted at the caravansary of Hāji Kambár, where we secured two rooms, or rather cells, at a little distance from one another. My first business was to despatch my letters of introduction to the Seyyids and to Ardashir Mihrábán the Zoroastrian, requesting them to appoint a time at which I might call and see them; having done which, I occupied the interval which must elapse before the return of my messenger in making such toilette as the circumstances admitted of.

CHAPTER XIII

YEZD

"Ey ūd-bál ba zákinán-i-shahr-i-Yezd az má bi-ghul,
K'ey xar-i-bakk-ná-shindín ghi-i-changdún-i-shumád
Garchd dár-lm az xidáir-khur, bimmat dár náxt;
Band-i-Shah-i-shumálm, ú zád-lhánán-i-shumád!"

"East-wind, when to Yezd thou wingest, say thou to its sons from me,
'May the head of every ingratitude ball-like 'neath your jail-bat be.
What though from your dais distant, near it by my wish I seem,
Homage to your King I render, and I make your praise my theme.'"

(Hárm, translated by Herman Blocknell.)

SCARCELY had I cleansed myself from the dust of travel,
when I was informed that one had come who would have speech with me; and on my signifying my readiness to receive him, a portly old man, clad in the dull yellow raiment of the guhbes, was ushered in. Briefly saluting me, he introduced himself as the Dastúr Tir-andáž, high-priest of the Zoroastrians of Yezd, and proceeded to inform me that the Governor of the city, His Highness Prince 'Imádu'd-Dawla, having learned that a European had just arrived in the town, had instructed him to interview the said European and ascertain his nationality, the business which had brought him to Yezd, and his rank and status, so that, if he should prove to be “distinguished” (mútashákhkhi'í), due honour might be shown him.

"As for my nationality,” I replied, “I am English. As for my business, I am travelling for my own instruction and amusement, and to perfect myself in the Persian language. And as for my rank, kindly assure the Governor that I have no official status, and am not ‘distinguished’ at all, so that he need not show
me any honour, or put himself out of the way in the least degree on my account."

"Very good," answered the fire-priest, "but what brings you to Yezd? If your only object were to learn Persian, you could have accomplished that at Ţeherân, Isfahân, or Shíráz, without crossing these deserts, and undergoing all the fatigues involved in this journey."

"Well," I said, "I wished to see as well as to learn, and my travels would not be complete without a sight of your ancient and interesting city. Besides which, I desired to learn something of those who profess the faith of Zoroaster, of which, as I understand, you are the high-priest."

"You would hardly undergo all the fatigues of a journey across these deserts for no better reason than that," he retorted; "you must have had some other object, and I should be much obliged if you would communicate it to me."

I assured him that I had no other object, and that in undertaking the journey to Yezd I was actuated by no other motive than curiosity and a desire to improve my mind. Seeing, however, that he continued sceptical, I asked him point-blank whether he believed my word or not; to which he replied very frankly that he did not. At this juncture another visitor was announced, who proved to be Ardashir Míhrábání himself. He was a tall, slender, handsome man, of about forty-five or fifty years of age, light-complexioned, black-bearded, and clad in the yellow garments of the Zoroastrians; and he spoke English (which he had learned in Bombay, where he had spent some years of his life) fluently and well. After conversing with me for a short time, he departed with the Dástúr.

Hardly had these visitors left me when a servant came from the Seyyids to whom I had letters of introduction, to inform me that they would be glad to see me as soon as I could come. I therefore at once set out with the servant, and was conducted by him first to the house of Hájí Seyyid M——, who, surrounded by some ten or a dozen of his friends and relatives, was sitting out in the courtyard. I was very graciously received by them; and, while sherbet, tea, and the kályán, or water-pipe, were successively offered to me, the letter of introduction given to me by Mírzá ‘Alí was passed round and read by all present with expressions of approval, called forth, as I suppose, not so much by the very flattering terms in which it had pleased my friend to speak of me, as by what he had written concerning my eagerness to learn more of the Bábi religion, to which my new friends also belonged. Nothing was said, however, on this topic; and, after about an hour's general conversation, I left in company with Mírzá M—— to visit his father Hájí Mírzá M—— T——, to whom also I had a letter of introduction. There I remained conversing till after dusk, when I returned to the caravansary, and, while waiting for my supper, fell into so profound a slumber that my servant was unable to wake me.

To go supperless to bed conduces above all things to early rising, and by 6.30 a.m. on the following morning I had finished my breakfast, and was eager to see something of the city of Yezd. My servant wished to go to the bath, but the Erívání, who had attached himself to me since I first made his acquaintance, volunteered to accompany me. We wandered for a while through the bazaars, and he then suggested that we should enquire of some of the townsfolk whether there was any public garden where we could sit and rest for a time. I readily acquiesced in this plan, and we soon found ourselves in the garden of Dáwat-ábád, where we sat in a shady corner and conversed with an old gardener who had been for thirteen months a slave in the hands of the Turcomans. He had been taken prisoner by them near the Kálat-i-Nádirí about the time that Hamzé Mírzá was besieging Mashhad (1848), and described very graphically his experiences in the Turcoman slave-market; how he and his companions in misfortune, stripped almost naked, were inspected and examined by intending purchasers, and finally knocked down
by the broker to the highest bidder. He had finally effected his escape during a raid into Persian territory, in which he had accompanied the marauders as a guide, exactly after the manner of the immortal Háji Bábá. He and the Eriváni joined cordially in abusing the Turcomans, whom they described as more like wild beasts than men. "They have no sense of fear," said the latter, "and will never submit, however great may be the odds against them; even their women and children will die fighting. That was why the Russians made so merciless a massacre of them, and why, after the massacre was over, they piled up the bodies of the slain into a gigantic heap, poured petroleum over it, and set it on fire, that perhaps this horrible spectacle might terrify the survivors into submission."

About mid-day we returned to the caravansaray, and I was again forced to consider my plans for the future, for Bábá Khán came to enquire whether he should wait to convey me back to Dihbíd, or whether I intended to proceed to Kirmán on leaving Yezd. I paid him the remainder of the money due to him, gave him a present of seven Krans, and told him that, unless he heard from me to the contrary before sunset, he might consider himself free to depart.

Later in the afternoon, two Zoroastrians came to inform me that Ardáshír Mírnbání, in whose employment they were, was willing to place his garden and the little house in it at my disposal during my stay at Yezd. It had been occupied about a month before by another Englishman, Lieutenant H. B. Vaughan, who had undertaken a very adventurous and arduous journey across Persia, from Bandar-i-Lingé, on the Persian Gulf, to Dámhán or Sháhrúd, on the Mashhad-Teherán road, and who had tarried for some while at Yezd to make preparations for crossing the western corner of the great Salt Desert. I of course gratefully accepted this offer, for the caravansaray was not a pleasant dwelling-place, and besides this, I was anxious to enjoy more opportunities of cultivating the acquaintance of the Zoroastrians, for which, as I rightly anticipated, this arrangement would give me exceptional facilities. I could not repress a feeling of exultation when I reflected that I had at length succeeded in so isolating myself, not only from my own countrymen, but from my co-religionists, that the most closely allied genus to which I could be assigned by the Yazdis was that of the guebres, for whom I already entertained a feeling of respect, which further knowledge of that much-suffering people has only served to increase.

Háji Šáfár was out when this message was brought to me, and, as I could not leave the caravansaray until I had instructed him as to the removal of my baggage, we were compelled to await his return. During this interval a message came from Háji Seyyid M—-, asking me to go to his house, whither, accordingly, on my servant’s return, I proceeded in company with the two Zoroastrians, one of whom, named Bahman, spoke English well.

On arriving at Háji Seyyid M—–’s house, I was delighted to find a theological discussion in progress. An attempt was evidently being made to convert an old Mulla, of singularly attractive and engaging countenance, to the Bábí faith. Only one of the Bábís was speaking, a man of about thirty-five years of age, whose eloquence filled me with admiration. It was not till later that I learned that he was ‘Andalib (“the Nightingale”), one of the most distinguished of the poets who have consecrated their talents to the glory of the New Theophany. “And so in every dispensation,” he resumed, as soon as I had received and returned the greetings of those present, “the very men who professed to be awaiting the new Manifestation most eagerly were the first to deny it, abandoning the ‘Most Firm Handhold’ of God’s Truth to lay hold of the frail thread of their own imaginings. You talk of miracles; but of what evidential value are miracles to me, unless I have seen them? Has not every religion accounts of miracles, which, had they ever taken place, must, one would have thought, have compelled all men to
believe; for who would dare, however hard of heart he might be, to fight with a Power which he could not ignore or misunderstand? No, it is the Divine Word which is the token and sign of a prophet, the convincing proof to all men and all ages, the everlasting miracle. Do not misunderstand the matter: when the Prophet of God called his verses “signs” (dydt), and declared the Kur’ân to be his witness and proof, he did not intend to imply, as some vainly suppose, that the eloquence of the words was a proof. How, for instance, can you or I, who are Persians, judge whether the eloquence of a book written in Arabic be supernatural or not? No: the essential characteristic of the Divine Word is its penetrative power (nafsâd); it is not spoken in vain, it compels, it constrains, it creates, it rules, it works in men’s hearts, it lives and dies not. The Apostle of God said, ‘in the month of Ramazan men shall fast from sunrise to sunset.’ See how hard a thing this is; and yet here in Yezd there are thousands who, if you bade them break the fast or die, would prefer death to disobedience. Wherever one arises speaking this Word, know him to be a Manifestation of the Divine Will, believe in him, and take his yoke upon you.”

“But this claim,” said the old mulla, “this claim! It is a hard word that He utters. What can we do or say?”

“For the rest, He hath said it,” replied ‘Andalib, “and it is for us, who have seen that this Divine Word is His, to accept it.” There was silence for a little while, and then the old mulla arose with a sigh, and repeating, “It is difficult, very difficult,” departed from our midst.

Soon afterwards I too left, and, accompanied by my Zoroastrian friends, made my way to the garden of Ardashir Mihrabân, situated at the southern limit of the town, hard by the open plain. I found my host and the old fire-priest awaiting me, and received from both of them a most cordial welcome. The latter informed me with some elation that the Governor, Prince ‘Imâdud-Dawla, had, in spite of my representations (which he, like the Dastur, no doubt regarded as the fabrications of an accomplished liar, whose readiness in falsehood afforded at least some presumptive evidence of a diplomatic vocation), decided to treat me as “distinguished,” and would on the morrow send me a lamb and a tray of sweetmeats as signs of his goodwill. “His Highness wished to send them sooner,” he concluded, “but I told him that you were not yet established in a suitable lodging, and he therefore consented to wait. When the presents come, you will have to call upon him and express your thanks.” I was rather annoyed at this, for “distinction” in Persia means much useless trouble and expense, and I wished above all things to be free and unconstrained; but I did not then know Prince ‘Imâdud-Dawla for what he was, the most just, righteous, and cultured governor to be found in any town or province of Persia. Devotion to philosophical studies, and the most tolerant views of other religions, did not prevent him from strictly observing the duties laid upon him by his own creed; he was adored by the poor oppressed Zoroastrians, who found in him a true protector, and, I believe, by all well-disposed and law-abiding persons: and it was with a very sincere sorrow that I learned, soon after my return to England, that he had been dismissed from the office which he so nobly and conscientiously filled.

The change from the hot, dusty caravansary to this beautiful garden was in itself a great pleasure, and my delight was enhanced by the fact that I was now in an environment essentially and thoroughly Zoroastrian. My servant and the Erivaní, indeed, still bore me company; but, except for them and occasional Musulmán and Babi visitors, I was entirely thrown on the society of the yellow-robbed worshippers of fire. The old priest, Dastur Tir-andáź, who at first seemed to regard me with some suspicion, was quite won over by finding that I was acquainted with the spurious “heavenly books” known as the Dessdit, about the genuineness of which neither he nor Ardashir appeared to entertain the slightest doubt. Ardashir sat
of them being engaged either in mercantile business or agriculture. From what I saw of them, both at Yezd and Kirmán, I formed a very high idea of their honesty, integrity, and industry. Though less liable to molestation now than in former times, they often meet with ill-treatment and insult at the hands of the more fanatic Muslims, by whom they are regarded as pagans, not equal even to Christians, Jews, and other “people of the book” (‘āhu’l-khātāb). Thus they are compelled to wear the dull yellow raiment already alluded to as a distinguishing badge; they are not permitted to wear socks, or to wind their turbans tightly and neatly, or to ride a horse; and if, when riding even a donkey, they should chance to meet a Musulmán, they must dismount while he passes, and that without regard to his age or rank.

So much for the petty annoyances to which they are continually subject. These are humiliating and vexatious only; but occasionally, when there is a period of interregnum, or when a bad or priest-ridden governor holds office, and the “lāfis,” or roughs, of Yezd wax bold, worse befalls them. During the period of confusion which intervened between the death of Muhammad Sháh and the accession of Nāṣiru’d-Dín Sháh, many of them were robbed, beaten, and threatened with death, unless they would renounce their ancient faith and embrace Islam; not a few were actually done to death. There was one old Zoroastrian still living at Yezd when I was there who had been beaten, threatened, and finally wounded with pistol shots in several places by these fanatical Muslims, but he stood firm in his refusal to renounce the faith of his fathers, and, more fortunate than many of his brethren, escaped with his life.

So likewise, as I was informed by the Dastur, about twelve years previously the Muḥammadans of Yezd threatened to sack the Zoroastrian quarter and kill all the guebres who would not consent to embrace Islam, alleging as a reason for this atrocious design that one of the Zoroastrians had killed a Musulmán. The
governor of Yezd professed himself powerless to protect the guebres, and strove to induce them to sign a document exonerating him from all blame in whatever might take place; but fortunately they had the firmness to refuse compliance until one of the Musulmané who had killed a Zoroastrian woman was put to death, after which quiet was restored.

On another occasion a Musulman was murdered by another Musulman who had disguised himself as a guebre. The Muhammadans threatened to sack the Zoroastrian quarter and make a general massacre of its inmates unless the supposed murderer was given up. The person whom they suspected was one Nám-dár, a relative of the chief fire-priest. He, innocent as he was, refused to imperil his brethren by remaining amongst them. "I will go before the governor," he said, "for it is better that I should lose my life than that our whole community should be endangered." So he went forth, prepared to die; but fortunately at the last moment the real murderer was discovered and put to death. Ardashir's own brother Rashíd was murdered by fanatical Musulmané as he was walking through the bazaars, and I saw the tablet put up to his memory in one of the fire-temples of Yezd.

Under the enlightened administration of Prince 'Imád 'd-Dawla, the Zoroastrians, as I have already said, enjoyed comparative peace and security, but even he was not always able to keep in check the ferocious intolerance of bigots and the savage brutality of lubbés. While I was in Yezd a Zoroastrian was bastinadoed for accidentally touching with his garment some fruit exposed for sale in the bazaar, and thereby, in the eyes of the Musulmané, rendering it unclean and unfit for consumption by true believers. On another occasion I heard that the wife of a poor Zoroastrian, a woman of singular beauty, was washing clothes near the town, when she was noticed with admiration by two Musulmané who were passing by. Said one to the other, "She would do well for your embraces." "Just what I was thinking," replied the other wretch, who thereupon approached her, clasped her in his arms, and tried to kiss her. She resisted and cried for help, whereupon the Musulmané got angry and threw her into the stream. Next day the Zoroastrians complained to the Prince-Governor, and the two cowardly scoundrels were arrested and brought before him. Great hopes were entertained by the Zoroastrians thatcondign and summary punishment would be inflicted on them; but some of the mulsás, acting in concert with the Malikul-tujjár or chief merchant of Yezd (a man of low origin, having, as was currently reported, kold or gipsy blood in his veins), interfered with bribes and threats, and so intimidated an old Zoroastrian, who was the chief witness for the prosecution, that he finally refused to say more than that he had heard the girl cry out for help, and on looking round had seen her in the water. I know not how the matter ended, but I greatly fear that justice was defeated.

On another occasion, however, the Prince-Governor intervened successfully to check the following unjust and evil practice. When a Zoroastrian renounces his faith and embraces Islam, it is considered by the Musulmané that he has a right to the property and money of his unregenerate kinsmen. A case of this sort had arisen, and a sum of ninety támán (nearly £28) had been taken by the renegade from his relatives. The latter appealed to the Prince, who insisted on its restoration, to the mortification of the pervert and his new friends, and the delight of the Zoroastrians, especially old Dastúr Tir-andáz, who, when he related the incident to me, was almost incoherent with exultation, and continually interrupted his narrative to pray for the long life and prosperity of Prince 'Imád 'd-Dawla. Nor was this the only expression of gratitude which the Prince's justice and toleration called forth from the poor oppressed guebres. One day, as he himself informed me, on the occasion of my farewell visit to his palace, he was riding abroad accompanied by three servants only (for he loved not ostentation)
when he met a party of Zoroastrian women. Reining in his horse, he enquired how things went with them, and whether they enjoyed comfort and safety. They, not knowing who he was, and supposing him to be an ordinary Persian gentleman, replied that, though formerly they had suffered much, now, by the blessing of God and the justice of the new governor, they enjoyed perfect safety and security, and feared molestation from none. Then they asked him to what part of the country he belonged; and he, when he had fenced with them for a while, told them, to their astonishment and confusion, who he was!

I was naturally anxious to see some of the fire-temples, and finally, after repeated requests, a day was fixed for visiting them. I was taken first to the oldest temple, which was in a very ruinous condition (the Muḥammadans not suffering it to be repaired), and presented little of interest save two tablets bearing Persian inscriptions, one of which bore the date A.H. 1009 as that of the completion of the tablet or the temple, I know not which. Leaving this, we proceeded to a newer, larger, and much more flourishing edifice, on entering which I saw, to my great delight, in a room to the left of the passage of entry, the sacred fire burning bright on its tripod, while around it two or three mīhāds or fire-priests, with veils covering their mouths and the lower part of their faces, droned their Zend liturgies. These veils, as Ardashir informed me, are intended to obviate the danger of the fire being polluted by the officiating priest coughing or spitting upon it. I was not, however, allowed to gaze upon this interesting spectacle for more than a few moments, but was hurried on to a large and well-carpeted room in the interior of the building, looking out on a little courtyard planted with pomegranate trees. Here I was received by several of the fire-priests, who regaled us with a delicious sherbet. The buildings surrounding the other three sides of the courtyard were, as I was informed, devoted to educational purposes, and serve as a school for the Zoroastrian children. This temple was built comparatively recently by some of Ardashir’s relatives, and on one of its walls was the memorial tablet to his murdered brother Rashīd.

Leaving this, we visited a third temple, a portion of which serves as a theological college for the training of youths destined for the priesthood, who, to some extent at least, study Zend and Pahlavī; though I do not fancy that any high standard of proficiency in the sacred languages is often attained by them. The space allotted to these young theologians was not very ample, being, indeed, only a sort of gallery at one end of the chief room. At the opposite end was spread a carpet, on which a few chairs were set; and in a niche in the wall stood a little vase containing sprigs of a plant not unlike privet which the dastār called by a name I could not rightly catch, though it sounded to me like “nāvist.” This plant, I was further informed, was used in certain of their religious ceremonies, and “turned round the sun”; but concerning it, as well as sundry other matters whereof I would fain have learned more, my guides showed a certain reserve which I felt constrained to respect.

Here also I was allowed a glimpse of the sacred fire burning in a little chamber apart (whence came the odour of ignited sandalwood and the droning of Zend chants), and of the white-veiled mīhād who tended it. A picture of Zoroaster (taken, as Ardashir told me, from an old sculpture at Balkh), and several inscriptions on the walls of the large central room, were the only other points of interest presented by the building.

On leaving this temple, which is situated in the very centre of the “Gabr-Mahalla,” or Zoroastrian quarter, I was conducted to the house of Ardashir’s brother, Gūdarz, between rows of Zoroastrian men and boys who had come out to gaze on the Firangi stranger. To me the sight of these yellow-robed votaries of an old-world faith, which twelve centuries of persecution and insult have not succeeded in uprooting from its native soil, was at least as interesting as the sight of me can have been to them,
and I was much struck both by their decorous conduct and by the high average of their good looks. Their religion has prevented them from intermarrying with Turks, Arabs, and other non-Aryans, and they consequently represent the purest Persian type, which in physical beauty can hardly be surpassed.

At the house of Ardashir’s brother, Gúdarz, I met the chief-priest of the Zoroastrians, who was suffering from gout, and a number of my host’s male relatives, with whom I stayed conversing till 8.30 p.m., hospitably entertained with tea, wine, brandy, and khabás. Wine-drinking plays a great part in the daily life of the gnebre; but, though I suppose not one total abstainer could be found amongst them, I never but once saw a Zoroastrian the worse for drink. With the Musulmáns the contrary holds good; when they drink, it is too often with the deliberate intention of getting drunk, on the principle, I suppose, that “when the water has gone over the head, what matters it whether it be a fathom or a hundred fathoms?” To a Zoroastrian it is lawful to drink wine and spirits, but not to exceed; to a Muhammadan the use and the abuse of alcohol are equally unlawful. The Zoroastrian drinks because he likes the taste of the wine and the glow of good fellowship which it produces; the Muhammadan, on the contrary, commonly detests the taste of wine and spirits, and will, after each draught, make a grimace expressive of disgust, rinse out his mouth, and eat a lump of sugar; what he enjoys is not drinking, but being drunk, even as the great mystical poet Jalálu’d-Dín Rúmi says—

“Nāg-i-hang ā khamar bar khud mī-n-bih
Tā dāmat az khwishtan tā wā-vāh.”

“Thou takest on thyself the shame of hemp and wine
In order that thou may’st for one moment escape from thyself.”

The drinking-cup (jām) used at Yezd and Kirmán is not a glass but a little brass bowl. On the inside of this the Zoroastrians often have engraved the names of dead friends and relatives, to whose memory they drink as the wine goes round with such formula as “Khudā pidarāt biyāmūrzād” (“May God pardon thy father!”), “Khudā mādarāt biyāmūrzād” (“May God pardon thy mother!”), “Khudā biyāmūrzād hame-i-rafaštad-ru” (“May God pardon all the departed!”). The following inscription from Ardashir’s drinking-cup may suffice as a specimen—

“Ṣālābār-i-mahbūm Mihrabān i-in Rustam-i-Bahram. Har kās kār fārmūzad ‘Khudā biyāmūzé ūl Mihrabān-i-Rustam, wa Sarvar-i-Ardashir, wa Gulchir-i-Mihrabān bi-dihd: hafzdā parib-i-isbān anmūrzdād bād! 1286 hijrī.”

“The wife of the beatified Mihrabín, the son of Rustam, [the son] of Bahram. Let every one who may make use [of this cup] give a ‘God pardon!’ to Mihrabín [the son] of Rustam, and Sarvar [the son] of Ardshir, and Gulchir [the daughter] of Mihrabín: may they be pardoned unto seventy generations! A.H. 1286.”

In drinking to the health of companions the formula (used also by Muhammadans when they drink) is “Bī-salāmat-i-shanad!” (“To your health!”), the answer to which is “Nāsh-i-jād-bād!” (“May it be sweet to your soul!”). I had ample opportunity of learning how to drink wine “according to the rite of Zoroaster,” for almost every afternoon Ardashir, accompanied either by Dastūr Tir-āndāz, or by his brother Gúdarz, or by his manager Bahman, or by other Zoroastrians, used to come to the garden and sit by the little stream, which for a few hours only (for water is bought for a price in Yezd) refreshed the drooping flowers. Then, unless Muhammadan or Bábí visitors chanced to be present, wine and ‘arāk were brought forth by old Jamshíd, the gardener, or his little son Khúsraw; fresh young cucumbers, and other relishes, such as the Persian wine-drinker loves, were produced; and the brass drinking-cups were drained again and again to the memories of the dead and the healths of the living.

It was on these occasions that conversation flowed most freely, and that I learned most about the Zoroastrian religion and its votaries. This is not the place to deal with the subject systematically, and I shall confine myself to noticing a few matters which actually came under discussion.
YEZD

The Zoroastrian year is solar, not lunar like the Muhammadan, and consists of twelve months of thirty days each, and five additional days called güt méd (corresponding to the Muhammadan "khamsa-i-mustaraka") to bring the total up to 365. The year begins at the vernal equinox, when the sun enters the sign of Aries (about 21st March), and is inaugurated by the ancient national festival of the Nowruz, or New Year's Day, which, as has been already mentioned, is observed no less by the Nuhuins than by the Zoroastrians of Persia. Each day of the month is presided over by an angel or archangel (of whom there are seven, called Amsbaspand, to each of which a day of the first week is allotted), save that three days, the 8th, 15th, and 23rd of the month, are, like the first, sacred to Ormuzd. These are holy days, and are collectively known as the Si-dey. The following is a list of the days of the month, each of which is called by the name of the angel presiding over it:—


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPRING (Bahur)</th>
<th>AUTUMN (Pâdž)</th>
<th>WINTER (Zamístán)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The week has no place in the Zoroastrian calendar, with which,

as I have elsewhere pointed out (Traveller's Narrative, vol. ii, p. 414, n. 1; and J.R.A.S. for 1889, p. 929), the arrangement of the solar year instituted by the Bábís presents many points of similarity which can hardly be regarded as accidental. As an example of the very simple manner in which dates are expressed according to the Zoroastrian calendar, I may quote the following lines from a Persian poem occurring in a Zend-Pahlavi MS. of the Vendidad of which I shall have something more to say shortly:

"Bi-rízq-e-Gůsh, u dar mib-i-Amurdád
Sene mub-sad, digar hund hafîn u hafîd;
Zi fawt-i-Yazdíjird-i-shabriyárdin
Kajad bigzahét hâl az wagegárân,
Namazdani mafî-e-Vendidd-i-awal
Rastandam, bi-hafîs-i-Iâhâk, bi-mangîl."

"On the day of Gûsh (the 14th day), and in the month of Amurdád (the 5th month),
When nine hundred years, and beyond that seven and seventy,
From the death of Yazdíjird the king
Had passed of time,
I wrote the first half of the Vendidad,
And brought it, by God's grace, to conclusion."

A little consideration will show the reader that one day in each month will bear the same name as the month, and will be under the protection of the same angel. Thus the nineteenth day of the first month will be "the day of Farvardin in the month of Farvardin," the third day of the second month "the day of Urdi-bihisht in the month of Urdi-bihisht," and so on. Such days are kept as festivals by the Zoroastrians.

The angel Rashn, who presides over the eighteenth day of each month, corresponds, in some degree, to the angels Munkar and Nakir in the Muhammadan system. On the fourth day after a Zoroastrian dies this angel comes to him, and weighs in a balance his good and his bad deeds. If the former are in excess, the departed is admitted into paradise; if the latter, he is punished—so my Zoroastrian friends informed me—by being

1 Cf. pp. 367–8, supra.
YEZD

re-incarnated in this world for another period of probation, which re-incarnation is what is signified by the term "hell" (diezah). Paradise, in like manner, was understood by my friends of Yezd in a spiritual sense as indicating a state rather than a place. I shall not readily forget an altercation on this subject which arose between the Dastûr Tîr-andâz and my Muhammadan servant Hâji Safar. The latter had, I think, provoked the dispute by applying the term dash-parast ("fire-worshipper") to the followers of Zoroaster, or it had been otherwise introduced. The Dastûr at once flashed out in anger. "What ails you if we prostrate ourselves before the pure element of fire," said he, "when you Muhammadans grovel before a dirty black stone, and the Christians bow down before the symbol of the cross? Our fire is, I should think, at least as honourable and appropriate a kibla as these; and as for worshipping it, we no more worship it than do you your symbols. And you Muhammadans" (turning to Hâji Safar) "have of all men least right to charge us with holding a gross or material creed; you, whose conception of paradise is as a garden flowing with streams of milk and wine and honey, and inhabited by fair boys and languishing black-eyed maidens. Your idea of paradise, in short, is a place where you will be able to indulge in those sensual pleasures which constitute your highest happiness. I spit on such a paradise!" Hâji Safar cried out upon him for a blasphemer, and seemed disposed to go further, but I bade him leave the room and learn to respect the religion of others if he wished them to respect his. Later on, when the Zoroastrians had gone, he renewed the subject with me, remarking that the Dastûr deserved to die for having spoken such blasphemy; to which I replied that, though I had no desire to interfere with his conscience, or, in general, to hinder him in the discharge of the duties imposed upon him by his religion, I must request him to put a check

1 I suspect, however, that this is a modern doctrine, derived from the apocryphal Dessâle alluded to at p. 403, supra.

upon his zeal in this matter, at least so long as he remained in my service.

In general, however, I found my Zoroastrian friends very tolerant and liberal in their views. Ardashir was never tired of repeating that in one of their prayers they invoked the help of "the good men of the seven regions" (khabûn-tahaft kishwar), i.e. of the whole world; and that they did not regard faith in their religion as essential to salvation. Against the Arabs, indeed, I could see that they cherished a very bitter hatred, which the Dastûr at least was at little pains to conceal; Kâdîsiyya and Nahâvand were not forgotten; and, with but little exaggeration, the words of warning addressed to the Arabs settled in Persia in the second century of the hijra by Naṣr ibn Seyyâr, the Arab Governor of Khurásân, might be applied to them:

"Fa-man yakun ta'ilî 'an asîf dinâhim,
Fa'âna dinabunm an yakjâla'l-'Arabû.

"And should one question me as to the essence of their religion,
Verily their religion is that the Arabs should be slain."

From these poor guebres, however, I received more than one lesson in meekness and toleration. "Injustice and harshness," said Bahman to me one day, "are best met with submission and patience, for thereby the hearts of enemies are softened, and they are often converted into friends. An instance of this came within my own experience. One day, as I was passing through the meydeh, a young Muhammadan purposely jostled me and then struck me, crying, 'Out of the way, guebre!' Though angered at this uncalled-for attack, I swallowed down my anger, and replied with a smile, 'Very well, just as you like.' An old Seyyid who was near at hand, seeing the wanton insolence of my tormentor, and my submission and patience, rebuked him sharply, saying, 'What harm had this poor man done to you that you should strike and insult him?' A quarrel arose between the two, and finally both were taken before the Governor, who, on learning the truth of the matter, caused the youth to be beaten. Now,
had I in the first instance given vent to my anger, the Seyyid
would certainly not have taken my part, every Musulmán present
would have sided with his co-religionist against me, and I should
probably have been beaten instead of my adversary."

On another occasion I had been telling another of Ardashír’s
assistants named Irán about the Englishman at Shiráz who had
turned Muḥammadan. "I think he is sorry for it now," I con-
cluded, "for he has cut himself off from his own people, and is
regarded with suspicion or contempt by many of the Musulmáns,
who keep a sharp watch over him to see that he punctually dis-
charges all the duties laid upon him by the religion of Islám.
I wish him well out of it, and hope that he may succeed in his
plan of returning to his home and his aged mother; but I mis-
doubt it. I think he wished to join himself to me and come here,
that he might proceed homewards by way of Mashhad; but I was
not very desirous of his company."

"It is quite true," replied Irán, "that a bad companion is
worse than none, for, as Sa’dí says, it is better to go barefoot
than with tight shoes. Yet, if you will not take it amiss, would
you not do well, if you return to Shiráz, to take this man with
you, and to bring him, and if possible his Muḥammadan wife also,
to England? This would assuredly be a good action: he would
return to the faith he has renounced, and his wife also might
become a Christian; they and their children after them would
be gained to your religion, and yours would be the merit. Often
it happens that one of us Zoroastrians, either through mere
ignorance and heedlessness, or because he is in love with a
Muḥammadan girl whom he cannot otherwise win, renounces
the faith of his fathers and embraces Islám. Such not un-
frequently repent of their action, and in this case we supply them
with money to take them to Bombay, where they can return,
without the danger which they would incur here, to their former
faith. Often their Muḥammadan wives also adopt the Zoroastrian
religion, and thus a whole family is won over to our creed."

"I was not aware," I remarked, "that it was possible under
any circumstances for one not born a Zoroastrian to become one.
Do you consent to receive back a renegade after any lapse of
time?"

"No," answered Irán, "not after six months or so; for if
they remain Musulmáns for longer than this, their hearts are
turned black and incurably infected by the law of Islám, and we
cannot then receive them back amongst us."

Of the English, towards whom they look as their natural
protectors, the Persian Zoroastrians have a very high opinion,
though several of them, and especially Dáštír Tírándáz, de-
ployed the supineness of the English Government, and the apathy
with which it regards the hands stretched out to it for help.
"You do not realise," said they, "what a shield and protection
the English name is, else you would surely not grudge it to poor
unfortunates for whom no one cares, and who in any time of
disturbance are liable to be killed or plundered without redress."

After my return to England I, and I think Lieutenant Vaughan
also, made certain representations to the Foreign Office, which
I believe were not ineffectual; for, as I subsequently learned, a
Zoroastrian had been appointed British Agent in Yezd. This was
what the Zoroastrians so earnestly desired, for they believed
that the British flag would protect their community even in times
of the gravest danger.

Although the Zoroastrian women do not veil their faces, and
are not subjected to the restrictions imposed on their Muḥam-
madan sisters, I naturally saw but little of them. Twice, how-
ever, parties of guebri girls came to the garden to gaze in amused
wonder at the Firangi stranger. Those composing the first party
were, I believe, related to Ardashír, and were accompanied by
two men. The second party (introduced by old Jamshid the
gardener, who did the honours, and metaphorically stirred me
up with a long pole to exhibit me to better advantage) consisted
of young girls, one or two of whom were extremely pretty. These
conducted themselves less sedately, and, to judge by their rippling laughter, found no little amusement in the spectacle.

Old Dastúr Tir-andáz was to me one of the most interesting, because one of the most thoroughgoing and least sophisticated, of the Zoroastrians. He appeared to be in high favour with the governor, Prince ‘Imádú’d-Dawlá, from whom he was continually bringing messages of goodwill to me. In three of the four visits which I paid to the Prince, he bore me company, standing outside in the courtyard while I sat within. My first visit was paid the morning after I had received the lamb and the tray of sweetmeats wherewith the Prince, on the representations of the Dastúr, already described, was graciously pleased to mark his sense of my “distinction.” Accompanied by the Prince’s pishkhídmat, or page-in-waiting (an intolerably conceited youth), and several farráshes, who had been sent to form my escort, we walked to the Government House, which was situated at the other end of the town, by the Arg or citadel. The Dastúr, who walked by my side, was greatly troubled that I had not a horse or attendants of my own, and seemed to think that my apparel (which, indeed, was somewhat the worse for wear) was hardly equal to the occasion. As I preferred walking to riding, and as I had not come to Yezd to see princes or to indulge in ostentatious parade, these considerations did not affect me in the least, except that I was rather annoyed by the persistence with which the Dastúr repeated to the Prince-Governor that I had come chufrar (by post-horses) from Shíráz with only such effects as were absolutely necessary, and that a telegram must be sent to Shíráz to have my baggage forwarded with all speed to Yezd. The Prince, however, was very good-natured, and treated me with the greatest kindness, enquiring especially as to the books on philosophy and mysticism which I had read and bought. I mentioned several, and he expressed high approval of the selection which I had made, especially commending the Lámd’th of Jámi, Láhijí’s Commentary on the Gulshan-i-Rád, and Jámi’s

Ash’átu’l-Lámá’dí, or Commentary on the Lámá’dí of ‘Iráqí. Of Hájí Mullá Hádí’s Aṣdrú’l-Íajám, on the other hand, he did not appear to have a very high opinion. He further questioned me as to my plans for the future, and, on learning that I proposed to proceed to Kírmán, promised to give me a letter of recommendation to Prince Náṣíru’d-Dawlá, the governor of that place, and also, to my consternation, expressed his intention of sending an escort with me. I was accompanied back to the garden by the farráshes, to whom I had to give a present of two támáns (about 13.5.4).

The Prince’s attentions, though kindly meant, were in truth somewhat irksome. Two days after the visit above described, he sent his conceited pishkhídmat to enquire after my health, and to ask me whether I had need of anything, and when I intended to visit a certain waterfall near the Shír-Kúh, which he declared I must certainly see before quitting his territories. For the moment I escaped in polite ambiguities; but two days later the pishkhídmat again came with a request that, as Rámažán was close at hand, I would at once return with him to the Government House, as the Prince wished to see me ere the fast, with the derangement of ordinary business consequent on it, began. I had no resource but to comply, and after giving the pishkhídmat tea, which he drank critically, I again set out with him, the Dastúr, and the inevitable farráshes, for the Prince’s residence. On leaving the palace shortly before sunset, the Dastúr mysteriously asked me whether, if I were in no particular hurry to get home, he might instruct the farráshes to take a more devious route through the bazaars. I consented, without at first being able to divine his object, which was no doubt to show the Musulmáns of Yezd that I, the Firangi, was held in honour by the Prince, and that he, the fire-priest, was on the most friendly and intimate terms with me.

After this visit I enjoyed a period of repose, for which, as I imagine, I was indebted to the fast of Rámažán. The Zoro-
astrians, of course, like myself, were unaffected by this, and so was my servant Haji Safar, who came to me on the eve of the fast to know what his duty in the matter might be. He explained that travellers were exempt from the obligation of fasting, provided they made good the omission at some future date; but that if I could promise to remain at Yezd for ten clear days of Ramadan, he could fast for those ten days, postponing the remainder of his fast till some more convenient time. It was of no use, he added, to begin fasting unless he could reckon on ten consecutive days, a shorter period than this not entering into computation. I declined to bind myself by any such promise (feeling pretty sure that Haji Safar would not be sorry for an excuse to postpone the period of privation till the season of short days), and so, though it was not till Ramadan 10th that I actually quitted Yezd, he continued to pursue the ordinary tenor of his life.

Amongst the minor annoyances which served to remind me that even Yezd was not without its drawbacks, were the periodic appearances in my room of scorpions and tarantulas, both of which abound in the dry, sandy soil of this part of Persia. Of these noxious animals, the latter were to me the more repulsive, from the horrible nimbleness of their movements, the hideous half-transparent grayness of their bodies, and the hairiness of their legs and venomous mandibles. I had seen one or two in the caravansaray where I first alighted, but, on removing to the clean and tidy little house in Ardashir's garden, hoped that I had done with them. I was soon undeceived, for as I sat at supper the day after my arrival, I saw to my disgust a very large one of singularly aggressive appearance sitting on the wall about three feet above the floor. I approached it with a slipper, intending to slay it, but it appeared to divine my intentions, rushed up the wall and half across the ceiling with incredible speed, dropped at my feet, and made straight for the window, crossing in its course the pyramid of sweetmeats sent to me by the Prince, over which its horny legs rattled with a loathsome clearness which almost turned me sick. This habit of dropping from the ceiling is one of the tarantula's many unpleasant characteristics, and the Persians (who call it ruyal or khāyī-ye-gar) believe that it can only bite while descending. Its bite is generally said to be hardly less serious than that of the scorpion, but Ardashir assured me that people were seldom bitten by it, and that he had never known its wound prove fatal. The Yezdis, at all events, regarded its presence with much more equanimity than I did, and the Kalantar, or mayor, of the Zoroastrians displayed no alarm when a large specimen was observed sitting on the ceiling almost exactly over his head. The Prince-Governor manifested somewhat more disgust when a tarantula made its appearance in his reception-room one evening when I had gone to visit him; but then he was not a Yezdī.

As regards scorpions, I killed a small whitish one in my room shortly after I had missed my first tarantula. A day or two afterwards old Jamshid the gardener brought me up another which he had just killed in the garden, and seized the occasion to give me a sort of lecture on noxious insects. The black woodlouse-like animal which I had slain at Chāh-Begī he declared to have been a “ṣūmār” (though this word is generally supposed to mean a lizard). Having discussed this, he touched briefly on the tir-mār (earwig?), ṣad-pā (centipede), and bazār-pā (millipede), concluding with the interesting statement that in every ant-hill of the large black ants two large black scorpions live. I suggested that we should dig up an ant-hill and see if it were so, but he declined to be a party to any such undertaking, seeming to consider that such a procedure would be in very indifferent taste. “As long as the scorpions stay inside,” said he, “we have no right to molest them, and to do so is to incur ill-luck.” So my curiosity remained unsatisfied.

Old Jamshid was very particular in the observance of his religious duties, and I constantly heard him muttering his
prayers under my window in that peculiar droning tone which so impressed the Arabs that they invented a special word for it. Ardashîr, who had seen the world and imbued latitudinarian ideas, affected to regard this performance with a good-natured contempt, which he extended to many of the Dastûr's cherished convictions. One day, for instance, mention was made of ghâls and other supernatural beings. "Tush," said Ardashîr, "there are no such things." "No such things!" exclaimed the Dastûr, "why I have seen one myself." "No, no," rejoined Ardashîr, "you saw a man or a mule or some other animal in the gloaming, and, deceived by the half-light, the solitude, or your own fears, supposed it to be a ghâl." Here I interposed, begging the Dastûr to narrate his experience, which he readily consented to do.

"I was riding back from Taft to the city one evening," said he, "when, nearly opposite our dakhamî, I lost my way. As I was casting about to discover the path, I suddenly saw a light before me on the right. I thought it must come from the village of Kâsim-ábhâd, and was preparing to make for it, when it suddenly shifted to my left hand and began to approach me. It drew quite near; and then I saw a creature like a wild pig, in front of which flitted a light like a large lantern. I was horribly frightened, but I repeated a prayer out of the Dastûr, whereupon the thing vanished. It soon reappeared, however, this time in the form of a mule, preceded by a man bearing a lantern, and thus addressed me: 'Ey adami-zâd! Injâ thi mi-kunî?' ("O son of man! What dost thou here?") I replied that I had lost my way. Thereupon it pointed out a path, which, as it assured me, would lead me to the city. I followed this path for some distance, but it only led me farther out of my way, until at last I reached a village where I found some of our own people. These set me in the right road, and would have borne me company to the city, but I would not suffer them to do so, believing that I should have no further difficulty. On reaching a bridge hard by the city, I again saw the creature waiting for me by the roadside: it again strove to mislead me, but this time I paid no heed to it, and, pushing past it, reached my house in safety. Its object was to lead me into some desolate spot and there destroy me, after the manner of ghâls. After this experience you will understand that I am firmly convinced of the existence of these creatures."

I was not so much troubled at Yezd by applications for medical advice and treatment as I had feared, partly because, after my experiences at Dihbîd and Gâd-i-Shirdân, I had forbidden Hâjî Šâfar and Bâbâ Khán to say a word about my having any medical knowledge, and partly because Ardashîr would not suffer strangers of whom he knew nothing to come to his garden to see me. Once, however, when I was sitting talking to Bahman and Irân in Ardashîr's office (situated on the ground floor of one of the chief caravansarâys in the city), a crowd of people assembled outside to stare at me, from which a Seyyid presently disengaged himself, and asked me whether I would cure him of an enlarged spleen. I asked him how he knew that it was his spleen that was affected. He replied that the Persian doctors had told him so. "What the Persian doctors can diagnose, can they not treat?" I enquired. "Yes," he replied, "they can; but they prescribe only two remedies, šabârî and zâbrâbîr, of which one is unlawful and the other disgusting." I finally told him that I could not undertake to treat him without first examining him, and that if he wished this he must come and see me in Ardashîr's garden. He never came, however; or, if he did, he was not admitted.

The Zoroastrians are, as a rule, good gardeners, and have some skill in the use of simples. From Ardashîr and his gardener, Jamshîd, I learned the names and supposed properties of many plants which grew in the garden. Unfortunately the little botanical knowledge I ever possessed had grown so rusty by long disuse that often I was unable to supply the English

1 Wine and urine.
name, or even to refer the plant to its proper order. However, I give the following list as a contribution towards a better knowledge of the Persian nomenclature. *Pâdana* or *pêdanak*; *kátni*, accounted “cool” and good for the liver; from it is prepared a spirit called ‘arâk-i-kâtni; *turb* (radish); *gâw-gâsh* (fighting-cock); *ôshb-gordân* or *gul-i-khursbid* (sunflower); *bid-ângir* or *bid-angîr* (castor-oil plant); *reçdanî* (fennel), said to be an analgesic; *yânî* (clover); *târé*, a small plant resembling garlic and with a similar smell, said to be good for hemorrhoids; *shâh-târé*, accounted “hot and moist”; a decoction of it, taken in the morning on an empty stomach, is said to be good for indigestion and disorders of the stomach; *shanîj*, a “hot” umbelliferous plant with a yellow blossom; *gashnîj*, a “cold” umbelliferous plant with a white flower; *chinbandar* (beetroot); *gul-i-khâmî* (holly-hock); *kâlam* (cabbage), called by the guebres in their dialect *kâmîî*; *isfnûj* (spinach?); *kôlî* (lettuce); *kadûjî* (tagged-robin or campion); *kâranfîl* (passion-flower).

I have alluded to the dialect spoken amongst themselves by the Zoroastrians of Persia, and by them called “Dari.” This term has been objected to by M. Clément Huart, who has published in the *Journal Asiatique* several valuable papers on certain Persian dialects, which he classes together under the name of “Pehlevi-Musulmân,” and regards as the descendants of the ancient Median language preserved to us in the Avesta. The chief ground of his objection is that the description of the Dari dialect given in the prolegomena of certain standard Persian dictionaries does not at all agree with the so-called Dari spoken by the guebres of Yezd and Kirman. Personally, I confess that I attach but little importance to the evidence of the Persian lexicographers in this matter, seeing that it is the rarest thing for an educated Persian to take any interest in local dialects, or even to recognise their philological importance; and I shall therefore continue provisionally to call the dialect in question by the name given to it by those who speak it. That it is closely allied to the

Kohrudi, Kâshânî, Sîvandî, Luri, and other dialects spoken in remote and isolated districts of Persia, and generally termed by the Persians “Furs-i-kadîm” (“Old Persian”), is, however, not to be doubted.

This Dari dialect is only used by the guebres amongst themselves, and all of them, so far as I know, speak Persian as well. When they speak their own dialect, even a Yezdî Musulmân cannot understand what they are saying, or can only understand it very imperfectly. It is for this reason that the Zoroastrians cherish their Dari, and are somewhat unwilling to teach it to a stranger. I once remarked to Ardashir what a pity it was that they did not commit it to writing. He replied that there had at one time been some talk of translating the *Gulistân* into Dari, but that they had decided that it was inexpedient to facilitate the acquisition of their idiom to non-Zoroastrians. To me they were as a rule ready enough to impart information about it; though when I tried to get old Jamshid the gardener to tell me more about it, he excused himself, saying that a knowledge of it could be of no possible use to me.

The following is a list of the Dari words and phrases which I collected at Yezd—

Hamshududon, to arise (shortened in speaking to hamushuth); imperative, hamushu; present tense (1 sing.) hamushudu or hamushudam; (2 sing.) hamushudul; (3 sing.) hamushuduk; (1 plur.) hamushudam; (2 plur.) hamushudul; (3 plur.) hamushudan.

Wotum, to say; imperative, ve-oot; past tense, do-oot, ud-oot or u'd-oot, oot-oot or oot-suet; (plur.) mo-oot or ma-oot-oot, do-oot, sho-oot. Don’t talk: vaq khe m-ooat (khe = khol, self; m-ooat = mukon, do not do or make).

Griftum, to take; ashuntum, to hear; didum, to see; kushum, to strike.

Venewdon, to throw. “Turn (lit. throw) the water into that channel,” “Wâb de sô jih ve-sen?” (wâb = water; de = to, into; sô = that).

Nâshâh or nashthum, I sat; (2 sing.) nâshšt; (3 sing.) nâshht; (1 plur.) nâshthum. Imperative (2 sing.) nâshh; (2 plur.) nâshht.

Ve-shu, go; kelshî, whither goest thou? Hamushuth va-shin, let us arise and go; ma ve-shin, let us go. Ve-shu yu, go down; shamsh gm-shšt, do you go down. Ma-wé ve-shu, I want to go.

Bi-yât, come; minî ut, come here; mî byûtî, may I come?
the ordinary arrangement of the letters of the Arabic alphabet there is another arrangement called the “abjad” (from the four letters alif, bā, jīm, dāl which begin it) representing a much older order. The order of the letters in the abjad is expressed by the following series of meaningless words, consisting of groups of three or four letters each supplied with vowel-points to render them pronounceable:—abjad, hawz, bāt, kalaman, safāz, kāran-
shat, thakhḏ (shakhd) ḏadīgha (gazgha). In this order each has a numerical value; alif = 1, bā = 2, jīm = 3, dāl = 4, and so on up to yd = 10; then come the other tens, kāf = 20, lām = 30, and so on up to kāf = 100; then the other hundreds up to gheyān = 1000. The manner in which, by means of this abjad, words and sentences may be made to express dates is familiar to all students of these languages, and I will therefore only give as a specimen, for the benefit of the general reader, the rather ingenious chronogram for the death of the poet Jāmī, premising that he was a native of the province of Khurāsān; that “smoke” or “smoke of the heart” is a poetical term for sighs; and that “to come up from” in the case of a number means to be subtracted from.

This, then, is the chronogram: “Dīd az Khurāsān bar dīmad,” “Smoke (sighs) arose from Khurāsān,” or “dīd (dāl = 4, dāl = 4, total 14) came up (i.e. was subtracted) from Khurāsān” (kūf = 600, rd = 200, alif = 1, stn = 60, alif = 1, nūn = 50; total 912). Taking 14 from 912 we get the date of Jāmī’s death, a.h. 898 (= A.D. 1492).

The method of secret communication above alluded to consists in indicating first the word of the abjad in which the letter to be spelt out occurs, then its position in that word. In communicating by raps, a double rap knocks off each word of the abjad, while on reaching the word in which the desired letter occurs its position in that word is indicated by the requisite number of single raps. An instance will make this clearer. It is desired to ask, “Nd-m-i-tū chist?” (“What is thy name?”): the