

BEHIND THE VEIL
IN PERSIA
AND TURKISH ARABIA

*AN ACCOUNT OF AN ENGLISHWOMAN'S
EIGHT YEARS' RESIDENCE AMONGST
THE WOMEN OF THE EAST*

BY

M. E. HUME-GRIFFITH

WITH NARRATIVES OF EXPERIENCES IN BOTH COUNTRIES.

BY

A. HUME-GRIFFITH, M.D., D.P.H.

With 37 Illustrations and a Map

PHILADELPHIA
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
LONDON: SEELEY & CO. LTD.

1909

3.15

KE 490



337
V7A88L-V0700E
V7300E

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
At the Ballantyne Press, Edinburgh

CONTENTS

PART I

CHAPTER I

EARLY IMPRESSIONS

	PAGE
Start for Persia—Arrival at Isphahan—Departure for Kerman—The Land of the Lion and the Sun—A rainy day and its effects—Eclipse—Locusts—Sand-storms—Land of cats—Modes of conveyance—Inhabitants	17

CHAPTER II

KERMAN

Short history of Kerman—Its overthrow—City of beggars—Story of the fort—The jackal's "tale of woe"	30
--	----

CHAPTER III

PERSIAN INDUSTRIES

Carpet-making—How to tell a good carpet—How to make a carpet—The cry of the children—Shawl manufactures—Calico-printing—Brasswork—Agricultural industries—Water disputes—Kanâts—Poppy crops—Wheat and corn—Tobacco-growing	40
--	----

CHAPTER IV

THE CLIMATE OF PERSIA

Resht, Teheran, Isphahan—Dryness of atmosphere—Cellars—Roof life—Children attacked by jackals—Chequered history of work in Kerman	50
---	----

CHAPTER V

HOLIDAYS IN PERSIA

How to ensure a prosperous journey—Natanz—Astonishment of natives at sight of hairpins—Pulivagoon—Mahoon—Aliabâd—Prince under canvas—Visit from a Persian princess—A Persian deer hunt	59
--	----

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL LIFE IN PERSIA

Kerman—House-hunting and building—White ants—Housekeeping in Kerman—Servant question—Truth v. falsehood—Abdul Fateh—Bagi—Recreations—Some exciting rides—Persian etiquette—Dinner at the governor's	71
---	----

CONTENTS

CHAPTER VII

THE WOMEN OF PERSIA

	PAGE
Home Life—Anderoon, women's quarters—Jealousy in the anderoon—Anderoon of Khan Baba Khan—Two days in an anderoon—H.R.H. Princess Hamadané Sultané—Visit to the anderoon of H.R.H. the Zil-es-Sultan	84

CHAPTER VIII

MORE ABOUT PERSIAN WOMEN

Costumes—Wedding festivities—Wedding dinner—Kindness of Persian husbands—Story of brutality—Divorce—Aids to beauty—Degradation and cruelty of women	95
---	----

CHAPTER IX

SOME POINTS IN THE MOSLEM FAITH

Fasts and feasts—Seyyids, Dervishes, Mullahs—Legends of the drowning mullah, and the yard-square hole	108
---	-----

CHAPTER X

OTHER RELIGIOUS SECTS

The Báb and Babism—Short sketch of life of the Báb—His imprisonment and execution—Parsees, or Zoroastrians—Persecutions of Parsees in seventh century—Sacred writings of Parsees, Zend-avesta—Fire-worshipping—Fire temples—Holy fire—Parsee wedding—Costume of women—Death customs—Burial customs	116
--	-----

CHAPTER XI

DESERT DELIGHTS

Songs of the desert—Sunsets, sunrises, mirages—Illness in the desert—Mehman khanehs, caravanserai—Chappa khanehs—Lost in the desert—Its cruelties and sadness	130
---	-----

CHAPTER XII

PERSIAN MEDICAL MISSIONS

The need of them—Work in Ispahan—The "little devil" transformed into a boy—Amputation—Brothers in adversity—H.R.H. Zil-es-Sultan as a patient—Fanaticism overcome	140
---	-----

CHAPTER XIII

PIONEER MEDICAL MISSION WORK IN KERMAN

Waiting for drugs and instruments—Native assistant proves a broken reed—First operation in Kerman—An anxious moment—Success—Doctrine of "savab" convenient to the Moslem—Fanaticism tempered with prudence—Opium slaves—Persian therapeutics—Persian quacks and their methods—Sure way of curing cancer—Hysteria	151
--	-----

CHAPTER X

OTHER RELIGIOUS SECTS

Other religious sects—The Báb and Babism—Short sketch of life of the Báb—His imprisonment and execution—*Parsees*. or Zoroastrians—Persecutions of Parsees in seventh century—Sacred writings of Parsees, Zendavesta—Fire-worshipping—Fire temples—Holy fire—Parsee wedding—Costume of women—Death customs—Burial customs.

“How many crimes have in religion’s name been wrought.”

LUCRETIVS.

“Too oft religion has the mother been
Of impious act and criminal.”

LUCRETIVS.

THE founder of Babism was a native of Shiraz, by name Mirza Ali Muhammed, born in 1820; it was not till 1844 that he publicly proclaimed himself to be The Báb or Gate, through which all who wished for peace and happiness might pass into the inner chambers of mysticism and sacred mysteries. He soon gathered a large following around him, and in an astonishingly short time the fame of the Báb was noised abroad throughout the length and breadth of Persia. At first the Government and mullahs paid little attention to this new religion, thinking and believing it to be only a passing fancy of the people, but in its second year it took such rapid strides that they began to be alarmed, and to look about for means of checking its progress. The Báb was placed in prison, and his followers were forbidden, on pain

OTHER RELIGIOUS SECTS

of death, to teach or discuss their new religion. Soon afterwards, however, the Báb escaped, and fled to Isphahan, where the governor of that city protected him for some months, but on the death of the governor the Báb was again cast into prison. During his imprisonment he was not idle, for he wrote many books, setting forth his doctrines, and exhorting his followers to remain firm to their new faith in the face of all opposition and persecution.

While the Báb was busy in prison, his followers were also busy, preaching and teaching, and by all means trying to extend the doctrines of their leader, and so great was the opposition and strife raised that the Government decided that the Báb must forfeit his life as a means of putting a stop once and for all to this new and dangerous sect. Accordingly the Báb was brought from Tabriz, where he had been imprisoned, and after a mock trial was sentenced to death. On the day appointed for his execution an enormous crowd gathered to witness his end—many from curiosity, and also many from love and pity for the youthful martyr, who to the last maintained the calmness and courage which had characterised his whole term of imprisonment.

To make the lesson more emphatic, it was decided that two of the Báb's chief disciples were to be executed with him. One of these at the last moment recanted, and so was allowed to go free. It was said that his recantation arose not from cowardice or fear of death, but from a special revelation given to him, whereby he was commanded to recant in order to be able to carry

OTHER RELIGIOUS SECTS

away all books and papers belonging to the Báb, and deposit them in a safe place: however that may be, it is known that after an interval of two years he too became a martyr. Efforts were made to entice the other disciple to recant, but all proved unavailing, and he and his master the Báb were suspended, by ropes placed under their arms, to a beam placed a few feet from the ground. As they hung thus the disciple was heard to say, "Master, art thou satisfied with me?" and then the order was given to fire. When the smoke cleared away the body of the disciple was found to be riddled with bullets, but no Báb was visible. What had happened? Had a miracle been performed, and an angel been sent to rescue him from the hand of his persecutors? This was the thought of some, and, indeed, a miracle had been performed, for in spite of the many bullets which had been aimed at him not one had touched the Báb, but had only brought him deliverance by severing the ropes which bound him, so that he fell to the ground unhurt. At first it seemed as if the multitude would have pity on the unfortunate man, and spare him a second attempt, but these feelings were only of short duration, and the Báb was again dragged forth from his hiding-place, where he had taken refuge, and was a second time suspended. A fresh batch of soldiers had to be told off for the execution, as the first company absolutely refused to fire again. This time there was no intervention, and in a second or two the body of the young martyr of Shiraz was pierced with bullets. The bodies were cast out to the jackals, but were afterwards recovered and buried

OTHER RELIGIOUS SECTS

in Teheran by the order of the new Báb, Mirza Yahya.

This event took place in 1850, and in spite of persecutions, oppositions, and cruelties, the Babis continued to grow in number and strength, and to-day they form a very large and important community throughout Persia. In fact, by the very barbarity of the persecutors their own end was defeated, for all the people were astonished at the heroism and fortitude displayed by the martyrs. Professor Brown¹ says, "Often have I heard Persians who did not themselves belong to the proscribed sect tell with admiration how Suleymán Khan, his body pierced with well-nigh a score of wounds, in each of which was inserted a lighted candle, went to his execution singing with exultation." The effect of such courage and heroism was only to stir up more people to be disciples of the Báb, as the following story shows.

During the persecutions in Yezd, a young man went to scoff and jeer, but when he saw with what courage the martyrs endured torture, and met death, he called out, "I am a Babi, kill me too." While we were in Yezd the Babis were keeping very quiet, but, nevertheless, a great work was going on amongst them, but none dared say, "I am a Babi." A year or two after our departure from Persia we heard of terrible cruelties and persecutions enacted against these suffering people, but in spite of all, their number continues to grow and increase throughout the whole land of Persia, and to-day the Babis are stronger and more numerous than ever before.

¹ "A Year amongst the Persians."

OTHER RELIGIOUS SECTS

The Parsees of Persia are another most interesting and important sect: they live chiefly in Yezd and Kerman. They are a people within a people, living in Persia, and with the Persians, yet keeping quite distinct from the present inhabitants of the land. Only a few thousand of this large and influential body of people, who up till the seventh century were the inhabitants of the land, now remain in Persia. When the armies of Mohammed conquered Persia, most of these people fled to India; others preferred to adhere to the new religion, while a few remained faithful to their 'old belief, and refused either to flee to a new and strange country, or to change their creed, and so they remain till this day a distinct people, following their own customs, and holding to their own religion amidst a new and domineering nation.

The founder of the Parsee religion was one called Zoroaster. Very little is known of his life; his birth-place is uncertain, though it is known he lived for many years in Bactria of Eastern Persia, and it is probable that it was in this place that he thought out the idea, from which in later years he constructed his religious system. The priests of this religion were the "magi" of the Old and New Testament, and it is very likely that at least one of the "wise men of the East" who went to offer their adoration to the new-born King was from these Parsees of Persia.

The date of Zoroaster is very uncertain too. It is known, however, that in the sixth century B.C., when Cyrus was king, the Zoroastrian religion was firmly established in Western Persia. Some

INDEX

A

Abdul Fateh, our *pishkhedmat*, 78
 Aganoor, Dr., 146
 Agha Mohammed Khan, Kerman
 sacked by, 31
 Alexander marched through Ker-
 man, 31
 Ali, "The Lion of God," 19
 Aliabâd, the village of, 66
 American mission, the, 27
 Amputation, how regarded, 142
 Anderoon, the, 68, 87; of the Zil-
 es-Sultan, 93
 Animals, cruelty to, 137
 Anjiman, the, a Parsee governing
 body, 129
 Ants, a pest of white, 73; their
 ravages, 75
 Arab dancing, a weird performance,
 310
 — women, their love of free-
 dom, 191; industry of, 309
 Arabs of Mesopotamia, the, 309;
 hospitality of, 310; dancing, 311
 — of Mosul, the, 190
 Arak, a favourite drink, 269
 "Arg," the Governor's residence,
 110
 Ark, remains of the, 177
 Armenians, their virtues and vices,
 28
 Asshur, remains of, 179
 "At Home," our, 85

B

Bâb, the, founder of Babism, 116;
 imprisonment, 117; execution,
 118
 Babism, its origin and founder,
 116
Bâd geers, or "wind-catchers," in
 Yezd, 54
 Baghdad railway, the, 184; its im-
 portance to Mosul, 328
 Bagi, our servant, 69, 79, 85
 Baradœus, Jacob, a Syrian re-
 former, 190
 Bathing in the Tigris, 203
 Bazaar, an exciting experience in
 the Kerman, 80
 Beauty specialists, Persian women
 as, 104
 Bedouin, the, as an in-patient,
 323
 Bedouins, the, 191
 Beggars, a saying among, 32
 Blackett, Mr. and Mrs., 57
 Blackett's, Mr., valuable library
 and the white ants, 75
 Boy's birth, celebrations at a, 211;
 education, 213
 Brass-work of Isphahan, the, 47
 Bread-making, 255
 Brick-making, 73
 Brick pillars for capital punish-
 ment, 138
 Bride, a Persian, 101