

IN THE
LAND OF THE LION AND SUN
OR
MODERN PERSIA

BEING EXPERIENCES OF LIFE IN PERSIA DURING A RESIDENCE
OF FIFTEEN YEARS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THAT
COUNTRY FROM 1866 TO 1881

BY
C. J. WILLS M.D.
LATE ONE OF THE MEDICAL OFFICERS OF HER MAJESTY'S TELEGRAPH
DEPARTMENT IN PERSIA

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

I GO TO PERSIA.

	PAGE
Wanted a doctor—The Director-in-chief—Doubt and distrust—Simple advice—Am referred to “Hadji Baba”—My kit—Saddle for riding post—Vienna—Rustchuk—Quarantine—Galatz—Kustendji—Constantinople—Turkish ladies—Stamboul—I have my hair cut—“Karageus”—Turkish coffee—A philo-Turk—Shooting party—The theatres—The Opera—Armenian theatre—Gambling house—A Bashi-bazouk—We leave, <i>via</i> the Black Sea—The Russian captain—Unarmed vessels—White Crimean wine—Foreign wines in Russia—Deck passengers—Sinope—Batoum—Poti—The post-house—Difficulty in getting food—Travelling <i>en trôika</i> —Kutais—A tarantass—Apply for horses—An itching palm—We start—Tiflis—Lecoq’s bear—A happy reprieve—The joys of travel—Chief of the Telegraph in Tiflis—Uniforms—Persian Consulate—Coffee and pipes—Smoking, an art—Effects on the tyro—Tea—The Consul—His age—Dyeing the hair—The Opera, varied costumes at—The Tiflis ballet—Leave Tiflis—Erivan—The Pass—We lighten our load—Hotel—Washing—Nakchewan—Julfa, the frontier of Persia	1

CHAPTER II.

POST JOURNEY TO THE CAPITAL.

Preparations for the start—Costume—Chaff bed—First fall—Extra luggage—The whip—Stages and their length—Appearance of the country, and climate—First stage—Turk guides—Welcome rest—Weighing firewood—Meana bug—Turcomanchai—Distances—New friends—Palace of Kerrij	20
--	----

CHAPTER III.

TEHERAN.

Teheran—The Director’s house—Persian visits—Etiquette—Pipes, details of—Tumbakti—Ceremony—Anecdote—The voice of the slug-gard—Persian medicine explained—My prospects as a medico—Zoological Gardens	28
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

TEHERAN.

	PAGE
The Gulhaek Road—Visit to a virtuoso—His story—Persian New Year—Persian ladies—Titles—The harem—Its inhabitants—A eunuch—Lovely visions—The Dervish—The great festival—Miscellaneous uniform—At the Court of Persia—The Shah—The ceremony—Bak-sheesh—Rejoicings	36

CHAPTER V.

HAMADAN.

Start for Hamadan—Bedding—Luggage makes the man—Stages—Meet Pierson—Istikbals—Badraghah—Pierson's house—Hamadan wine—Mode of storing it—My horses—Abu Saif Mirza—His stratagem—Disinterested services—Persian logic—Pierson's horse's death—Horses put through their paces—I buy salts and senna—The prince's opinion—Money table—Edict	54
---	----

CHAPTER VI.

HAMADAN.

Morning rides—Engage servants—Dispensary—A bear-garden—Odd complaints—My servants get rich—Modakel—The distinction between picking and stealing—Servants—Their pay—Vails—Hakim Bashi—Delleh—Quinine—Discipline—I commence the cornet—The result of rivalry—Syud Houssein—Armenians—Cavalry officer—Claim to sanctity of the Armenians—Their position in the country—Jews	64
--	----

CHAPTER VII.

HAMADAN.

Tomb of Esther and Mordecai—Spurious coins—Treasure-finding—Interest—A gunge—Oppression—A cautious finder—Yari Khan—We become treasure-seekers—We find—Our cook—Toffee—Pole-buying—Modakel—I am nearly caught—A mad dog—Rioters punished—Murder of the innocents	75
--	----

CHAPTER VIII.

HAMADAN.

Antelope—Hunting and hawking—Shooting from the saddle—Thief-catching—The prince offers his services as head-servant—Our hunting party—The prince takes the honours—Kabobs—A pro-	
--	--

	PAGE
vincial grandee—His stud—Quail-shooting—A relative of the king—Persian dinner—Musicians and singers—Parlour magic—The auderûn—Cucumber-jam—Persian home-life—Grateful Armenians—Lizards—Talking lark—Pigeon-flying—Fantails—Pigeons' ornaments—Immorality of pigeon-flying—Card-playing—Chess—Games—Wrestling—Pehliwans—Gymnastics	84

CHAPTER IX.

KERMANSHAH.

Leave for Kermanshah, marching—Detail of arrangements—Horse-feeding—Peculiar way of bedding horses—Barley—Grape-feeding—On grass—Nowalla—Colt, anecdote of—Horses, various breeds of—Turkomans—Carabagh—Isphahan cobs—Gulf Arabs—Arabs—Rise in price of horses—Road cooking—Kangawar temple—Double snipe—Tents—Kara-Su River—Susmanis—Sana—Besitûn—Sir H. Rawlinson—Agha Hassan—Istikhbal—Kermanshah—As we turn in another turn out—Armenians—Their reasons for apostatising—Presents of sweetmeats	100
---	-----

CHAPTER X.

KERMANSHAH.

Kermanshah—Imâd-u-dowlet—We visit him—Signs of his wealth—Man nailed to a post—Injuring the wire—Serrum-u-dowlet—Visits—We dine with the son of the Governor—His decorations and nightingales—Dancing girls—Various dances—The belly dance—Heavy dinner—Turf— <i>Wild</i> geese—The swamp—A ducking through obstinacy—Imâdîsh—Wealth of the Imâd-u-dowlet—The Shah loots him—Squeezing—Rock sculptures—Astrologers—Astrolabes—Fortune-telling—Rammals—Detection of thieves—Honesty of servants—Thefts through pique—My lost pipe-head—Tragedy of two women	112
--	-----

CHAPTER XI.

I GO TO ISPAHAN.

Deficiency of furniture—Novel screws—Pseudo-masonry—Fate of the Imâd-u-dowlet's son—House-building—Kerind—New horse—Mule-buying—Start for Isphahan—Kanaats—Curious accident—Fish in kanaats—Loss of a dog—Pigeons—Pigeon-towers—Alarm of robbers—Put up in a mosque—Armenian village—Armenian villagers—Travellers' law—Taxman at Dehbeed—Isphahan—The bridge—Julfa	123
---	-----

CHAPTER XII.

JULFA.

	PAGE
Illness and death of horse—Groom takes sanctuary—Sharpness of Armenians—Julfa houses—Kürsis—Priests—Arachnoort—Monastery—Nunnery—Call to prayer—Girls' school—Ancient language of the Scriptures—Ignorance of priests—Liquor traffic—Sunday market—Loafers—Turkeys—Church Missionary school—Armenian schools .	136

CHAPTER XIII.

ISPAHAN.

Prince's physician—Visit the Prince-Governor—Justice—The bastinado—Its effects—The doctor's difficulties—Carpets—Aniline dyes—How to choose—Varieties—Nummad—Felt coats—Bad water—Baabis—A tragedy—The prince's view	145
--	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

JULFA AND ISPAHAN.

Julfa cathedral—The campanile—The monk—Gez—Kishmish wine—The bishop—The church—Its decorations—The day of judgment—The cemetery—Establishment of the Armenian captives in Julfa—Lost arts—Armenian artificers—Graves—Story of Rodolphe—Coffee-house—Tombstone bridges—Nunnery—Schools—Medical missionary—Church Missionary establishment—The Lazarist Fathers	157
---	-----

CHAPTER XV.

ISPAHAN AND ITS ENVIRONS.

Tame gazelle—Croquet-lawn under difficulties—Wild asparagus—First-fruits—Common fruits—Mode of preparing dried fruits—Ordinary vegetables of Persia—Wild rhubarb—Potatoes a comparative novelty—Isbahan quinces: their fragrance—Bamiah—Grapes, Numerous varieties of—At times used as horse-feed—Grape-sugar—Pickles—Fruits an ordinary food—Curdled milk—Mode of obtaining cream—Buttermilk—Economy of the middle or trading classes—Tale of the phantom cheese—Common flowers—Painting the lily— <i>Lilium candidum</i> —Wild flowers—The crops—Poppies—Collecting opium—Manuring—Barley—Wheat—Minor crops—Mode of extracting grain—Cut straw: its uses—Irrigation	167
---	-----

CONTENTS.

xi

CHAPTER XVI.

ISPAHAN AND ITS ENVIRONS.

	PAGE
Pig-sticking expedition—Ducks not tame, but wild—Ruined mosque with tile inscription—Ancient watch-towers—The hunting-ground—Beaters—We sight the pig—Our first victims—The bold Gholam—Our success—Pig's flesh—A present of pork—How Persians can be managed—Opium—Adulteration—Collection and preparation—Packing—Manœuvres of the native maker—Opium-eating—Moderate use by aged Persians—My dispensary over the prison—I shift my quarters—Practice in the bazaar—An ungrateful baker—Sealing in lieu of signing—Seals—Wisdom of a village judge	176

CHAPTER XVII.

ISPAHAN.

Cost of living—Servants—Our expenses—Price of provisions—Bargains—Crying off—Trade credits—Merchants—Civil suits—Bribery—Shopkeepers—Handicrafts—Damascening—Shoemakers—Other trades—Bankers—An Ispahani's estimate of the honesty of his fellow-townsmen	186
---	-----

CHAPTER XVIII.

ISPAHAN.

Daily round—The river—Calico-rinsers—Worn-out mules and horses—Mode of treating the printed calico—Imitations of marks on T-cloths—Rise of the waters of the Zend-a-Rûd—Pul-i-Kojû—Char Bagh—Plauë-trees—The college—Silver doors—Tiled halls and mosque—Pulpit—Booric—Hassir—Sleepers in the mosque—Cells of the students—Isbahan priests—Telegraph-office—Tanks—Causeways—Gate of royal garden—Governor's garden—Courtiers and hangers-on—Prisoners—Priests—The Imâm-i-Juma—My dispensary—Ruined bazaar—A day in the town—Bazaar breakfasts—Calico-printing—Painters—The maker of antiquities—Jade tea-pot—Visit to the Baabis—Hakim-bashi—Horse-market—The "Dar"—Executions—Ordinary—Blowing from guns—A girl trampled to death—Dying twice—Blowing from a mortar—Wholesale walling up alive—A narrow escape from, and horrible miscarriage in carrying it out—Burning alive—Crucifixions—Severity: its results	193
--	-----

CHAPTER XIX.

MY JOURNEY HOME AND MARCH TO SHIRAZ.

Julfa quarters—Buy a freehold house—I ornament, and make it comfortable—Become ill—Apply for sick leave—Start marching—Telegram—Begin to post—Reach Teheran—Obtain leave—Difficulty at	
--	--

	PAGE
Kasvin—Punishment of the postmaster—Catch and pass the courier—Horses knock up—Wild beasts—Light a fire—Grateful rest—Arrive at Resht—Swamp to Peri-Bazaar—Boat—Steamer—Moscow—Opera—Ballet—Arrive in England—Start again for Persia—Journey <i>vid</i> Constantinople—Trebizonde—Courier—Snow—Swollen eyes—Detail of Journey from Erzeroum to Teheran—The races—Isfahan—Leave for Shiraz—Persian companions—Road-beetles—Mole crickets—Lizards—Animals and birds—The road to Shiraz—Usaher's description—Means bug legend again	206

CHAPTER XX.

SHIRAZ.

Entry into Shiraz—Gaiety of Shirazis of both sexes—Public promenade—Different from the rest of Persians—Shiraz wine—Early lamb—Weights: their variety—Steelyards—Local custom of weighing—Wetting grass—Game—Wild animals—Buildings—Ornamental brickwork—Orange-trees—Fruits in bazaar—Type of ancient Persian—Ladies' dress—Fondness for music—Picnics—Warmth of climate—Diseases—The traveller Stanley—His magazine rifle and my landlord's chimney—Cholera—Great mortality—We march out and camp—Mysterious occurrence—Life in a garden—The "Shitoor-gooloo"—Bear and dog fight—The bear is killed	218
---	-----

CHAPTER XXI.

SHIRAZ WINE-MAKING.

Buy grapes for wine-making—Difficulty in getting them to the house—Wine-jars—Their preparation—Grapes rescued and brought in—Treading the grapes—Fermentation—Plunger-sticks—Varieties of Shiraz wine and their production—Stirring the liquor—Clearing the wine—My share, and its cost—Improvement by bottling—Wasps—Carboys—Covering them—Native manner of packing—Difficulties at custom-house—The Governor's photographic apparatus—Too many for me—A <i>liti-piti</i>	229
--	-----

CHAPTER XXII.

SHIRAZ AND FUSSA.

Cheapness of ice—Variety of ices—Their size—Mode of procuring ice—Water of Shiraz: its impurity—Camel-fight—Mode of obtaining the combatants—Mode of securing camels—Visit to Fussa—Mean-looking nag—His powers—See the patient—State of the sick-room—Dinner sent away—A second one arrives—A would-be room-fellow—I provide him with a bedroom—Progress of the case—Fertility of Fussa—Salt lake—End of the patient—Boat-building—Dog-cart—Want of roads—Tarantulas—Suicide of scorpions—Varieties—Experiment—Stings of scorpions—The <i>Nishan</i>	240
---	-----

CHAPTER XXIII.

SHIRAZ.—THE FAMINE.

	PAGE
Approach of famine—Closing of shops—Rise in mule-hire—Laying in of stores—Seizures of grain—Sale of goods by poor—Immigrations of villagers to the towns—Desertions of children—Increase of crime—Arrival of money from England—Orphanage—Labour question—Koomishah—Village ruffian—His punishment—Prince's accident—The kalâat—Mode of bringing it—Invitation to the ceremony—Procession—Gala dress of the prince—The arrival of the firman—Assemblage of grandees—The kalâat—The Kawam's kalâat—Return to town—Sacrifice of an ox	251

CHAPTER XXIV.

I FALL INTO THE HANDS OF BRIGANDS.

A call to a patient—Start on post-horses—No horses—I carry a lantern—The Bakhtiaris—Fall among thieves—They strip me—And march me off—Mode of disguise of thieves—Attacked by footmen—Division of spoils—Fate of a priest—Valuing my kit—Ignorance of my captors—A welcome sight—My escape—I get a horse—Reach Yezdikhast—Old women get thorns out of my feet—Want of hospitality of head-man of Yezdikhast—Arrive at Kûmishah—Kindness of a postmaster—More robbers—Avoid them—Am repaid for my lost kit—Fate of my robbers	259
--	-----

CHAPTER XXV.

SHIRAZ.

The Muschir—His policy and wealth—His struggle with the king's uncle—He is bastinadoed—His banishment to Kerbela—The Kawam—Mirza Naim—Siege of Zinjan—Cruelties to Mirza Naim—Reply to an author's statement—Cashmere shawls—Anecdote—Garden of Dilgoosha—Warm spring—"Sau-Sau-Rac"—The Well of Death—Execution—Wife-killing—Tomb of Rich—Tomb of Hafiz—Tomb of Saadi—A moral tale—Omens—Incident at tomb of Hafiz	270
--	-----

CHAPTER XXVI.

SHIRAZ—PERSIAN CUSTOMS.

The Tazzia—Persian pulpit—Prince's flirtations—Month of mourning—Details of performance—Breast-beaters—Hymn in honour of the king—The performers—Processions—Detail of the tragedy—Interludes—Roseh-khaneh—The Ramazan—The fast—Hospitalities—Zalâbi—Religious affectation—Reading poetry—A paraphrase—A quotation—Books and their covers—Calamdans—Writing a letter—Sealing—Specimen of an ordinary letter—Apparent piety—The evil eye—Talismans—I procure one	279
---	-----

CHAPTER XXVII.

SHIRAZ.

	PAGE
Bagh-i-Takht—Jews' burial-ground—Christians' cemetery—Its desecration—Sergeant Collins's murder—Capture and execution of the robbers—How it was brought home to them—Memorial to Collins—Health of the staff—Persians as servants—Persian cuisine—Kabobs, varieties of—English dinners—Confectionery—Fruits—Vegetables—Pickles, etc.—Cook-shops—Trotters—Mode of selling meat—Game—Eggs—Wild vegetables—Potatoes—Disinclination to use new seeds, and its cause—Narcissus—General use of flower decoration—Tame birds—Wild birds—White ants—Damaging the line—Hamilton poles	292

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BEASTS, BIRDS, FRUITS, AND FLOWERS.

Tamed pigs—"Marjahn"—Mongoose—Persian cats—Their value—Van cats—A fierce cat—How to obtain a Persian cat—Greyhounds—Toolahs—Watch-dogs—Monkeys—Tame lions—Tame and cage birds—Superstition concerning house-snakes—I kill a clockwinder—Wild ass—Fighting rams—Tame partridges—Gardening—Ordinary flowers—The broom-plant—Vine-culture—Quinces and pomegranates—Orchards—Garden parties	302
---	-----

CHAPTER XXIX.

PERSIAN CHARACTER, COSTUMES, AND MANNERS.

Character of the Persians—Exaggeration—Mercifulness—Anecdote—Costumes of men—Hair—Beards—Arms—Costumes of women—Jewellery—Glass bangles—Nose-rings—Painting of the face—Tattooing—Hair—Out-door costume—Dress of children—Their manners—Strange custom—Love of mothers—The uncle—Cousins—Slaves—Servants—Slavery	314
--	-----

CHAPTER XXX.

TRAVELLING—ART WORK—FOODS.

Travelling—Difficulties of posting—Saddles and bits—Cruel joke—Old stories—Pastimes—Enamels—Persian pictures—Curio buyer—Carvings—Metal-work—Caligraphy—Kahtam—Incised work on iron—Embroideries—Silver-work—Washing of linen—Ironing—Needle-work—The bath—Washing the hair with clay—Bread and baking—Unleavened bread—Other kinds—Travellers' food—Inordinate appetites—Food of the poor	328
--	-----

CHAPTER XXXI.

EDUCATION—LEAVE, AND RETURN VIÀ INDIA.

	PAGE
Education—Schools—Punishments—Love of poetry—Colleges—Education of women—Religion—March to Bushire—Extremes of cold and heat—Good luck—Go home to England—Leave <i>viâ</i> India—The “Boys”—Lisbon—Algiers—Port Said and Suez—Jeddah—Donkeys—Coral reef—Sea-slugs—Aden—Madagascar oranges—“Grimes”—Kurrachee—Drives—Visit to the alligators at Muggerpîr—Disgusting scene—A legatee—Black-wood furniture—A lost bargain—Persian Gulf—Bushire—Leave for Shiraz	337

CHAPTER XXXII.

FROM THE PERSIAN GULF TO ISPAHAN.

Our start for Shiraz—Camp out—Borasjûn—Spring at Dalliké—Kotuls—Kazerûn—Buy a horse—A tough climb—Place of Collins’s murder—Arrive in Shiraz—Hire a house—Settle down—Breaking horses—Night marching—Difficulties of start—Moorghab—Find our muleteer and loads—Abadeh—Yezdikhast—Koomishah—Mayar—Marg—Arrive in Julfa	347
--	-----

CHAPTER XXXIII.

JULFA.

Hire a house—Coolness of streets—Idleness of men—Industry of women—Stone mortars—Arrack—Hire a vineyard—A wily Armenian—Treasure-trove—The “Shaking Minarets”—A hereditary functionary—A permanent miracle—Its probable explanation—Vaccination—Julfa priests—Arrack as an anæsthetic—Road-making—Crops of firewood—Fire temple—Huge trees—The racecourse—Disappearance of ancient brick buildings—Donkeys—Healthiness of Julfa—Zil-es-Sultan—His armoury—Prospects of the succession to the throne—Bull-terriers—Mastiffs—Politeness and rudeness of the prince	359
--	-----

CHAPTER XXXIV.

JOURNEY TO AND FROM TEHERAN.

Proceed to Teheran—Takhtrowan—Duties—Gulhaek—Lawn-tennis—Guebre gardener—A good road—The Shah—Custom of the Kûrûk—M. Gersteiger—Cossack regiments—Austrian officers—New coinage—Count Monteforte—New police—Boulevard des Ambassadeurs—English Embassy—Tile gates—Summer palaces—Bazaars—Russian goods—Demavend—Drive to Ispahan—Difficulties of the journey—	
---	--

	PAGE
Accidents—Danger of sunstroke—Turkeys—Keeping peacocks— Armenian tribute of poultry—Burmese and Japanese embassies— Entertainment and fireworks—Cruel treatment of Jews—Oil paint- ings—Khoero and Shireen—Practice makes perfect—Pharaoh and the Red Sea—Pharaoh and the magicians	363

CHAPTER XXXV.

WE RETURN VIA THE CASPIAN.

New Year's presents—Shiraz custom—Our cook's weaknesses—He takes the pledge—And becomes an opium-eater—Decide to go home— Dispose of kit—Start for Europe—Our own arrangements—Diary of our journey home—Arrival	379
---	-----

APPENDIX A.

Table of Post Stages and Ordinary Marches from Bushire, Persian Gulf, to Teheran	410
---	-----

APPENDIX B.

Duration of our Journey from Ispahan to London	412
--	-----

APPENDIX C.

Travelling in Persia	413
--------------------------------	-----

APPENDIX D.

RUSSIAN GOODS VERSUS ENGLISH.

The Kerūn River route—The best means of reaching the Commercial Centres of Persia—Opinions of experts—Wishes of Merchants	417
--	-----

GLOSSARY OF PERSIAN WORDS	420
-------------------------------------	-----

INDEX	429
-----------------	-----

As a rule the Armenian women are industrious and notable housewives. In the summer they knit socks in groups at the doors of their houses, and gossip; in winter they do the same around the *kürsis*, as long as it is light. Wine is made by all, and the jars used in the fermenting are often very ancient, some being two and three hundred years old.

Most of the men who work do a little market-gardening, and many have orchards or vineyards. But the more active and brighter travel to India or Batavia, and often make fortunes in retail trade; some have even established well-known houses in Manchester, Liverpool, and London. Many enter the Persian service; these generally apostatise. The effect of this emigration on the inhabitants of Julfa is deleterious in the extreme. The rich relations rarely forget the family in Julfa, and there are consequently a number of people subsisting on what the successful husband, father, or son, sends as a pension. These will not work, but prefer to drag on a life of idleness on a pittance. I often have asked a man, "What are your resources?" and he has replied, "My relatives at Bombay," etc., as the case may be. Armenians at times rise to high employ: the chief of the Arsenal to the Shah is an Armenian, so is the Ambassador in London.

The first day of my arrival in Julfa I was visited by twenty-six priests; they were all regaled with brandy. The next day there were twenty-nine, including the original twenty-six, who called again. However, I treated them this time to tea, saying I had no more brandy. The third day no more priests came.

Near the banks of the river is the old church of "Soup Gework," or "St. George." This is celebrated for being the receptacle of two miraculous stones, which have reputed power in the healing of diseases. They are said to have flown from Etchmiadzin, in Armenia, in one night, and are the ordinary stones of the country brought to Julfa by some rich citizen in bygone days for some building which was never erected.

There are also the ruins of the old church of the Jesuit Fathers standing in its garden. There is nothing remarkable in it. It is a plain brick building, less pretentious than most Julfa churches, and whitewashed inside; it is rapidly going to decay, as are many other of the Julfa churches, for the population is lessening by emigration.

The successful Armenian seldom returns; when he does, he repairs his father's house, buys up the gardens round it, and his estate is usually devoured at last by the priests and the Persian authorities.

At one time turkeys were bred in Julfa, but the Governor of Ispahan having imposed a tax of a certain number of fat birds at the New Year, the Julfa Armenians allowed them to become extinct. At the present moment—thanks to the protective presence of the English in Julfa—the Armenians are quite on an equality with the Persians, nay, even treat them with a certain amount of arrogance. When I first came to Julfa, no Armenian dared to ride a horse, and all used to get off their donkeys when they saw a Persian of position.

Education has advanced. The English missionary school and its energetic teacher, Mr. Johannes—who, educated in England, left the Nassick School, where he was a master, to take charge of the C.M.S. school—has effected wonders. The boys, really well educated, go off at about seventeen to India, and get their living respectably; and the C.M.S. has done really good *educational* work; as to the proselytising, *no Mussulman convert has ever been made*. Many fanatics of the Baabi sect have sought and obtained temporary protection, to which they owe their lives, but as a Christianising influence it is at present a failure, though the enterprise has been carried out regardless of cost, even in the most liberal manner.

The American mission at Teheran has really succeeded in making some headway.

However, the at present (in regard to converts) abortive mission to Julfa has in the educational department certainly done wonders, and has given an impetus to the native schools, which previously, heavily subsidised by successful Armenian emigrants, had done no work at all, and were battered on by a set of hungry priests and mirzas, who on some pretext or other sent away their pupils for five days out of seven, and declared a holiday. Where the income went nobody knew; this much was apparent, there was no result.

The long fasts of the Armenian Church are loyally kept by the poorer of the Armenian community and by the villagers. They occupy altogether a sixth of the whole year, and in them no eggs or meat may be eaten, only vegetables, fruits, grain, and vegetable oil, but wine and spirits are freely indulged in.

horsemen, who wrap their spare clothing in it and use it as a bed and carpet too.

For about fifty pounds I was able to get enough carpets for all my living rooms, and, owing to the steady rise in the price of carpets, on my departure in nine years' time on leave, I got as much as I gave for them. Exactly the same as with horses after the famine, the demand being greater than the supply on account of exportation, prices rose considerably.

A good deal of illness occurring just at this time among the staff, I had my attention directed to the water, which, being mostly from surface wells, was much contaminated. I therefore engaged a water-carrier from the town, purchased a skin and bucket for him, and the staff were supplied with a skinful twice a day, for cooking and drinking purposes, from the monastery well—a deep and good one.

The Persians are particular what water they drink, and invariably employ a sakka, or water-carrier; but the Armenians generally have a cesspool just outside their house door, and in its immediate proximity the well is dug, often only ten feet deep. The result is obvious.

Our superintendent being a married man, collars which I had cast off for the last year, principally because I could not get them washed, had to be worn; and I had to send them to Teheran by post to get them washed, for in Ispahan the art of ironing was unknown; and the American term for a shirt, "boiled rag," was literally appropriate.

I made the acquaintance of three brothers who were Syuds, or holy men, but who had the reputation of being freethinkers; these men called on me and insisted on my breakfasting with them in the town: they were wealthy landed proprietors and merchants. I found their house beautifully furnished and their hospitality was great; they discoursed much on the subject of religion, and were very eloquent on the injustices perpetrated in Persia. They were nearly related to the Imâm-i-Juma, or high priest, a very great personage indeed, who ruled the town of Ispahan by his personal influence. It was said that any one who incurred his displeasure always, somehow or other, lost his life.

Under the shadow of such a relation, the Syuds Hassan and Houssein and their brother openly held their very liberal opinions. They were, in fact, sectaries of the Baab.

This impostor has succeeded in establishing a new religion, the tenets of which are very difficult to get at—a community of property being one. Mahommedans state that a community of women is also observed; this is, however, very doubtful.

The execution of their prophet, far from decreasing their numbers, has had an opposite effect; many among the Ispahanis and Zinjanis still secretly profess Baabiism.

A few years before my arrival in Ispahan (1867), a determined attempt was made on the life of the present Shah by a few of the fanatics of this sect, and the unsuccessful conspirators were put to death with horrible tortures. (For details see Lady Shiel's work.) In these latter days (1880), when I was in Ispahan, a priest was denounced by his wife as a Baabi. I saw him led to prison; he avowed his Baabiism and declined to retract, though offered his life; he, however, denied the statements of his wife and daughter, who accused him of wishing to prostitute them to others of his co-religionists.

On being taken to the public square for execution, after having been severely bastinadoed, and when in chains, knowing his last hour was come, he was offered his life if he would curse Baab.

He replied, "Curses on you, your prince, your king, and all oppressors. I welcome death and long for it, for I shall instantly reappear on this earth and enjoy the delights of Paradise." The executioner stepped forward and cut his throat.

A few days after his execution, my friends the three brothers were arrested, their valuables looted by the king's son the Zil-es-Sultan, the then Governor of Ispahan, and by the Imām-i-Juma, the successor of their former protector, in the office of high priest of Ispahan. Their women, beaten and insulted, fled to the *anderūn* (harems) of friends and relations, but were repulsed by them for fear of being compromised. They then came to the telegraph-office in Julfa and sat in an outer room without money or food. After a few days the relatives, rather than let the (to them) scandal continue of the women being in the quarters of Europeans, gave them shelter.

The real cause of the arrest of these men was not their religion; the Imām-i-Juma owed them eighteen thousand tomans (seven thousand two hundred pounds); they were sent for and told that if they did not forgive the debt they would be denounced and inevitably slain. But habit had

made them bold; they declined to even remit a portion of the sum owing; they were politely dismissed from the high priest's presence, and a proposition made to the prince that the whole of their property should be confiscated by him, and that they should be accused of Baabiism and executed. This was agreed to. They were sent for and taken from the prince's presence protesting their innocence, the youngest brother cursing Baab as proof of his orthodoxy.

The next day all were savagely beaten in prison, and it was generally given out that they would be executed; but being men of wealth and influence, no one believed in this.

The English missionary in Julfa, the assistant superintendent of the telegraph, and a few Armenians, addressed a letter to the prince which, while apparently pleading their cause, really, I fear, accelerated their fate (if it had any effect). The prince was furious, and vouchsafed no reply.

I happened to see him professionally, and he asked me why I had not signed this letter. I replied that I had not been asked to in the first place; and that I should hesitate to mix myself up in the politics of the country, being a foreign official. He appreciated my motives, and asked if I knew the three men.

I replied that all three were my intimate friends, and I trusted that their lives were not really in danger.

I never have been able to ascertain if his reply was merely given to quiet me or not; it was this:—

“The matter is really out of my hands—it has been referred to the king; he is very bitter against Baabis, as you know; nothing that sahibs in Julfa may do will have any effect. Why, sahib, what would your Prince of Wales say if *he* were interviewed, and letters written to him about confessed criminals by obscure Persians? The missionary, the missionary, he only troubles me to make himself notorious.”

I explained that these Syuds were really personal friends of the missionary as well as my own.

“All disaffected people are friends of missionaries, as you very well know.”

I again asked him if they would be spared or not?

“I can tell you nothing more,” he said; “one has cursed Baab, he will not die. As for the others the king will decide; for me, I wish personally to kill no one; you have known me

school in Julfa; and the upper form proceed to the first four books of Euclid, Algebra, Latin, and French, in which, unlike the smattering of a middle-class school at home, a thorough grounding is given. Dr. Hoernle, too, sees all comers gratuitously, and administers to their ailments. He has a large apartment as a consulting-room, with convenient waiting-rooms for either sex. Another room has been set apart as a hospital, where the more serious cases are treated surgically; and the Church Missionary Society certainly have not spared money in benefiting the inhabitants of Julfa.

Some orphan-boys are fed, clothed, and educated with the others, and gradually it is hoped to make the school self-supporting; but I fear that the Julfa people will hardly pay for what they are used to get gratuitously. A girls' school has also been commenced by Mrs. Bruce, and sufficient funds having been collected to obtain a schoolmistress, in November 1882 one went out. The Rev. Dr. Bruce, who commenced the work in Julfa, is engaged in translating the Bible into Persian, and portions of it have been completed and published.

All the difficulties which were first thrown in the way of proselytism *among the Armenians*, have now been surmounted, and a considerable number of converts have been made from the Armenian Christians to the tenets of the Church of England. But as yet no converts have been made from the Mahomedans. These, however, are encouraged to come to the services, in the hope of arousing their curiosity; but they simply seem to come for the show, only presenting themselves very occasionally. The magnificent establishment kept up by the Church Missionary Society is the wonder of the Persians, and Dr. Bruce has succeeded, principally by having expended large sums of money in building in Julfa, and employing many labourers, in securing the respect of the Julfa Armenians.

Employment is sought to be given to the less gifted among the scholars in a factory where various arts are taught, such as weaving, but this does not appear a success. The clever artisans, Baabis, nominally Mussulmans, employed by Dr. Bruce as decorators and builders, have made a really handsome series of buildings, perhaps a little florid. These men have been able to show their great skill in decoration, and the beautiful geometrical patterns on the outer wall of the church, the hand-painted screen which runs round the eaves of the courtyard,

and the incised decorations in stucco in the interior of the church, representing parrots, flowers, etc., are curious in the extreme.

This church can seat three hundred comfortably; the effect is good of the pale yellow of the plaster and the coloured glass of the windows.

Every door and window in the house, etc., is beautifully made, stained, glazed, and varnished, and fitting accurately; in fact, one feels a little envious when one leaves one's poor Persian quarters with ill-fitting doors and windows, for this handsome European-like establishment.

On leaving the first courtyard, which contains the private quarters of Dr. Bruce and the church, one enters the school. Three sides of a large courtyard are occupied by schoolrooms, and a fine playground is in the middle, with a large stone houz, or tank, handsomely built. In this the boys in hot weather daily bathe. Here, too, are parallel bars, a vaulting pole, and a giant's stride; beyond this is another courtyard, containing a vineyard, the technical school, the dispensary, and rooms for the orphans. Other rooms, but small and poor, are occupied by the girls' school, which is, however, I believe, to be enlarged, and an English teacher, too, has lately gone out for the girls. Another large house adjoining is occupied by the steward of the orphans, while at the other side are built a set of European stables. A garden is hired by Dr. Bruce, where he cultivates successfully all kinds of European vegetables for his table.

There is no doubt that so large an establishment, vying with that of the bishop in size, and far exceeding it in the amount of money expended, and the number of hands employed, is of great benefit to the Julfa people.

The influence of the priests is on its last legs, and the education given is very thorough, while gratuitous medical attendance is provided by Dr. Hoernle. This, however, is indiscriminately given to Mussulmans as well as Armenians. Of course the great hope is that the benefits of the school may be permitted to the Mahommedan population of the town; but this, I fear, will never be. Let us hope I may be wrong.

The small establishment of the Lazarist Fathers, which is the next house to the vast range of buildings belonging to the Church Missionary Society, presents a great contrast.

I learn a good deal of the inner side of Persian life. I look over the work of my artist friends, who do not press me to buy, but who do descant on the falling off in art in Persia.

Or I take a look at Houssein Khari, who has a factory for false antiquities. Here I see, among heaps of sham, at times something real and good; but Houssein Khari does not sell the good things, only the rubbish. As I go he ironically holds out to me a jade teapot, requesting me to buy it for one hundred pounds. I see that the age of bargains is over, and retire.

Or I make a visit to my friends the Baabis. Here, however, I have to eat such a tremendous breakfast that a siesta is needed, and I only am allowed to start homewards at six, after pipes and tea have been taken, and much information extracted from me.

Or a professional visit is made, and I come across bits of Eastern life in out-of-the-way quarters of the huge and ruined town.

Or I call on the hakim-bashi, or head doctor, my friend, and hear of his troubles in ruling the Jews, editing his newspaper—for he is the editor of the *Ispahan Gazette*—in establishing the *new* or *modern* college, of which he is the head and the prince the patron.

Or I take a long ride through the bazaars, to the disgust of my servants, who do not care to be seen as an unbeliever's servants in the fanatical heart of the city.

Or, riding to the maidān, I look out in the early morning for a cheap horse, which the brokers offer for sale here each day, and see the furious riding of the Persian buyer trying his steed. This maidān, or "*place*," is, I think, over a quarter of a mile long by a furlong wide. In the centre is a small circular brick platform, on which is a high pole, with projecting pieces for the feet, and a pulley at top. Here criminals used to be hoisted by the feet, and then allowed, the rope being cut, to be dashed head foremost to the ground. At the foot of this pole take place the numerous executions, though the Governor of Ispahan is not fond of shedding blood.

When the new Mission at Gulhaek was being finished in the time of the late minister, Mr. Alison, he instructed the builder to make a "a place for a flagstaff," and a huge pole

having been procured, it was set up, and the architect smilingly presented the work to his Excellency.

Mr. Alison looked at it and tapped his forehead, and, turning to the architect, said—

“I think I have seen somewhere something like this” (there was then an execution pole in Teheran exactly like the one in Ispahan, but with a higher and larger brick platform).

“Yes, yes,” replied the smiling Persian, of course, “the Dar” (execution pole). “I have tried to copy it exactly; very imposing, is it not? Strikes the eye at once.”

No praise came. His Excellency turned away, and the pole was earthed up over the brickwork, leaving an ornamental mound, now covered with shrubs and roses.

The ordinary way of execution is by throat-cutting; the victim, clad in shirt and drawers only, is led into the square; unless a celebrated criminal, only a few loafers crowd round; a pipe is smoked by the culprit, and he is told to kneel; he does so, and the executioner, coming behind him, cuts his throat with a short curved knife. As a rule the body lies where it falls, and the relatives, on payment of a small fee to the executioner, are allowed to remove it next morning. Blowing from a gun is a common form of death when it is wished to strike terror into the hearts of evil-doers; I have known it done once at Ispahan, the criminal being a Khan accused of rebellion. This man had been some months in prison under sentence of death; day by day he found means to bribe the minister and the Governor, and his execution was delayed; at length his funds being exhausted he was actually brought out into the maidān, and the cannon loaded in his presence; but he had still a little money left, which he paid, or rather his friends did, and he was taken back to prison; this was his last penny; *the next day* he was blown from a gun.

Just after my arrival in Teheran a notorious female dancer of considerable personal attractions, and only seventeen years of age, was brought before the queen-mother, who was celebrated for her intrigues, charged with visiting the houses of Europeans. The girl did not deny her crime, and, feeling her danger, became desperate, reviling the queen-mother, and saying that they were fellow-sinners. The queen-mother immediately obtained an order for the girl's death, and caused

of the old man must be enormous; besides his own estates, which are very large, he inherited the entire property of his brother, a very wealthy man, and much of that of his son-in-law, the late Governor of Fussa. In 1879 and 1880, however, came an evil day for him. Khosro Mirza, the Motummad-ul-Molk and uncle of the king, was made Governor of Fars. This powerful and politic prince had on a previous occasion been compelled to leave Shiraz, and was subsequently deprived of his governorship by the successful intrigues of the Muschir, whose son-in-law, specially kept at Teheran for the purpose of having access to the royal ear, had administered on the Muschir's behalf bribes to the king, to such an amount as to induce the Shah to deprive his uncle of his governorship, and to appoint a man of straw, thus giving the real power into the hands of the Muschir. And now came the day of reckoning. The Muschir became, as it were, a prisoner in his own house. The Kawam, his wealthy and ancient rival, was at once taken into the Governor's favour, and titles of honour and local governorships conferred on his son, a youth long supposed to be an idiot, but who now showed a capacity for Persian political life which astonished even his own people. The hungry sons of the Motummad, despatched into the richest governorships of the province, proceeded to fleece the dependants of the Muschir. And to be a dependant, friend, or adherent of the old man became a crime.

Mirza Mahomoud, the secretary of the Muschir, was arrested, his house and property arbitrarily confiscated, and his accumulations wrung from him as the price of his life. And at last the Governor seized the Muschir himself, and actually administered a severe bastinado to his enemy, *now an old man of seventy-five*: the Muschir's life was also attempted by poison. All that could be confiscated was taken, the ready cash and jewels to an enormous amount became the property of the Motummad-ul-Molk (the king's uncle) and his sons, while claims were made against the Muschir for great amounts.

But though Khosro Mirza hungered for the old man's life, he had yet influence sufficient at the capital to preserve it, and an order came that the Muschir should retire to Kerbela (in Turkey), the shrine of the prophets Houssein and Hassan, there to end his life in prayer and repentance. But the Muschir may yet prove a thorn in the side of his enemies; he is now back in Shiraz and apparently inactive.

The Kawam (grandson of the celebrated Hadji Kawam of Shiraz, executed by boiling to death), after being for some years in the shade, through the successful intrigues of the Muschir, is now in the full blaze of power. His son has his foot in the stirrup of success, and he is the only local man in real power in the province of Fars. Rather boorish in manner, the Kawam is kind and honest, liberal and true to his adherents in adversity; it remains to be seen whether he will show the politic moderation of the Muschir, who never made an enemy unless he was able to remove him. The system of the Kawam has been to strengthen his local influence by marriages of the various members of his family, and his open and honest, if at times obstinate, policy has made him many personal friends, more valuable than those of the Muschir, whose adherents were either mercenary or those who for their safety assumed the name.

The policy of the Governors of Fars has invariably been to play off the Kawam against the Muschir, so taking bribes from both, but never destroying either. However, one thing is quite certain, the Kawam is an old and honoured citizen of Shiraz without a personal enemy save the Muschir, while the latter does not possess a real friend, and being heirless may fall a victim to some unscrupulous Governor, who may take his life on some pretext, secretly or openly, for the sake of the pickings from his still gigantic estates.

Another grandee of Shiraz was Mirza Naim, the paymaster of the forces of Fars, a military officer of high rank and great age. (He was the general who in the time of the Baabi revolt besieged the walled city of Zinjan, the capital of a province of Persia held by those fanatics; the place was obstinately defended, the women even appearing on the walls, and fighting and dying for the sake of their ridiculous creed. On the taking of the city by assault, a *kutli-i-aum*, or general massacre, was ordered, and the atrocities committed were too horrible to mention.) The Governor of Fars (at that time, 1870-5), the Zil-es-Sultan, wishing to wring a large fine, and a considerable sum of money supposed to have been appropriated by the paymaster-general, after numerous indignities placed Mirza Naim in a snow-chair—the man was seventy-five years of age—compelled him to drink water-melon juice, to produce the well-known diuretic effect, and while the sufferer was frozen to the

snow-seat, caused a dog to be placed on his lap, thus insulting his aged co-religionist. Although the man had borne these horrible tortures for some hours, he now consented to pay the sum demanded. Of course the result to his aged frame was not long in doubt; he soon succumbed to the effects of the injuries he received.

I am particular in describing his treatment from the Zil-es-Sultan, as it shows the improbability of the story told by a radical politician who recently travelled through Persia, and among other marvellous tales inserted the groundless calumny, seen at page 15, volume ii., of Mr. Arthur Arnold's 'Through Persia by Caravan,' in which he says, "A European doctor, to his shame be it said, talking one day with the Zil-i-Sultan [*sic*] upon the interesting topic of torture, suggested an ancient method which, we were told, at once struck the prince as applicable to the snowy regions of Ispahan. To draw the teeth of Jews who refused gifts to the Government was the practice in days when the civilisation of England was no more advanced than that of Persia; but I never heard before of stuffing a man's trousers with snow and ice as an efficient way of combating his refusal to pay a large demand in the season when the thermometer stands—as it does in Central Persia—for months below zero." Now, as possibly I may be alluded to under the vague title of "A European doctor," not many of whom exist in Persia to speak to the Zil-es-Sultan, and the story is glibly told by this author, yet I fancy that it will not be credited, even on the statement *of the retailer of scandals, said to be heard, through interpreters, from Orientals*; when it is considered that it was hardly needful to *apprise* the Zil-es-Sultan of a means of cruelty, since he was so ingenious as to use the very same old method on a general of over seventy-five *some years before—I being in Shiraz at the time, as the prince well knew—and the supposed refinement of cruelty no new thing to the prince.** When an author swallows and *repeats* such yarns, as that one of our sergeants shot an unoffending Armenian, etc.—the unoffending Armenian and the shooting being alike myths (see vol. ii. p. 167, etc.)—one can only suppose that the capacity for swallowing such tough stories is equalled by the pleasure

* Would it have been necessary to have *explained* to Bishop Bonner the use of the thumbscrews *after* his cruelty to the Reformers?

At many village schools a few only of the boys learn to write, all to read. This power of reading they soon lose, but a villager has little occasion for it, and the repeating from memory of a few prayers, and passages from the Koran, with some verses of poetry, is all that remains to the villager generally of his education.

The quoting of poetry in Persia is universal; it is in every man's mouth from highest to lowest, and is introduced into the most unpoetical conversations. The servants would often pass their evenings listening to the declamation of the poet Firdūsi as intoned by my cook; and certain hackneyed quotations are ever on the lips of even the most ignorant.

A few boys, after leaving school, proceed to college ("medresseh"). These are intended for the priesthood, the law, or medicine.

There seem to be no regular courses.

The student studies Arabic sedulously, and reads a good deal in a desultory sort of way, much time being devoted to poetry and commentaries on the Koran, while he fills up the rest of his time in literally "sitting at the feet of the local Gamaliels," regularly presenting himself at the receptions of the heads of law and religion; he is seen at their "medjlisses," or assemblies; ever ready with a quotation, or a smooth affirmative, or a sigh of astonishment at the erudition of his patron; the student swells the throng of his numerous hangers-on, accompanying him on visits, and to the mosques; ever ready to write a letter, run with a message, give an order to a servant; in fact, to do everything that is not exactly menial.

After a few years of assiduously imitating the great man, the young priest or lawyer is, perhaps, sent to a small village, where he may become pedagogue and parson, or he elects to follow the fortunes of some grandee as secretary on no wages, with possible opportunities of modakel (peculation).

Or, if a doctor's son or relative, he compounds his drugs for a year, and then is a full-blown hakim, or physician, and, setting up in some distant town, on the principle that "no man is a prophet in his own country," he may earn a very comfortable living.

In Teheran there is a college where the rudiments of a liberal education are taught by English and French professors on an ambitious scale. From this college are recruited the

courtiers, diplomats, and Government employés of the Shah, also the principal officers of the army.

The daughters of the rich and learned are the only women who are at all educated; some of them are good readers and reciters of poetry, and can even write verse themselves; but most of the educated women can merely write a letter and read the Koran, or an ordinary Persian story-book, the former *without comprehension*, it being in Arabic. A great deal of their time is given to poetry, and they are all of a very sentimental turn. About one woman to fifty educated men are found, the policy of Mahommedanism being "not to open the eyes of a woman too wide."

Among the educated classes many are infidels, others pure theists, while communism *as a religion* is followed by the numerous secret sectaries of the "Baab;" among whose tenets is undoubtedly, though the Baabis deny the fact, that of community of wives and property.

The great portion, however, of the merchants, traders, and villagers are *really* Mahommedans, a practical and work-a-day religion, when stripped of mummery and bigotry. The Persian is not prone to fanaticism, though he is easily excited to it, and dangerous when in a state of religious fervour. They are very particular as to prayers and forms, as fasting, etc., and many carry them out at great personal inconvenience.

Among the higher servants—military and courtier class—however, irreligion is rife. These say no prayers, keep no fasts, have no belief, and are utterly dead to everything but what they believe to be their own interests. Many openly boast their disbelief in anything, *and this is done with impunity*.

In the year 1874 I had occasion to march down to Bushire. The journey was without incident, but shows the extraordinary variety of the climate. We went down on our own horses in five days.

The first night we lay covered with all our rugs in a small room, four of us, with a huge fire, and it was impossible to sleep for the intense cold. The next day we rode through heavy snow, having to blunder through drifts on foot up to our waists, dragging our horses, and glad to drink raw curaçao to keep any warmth in us when freezing on our horses, where we *were* able to ride. The fourth night we slept in the open air at Dalliké, under some palms, with next to no covering; and

INDEX.

- ABADEH**, 261, 356
 „ carvings, 332
Abbah, the, 319
Abbas Kūli Khan, 215
 „ the Great, 161
Abdul, 285
Abdul Hamid, 276, 353
Abdullah's types, 9
Abdul Mahomed, 64
Ab-i-Rūkhni, 218
Ab-i-Zungi, 218
Ableh, 62
Abū Seif Mirza, 59, 84
 „ Senna, 82
Accident to Mr. H—, 128
Accidents in driving, 374
Actors, Persian, 282
Aden, 343
Administration of justice, 146
Adulteration of opium, 180
Afghan pousseens, 319
 „ (?) tiles, 198
Aflatoon, 82
Agha Hassan, 109
Ahs an Ahs, 96
Ahū, 167
Aid-i-No Ruz, 48, 51
Akbar Khan, 402
Alangū, 323
Alarm of robbers, 130
Alexander the Great, 378
 „ „ coins of, 76
Algiers, 342
Ali Akbar, 282
 „ death of, 283
Ali Oh! 43
Alison, His Excellency Mr., 48, 201
Alla Sung, 392
Alligators, 344
American missionaries, 144
Aminabad, 262
Ancient Armenian language, 140
 „ buildings, disappearance of, 364
 „ engraved ruby, 37
 „ Julfa, 161
 „ mud-houses, 137
Anderūn, 92
Anecdote of a dervish, 47
 „ re smoking, 32
Aniline dyes, 149
 „ dyes, prohibition of, 63
Animals, treatment of, 316
Antelope hunt, 86
Antelopes, 56
Apostate monk, 139
Appetites, large, 336
Apricots, 163
April, the 1st of, 330
Arab dress, 110
 „ horse, my, 61
 „ horses, 106
 „ pipe, 33
Arachnoort, the, 138, 141, 159
Ararat, hailstones at, 391
Araxes river, 19, 313
'Arcot,' voyage in the, 341
'Arkansas,' 214
"Armchair," 136
Armenian Alsatia, 142
 „ artificers, 162
 „ baptism, 141
 „ church, 160
 „ converts, 164
 „ cook, 363
 „ fasts, 144

- Armenian, grateful, 93
 " graves, 162
 " jewellers, 162
 " Kaweh Khana, 163
 " loafers, 143
 " marriage of, 141
 " priest, 132
 " Protestant teacher, 140
 " schools, 144
 " scriptures, 140
 " theatre, 9
 " tribute, 376
 " village, 131
 " wine-sellers, 142
 " women, dress of, 132
 " women, industry of the,
 360
 Armenians, 72, 110
 " anecdote of, 73
 " apostatising, 111
 " bread, 336
 " carpenters, good, 123
 " character of, 316
 " disguised as Europeans,
 72
 " education of, 144
 " former oppression of, 144
 " idleness of the, 359
 " improved position of, 144
 " of Hamadan, 72, 74
 " position of in Persia, 74
 " sanctity of, 73
 " successful, 143
 " taken to Julfa, 161
 " uncleanliness of, 316
 Arms, 322
 Arnold, Mr. Arthur, 373
 Arrack, 140, 159, 360
 Art of avoiding falls, 54
 Arts, lost, 162
 Asparagus, wild, 168
 Ass, wild, the, 308
 Assadabad Pass, 101
 Astrachan, 405
 As we turn in another turns out, 110
 Attempts to proselytise among the
 Persians, 144
 Audience at Tazzia, 281
 Austrian officers, 371
 Avadavata, 347
 Avicenna, 82
 Ayrton, Mr., 5
 B——, Mr., 27, 213
 B——, Rev. R., 340
 Baab, cursing, 155
 Baabi artificers, 164
 " conspiracy, 154
 " death of a, 154
 " revolt, 272
 Baabiism, tenets of, 154, 339
 Baabis, 144, 339
 " charges against, 154
 " visit to, 201
 Baab, 153
 Bad drainage, 153
 Badraghah, 56
 Bad water, 153, 241
 Bagghalli, 236
 Bagh-i-No, 218
 Bagh-i-Takht, 220, 292
 Baker, an ungrateful, 183
 Bakhtiaria, 262
 Baku, 403
 Bamiah, 170
 Bankers, 192
 Bank-notes, edict as to, 63
 Baptism, Armenian, 141
 Barbers' Bridge, the, 388
 Bargain for mules, a, 381
 Bargains, 187
 Barley, 102
 Bastinado, the, 146
 " at Kümishah, 254
 " degrees of, 148
 Bath carpets, 152
 " at Constantinople, 212
 " the, 334
 Bazaar, at Teheran, 372
 " breakfasts, 200
 " practice, 182
 Bazaarcha Balund, 20
 Bazūband, 290, 323
 Bear and dog fight, 227
 Beards, 321
 Beaters, 177
 Bēbē Sakineh Sultan Khanūm, 215
 Bedding for travelling, 55