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

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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 kūrsis, 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 battened 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 Imām-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 Mahommedans. 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 hauz, 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 kuttl-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

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