[James Morier]

first issued
London 1828
"revised, etc."

ADVENTURES

HAJJI BABA

OF ISPAHAN

IN ENGLAND.

PARIS,
THEODORE LEGRAND.

THE

ADVENTURES

OF

HAJJI BABA,

OF ISPAHAN,

IN ENGLAND.

REVISED, CORRECTED, AND ILLUSTRATED WITH NOTES, AND AN APPENDIX,
BY THE AUTHOR.

PARIS,
BAUDRY'S EUROPEAN LIBRARY,
RUE DU COQ, NEAR THE LOUVRE.
SOLD ALSO BY AMYOT, RUE DE LA PAIX; TRUCHY, BOULEVARD DES ITALIENS;
THEOPHILE BARROIS, JUN., RUE RICHELIEU; LIBRAIRIE DES ETRANGERS,
RUE NEUVE-SAINT-AUGUSTIN; AND FRENCH AND ENGLISH LIBRARY,
RUE VIVIENNE.

1835.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

To the gentle Reader,

Should you perchance have perused a certain history, called The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan, and had the patience to reach the last page, you will there have seen a sort of declaration, that if the translator were to meet with encouragement, he would inform you how his hero (if such he may be called) accompanied a great ambassador from Persia to England, and of their subsequent adventures.

In all humility I beg to inform you that I am that translator; but in making the said declaration, I found that I had placed myself in a dilemma; for what is encouragement? let me ask. Is it the applause of friends ? No; they are partial. The notice of the daily press? Puffing is no encouragement. The criticism of reviewers? They lose sight of the work, and write their own essays. Not even the several editions through which a book may pass can be appealed to as a decided test; for now-a-days, in England, reading societies are as numerous as reading men in other countries, and they alone exhaust a first edition, whether the book is read or not; whilst the second generally remains to lumber the booksellers' shelves; therefore, unless the copies sold be counted, not by hundreds, but by thousands, an author can scarcely be said to have acquired decided success.

Such being the case, to use Hajjî's language, I folded the arms of idleness over the breast of resignation; and since my book had scarcely exhausted a second edition, I was determined to bid adieu to ambition, and to seat myself amongst the obscure class of second or third-rate scribblers. In the meanwhile, certain duties having obliged me to cross the Atlantic to visit certain countries in America, I had almost forgotten the pro-

jected continuation of my translation; and, absorbed in the affairs of the New World, I became neglectful of my plans in the Old.

On my return to England, I was one morning roused by the reception of a letter from Persia. It came from one high in office, and with whom I had lived in habits of intimacy during my residence in that country, and its perusal threw me at once into the very heart of my Asiatic recollections. As I considered and reconsidered its contents, I could not forbear exclaiming, "Encouragement! do I seek for encouragement to proceed with Hajjî Baba? Here it is in abundance—this letter alone is sufficient!"

I will now venture to lay the said letter before you; and, suppressing the first paragraph, which is evidently written by an English hand, I will then state why I look upon it as "encouragement."

It is as follows: —

"*Tehran*, 21*st May*, 1826.

"My dear Friend,

"I am offended with you, and not without reason. What for you write Hajjî Baba, sir? King very angry, sir. I swear him you never write lies; but he say, yes—write. All people very angry with you, sir. That very bad book, sir. All lies, sir. Who tell you all these lies, sir? What for you not speak to me? Very bad business, sir. Persian people very bad people, perhaps, but very good to you, sir. What for you abuse them so bad? I very angry. Sheikh Abdul Russool * write, oh! very long letter to the king 'bout that book, sir. He say you tell king's wife one bad woman, and king kill her. I very angry, sir. But you are my friend, and I tell king, sheikh write all lie. You call me Mirza Firouz, I know very well, and say I talk great deal nonsense. When I talk nonsense? Oh, you think yourself very clever man; but this Hajjî Baba very foolish business. I think you sorry for it some time. I do not know, but I think very foolish.

"English gentlemen say, Hajjî Baba very clever book, but I think not clever at all—very foolish book. You must not be angry with me, sir. I your old friend, sir. God know, I your very good friend to you, sir. But now you must write other book, and praise Persian peoples very much. I swear very much to the king you never write Hajjî Baba.

"I hope you will forgive me, sir. I not understand flatter peoples, you

* The governor of Bushire, in the Persian Gulf; by which it appears that the book reached Persia through India.

know very well. I plain man, sir—speak always plain, sir; but I always very good friend to you. But why you write 'bout me? God know I your old friend.

"P. S. I got very good house now, and very good garden, sir; much better as you saw here, sir. English gentlemans tell me Mexico all silver and gold. You very rich man now, I hope. I like English flowers in my garden—great many; and king take all my china and glass. As you write so many things 'bout Mirza Firouz, I think you send me some seeds and roots not bad; and because I defend you to the king, and swear so much little china and glass for me very good."

And now, very probably, you will ask, "How can you gather encouragement from such a letter as this?" for it sounds very much like the story of the horse-dealer, who, in showing off his horse, received a kick in his ribs, and, although smarting under the pain, made up the best face he could, and exclaimed, "Pretty playful creature, it is nothing but play!"

I proceed to assert, that I look upon it as an encouragement to have produced any sort of sensation among a lively people like the Persians, by which they may be led to reflect upon themselves as a nation. Touch but their vanity, and you attack their most vulnerable part. Let them see that they can be laughed at, you will make them angry. Reflection will succeed anger; and with reflection, who knows what changes may not be effected?

But having produced this effect, let me ask what further good may not be expected by placing them in strong contrast with the nations of Christianity, and more particularly with our own blessed country? And it is this which has been attempted in the following pages. In talent and natural capacity, the Persians are equal to any nation in the world. In good feeling and honesty, and in the higher qualities of man, they would be equally so, were their education and their government favourable to their growth. What is wanted, then, but some strong incentive to reflection? And if an insignificant work as the one in question can have produced the feelings with which the foregoing letter has been written, what might not the labours of some of the high and mighty in genius and ability produce, if applied to the same purpose? A change in the edifice may be made, that is certain; the only question is, on what side of it shall we begin to knock down?

Adopting his style of language, I answered my friend's

letter; * and forthwith determined to proceed in unravelling the manuscript of which Hajjî Baba had made me master. I found that to translate it word for word would be almost impossible, for it was so full of inaccuracies, so difficult of comprehension in its chronology, what took place in one year was so identified with what had happened in another, that my only chance to be intelligible would be to found it upon a new model. The European names also were perfect hieroglyphics. Who could discover Willoughby, in *Yellobelli;* Crawley, in *Cara Ogli*; Wellesley, in *Wizly*; Salisbury, in *Asalbery*; Stracey, in *Istirgi*; Foreign Office, in *Fall in hafiz ?*

* The following letter can be looked upon as of no consequence, excepting, perhaps, to illustrate the sort of answer which is likely to have weight with a Persian :—

"*London*, 10*th Sept.* 1826.

"My dear Friend,

"I have received your letter, and I pray that your shadow may never be less.

"As for Hajjî Baba, what for you not read that book before you write me such letter, sir? Sheikh Abdul Russool great fool; he eats dirt, and knows no better; but you, Mashallah! you very clever man, sir, now, vizier, how you not read before you write? You say Hajjî Baba all lies. To be sure all lies. Thousand and One Nights all lies. All Persian story-books lies; but nobody angry about them. Then why for you angry with me? You say Persian people very good to me. Perhaps, not kill me, not make me Mussulman; that very good; thank you, sir, for that: but that's all. You say you my very good friend, sir. Yes, sir, you my very good friend. You lie and swear for me to shah, that very good: but one thing little bad. You say because Mexico rich, I very rich. That no very clever, sir. If I say, because shah very rich, you very rich, that stupid. I same as was; but you great vizier now, and got very good house, and very good garden. I send you, Inshallah! some seeds and roots by ship to India or Constantinople, and if you go on swearing so much to shah, perhaps send some china and glass.

"I hope you forgive me, sir; I not understand flatter peoples; you know very well I plain man, sir—speak alway plain, sir; but I always good friend to you. But why you write such bad letter to me? God knows I your old friend.

"P. S. I got very good wife now, and very good child, sir. You grand vizier now, and got all silver and gold, and shawls, and turquoise. I like silver and gold and nice things. As you write such bad letter, and so much abuse, and tell me I say lies, I think you send me some silver and gold; and because I got good wife and child now, little shawls and turquoise for me very good."

I determined, therefore, to attempt the compilation of a work which should give as many of the first impressions which England made upon Persians as I could gather from the Hajjîan manuscript. Leaving out long and tedious descriptions of things too well known to be amusing, and discarding numerous allusions to living persons, which, although in themselves, as far as I could discover, are inoffensive, yet still might cease to be so when they appeared in print, I have endeavoured to preserve the spirit of the original, although I have mainly deviated from its text.

And here, for my own part, I beg leave to disclaim personality of any kind. The letter above cited of my Persian friend shows how easily an individual will take a character to himself, which, although it may fit in some parts, yet does not on the whole; and is no more presented as a finished portrait, than taking a nose from one person, a mouth from another, and the eyes from a third, to make up a whole face, can be called the likeness of either of those who have only contributed a feature.

And should you, my reader, perchance alight upon some trait which you may recollect, do not immediately exclaim, "This is Mr. Such-a-one," or, "That must be my Lady This;" believe me, you will form imperfect conclusions. The one idea of illustrating Persian manners by contrast with those of England has been my *kebleh*, the direction of my Mecca. It is unnecessary to say that the work might have been extended through many volumes, so rich and various is the subject; but I felt that hints would be better than more elaborate description; and as

> "The slightest sketch, if justly traced,
> Is by ill colouring the more defaced;"

so I thought if I dwelt too much upon subjects which were obvious in themselves, my book would be thrown aside, and I should be preparing for myself that greatest of all calamities, viz. being voted a bore.

That you may not think me so, and that the protecting shadow of your countenance may not be withdrawn from me, is the earnest prayer of your humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

London, 19*th April*, 1828.

To this edition of Hajjî Baba in England, which I have revised for "The Standard Novels," I have added an Appendix containing illustrations of Persian manners, which may not be uninteresting to the reader. This Appendix is extracted from my second "Narrative of Travels in the East."*

THE AUTHOR.

London, April, 1835.

* Published by Messrs. Longman and Co., and appended to this work by their permission.

THE

ADVENTURES

OF

HAJJI BABA

IN ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

Hajji Baba, now a man of consequence, enjoys his dignity.—He is ordered to collect presents, preparatory to an embassy to England from the shah of Persia.

When I entered Ispahan as the shah's deputy, so much wind had inflated my brain, and my nose was carried so high, that I looked upon my townsmen, the Ispahanis, in no better light than stones in the highway. Most luckily my mother and her husband, the Âkhon, had quitted the city, and taken up their abode in a mountain village, the Âkhon's birth-place, some fifteen parasangs distant, and therefore they did not obstruct my grandeur. As for old Ali Mohamed, the door-keeper of the caravanserai, whose presence would probably have interfered with my vanity, he had hastened to follow my poor father to the grave, and the inexorable Azraël* had long since separated his soul from his body. I almost instinctively avoided the approaches to our shaving shop, that scene of my early days and subsequent adventures, and, indeed, took but little pleasure out of the house, where, however, I took care

* Azraël is the angel or death, according to the Mahomedan faith, who, at the death of a true believer, separates the soul from the body.

to enjoy as many of the privileges attendant upon my new dignity as I possibly could. I ceded the seat of honour to no one but the governor of the city himself, and even with him I never failed to go through all the restiveness of a man of consequence, who, in forcing another to the seat of honour, shows that he does not thereby relinquish some pretensions to it himself. To any one who was ignorant of my origin, my knowledge of ceremony and forms of speech must have appeared quite natural, so perfectly at home did I find myself in my new character.

The business with which I was intrusted was one of no small importance, inasmuch as I was commanded, by virtue of a special firman, to levy upon the cities of Ispahan, Shiraz, and their dependencies, almost the whole of the presents intended to be sent to the king of England by the projected embassy. "By my head, friend Hajjî," would I occasionally say to myself, "thou art born under a fortunate star! Here are the beards of the inhabitants of two of the largest cities of Persia and their provinces placed in thy hand, that thou mayst pluck them at thy pleasure." But then recollecting some of the wholesome lessons which my past life of adventure and vicissitude had taught me, I determined to make the head of prudence guide the hand of moderation, and for once to show the Ispahanis that conscience is a thing known in the heart of at least one of their fellow-citizens.

The firman was accompanied by a code of instructions, both of which, during the journey from Tehran, were the objects of my frequent meditation, more particularly because they contained one certain little word, upon which my mind constantly dwelt, and which raised my vanity to a most unruly height. I was styled *alijah*, the high in station, or the exalted Hajjî Baba. If any of my readers know what we Persians are, they will readily ascertain the reasons of my exultation; but those who do not must be told, that, if there is one point of ambition among us greater than another, it is that of being called *alijah*. Here, then, my rank in life was

settled. I bade adieu, as I hoped, for ever to the mortification of being called nothing but an *alishoon**, which was the case as long as I had been an executioner's officer, a mollah, and a merchant; and my imagination could scarcely contain the images of splendour and prosperity with which I was pleased to fill it. "Let those poor devils, the *alishoons*, now," said I, "hide their faces under the armpit of humility! I, who am an *alijah*, may hold up my head, and look at the sun with impunity." And I did not restrict my feelings within the bounds of mere words; for those who know me are, I am sure, aware that none ever supported his dignity better than I did. I did not hesitate to "thou" and "thee" those whom I had looked upon as my equals, and to drawl out my *demaugh-et-châk*, "Is thy brain in a state of sanity?" with the superior tone of one who takes another under his protection How delighted did it feel when I could say to a visiter, "Sit," instead of "Be pleased to command," the form of speech to which my lips had hitherto been accustomed! and it was perfect music to my ears to hear myself addressed by the inflating epithets of "lord and master;" I, who through life had never been favoured with any caresses from the hand of fortune, without having very soon after received some corresponding buffet.

The instructions from the shah were to the following effect:—"That the high in station, Hajjî Baba, was to use his best endeavours, with that wisdom for which he is famous, to procure several heads† of slaves of different denominations, worthy of being presented to the king of the Franks‡; that

* Although *alijah* and *alishoon* are words nearly of the same import, viz. exalted, eminent, high in station, &c.; still custom has produced a strong distinction in favour of the former. It is a title bestowed on those of undoubted rank, whilst the latter is used in addressing persons in the middling classes of society.

† Horses, asses, mules, black cattle, sheep, and slaves are sold by the *ras*, or head, in Persia.

‡ The Persians have but recently learned to discriminate one king of Europe from another; and "King of the Franks," even now, is perhaps, used as commonly by them to denote our sovereign as "King of England."

they should be skilled in various arts; and that one at least, of choice deformity, should be all ready prepared to act as a guardian in the infidel seraglio.

"That, in consideration of that holy injunction of the blessed Mahomed (upon whom be blessings and peace!) who ordaineth to give to those who have not, and to be merciful to those who are in need, the said Hajjî Baba is ordered to procure divers horses, Arabian, Turcoman, and others, which, on being presented to the shah of the Franks, may draw forth the admiration of his infidel subjects, and at the same time do credit to the king of kings in a foreign land; and that, moreover, by way of a mark of special favour and friendship to the said Franks, a mare, if to be procured, may be added, and thus perpetuate the blessing of giving a race of horses to those who now only possess jades, and promoting those who hitherto have grovelled in the mud to be carried on high with their heads in the fifth heaven.

"That, as it behoveth the dignity of the king of kings to clothe those whom he loveth in dresses of honour and high consideration, the said Hajjî Baba is commanded to select and gain possession of certain stores of brocades, silks, and velvets from the royal manufactories of Ispahan, Yezd, and Kashan, as well as to procure the shawls of Cashmire, woven in the looms of industry by the hand of science, suited to the wants, tastes, and fancies of the followers of the blessed Isau, in order that the shah of England may make clothes thereof suited to his own taste and pleasure; and that the love of the shah to the whole Frank nation, female as well as male, may be manifest, the said Hajjî is ordered to employ tailors, and men cunning in the fashioning of clothes, to make two full suits of dress for the queen of the Franks, similar to those worn by the Banou of the royal harem, duly adorned with precious stones, before and behind, above and below, and to add thereto a store of collyrium for the eyes, *khennah* for staining the hands and feet, jewels for the nose, and jewels

for the ear, pins for the shirt, a zone for the waist, and rings for fingers as well as toes.

"That the pearl being the ornament peculiar to royalty, the said Hajjî Baba is enjoined to seek for and possess such pearls, or strings of pearl, as may form suitable presents to the king of the Franks; and if in the royal fishery at Bahrein any single pearl of consequence has been lately discovered, he is ordered to give due intimation of the same.

"And he is further commanded to make collections of turquoises of the finest colour of the old mine, in order that, being worn and hung about the august person of the sovereign of England, he and his family may be effectually protected from glances of the evil eye, or from looks foreboding misfortunes."

To these were added several other articles for which Persia is famous, such as armour, swords, specimens of fine writing, inkstands, paintings, and talismans possessing various virtues. And, in fine, I was invested with almost full powers to attain for the use of the shah every thing that might be worthy of being presented to a crowned head.

CHAPTER II.

He describes the mode of levying the presents, and selects slaves for the use of the king of England.

When I exhibited my instructions to the governor, he was struck dumb with astonishment, and, as the phrase goes, his head went round and round. He was the son of the lord high treasurer, and, in his own estimation, a personage of great consequence; and was therefore extremely surprised to find that one of my hitherto insignificancy should have been

intrusted with a business of so much importance, and placed as it were over him, and out of the reach of his control. But he knew that the grand vizier was no friend to his father, and therefore he felt, however humiliating my presence at Ispahan might be to him, still he was bound in policy to be civil to the servant of that great dignitary; for such I took particular care to call myself.

"Where are we to find all these things, in the name of Allah?" said the governor. "The king's rayats are poor, and the articles here enumerated are only to be found among the wealthy. Our wits are diminished at the thought."

I answered, "As far as my interference goes, I am less than dust; but here is the king's firman, and you well know, O governor! that if these things do not exist on the face of the earth, it alone would produce them, let them be buried one hundred gez deep. A despotic shah produces strange miracles."

"Yes, that is very true," said he, as he cast his eye over the instructions; "but Ispahan is not Nubia, that slaves may be procured at a moment's notice; nor is it *Nejd*,* nor *Gûklan*, that horses are to be had when called for; nor are the pearl banks of Bahrein close at hand, no more than the mines of Khorassan for turquoises. Silks and velvets we possess, and such as we have, in the name of the Prophet, take; and tailors, by the blessing of Ali, to make them up, we have in abundance; and upon my head be it to fulfil that part of the orders of the Centre of the Universe; but as for the rest, our hands are cut short, and we must put our trust in Providence."

I had seen enough of my countrymen, to know whence these difficulties arose: therefore I quietly whispered into the governor's ear, that I was not one of those who kept the inside of my palm in darkness, but was willing to share with him such advantages as fate might throw in our way.

* *Nejd*, the province in Arabia whence come the most celebrated horses. *Guklán*, a tract of country amongst the Turcomans, famous for its horses.

This said, I found that things took a new turn; difficulties disappeared; and what before was not to be found, all at once became plentiful. Slaves now thronged the house; horses of all description were brought; silks, velvets, shawls, and carpets were piled up in the corners of my apartments; and merchants from Hind, Bagdad, and Khorassan came in bodies to exhibit their merchandise.

Considering that I was a party concerned in the embassy now in contemplation, and that much of its credit or discredit would accrue to me from the nature of the presents by which it would be accompanied, I became very anxious to make a selection of slaves, whose good qualities, being both agreeable and useful to the shah of England, might cement the good understanding between our respective states. Many of both sexes were brought to me, who had been taken from the harems and households of the principal men and merchants of Ispahan; but few met with my approbation, because few were accomplished in the arts which I conceived would be prized among the Franks. I at length fixed upon one, a woman of Ethiopia, who had acquired the peculiar habit of living almost without sleep; and when she did sleep, it was with her eyes open; so, if placed at night at the door of the shah of England's chamber, she would keep watch better than the fiercest lion. She was also warranted not to snore; a quality in a watching slave no doubt as much esteemed among the Franks as it is in Persia. I pitched upon a second, who was celebrated for boiling rice well, and for her skill in composing provocatives; so that whoever ate of her handiwork might be said to live twice as long as any other person; and this I thought was the highest compliment that could be paid to a crowned head, who ought, in justice and consistency, to live twice as long as other mortals. To these, as a specimen of the bodily strength of our Eastern subjects, I added a *pehlivan*, or prize-fighter, a negro whose teeth were filed into saws, of a temper as ferocious as his aspect, who could throw any man of his weight to the ground, carry a

jackass, devour a sheep whole, eat fire, and make a fountain of his inside, so as to act as a spout.

These I was lucky enough to secure; but the attainment of that jewel in our eyes, an accomplished guardian over the honour of the weaker sex, was not of such easy acquisition. Few harems at Ispahan are of sufficient consequence to be superintended by such persons, for they are the appendages of princely state, and of those upon whom the riches of the world have been plentifully showered. My enquiries were extended to Shiraz, where the prince governor of that place, celebrated for the magnificence of his harem, maintained several: but who could dare to insist upon his relinquishing one, merely for the convenience of infidels? I despaired of hearing of anything which might suit my views, when my emissary in the city assured me that he had obtained intelligence of one whose hideous aspect was all that I could desire, and whose price was beyond rubies and diamonds. He was reported to be the most vindictive, spiteful, and inexorable of his species, as watchful as a lynx, and as wary as a jackal. But to gain possession of him would require some art, since he was the property of the head of the law of Ispahan, an old, decrepit, and jealous man, whose numerous wives, it was said, made him eat more abomination in the course of a day than did all the reverses common to mortals in the course of a year.

I very soon found that my applications to obtain him were useless, for I had to treat with a man of considerable influence; and as I knew that it was the wish of the shah to keep well with the interpreters of the law, I did not press so immediate a compliance to the orders contained in my firman as I might have done. However, I thought it right to despatch a courier to the grand vizier with the intelligence, requesting that a special command might be sent to give up this prize into my hands, and to have it strongly stated, that none but the person in question was fitted to fill the high post of guardian over the wives of the shah of England.

This instrument soon produced its effect. The head of the law, with despair in his heart, heightened by jealousy, at length submitted to part with his treasure, and *Mûrwari*, or the Pearl, for that was his name, was delivered over into my custody. For the information of the curious, I must take the liberty of describing a specimen of such rare and precious deformity. In the first place, he had a head of enormous size, placed upon a thin shrivelled neck, that seemed by much too slender a pedestal for its support. The face was composed of a succession of wrinkles, which festooned over his features in folds of loose skin. The eyes, large, watery, and bloodshot, possessed the heavy dulness peculiar to the snake. The nose was merely an indication of that feature; but the mouth was that upon which the value of the deformity principally rested, for it was more a rent than an opening, the lower lip falling prone upon the chin, showing an inside of flesh seemingly on the brink of mortification. In short, Mûrwari was perfection. His voice was more like a croak than any other sound; and, altogether, when his features were set into motion, and when, at the same time, he exerted his lungs, it is positive that no woman, be she demon or angel, could ever for one moment dare to oppose him.

My assortment of slaves being complete, I soon collected the remainder of the presents, and then made my preparations for returning to Tehran. The governor and I had succeeded much beyond our most anxious expectations, for the surplus which we had managed to secure to ourselves was very handsome, all things considered; and I found the grand vizier's words verified; for, as the reader may recollect, he had forewarned me that this part of my commission could not fail of being beneficial to my interests. I determined to hoard this piece of good fortune as a provision against future want, and, instead of laying it out in vanities, and in preparations for a journey to the infidels, to bury it many *gez* deep, well secured in sealed bags, in some safe and secluded spot. None but myself should be acquainted with my secret;

and then, come what might, the day of necessity might overtake me, but it would find Hajjî Baba provided against its severity.

CHAPTER III.

The notions of Persians and Englishmen upon slaves are found to be at variance.—Hajjî Baba describes an interview with the English elchi.

I REACHED the capital in safety with the presents; my female slaves packed in baskets, my males on horse or mule-back: my carpets, shawls, and silks made up into bales impervious to rain; and my precious stones, &c. well secured in my own trunks. I made my way at once to the vizier's house, where I landed the caravan; and having gained an immediate admittance to his presence, made myself welcome by a valuable present, which I freely assured him was all that our destinies had placed at my disposal, although certain mysterious sacks at the bottom of my *yakdan*, I knew, were laughing at his beard. I then gave him a long and faithful account of my proceedings.

He very scrupulously ascertained the amount of my offering before he paid attention to other matters; and at length, having cheered me by the smile of satisfaction, and the corresponding compliment of "Hajjî, your place has been empty," he then proceeded to inform me that the eminent and exalted Mirza Firouz, the intended ambassador, had not been idle during my absence, for he had been fully taken up in furnishing out his own state and retinue, and that all now to be done, previous to his departure, was to communicate with the English elchi upon the letters to be addressed to the king of the Franks and his court, and also to exhibit before him the dif-

ferent articles which had been selected for presents to his sovereign. No embassy, in modern times, had been sent from Persia to the infidels, and therefore we were anxious to produce as good an impression as possible upon their minds of the wealth, power, and ingenuity of our country.

The English elchi was invited by the grand vizier to visit him one morning, and Mirza Firouz was also ordered to be in attendance, when the whole of the presents should be displayed. No hint had yet been given of what they were to consist, and, excepting what he might have gathered from common report, he was supposed to be ignorant of that which he was about to see. He came, and was received in the *dewankhoneh*, or hall of audience; a ceremony seldom adopted by the grand vizier, who was an old man little given to show, but who thought it necessary on such an occasion to make a sort of official display. The curtain was drawn up and extended in front of the room, the fountain in the marble basin was made to spout forth its water, and bowls of fruit, cooled with ice, were spread upon the floor.

When the ambassador and his suite had taken their seats, and when they had been properly welcomed by the vizier, I, who stood at the farthest end of the apartment, was ordered first to present to the ambassador a list of the intended presents, and then to exhibit each article in rotation.

The slaves and Mûrwari, who were in attendance, were made to stand forward and range themselves in a row on the border of the basin. As soon as the elchi had looked at the list, he stopped at the first article, and exclaimed, "How is this? Slaves!—This cannot be—we allow of no slaves in England."

"What words are these?" said the vizier calmly; "you have no slaves? Then how do you manage? who serves you?"

"We are all free in our country," said the ambassador, "and whoever comes there is free also."

"But, surely," said the vizier, "your shah must have slaves.

A king without slaves! Why, you might as well have a body without hands or feet. Who cooks for him? who attends him in the bath? who watches over him when he sleeps?"

"No," answered he, "our king has no more right to a slave than any one of his subjects. What you do by purchase, we do by hire; and, what is more, we not only do not allow of slavery in our own possessions, but our king is using his best influence to put it down in other states also."

"Indeed!" said the vizier, opening all his eyes and looking much astonished, "you surely cannot be so cruel? What would become of the poor slaves if they were free? Nothing can be happier than the lot of ours; but if they were abandoned to their fate, they would starve and die. They are our children, and form a part of our family."

"But you have it in your power to destroy them."

"Destroy them!" exclaimed the vizier. "Who is fool enough to set fire to his own house? Who would willingly lose the price of his slave?"

"At all events," answered the ambassador, "you can beat them at your pleasure, and no one can call you to an account for so doing."

"And what can hinder my beating any other servant, be he slave or not?" said the vizier. "All ranks here partake of the stick, excepting the shah, (whom Allah in his mercy preserve!) from me, who am the vizier, to the court scullion; and were it not for that, who could exist among such a set of madmen as we Persians are?"

"But," said I, in great humility, "if the ambassador did but know the qualifications of these slaves, I am sure he would not resist their proceeding to England. Under the protection of the one, the shah of England might sleep as securely from treachery as if he were watched by a lion; and eating of the food prepared by the other, he would never die."

"Our manners are different to yours," answered the ambassador with great politeness. Our shah, Heaven bless his

majesty! sleeps, like his subjects, in peace,—he wants no one to watch him,—he eats his food without the fear of poison, and puts as much trust in his cook as in his grand vizier."

"Then," said I, "here is the famous *pehlivan*. He is a complete Asfandiyar;* a body of brass, and hands of iron; you won't surely refuse him? Such a man is necessary to the state of every shah, and here is one who has no equal; with proper treatment he will fight anything that may be opposed to him."

"Yes, by the grace of Allah!" exclaimed the first minister, "whatever is of Frank origin, he would soon annihilate it. He is an animal to keep in a stable."

"We have our pehlivans too," said the ambassador; "but if they were to be deprived of their liberty, they would lose their strength. No, we cannot admit of slaves, and therefore I cannot agree to receive even this one as a present to our shah."

"Oh, this is most wonderful!" did we all exclaim. Every Persian looked astonished; and Mirza Firouz seemed vexed at being deprived of the advantage of making presents, which, in our eyes, were expected to ensure the success of the embassy.

"Well, but you won't refuse this," said the vizier, pointing to Mûrwari,—"this, who is without a price,—who has not his equal,—which even our king, the Asylum of the World, cannot boast of possessing."

"Our king is in no want of such an officer," said the ambassador; "we do not even know what the office means, much less what is its use."

"No!" said the vizier; "but your king has his wives, in the name of the blessed Mahomed! and, therefore, he must have guardians to superintend them. No women can exist without guardians" (looking round him at the same time, to

* Asfandiyar, the son of Kishtasp, in Persian history. He was called "Brazen-body," on account of his great strength, and is esteemed one of the Persian heroes.

gather the approbation of the bystanders), "no more than an orchard can be safe without its walls."

"What words are these?" was echoed by every one present, this being a matter of such common acceptance as not to be doubted, until they were stopped by the English ambassador saying,—

"Our king has only one wife, and the whole of his government are guardians over her good conduct; they are his Mûrwaris."

Upon this speech all the Persians laughed, and cried out, "*La illahah illahah!* there is but one God!"

"How," said the vizier, "only one wife? Then what is the use of his being king? Suppose he gets tired of her, what then?"

"How can I explain," said the elchi, "that which to you must be so difficult of comprehension? Women have frequently been our sovereigns. The meaning which we apply to the wife of your shah, and to an English queen, are totally different."

"It is plain," said the vizier, after weighing the subject in his mind, "that there is great difference between our customs and yours. Women here are counted as nothing. We put no trust in them. We look upon them as entirely devoted to the use of man; and you might as well expect the tiger to do homage to the lamb, as to see a Persian submit to be ruled by a woman. No, no, the *kizzilbash* only submits to the brave—he who wields the sharpest sword. The sword! the sword!" exclaimed the grand vizier, making a horizontal motion with his hand at the same time; "'tis the sword which governs us; there is nothing like a good *zualfaker*." *

"But, in the name of the Prophet, tell me," said Mirza Firouz to the Ambassador, "your shah must have more women belonging to his household than this one wife? He must

* Zualfaker was the famous sword of the Prophet Mahomed, which he alleged to have received from the angel Gabriel, and presented to his son-n-law, Ali.

have his dancing and singing women,—the keeper of his clothes,—his story-tellers, to set him to sleep,—his watchers at the door,—his private cooks,—besides, the chief wife, the *Banou* of the harem—she must be waited upon; and if she has children, they must be served by women; and all these women together require the control and superintendence of such persons as Mûrwari. You cannot make us believe that the women of your country are so different from ours, that they are left without proper spies and guardians over them."

"However extraordinary it may appear to you," answered the ambassador, "such is really the case. Our women are under no control, and are just as free as our men. Our king, respected and loved as he is, could no more attempt to keep his wife and her attendants in the state of subjection and confinement in which they are kept in Persia, than he could, without a trial, cut off their heads. The laws would not allow it. And as for placing spies and jailers over them, that would be totally impossible. In the first place, where could he get them.

"Get them?" exclaimed the vizier; "make them, to be sure, in the same manner that they are made here. A vizier who misbehaves,—a refractory khan,—a thieving *mastofi*, or secretary,—in short, anything will make a Mûrwari; and a very good situation they get of it, let me tell you. Then all one's prisoners of war are turned to such good account in this manner."

The ambassador appeared horror-struck at this speech, and still persisted in refusing Mûrwari to proceed to England as a present to his sovereign. But he assured us at the same time, that when the anxiety of the king of kings for the safety of the honour of the British harems was known, he made no doubt that such good intentions would be received with suitable expressions of gratitude.

But having refused the slaves, he made up for any unplea-

sant feelings which he might have caused in our minds,* by the rapture which he expressed at the sight of the horses which were intended to be sent. He was, luckily for us, no great judge of them; and, therefore, the animal which a Persian would most likely have rejected, he accepted with joy. What they wanted in excellence we, however, made up in fine sounding titles. One covered with marks, foreboding ill luck, was called *Khodabaksh*, or the Godsend. Another, white with age, was the Pearl. A third, who would never permit its ears to be touched, was known by the sportive name of *Sermest*, or Drunkard. Besides which there was a Hawk, a Hero, and a Bosom-friend, all names descriptive of the qualities of the animal. It had been in contemplation to add an elephant to the horses, seeing that its daily consumption of food was very inconvenient to the shah's treasury; but the ambassador having remarked that it would be difficult to transport it on shipboard, that part of the plan was omitted.

To the other presents the ambassador gave his ready approbation. In the same manner as we had named the horses, so we dealt with certain swords and pieces of armour. One sword was called Timoor's whip, and another was said to be the very scimitar with which Nadir Shah made his entrance into Delhi. A handsome corslet, helmet, and cuishes of steel inlaid with gold, were presented as having belonged to the famous Shah Ismael; whilst a shirt, inscribed all over with choice sentences of the Koran, and which had been worn by the shah's uncle, the great Aga Mohamed, during all his wars, was sent as a special mark of the friendship of the shah to the person of his brother of England, with a pressing request that he would wear it next to his skin whenever he went to battle, for that it was a sure talisman against any danger in or out of the field.

To the shawls, the magnificent quilts, the Herat carpets, the

* The refusal of a present in Persia is always esteemed an affront, and between crowned heads is a signal of warlike intentions.

silks, the velvets, the brocades, the ambassador made no objection; and he also accepted, without hesitation, of the pearls, the turquoises, the rubies, and the emeralds. The contemplation of the dress intended for the queen seemed to afford him some amusement. When it was spread out, the jacket opened to display the embroidery, the shirt with its ingrafted precious stones, and the trousers so well padded and overlaid with cloth of gold as to stand by themselves in the middle of the room, he laughed outright, and although he assured us that his queen would find it inconvenient to put on these articles, since the Frank women dressed differently to ours, still with great good-will he agreed to number this among the presents.

The conference being thus terminated, the ambassador returned to his house, leaving us to express our astonishment at the strange things we had heard concerning the extraordinary countries which we were about to visit.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the manner of conducting a royal correspondence in Persia.—A genuine letter from the king of Persia's chief wife to the queen of England.

The next most important matter to settle was the letters to be adressed to the king of England and his ministers, in answer to those brought by his ambassador. This was a subject of much consideration, for it was a long time since we had addressed any one of the kings of Frangistan; and it would be difficult, in so doing, to ascertain how far the Asylum of the Universe might compromise his dignity. The ambassador from the shah of England, 'tis true, had brought several oddly shapen, oddly written, and strangely sealed letters, whose form

and appearance were as different from those used in Persia, as was the ambassador's smooth chin to the grand vizier's bearded one. What the Franks explained to us, as intended for the seal, but which we thought at first might have been some precious salve, or ointment, was that which created the greatest curiosity amongst us. It was contained in a gilded box, and upon it was impressed a figure of strange import, representing a man on horseback killing a beast. Our learned men were called upon to offer some explanation. The nearest which they could afford was a conjecture that it might represent Rustam killing the celebrated white devil; but this was laid aside, for what had the Franks to do with our great hero, and where was the white devil ever heard of except in Mazanderan? The explanation which the Franks themselves gave was this, that it represented one Georgio one of their favourite imâms, who was always at work to keep a furious dragon from desolating England, and attacking their king; and therefore, that the representation of this great and everlasting miracle was used as a talisman to all writings, and to every thing relating to royalty, by which means the country was preserved in safety. This seal being attached by certain silken strings to the bottom of the letter, was the cause of much discussion between the grand vizier and the elchi. The former asserted that it denoted and acquiesced in inferiority; the latter maintained that no such intent could be implied, for that the king of England esteemed himself inferior to no crowned head in existence. We asserted our right to place the shah's seal at the very top of the letter; but this the elchi rejected with much indignation, because he had found out that this form was only used in Persia towards an inferior. We then offered to stamp it on one side of the writing; this also he objected to, because that might look too much familiarity. He then suggested thst the seal might be placed on a separate piece of paper, and inserted loose in the letter; to which we willingly agreed, because, whilst he asserted that it was

placed where it ought to be, we might on our part assert, if we chose, that it was intended for the very top of the letter.

The letter at length was composed, and was looked upon as a model of fine writing. The *Moonshi al Momalek*, the great moonshi of state himself, had applied the whole of his genius to selecting such flowers of language as would not fail to diffuse joy when exhibited in those dark and dank regions of the north; and it was remarked that the refined allusions which it contained were so difficult of comprehension, except by minds the most acute, that no common mortal could ever pretend thoroughly to understand what was meant. I cannot charge my memory with the contents of the whole letter, but there was one passage in it which was admired by all the court as a most finished piece of eloquence, and repeated from mouth to mouth as the acme of composition; it was this:—

"When the flower-garden from which the sweet-smelling flowers of this letter have been culled shall be refreshed and watered by the oscillations of your majesty's eyes, beaming good fortune, and when their fragrance shall have risen in soft incense into the inmost chambers of your understanding, at that auspicious moment may you be seated on the throne of health, and reposing under the canopy of a well-organized brain!"

Now, what common mind could ever suppose that this was only intended to mean, "we hope that this letter will find your majesty in good health?"

There still existed one difficulty, and that was, to answer a letter which had been written by the queen of England to her, whom, in the ignorance of our customs, the English called the queen of Irân, and which was accompanied by a present, consisting of a portrait of the queen, set round with diamonds, suspended by a chain to be worn round the neck. Now, although the shah's principal wife is called the Banou Harem, or the head of the seraglio, yet her situation in the

state bears as little affinity to that of queen of England (from what we could ascertain) as, one may say, the she buffalo kept in the enclosure for food and milk, has to the cow fed and worshipped by the Hindoo as his god. Our shah may kill and create banous at pleasure, whereas the queen of England maintains her post till the hand of fate lays her in the grave. However, it was necessary to answer the letter; and after it had been tried by several of the office scribes, it was at length undertaken by the great monshi, who had succeeded so well in the former instance. As such a correspondence was new in the annals of the empire, I will herewith give a copy of this letter in order that the world may know that genius and wisdom are flowers peculiar to the soil of my country:—

*Letter from the king of Persia's chief wife to the queen of England.**

"With prayers resembling the chaste garment of the Virgin Mary acquitted of false accusations, and with salutations true as the testimony of Isau given in favour of his mother's virtue, we hail your majesty, our beloved sister, whose court is resplendent as paradise; the pearl of the shell of authority; the lovely Venus in the sky of greatness; the ornament of Great Britain; the accomplished of the age; whose head, we pray, may be encircled with the canopy of splendour, so long as the celestial bodies, like the illuminating chandeliers in Christian churches, give light to the utmost recesses of the sky; and so long as the sign Gemini, resembling the crucifix, is apparent in the heavens. We beg leave to assure your majesty of our sincere affection, and to acquaint you that at an auspicious period like the breath of the angel Gabriel communicating grace, and at a time like the invigorating respiration of the blessed Isau, the letter of our

* The sanction of the highest authority has been graciously given to the publication of this original letter.

beloved sister, scented with musk and ambergris, reached the royal seraglio, perfuming our assembly with the breath of our beloved sister, and feasting our delighted senses with the intoxicating odour of the lily. Its variegated contents, whilst they gratified us with the assurance of your majesty's friendship, were an earnest of the accomplishments of the mind of our illustrious sister. By the blessing of Allah, the alliance between the two states is so firm, that the distillations of the pen in the garden of concord, the variegated flowers of harmony and unanimity thereof, are exulting and smiling. From the exchange of ambassadors the doors of friendship are thrown open on all sides. It is necessary that the sweet-singing nightingales of the pen of correspondence should warble some notes in the garden of affection, and open the buds of our design in performing the pleasing duty of acknowledging, with thanks, the receipt of the acceptable present of our beloved sister, which we have hung upon the neck of accomplishment. May your house, the dwelling of kindness and friendship, ever flourish. The duties of friendship point out the necessity of occasionally sprinkling drops from the cloud of the pen, to increase the verdure of the meadow of affection. May your majesty's honour and glory be perpetual."

CHAPTER V.

The Shah's ambassador to England and Hajji Baba have their audience of leave of the Asylum of the Universe.

These letters, with others from the ministers of Persia to those of England, in which the business and interests of the two states were discussed, having been duly written and

communicated to the English ambassador, nothing was now left to be done previous to our departure, but that Mirza Firouz should receive his audience of leave from the king of kings.

The astrologers were consulted upon the most fortunate hour for the beginning of an enterprise of such great importance both for the individuals engaged in it and for the state whose interests were concerned, and they fixed upon the anniversary of the death of Omar; a day sacred to joy among the sectaries of Ali. On the day previous to that of departure we were ordered to take leave of the shah, and the English ambassador was also invited to be present on the occasion. In order to receive every advantage from the awards of fate, the king determined to seat himself, for the first time, in a saloon which had been newly erected, an act always looked upon as productive of good fortune; and thither we repaired. His majesty was seated in a corner, reposing on his pearl-ingrafted cushion of state and on his carpet ornamented with precious stones. The grand vizier, the lord high treasurer, and the secretary of state were standing before him, when Mirza Firouz, followed by myself, entered the court-yard; and after having stood on the border of the marble basin for some time without our shoes, Mirza Firouz, as a mark of peculiar condescension, was ordered into the room, and took his stand near the vizier, while I remained fixed where I was.

The mirza thought it necessary, and indeed it was proper etiquette on such an occasion, to clothe his face with looks of great dejection, considering how soon he was to be deprived of the all-inspiring and all-exhilarating presence of the great king; and when he stood before his majesty with downcast eyes, with his hands before him, and with a humble half-inclined curvature of the body, one might suppose that he was a criminal brought up for condemnation, rather than one who was about to be clothed with the great dignity

of being representative of one of the greatest sovereigns of the world.

"Why are you thus downcast?" exclaimed the shah; "after all, do not you enjoy the king's condescension?"

"*Belli, Belli*, yes, yes," exclaimed the three ministers all in a breath, whilst Mirza Firouz's looks were on the brink of tears.

"Yes," said the vizier, "the condescension of the king of kings once secured, can anything else be required?"

"'Tis true," said his majesty, addressing himself to Mirza Firouz, "you are about embarking in a ship, you are going on the sea, and will live among the infidels, but recollect that by so doing you ensure to yourself the shah's approbation, and then, Inshallah! please God, when you return, your face will be whitened to all eternity. What can you wish for more?"

"*Inshallah! Inshallah!*" was echoed by the three viziers, whilst Mirza Firouz knelt down and kissed the ground.

"Besides," said the shah, raising his voice to a tone of gaiety, and smiling with great benignity at the same time, "besides, reflect what wonders you are about to behold. Instead of losing the faculties of your brain, consider yourself one of the most fortunate of men. You are going to see the most celebrated beauties of Frangistan. You will see the faces of the wives of my brother the King of England, doubtless the gems of the beauties of his dominions. You will see more wonders than a Persian ever yet saw."

Upon this, Mirza Firouz broke the silence of his tongue, and exclaimed, "May the condescension of the king of kings never be less. May he live a thousand years. I am less than dust, and am ready to cover my head with ashes. Let me but live to return with a white face, and I am willing to undergo whatever miseries the infidels may choose to inflict. Whose dog am I, that should refuse to obey the orders of the king of kings? I have only one supplication to make before

I go, and which I beg permission to place at your majesty's feet."

Here he paused, waiting for the royal answer, when, after a minute's interval, the shah exclaimed, "Say on."

"My supplication consists in this, that, encountering the dangers, so celebrated and well known, of the great seas, the tempests, the rocks, and the monsters of the deep, dangers which no Persian can think of without shuddering, should this least and most insignificant of your majesty's slaves happen to be swallowed up, he hopes that his house* may still enjoy the protection of the king of kings; and, moreover, that his son, now an infant, his only child, may ever sit under the shade of the throne. I have said my word, and my supplications are at an end."

"Yes, by the head of the shah," answered the king in great good-humour, "yes, make your mind easy: lay your head on the pillow of confidence, for, whatever may happen, after all I am a king; your son shall be our son; and from this day we appoint him one of our slaves in office; and, when he shall attain the proper age, shall wait upon our person, and watch over our safety. Go, go; collect your fears into a heap, and bid them rest."

Upon this, Mirza Firouz again knelt, and touched his forehead to the ground; whilst the viziers exclaimed, *Mashallah! Mashallah!*

The English ambassador was then introduced, and with him a young infidel, one of his suite, who was appointed to attend the Persian embassy to England, to act as interpreter, and, when the occasion required, as mehmandar. They were permitted to be covered by the same roof that sheltered the Asylum of the World, and were invited to take post in the room.

When the accustomed bows and prostrations had been

* When a Persian talks of his *khaneh*, or house, it is understood that he means his women.

made, and the shah had delivered his *khosh amedeed*, "you are welcome," he said: "By the blessing of Allah, elchi, this will be a fortunate day for the interests of our two states. The shah has spread his carpet in a new place, and he hopes that the despatch of his embassy to England will be attended with the good fortune which such an act secures."

To this speech the elchi bowed, and said he fervently prayed that the friendship which now existed between England and Persia would last for ever.

The shah then expressed a hope that the person whom he had selected as his representative would be agreeable to the English nation, and requested that the elchi would make it known to his government that he was a man enjoying the royal confidence; and in order to that, he added, "You will be pleased to notify officially to my brother, the king of England, that he has been honoured with the highest distinction which a Persian subject can enjoy. The shah this day endows him with one of his own robes."

Upon this a signal being made, a servant brought, wrapped in a napkin, a *catebi*, or furred cloak, which had frequently graced the royal person, and it was immediately transferred to the shoulders of Mirza Firouz, who once more knelt and kissed the ground, whilst the viziers and the elchi complimented him by saying, "*Mobarek*, may you be fortunate."

The shah then addressed the king of England's representative, and asked him, with great politeness, whether he was satisfied with the presents which had been selected for his court? to which he received a flattering answer, and said that only one thing was wanting to make them complete, namely, a portrait of the king of kings, in order that the people of England might form some conception of the beauty of his person, and of his dignity as a sovereign.

To which the shah was pleased to make a suitable reply, saying, that he had not been unmindful of that part of the ambassador's wishes, for that his painter-in-chief had been ordered to prepare a portrait, not only of himself, but of the

princes his sons also, which he trusted that his brother of England would accept as a mark of his peculiar friendship. The painter-in-chief was then ordered to exhibit the portrait, which was, indeed, a great and immortal effort of art. It represented the shah in the chase, in the very act of piercing an antelope with a spear on the fullest speed of his horse, with the crown on his head, his magnificent armlets buckled to his arm, and dressed in all the state jewels. The painter, with inimitable ingenuity, had contrived to introduce forty of his sons, like so many stars in the firmament blazing in different constellated groups; but for want of room he could not introduce the rest.

After it had been sufficiently exhibited and admired, it was rolled up, and prepared for the journey.

The assembly was now about being dismissed, when the shah stopped the English ambassador, and sending for the court poet, said, "We have still one other mark of our friendship for the king of England to show you. Through your hands, O elchi! the shah received a box, on the lid of which your aged sovereign (for we have perceived that his hair is white*), has caused his own person to be painted. We have faithfully kept this gift, and cherished it as it deserves. As a return, we have caused this trinket to be made." At the same time he drew from under his pillow a pocket looking-glass, curiously painted and enamelled, upon the lid of which was a miniature portrait of himself. "When my brother shall look upon himself in this mirror," said the king of kings, "he will also see our portrait; thus two sovereign heads will be reflected; and in order to illustrate this we have caused our poet to write the ode which is inscribed on the surface of the frame."

Upon which Askar Khan, the *melek-alshoheroh*, or the prince of poets, who had now appeared, was ordered to read aloud what was written on the opposite lid of the glass;

* In this portrait of George III. the hair was powdered.

and, clearing his voice, and stroking down his beard, sang as follows:—

Go, envied glass, to where thy destiny calls thee;
Go, thou leavest the presence of one * Cæsar to receive that of another.
Still thou bearest within thee thy sovereign's form;
And when thou 'rt opened again by Britain's king,
Thou 'lt reflect not one Cæsar, but two Cæsars;
Not one brother, but two brothers;
Not one Jemsheed, but two Jemsheeds;
Not one Darab, but two Darabs:
And as the two Cæsars thus become one,
So will the English and Persian nations unite.
The friends of the one will be friends of the other;
And the enemies of either shall be enemies to both.
Go, envied glass, to where thy destiny calls thee;
Go, leave the presence of thy sovereign to receive that of his brother."

All the assembly seemed struck by the beauty of the poetry, and the ingenuity which gave rise to it. The English elchi assured the shah that it would be received with the greatest satisfaction by his own sovereign, who would not fail to look into the mirror at least once every day; whilst the viziers and Mirza Firouz did not cease to extol the wisdom of their royal master for having contrived so infallible a mode of uniting the two nations in friendship, and of bringing their respective sovereigns so near to each other.

During all this time I had stood on the brink of the basin, and the shah had not designed to notice me. But when he dismissed Mirza Firouz from his presence, and when I was pointed out to him as one who was to accompany his ambassador to England, he exclaimed in a loud voice, whilst I kissed the ground, "Go, do good service; labour hard to make the shah's face white in a foreign land. Open your understanding and learn things useful. The shah expects you to understand all the languages of the Franks at your return, in order that you may be able to translate all their

* To this day one of the titles by which the sultan of the Turks is known in Persia is, *Kaiser Rûm*, the Cæsar of Rome.

books, and let us know under what star the infidels of those unknown regions draw the breath of life. Go, and having done this, the condescending looks of the king of kings await thee."

I had scarcely strength to stammer out, "*Be cheshm*, upon my eyes be it," so overpowered was I by the shah's kindness and affability; and as soon as Mirza Firouz had reached me, and we had gathered up our slippers again, we retreated whence we came, and went our way to make preparations for immediate departure.

But however exalted I might have felt by the magic of the shah's words, still I clung in preference to realities; and, therefore, at the close of day slipt out into the skirts of the town, and in the burying-ground, near to the tomb of the unfortunate Zenab, I buried one heavy sack full of tomans. At least, said I to myself, there will be one spot in the world towards which my thoughts may turn with interest and affection!

CHAPTER VI.

The Persian embassy leaves Tehran.—The Ambassador makes a soliloquy; and Hajjî Baba shows how well he can make himself agreeable.

The embassy to England was composed of the following persons:—

Mirza Firouz, .	ambassador.
Mirza Hajjî Baba, .	secretary.
Mohamed Beg, .	the master of the ceremonies.
Ismael Beg, . .	*nazir*, or steward.
Aga Beg, . .	master of the horse.
Hashem, . .	*peish kedmet*, or footman.

Abbas Beg, . .	*jelowdars*, or head grooms.
Hossian Beg, . .	
Taki, . . .	*ferash*, or carpet-spreader.
Sadek, . . .	running footman.
Feridoon, . .	barber.
Hassan, . . .	cook.
Mahboob, . .	black slave, the treasurer.
Seid, . . .	ditto, valet de chambre.

Besides many *mehters*, or stable boys.

The young infidel before alluded to, who had accompanied the English ambassador to Persia, and who knew but just enough of our language to misunderstand all that we said, was to proceed in the train of Mirza Firouz, and when we had reached his own territory was to act as interpreter; for he calculated that during the journey he would be so much under the necessity of learning Persian, that before we reached England we should be able perfectly to understand each other.

On the evening before the festival of the death of Omar the tents of the embassy were pitched at one parasang from the city; and on the morning of that day, when every good shiah, was devoutly heaping curses upon that long-deceased usurper, precisely at the moment prescribed by the astrologers, Mirza Firouz and suite issued from the Casbin gate. We were followed by our respective friends, who did not cease to put up prayers for our prosperity; and the day was passed in frequent communications with the city, in order that every part of the baggage and equipages might be got together, previous to ultimate departure.

I, 't is true, had but few friends to regret my loss. Hitherto, I had formed no ties in Persia; I had neither house nor child belonging to me; and I left Tehran with few regrets. But it was not so with my companions. The ambassador himself had only one wife and one child; but he had, besides, a large establishment of slaves, who, as report gave out, contributed to his happiness. Several of his servants had wives

and families; and it may be imagined what black water* was shed, when it was known that the object of the journey they were about to undertake was Frangistan; a country which, in the mind of a Persian, scarcely exists but in imagination, where the unclean beast is eaten without scruple, and Mahomed the blessed treated as an impostor. I had conversed freely with most of my future companions, and learned that very few of them had ever been beyond Ispahan; so ignorant were they of almost every thing save their own hills and plains. God knows by what magic I had acquired a sort of reputation for knowing a great deal about the manners and customs of Europe; and it was quite amusing to listen to the extraordinary questions which were made me concerning them. One asked, "How shall we get there? underground, or how?" Another, "We hear that their only food is the unlawful beast; how can a Mussulman exist there?" A third said, "At least we shall get wine, for we are told they drink nothing else, and that all their water is salt." The nazir avowed his intention to take several loads of rice with him, expecting to find none in Europe; and he seemed very much puzzled how to convey a sufficient quantity of Shiraz syrup in bottles, to make his master's sherbets. The stable men were anxious to know whether barley grew in the countries they were going to visit, and whether chopped straw was also to be had in abundance. The barber wished to ascertain what quantity of soap he was to convey; and the cook whether pots and pans were common to Franks.

Having been joined by the Englishman, who had clothed himself in our dress for the journey, we at length departed, and turned our horses' heads towards the land of infidels. I must not omit to mention here, that, out of compliment to us, he permitted his beard to grow, and thus cleared up the question whether Franks ever could have beards. All those who visited our country looked as if they had been prepared for offices in our harems; but now that we were positive they

* *Ab siah*, black water; so the Persians figuratively call tears.

possessed the seeds of a beard within the soil of their face, we were angry that they did themselves and their country such little justice in our eyes.

Ever since my return from Ispahan I had endeavoured to ascertain upon what terms I stood with my new master (for such I must call him), the Mirza Firouz. It had been whispered to me that he was jealous of the selection which the grand vizier had made in appointing me to collect the presents. He very probably would have liked that commission himself, or, at all events, he expected that he might have superintended it, by sending one of his own servants to execute it. I was told, that, dependent as I was upon the prime minister, the ambassador looked upon me in no better light than as a spy upon his actions; and, as the grand vizier himself was his enemy, he naturally expected that I should be so also. Therefore I was advised to keep well upon my guard, to open wide the portals of prudence, and to close the avenues of indiscretion.

In order to do away with those impressions, I endeavoured to insinuate myself into his good graces: I well knew his weak points, and there made my advances. My former experience of his character had taught me that with flattery, flattery as palpable as the gold which covers the coppered cupola of the imperial mosque at Tehran, I might, if I chose, always carry his beard in my hand, and make him walk round and round my little finger. Accordingly, I sought every opportunity of entering into conversation with him, by riding close behind him whilst we were on the road, or standing before him when we made a halt; and I so humbled myself, by not presuming to sit unless he bid me, that he became much pleased with my attentions, and with the tone of deference and submission that I had adopted. He had always been famous for the indiscreet use which he made of the great powers of speech with which he was endowed, and every one knew it was owing to that circumstance the grand vizier had determined to inflict upon him the honour of being

an ambassador to countries beyond the sun, in the hope of being rid of him and his tongue perhaps for ever.

We had not travelled many parasangs ere he broke loose from every restraint, and gave full vent to his feelings. Surrounded by his servants, who, although taken up with their own thoughts upon leaving their homes, still were ready to take part in what was passing in his, he launched out into the following soliloquy:—

"I have done the needful to his father's grave; I will neither spare his wife nor his sisters. May an old ass make love to his mother! By the blessing of the Prophet, a hundred dogs, one after another, will make a corner-stone of his beard, and every day bring their friends to follow their examples! Oh, thou old flint-heart! thou whose stone never sweats! * Inshallah! please Allah! whatever curse was ever conceived, or whatever misfortune was ever known to befall, may they all alight on thy head at once!" Then turning round to me, he exclaimed, "Hajjî! by my soul, and by your own death! you who know the world, who have eaten the dirt both of Turk and Turcoman, how is it possible that you would consent to eat that of an old niggard?" Then looking straight forwards, and talking aloud as he rode at the head of the party, "Well, and now I am an elchi! and to whom? to the Franks —to the king of the Franks! May they and their fathers' graves be eternally defiled! And I am, forsooth, to leave my family, my child, my country, to go wandering into unknown regions, amongst beardless infidels, all because this old ill-begotten vizier chooses to think that the shah was beginning to be too mindful of me!"

"Yes," said I, "whatever you are pleased to say is true, and I, who am less than a dog, agree in all your feelings. But, in the name of your child, the shah's business must be done by somebody; if it be not by you, it would be by some one else; and by your own beard, let me ask, who is there

* This designation is frequently applied to a miser; as we might say, a skin-flint.

throughout the whole of Iran, excepting yourself, who could undertake it?"

"There is no one else," exclaimed Mohammed Beg, the master of the ceremonies; "mashallah! praise be to God! who is there like our aga now in Persia? Who is the master of wit, the master of thought, like him?"

"Yes, yes," echoed I, "and the owner of accomplishments, the lord of penetration."

"A man of judgment and design," rejoined the master of the ceremonies.

"Of good heart, good temper, and good fortune," answered I.

"True, true," said my companion, "there is none his equal."

"Besides, mashallah! look at his person," screamed I; "a handsome youth, with narrow waist and broad shoulders; a good rider, and one who has not his equal with the spear."

Upon hearing this, Mirza Firouz, who had permitted the free circulation of our words to enter into both his ears, struck the stirrups into his horse's flanks, dashed off at a bound, and, making a deviation from the road on the fullest speed of his horse, took a long sweep, and returned to us, apparently quite pleased with his feat. He then suddenly stopped his horse with all the force of his arm a few yards from us.

"Praise be to God!" was echoed through all the band when they saw this, which was answered by the ambassador by calling for a *jerid*, or staff, and exclaiming, "'Tis most true; I swear by the beard of Ali, that in point of horsemanship there is no one like me." Then calling out to me, "Hajjî, in the name of Allah," said he, "let us make a little play." Upon this I dashed my horse onwards, and fled from before him, in the most courtier-like style possible, when, as he followed close upon me, he was pleased to launch his jerid at my head, and inflict thereon so severe a blow, that the stick rebounded to some distance, and left him nothing to

wish for. This was a signal for the rest of the party to abandon the sobriety of their steady travelling pace, and to commence a skirmish all over the plain, hooting, kicking, pulling up, advancing again, and, in short, doing all that which men taking a ride for mere pleasure would do.

When this exuberance of spirits had subsided, and we had again collected into the train of our chief, he asked for his pipe, and smoked and chatted until we reached our first stage.

Notwithstanding the blow on my head, which had in a great measure stopped the flow of my applause, I managed to keep up a good countenance; and though I rubbed the sore place, I still could laugh at the jokes of my chief. By way of a jeer, he frequently said, "Ay, Hajji, it is lucky that the blow was not worse. God was merciful;" which set all those around us upon the broad grin, and increased the satisfaction which he enjoyed at the contemplation of his own dexterity.

CHAPTER VII.

The Ambassador exercises his privilege at Arz Roum, and sets at defiance a pasha of three tails.—They reach Constantinople.

We travelled through Persia by easy stages, and made a halt for a few days at Tabriz, to receive the commands of our illustrious prince royal, previously to quitting the territory of Persia. Having taken charge of his letters for his uncle, the king of England, as well as some additional presents, we proceeded on our march again, passed Erivan, ranged the foot of Agri-dagh, or the Wild Mountain,* slept at the Armenian monastery, and crossed, without an accident, the rapid and

* One of the names given to Mount Ararat.

dangerous stream of the Arpachai. Traversing the frozen region of Armenia, we reached Kars, where we rested two days; and without meeting any of the much dreaded Cûrdish robbers on the mountains of Savanlú, at length reposed in Arz Roum.

Here the ambassador was well received by the governor of the province, a pacha of three tails, who did his utmost to make our stay agreeable; but it was evident that we entered his city at an unlucky hour, because a circumstance, not long after our arrival, took place, which destroyed the good understanding that at first had subsisted between the ambassador and the pasha.

Sadek, the running footman, as depraved and worthless as the worst of his fraternity, had shown dispositions to abscond even before we reached Arz Roum, having more than once expressed his sorrow at leaving his own country and its pleasures. We had not been many days arrived, when it was announced to the ambassador that he was nowhere to be found; and, moreover, that one of the gold pipe-heads and a horse's gold chain were missing. Instantly a search was instituted the pasha's officers, as well as some of the ambassador's own servants, were sent in pursuit, and in two days after the fugitive was brought back, and convicted of the theft. He was seized, tied hand and foot, and the ambassador, in the hearing of the Turkish officers, proclaimed his intention of cutting off his ears. This was reported to the pasha, who feeling that no punishment of that description ought to be inflicted except by himself, and that to permit such an act in his own city would be throwing away his consequence and authority, determined upon making a remonstrance with the ambassador; and ordered his principal chaoush, an old grave Turk with a white beard, to carry a very civil message to that purport.

The ambassador was surrounded by all his servants when the chaoush entered, and was still in the height of his fury at the delinquency of his running footman. He was pouring

out a torrent of words, cursing first the day he had set out on this expedition, then the vizier who sent him, then the Turks and their country, when the solemn son of Osman interposed his *selam aleikum*, peace be with you! and took his seat with all due reverence.

"What has happened?" exclaimed the ambassador to his visiter.

"Nothing!" answered the chaoush.

"Have you seen what abomination that rascally countryman of ours has been committing?" said the ambassador. "Please heaven, his father shall burn ere long. We are not such asses as to let him escape gratis. Until I have got his ears into my pocket, not a drop of water passes my lips; of that make your mind easy, O effendi!"

"The pasha, my master," said the Turk, "makes prayers for your happiness, and has desired me to inform you that such things cannot be."

"What things cannot be?" exclaimed the ambassador, with the greatest vivacity. "What cannot be? Shall I not then cut off his ears? Ah! you know but little of Mirza Firouz if you think so! By the sacred beard of the Prophet, by the salt of the shah, by the pasha's soul, and by your death, I would as soon cut off his ears (ears, did I say?—by Ali, and head into the bargain!) as I would drink a cup of water. We are rare madmen we Persians; we do not stand upon trifles."

"But," said the Turk, totally unmoved by the volubility and matter of this speech, "my master orders me to say that he is one of three tails, and that, therefore, no ears can be cut off in Arz Roum except by himself."

"Three tails!" exclaimed the Mirza, "three, do you say? If the pasha has three, I have fifteen; and if that won't do, I have a hundred; and if that be not enough, tell him that I have one thousand and one tails. Go, for the love of Allah, go; and tell him, moreover, since he brings his three tails into the account, that the ears are off, off, off." Then calling aloud

to his ferash, and to two or three other servants, he said in a most peremptory tone, "Go, rascals, quick, fly, bring Sadek's ears to me this instant. I'll three tail him! If he had fifty ears I would cut them off." Then turning to the chaoush, who had already got on his feet in readiness to depart, he said, "May your shadow never be less. May God protect you. Make my prayers acceptable to the pasha, and tell him again, if he has three tails, I, by the blessing of the Prophet, have fifteen.

Upon this the Turk, exclaiming from the bottom of his gullet "*La illaha illallah!* there is but one God," walked slowly away, and had not proceeded many steps before he met the Persians coming up, bearing the ears of their countryman, or something very like them, on the cap of a saucepan, and who did not fail to exhibit them to the phlegmatic Osmanli with appropriate expressions of superciliousness.

The pasha, enraged at this treatment, soon made our residence in his city too disagreeable to invite us to stay longer than necessary, and accordingly we very soon after departed, leaving the cropped Sadek to find his way back to Persia in the best manner he was able. It was, however, known afterwards that he departed with his ears on his head; and that the bits of flesh exhibited on the lid of the saucepan were slices of a young kid: for whether the executioners of their master's commands knew that it was in nowise in his nature to be cruel, or whether they were the culprit's personal friends, it is certain that he fared very tenderly for his roguery.

After having traversed the long and tedious road through Turkey, quarrelling at every post-house, and increasing our stock of hatred for the sectaries of Omar, we at length descried the copulas and minarets of the capital of the Blood-drinker,* the vast and magnificent Constantinople.

The ambassador was received with proper ceremony and respect by the Turkish authorities, and a large house at Scutari†

* A title by which the sultan of Turkey is known in Persia.

† The suburb of Constantinople on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus.

allotted to him and his suite. A mehmandar was also appointed, whose duty was to collect and distribute the daily allowance of provisions granted for the use of the embassy, according to the established usages of the empire. The young infidel, who had accompanied us, and who now made himself tolerably well understood in our language, left us, and took up his quarters among his own people; and shortly after preceded us to a city called *Giaour Ismir*, or the Infidel Smyrna, in order to prepare a ship to conduct us to England.

The ambassador, soon after his arrival, visited the grand vizier, and in succession most of the principal Turkish officers, many of whom took a great liking to him, and seemed to take much pleasure in his conversation. However he might be pleased with this, still his native hatred for the Turks never forsook him, and he never lost an opportunity of expressing it, when he could do so with propriety. One day, at a confidential interview with the grand vizier, at which I was permitted to be present, that minister, celebrated for being a pure and bigoted Mussulman, talking of the power of the Franks in general, of their institutions, and also of their obstinate adherence to their own religious faith, exclaimed to the ambassador, "Ah, my friend, when will the world be cleansed from this most accursed race of unbelievers? What is to be done?"

"I tell you what," answered the Mirza, "Allah must do it; for, between you and I, I do not think that you ever will."

On another occasion, when on a visit to the mufti, that great chief of the law, having sufficiently deplored the ambassador's evil destiny, which led him to quit the land of the true faith, in order to inhabit the regions of infidelity, said, "Great will be the mass of impurity with which you will be overwhelmed before you return. How shall you ever cleanse yourself therefrom?"

"Inshallah! please Heaven," answered my chief, "by not returning through Constantinople."

The ambassador was once invited to an assembly of free livers, where wine was introduced, accompanied by singing and music. This brought on a discussion upon the respective merits of Turkish and Persian music, when a young effendi, who showed great pretensions to wit, said, loud enough for us to hear, "As for the effect which their music produces, we know that when a Persian sings we always expect that it will rain."

"And we in Persia have always remarked," exclaimed the ambassador, "that when a Turk sings he sets all the asses braying in response."

CHAPTER VIII.

Mirza Firouz receives a present of a Circassian slave.—The history of her captivity is described.

A FEW days before our departure, the ambassador sent presents to the principal Turkish officers, and received others in return. He had formed a great intimacy with one of the secretaries of state, a jovial spirit, who was addicted to pleasure, and particularly fond of Persian poetry and literature. To him he presented his own favourite riding-horse, accompanied by a beautiful copy of Hafiz;* and as he was anxious that they should be well received, he requested me to present them myself, with the proper compliments. Yarak Effendi, for that was his name, expressed himself greatly pleased at this mark of his friend's attention, and professed himself at a loss what to offer in return. He consulted me for a long while upon what I thought would be most agreeable

* The most esteemed of the Persian poets.

to him. Of shawls he knew he had abundance. Pelisses and furs he also knew were common in Persia. Stuffs and brocades were more beautifully manufactured with us than in Turkey. English goods he would not offer; we were going whence they came. Amber-headed pipes the Persians did not use; and we neither prized their horse-furniture nor their carpets. What then was to be done? At length a thought struck him, and he exclaimed, "I have it! I have it! The ambassador, I know him, is an admirer of female beauty. He shall not go among the infidels to put his beard into their hands. He shall have my new Circassian slave; she is beautiful as the moon; and it is scarcely an hour since she has made the profession of the true faith. I bought her out of the ship she came in but yesterday from that arch man-stealer, Khersis Oglu, and he assures me that she is of Circassian blood, and a princess; but I suppose the kafir lies." Then addressing himself particularly to me, he said, "May I venture to send her to your aga?"

I professed ignorance of his tastes, and said that I would soon inform him of the ambassador's wishes on that head, not doubting, that if there was a possibility of taking such an addition to his suite with him, that he would not hesitate in so doing.

Accordingly I returned to Mirza Firouz, who received the effendi's proposal at first with ecstasy; then with hesitation; and at length, by way of not doing an uncivil act, he let him know that he could not have hit upon a present that would be more agreeable to him.

At the close of day she arrived, veiled from head to foot, mounted on a horse, and escorted by the effendi's black man slave, who received a handsome present in money for his trouble. She was immediately conducted into the ambassador's house, who had ordered a suitable place for her reception; and when he went to visit her, we collected ourselves into a body, and freely discussed the probable consequences of this proceeding.

"He will eat a good allowance of his wife's slipper,"* exclaimed Ismael Beg, the nazir, "if once he gets within reach of it, should she become acquainted with what he has done."

"Ah!" said Taki, the ferash, who seemed to know much of the interior of his household, "the khanum is at a great distance now; and until that time comes, the world may have turned upside down."

"Were she a Georgian," remarked Seid, "there would be no harm done, for they are tractable; but being a Circassian, 'tis time to put our trust in God. They are a bad race."

"Georgian or Circassian, Lesgui or Abkhasians," said the master of the ceremonies, "they are all children of the devil together. I hope the arrival of this stranger among us may not bring ashes upon our heads in a foreign land."

"I tell you what," said I, "whatever we may think on this occasion is all very well, provided we recollect that she is the elchi's property; and although she is one woman among so many men, yet, mind ye! he alone is her master."

"Yes, O yes!" they all exclaimed; "whose dogs are we, that we should think otherwise?"

The next morning the ambassador, of his own accord, gave me the history of his slave, which he had got from her own mouth. It was briefly this, that she was the daughter of a Circassian chief, who lived near the banks of the Black Sea, of a character so lawless and depraved, that even among his own countrymen he was called *Shaitan bacheh*, or Child of Satan. His cruelties and drunkenness would have been of little consequence had they been merely the effect of sudden passion; but gambling was the vice to which he

* The shoe is a great instrument of aggression in Persia: a mistress beats her slave with her shoe; a wife her husband; and when a servant is impertinent he receives blows on the mouth with the shoe-heel.

sacrificed every other feeling; and this led him to commit acts of unheard-of enormity. To one of these acts this poor slave had fallen a victim. He had gambled to such an excess with a neighbouring chieftain, a man of greater power than himself, that he was totally ruined; and, determining to make one desperate effort to retrieve his losses, he resolved upon selling all his family as slaves to the Turkish merchants who made that traffic. He accordingly struck a bargain with one of the most enterprising of that profession; and on a certain day it was agreed that he would furnish a fixed quantity of slaves, both male and female, who should be embarked in the vessel waiting off the coast for that purpose. When he had been apprised of the arrival of the ship, upon pretext of giving an entertainment to his family, he collected the different individuals composing it under his roof, and invited them to join him in emptying certain skins of wine which had been provided for the occasion. When he saw that the men were sufficiently intoxicated for this purpose, at a signal given his house was surrounded by a host of armed Turks, the crew of the slave-ship, and they immediately made prisoners of all the company, carrying away the drunkards like logs, and forcing off the women. Besides herself, who was his daughter, he had sold his wife and two of her brothers, with one of his own, his father and mother, two women servants, two aunts, and an uncle; and, by way of completing the dozen, he stole a priest who was riding quietly by at the time, and added him to the party. As soon as they were embarked, the vessel set all sail, and not many days after they reached Constantinople, when she was immediately bought up by the secretary of state.

The ambassador said that her Circassian name was Mariam, but that he intended to call her *Dilferib*, or the Heart-enslaver, owing to the great fascination of her manner. He described her as being low in stature, and of a round and melon-formed person, but possessing eyes of surprising size

and fire, and a complexion as verdant* as even the most celebrated beauties of Irân. He seemed quite elated with his acquisition, and expressed his intention to have her instructed in all the arts and accomplishments which the Europeans are capable of teaching. She was to become mistress of embroidery, of tailoring, of making stockings, and twisting ringlets. She was to learn to sing, dance, and play musical instruments. In short, he intended to make her so accomplished a slave, that, in case some conciliatory present were ever necessary to the shah, he might have her ready at hand to secure his peace. At present he described her as totally ignorant. She could give no account of her religion; she could neither read nor write; and her whole morality seemed that of revenging a family quarrel, and showing hospitality to the stranger. She was perfectly agreeable to become a follower of the blessed Mahomed, and pronounced the profession of the true faith without a moment's hesitation. "What she may prove to be in character," said the ambassador, "Allah only knows; that will entirely depend upon my good or ill luck, and upon the position of the planets at the time of her entering my house."

CHAPTER IX.

The embassy leave Constantinople, reach Smyrna, and embark on board an English ship.—Their reception on board is described.

The ambassador having received intelligence from "*Giaour Ismir*"† that a ship was in readiness to receive him and his

* *Subs*, or green, is a word used in Persian, denoting a brunette.

† The *infidel* Smyrna; so this city is called in Turkey, owing to the large quantity of Europeans who reside there.

suite, in order to convey him to London (for so is the foot of the English throne called), we proceeded on our journey in the same manner as we had travelled from Persia, with this difference, that *Dilferib*, the Circassian, who now had been put under the special charge of the two black slaves, Mahboob and Seid, was mounted upon a mule, closely veiled from head to foot. Having passed the two large cities of Brousa and Manesia, traversing a country which produces every thing that can contribute to the happiness and well-being of man, we at length reached the city of our destination, situated on the borders of a magnificent bay, and called Infidel because it harbours many European merchants, many Greeks, and many Armenians, who drink wine openly, and whose hogs are allowed to walk about the streets. Upon entering it we blew over our shoulders to keep the impurity of its inhabitants from us, and then took up our quarters in a house which the Turkish government had been enjoined to prepare for the ambassador's reception.

We had been greeted a parasang before our entry into the city by the young Inglis, who, in quality of mehmandar, had proceeded from Constantinople to prepare our way; and he informed the ambassador that two ships were in readiness, the one, as he described it, a large ship belonging to the shah of his country, destined for the use of the embassy; and another hired from a merchant, for the purpose of conveying the horses. He assured us that every thing was ready for our reception, that all the provisions were on board, sheep for our *kabobs*, goats for our milk, fowls, geese, ducks, and turkeys, and plenty of water. There was only one thing which he wished to ascertain, namely, whether the ambassador liked to sleep in a bed which, by his description, was made to move backwards and forwards, or one which remained stationary.

Ignorant as we were of the nature of a ship, and of every circumstance attending a sea life, we became much puzzled at his question. In the first place, that a ship should, from his description, be a farm-yard, containing all the animals he

had enumerated, surprised us not a little; but why a bed should be made to move about was extremely puzzling; and why it should even be a question, whether a man should lie quiet, or be tossed backwards and forwards, was still to be explained; and therefore the ambassador wisely left the matter at rest for the present, until we should be better able to judge for ourselves.

This, and various other circumstances, gave us great matter for discussion, and increased our impatience to see the Frank ship, and all the wonders which we anticipated that it would contain. The mehmandar was not aware of the circumstance which had added the Circassian to our party, and, as he was acquainted with our customs, which required the seclusion of women from the gaze of men, he hastened on board to make the necessary arrangements, and left us to prepare our baggage for immediate departure.

The ambassador was very anxious not to leave the shore and set foot on board excepting at a fortunate hour; and he consulted thereupon his master of ceremonies, Mohamed Beg, who had a good knowledge of astrology, having studied for some time under the celebrated Mirza Cossim of Ispahan. He did not discover any fortunate conjunction of the planets for a week to come; and we were making up our minds to remain quietly smoking the pipe of patience, when, the second morning after our arrival at Smyrna, our baggage having been embarked the day before, the mehmandar, attended by the captain of the ship, came to announce that all was ready, that the wind was fair, and that we must embark. This had not met the ambassador's calculation, and he positively said that he would not stir. The want of a good moment, said he, was not to be disregarded; and whatever any body else might think, he for his part valued his life and the beard upon his chin too much, to commence such a hazardous undertaking as that of embarking upon a ship commanded by infidels, to go to infidels' countries, without having the full sanction of his own astrologers. He was strengthened

in his resolution by Mohamed Beg, who, strong in his science, and obstinate in his converse with the heavens, declared that to go, merely at the invitation of an infidel, who, because the wind blew fair, thought that no other requisite was wanting to a prosperous voyage, would be downright madness; and accordingly they both resolved that nothing should make them stir. In vain, both mehmandar and captain said that the most fortunate moment surely was that when the wind was fair; and that, if they permitted it to shift, they might not be able to sail for many a week; nothing could avail, and they were about to walk away in despair, when, as the best of all good luck would have it, the ambassador sneezed twice. Every one having complimented him, he said, "This is a good omen; if the stars were now but propitious, what an excellent moment for departure!"

At that very instant Mohamed Beg also sneezed twice! We were all in ecstasy. "Praise be to God, and thanks to Allah!" came from every lip, and there was not a dissenting voice; the omen was too strongly pronounced, that further objections should be made, and the ambassador immediately announced his readiness to proceed.

We then without delay, putting our right legs foremost on crossing the threshold of the house, proceeded in a body to the beach, where boats had been provided to take us on board. There seemed to be considerable ceremony among the Franks on this occasion. The ambassador and I, and one of his slaves bearing his shoes, were placed in the largest boat with the mehmandar and the captain; whilst another conveyed the rest of the suite and the Circassian. The head of the stable, with his grooms and stable-boys, were embarked on board the horse ship.

We had reached the frigate all but about one *maidan*, when, wonderful to behold, at the sound of a shrill whistle, out jumped hundreds of what we took to be rope-dancers; for none but the celebrated Kheez-Ali of Shiraz, inimitable throughout Asia for his feats on the tight rope, could have

done what they did. They appeared to balance themselves in rows upon ropes scarcely perceptible to the eye, ascending higher and higher in graduated lines, until on the very tip-top of the mast stood, what we imagined to be either a *gin* or a *dive*, for nothing mortal surely ever attempted such a feat. We had no sooner reached the deck whither we had all been whisked up (the blessed Ali best knows how), than instantly such discharges of cannon took place, that with excess of amazement our livers turned into water, and our brains were dried up.

"In the name of Allah!" exclaimed the elchi, "what does this mean? Is this hell? or is it meant for heaven? What news are arrived?" All this he was exclaiming, whilst the captain, standing before him, made low bows, and seemed to claim his admiration. And it was only when the firing had ceased, and that our ears had somewhat recovered the shocks they had received, that the mehmandar stepped up and said, this was done in honour of his excellency, and was the acknowledged mode in England of treating persons of distinction. "May your shadow never be less," rejoined the ambassador. "I am very sensible of the honour," at the same time thrusting his fingers into his ears, "and I assure you that this mark of distinction will leave a lasting impression upon me. But what is the use of discharging so many cannon, and wasting so much precious gunpowder? You have fired away more powder than our shah did in the celebrated siege of Tûs, when, with three balls and one cannon he discomfited a host of Yuzbegs, and kept the whole of their kingdom in fear of his power for ever after. But how many cannon have you on board, in the name of the Prophet?" said he. The mehmandar answered, "Forty-four."

"Do you mean actually forty-four?" said his excellency, "or do you mention that number as indefinite, signifying a great many, as we say *chehel minar*, forty pillars, when we talk of the ruins of Persepolis; or the *chehel ten*, or forty

bodies, when we would describe the many saints buried in the mausoleum near Shiraz?"

"I mean actually forty-four," said the mehmandar, appealing to the captain of the ship, who was standing near. "But that is a mere trifle," added he. "Our king has many ships that carry three times this number, and at least fifty bearing the same number, and when all the guns which are carried about from one end of the world to the other are enumerated, you must cease counting by hundreds, but take to thousands."

"There is but one God!" exclaimed the ambassador, putting his finger in his mouth at the same time, and deeply cogitating. "You see what I said before is true," turning towards me and others of the suite who were gathered round him; "I told you once before, that the English dig up their cannon all ready made in the mine, and this proves it. Centuries, with all the blacksmiths of Iran at work from morning to night, would never make so many guns."

"Yes, yes," was answered by us. "We believe it all," said one. "These Franks are devils, not men," said another, "Wonderful things shall we have to say when we return to Persia," said a third. Then all at once, as if by magic, we saw immense sails loosened from places where the eye before saw nothing but wood and rope; and ere a mollah could have counted his beads and said an hundred "God forgive me's," we began to move at a rapid rate through the water, and an universal commotion among the houses, ships, trees, and mountains which surrounded us appeared to have taken place, and we were given to the mercy of the waves.

"We are gone and doubly gone, now," said the ambassador; "we are in the hands of Allah!"

"God be with us! oh, Mahomed! oh, Ali!" exclaimed I. "Ali send us all safe back!" groaned the master of the ceremonies.

"*Ameen! ameen!*" echoed the remainder of the suite.

CHAPTER X.

The novelty of ship-board to Persians is described.—They learn the difference between astronomy and astrology.

When we had exhausted our first astonishment on the deck, we descended into a room ornamented with looking-glasses, and fitted up with various conveniencies suited to the habits and customs of Europeans. And here the question of the bed, which had before been unintelligible, was made clear to our understanding; for it was a sort of hammock, and resembled those used by the Armenians at Julfa, where one end of it is fastened to a beam, whilst the other is fixed to the wall, and thus swings backwards and forwards. The ambassador chose to sleep in one of these. I extended my mattress on the ground in an outer room, and the servants spread their carpets between the guns, hanging up their muskets, swords, and pistols upon pegs, as they were wont to do in caravanserais and post-houses, when travelling on dry ground.

We passed the first night in a manner not to be described. To say that our heads went round, that our stomachs were thrown at variance with our livers, and our livers were made to contend with our heart-strings, would only express half our miseries. The tossing to and fro, the extraordinary noises, the newness of the smells, the strange jargon which struck our ears, in short, the novelty of the scene altogether, kept our astonished senses in one constant stretch, and caused us to make various original reflections. Mohamed Beg, the master of the ceremonies, who never failed to say his five prayers per day, be he where he might, having spread his carpet on

the deck, was about making his adoration on seven members,* when the ship gave a toss which threw him upon his nose. This set those of the Franks who were looking at a sight so new on board their ship a-laughing, and threw us all into a melancholy fit of musing, bewailing our hard fate to be thus cast amongst people who mocked our religion, and who looked upon our Prophet and his followers in no better light than as swine in their sheds. However, a repetition of "God is great!" and "God is merciful!" made us recollect in whose hands we were, and that, if it was our lot to be polluted, destiny had all the blame.

Awaking the first morning after our embarkation, a sight totally new presented itself. Life and the world seemed to have departed from us, and we now only saw the outsides of things. Where was Tehran? Where the splendour of our shah? his gilded palaces, his iron-clad warriors, and his brilliant courtiers? Where was Ispahan? Where the lofty Demawend? Where the plains of Sultanieh, and the wilds of Mazanderan? The capital, and even the whole dominion of the Blood-drinker, had passed from us, and here we were, a speck in the ocean, seen only by the clouds, passing the shadows of lands painted at immeasurable distances from us, and in the hands of infidels, who were carrying us God knows whither; with whom we could hold no converse; who could neither tell us why they went one way instead of the other; why they chose to make a path in the sea, when there was none; and for what good reason the ship went straight forwards, when there was nothing to hinder it going backwards. Who amongst us knew where England was? Not a soul. All that we saw of sea and sky might be the country of the infidels, for aught we knew; and that might perhaps be our ultimate destination, for these objects seemed as likely to belong to them as to any one else. But what could be the use

* Adoration on seven members is a mode of worship common to Mahometans; the hands, feet, knees, and forehead touching the ground at the same moment.

of such a country to any one, seeing that all its inhabitants must be enclosed in boxes, like the one in which we were; and that, running away from each other at their pleasure, no government could exist, no shah could control them, no one could levy fines upon them? In short, the more we argued among ourselves upon our situation, the more we became perplexed; nor did the explanations which we received from the mehmandar much clear up our difficulties, for he talked to us of things so foreign to our understandings, that we were for the present obliged to drop the anchor of our curiosity in the harbour of expectation.

As long as we were near the land, we understood how sailors might track their way; but when once fairly out of sight of every thing, save heaven and water, what was there to guide them? However, we began to acquire some intelligence on this head; for, upon the day when we first lost sight of land, we discovered that the ship was filled with astrologers. At about noon many of those whom we had looked upon as mere idle young men, appeared on the deck with astrolabes in their hands, and fell to observing the sun. Even boys handled this instrument of wisdom; and, according to the answer which they gave to our questions, it seems that they were perfectly satisfied that we were going right, and that the heavens were propitious to our undertaking. Mohamed Beg, not to appear deficient in knowledge, also produced his astrolabe, but could not make any of the observations which he was wont to do at Ispahan, when he studied under the celebrated Mirza Cossim, because he declared that we had changed our stars, and that those he now saw were different from those of his own country. However, the science which the Franks possessed, we presumed, was different from ours; and they endeavoured to show us the difference between astronomy and astrology. Although we evidently drew our conclusions from the same sources, yet our objects were not the same; for the ambassador, not feeling well, and desirous to take medicine, sent to one of these star-gazers, through

the mehmandar, to enquire whether the heavenly bodies were propitious to such an event; and he received for answer, that their science only extended to settling the latitude and longitude of the ship, and that they had not yet learned to decide what might be the best moment for medicating his excellency's inside. This gave a sort of superiority in our eyes to Mohamed Beg, who, in this instance, very valiantly decided, by some method of calculation peculiarly his own, that bleeding and purging might at present be used with great safety.

But still we could not overcome our astonishment at seeing astrology practised by a parcel of beardless boys. What in our country was the avocation of experienced men, who had passed their lives in watching the stars, and settling proper hours for each action of the life of man, here was undertaken by mere children. I was assured that any one of the observers with the astrolabe could inform me within a mile of the exact spot we stood upon the earth; and, prove that, it would only be necessary to watch the time when we should see land, which it was expected to take place that very evening at sunset. As we had now been at sea more than a week, we longed to ascertain whether countries besides Turkey and Persia did actually exist; and, therefore, strained all our eyes, in company with the English astrologers, to discover the land. At length, just as the sun had taken its plunge into the furthermost corner of the deep, a streak was descried in the horizon, which every one affirmed was land, and I was called upon to acknowledge the accuracy of the astrologers. Mohamed Beg, who, in his own estimation, looked upon himself quite as great a person as Abu Mazer,* the father of conversation himself, doubted, and assured those who would listen to him, that his science was preferable to that of our navigators, inasmuch as he could guard against things unseen;

* Abu Mazer, which, rendered in Arabic, means the father of conversation, was a celebrated astronomer and astrologer, known in Europe as Albumazer.

whereas the English only foretold the appearance of things visible. And, on this occasion, I well recollect that Mohamed Beg had a memorable argument with the mehmandar, who, endeavouring to make us comprehend the object of the observations made daily at noon, asserted that the earth upon which we stood went round the sun; whereas it is a well-known fact, approved by all the learned in Persia since the days of Jemsheed, that the sun has no other business than to revolve round us. I cannot well record all that was said on both sides, but this I remember, that Mohamed Beg, being disturbed by the newness of the mehmandar's observations, finished the discourse by saying, that if he were in Persia, on his own territory, he would soon find unanswerable reasons why what he advanced was true.

CHAPTER XI.

They arrive at Malta.—Are indignant at the restrictions of quarantine, and hold communication with the English governor.

The next morning we found ourselves close to the shores of an island called Malta, which the mehmandar informed us had formerly belonged to a band of fighting dervishes, whose only business was to take unnatural oaths, and fight against the children of the true faith. But it seems that their destinies were of no avail, when opposed to those of Mahomed the blessed, since they no longer exist, whereas Islam flourishes. One of their principal laws was, that they could not marry. Then how could they continue to exist? 'Tis evident their lawgiver was duller than the father of stupidity.* Had they

* *Abu Jahel*, the father of stupidity, so the Arabians call the ass.

been allowed even half the number of wives which the Prophet allows his followers, perhaps, they still might have flourished.

The avidity with which we eyed the shore, as we sailed into the harbour, may be better conceived than described. We saw new men, new women, new buildings; we heard a new language, and new sounds. If all the caravans that traverse Persia and Arabia were collected together, the united din of their bells could not be greater than the eternal jingle of those which issued from numerous minarets that were seen to rise, in various odd and fantastic shapes, throughout the town. Ismael Beg, the nazir, well remarked, that it was evident, from this circumstance alone, we had got into a Christian country; for here they might ring their bells and welcome, whereas no dog of them would presume so to do in our cities, without having dearly purchased the permission. And he added, such a quantity of bells as we now heard ringing would make a handsome revenue for any one of the shah's sons.

Our first impulse, as soon as the ship was at anchor, was to endeavour to rush on shore; but what was our surprise and indignation when we were informed that immediate access was not permitted; that forty days at least must pass over our heads before we could be pronounced clean? As soon as we heard this, our rage knew no bounds, and we proceeded at once to the presence of the ambassador to vent it.

"In the name of Allah," said I, speaking for the rest, "are we come all this way that we should be called unclean? We are Mussulmans. To this day we have heard of nothing unclean, except it be these dogs of Christians. We can only be unclean from the pollution which we have acquired by living with them. In the name of the Prophet, we desire to return to Persia. If you are not permitted to land here, much less will they permit you to land in England, which is their principal country, upon which the foot of their throne rests."

"You do not speak amiss, Hajjî Baba," said the ambassador to me in a quiet manner, unusual to himself.

"I also am in a state of amazement, but the business of the shah must be done: to eat dirt in his service is now to be our daily occupation, and eat it we must, and say, thanks be to Allah! The mehmandar has endeavoured to make me comprehend the reason of this regulation. He says it is a precaution to guard against the plague; and is not deviated from throughout the whole of the kingdoms of Frangistan, even in favour of kings; that any one attempting to escape is shot like a wild beast; and that this would be the ceremony either of us would undergo should we resist. Such being the case, what is to be done but to sit down in patience? These people have no belief in *takdeer*, predestination. They do not like to die, if they can avoid it; and, to say the truth, I think they are right."

"But we have no plague," exclaimed Taki, the ferash. "We are men of Iran, where the plague never comes. Let them look upon the Turks, and welcome, as unclean; but we are Persians."

Mohamed Beg made some wise observations upon the unerring decrees of fate, and quoted the koran with great effect; and at the same time he added, if it was not our destiny to set foot on shore at Malta, nothing more need be said, and we must be content to take events as they chose to come.

This allayed our impatience, which was much appeased when we found that we were to proceed on our voyage on the following day in a much larger ship, which was pointed out to us, and which, indeed, looked like a floating castle. Our eyes were much struck at all we saw, and the power of the ship in which we now were sank in our estimation when in every creek and corner we discovered cannons upon cannons, in such vast numbers, that if we were to give a true account of them in Persia, nobody would believe us. We now began to find, for the first time, how it happened that the English had got possession of India, and resolved in our minds

that all the stories which we had heard about their being governed by old women must be nonsense. With such cannons, and such ships to carry them about, who would not conquer the world?

Our ship soon held much communication with the shore, and we were informed that the ambassador's arrival had produced a strange commotion, which very soon proved itself by the quantities of boats which surrounded us. It was reported, among other things, that the ship carrying the horses was loaded with the ambassador's wives, and, consequently, attracted as much of the public attention as ours. The Circassian slave in the meantime had not stirred from the corner in which she had been placed from the moment of our getting on board; and so little did she know of what was doing, that long after our arrival at Malta she enquired, "What may the news be?"

Before we were transferred from the small ship into the larger one, the ambassador received a visit from the governor of the city, who, as he came alongside, pointed to a yellow flag floating on the top of our mast as an excuse for not coming on board, and which we found was the signal of uncleanness. Through the interpretation of the mehmandar he apologised for not having been able to receive the ambassador on shore, to treat him in a manner suitable to his rank; but he again assured us that regulations concerning quarantain were so strict, that even an angel would not be admitted as pure if coming from Turkey. He then stated that he had received recent intelligence from his government, who had apprised him of the possibility of the ambassador touching at Malta on his way to England, and he had been enjoined to do every thing in his power to forward his voyage, since the whole country of England, from the king to the peasant, were anxious to see him and do him honour. He then finished his speech by making many special enquiries concerning the health of the shah and the political state of Persia.

Upon this, Mirza Firouz, thinking it necessary to return so

flattering a speech, and also to place the prosperity of his country in the best possible light, assured the governor that when last we had heard from the shah he was enjoying the greatest sanity of brain, and was even rejoicing in his palace at Sultanieh, at the arrival of twenty mule-loads of rebels' heads, which had just been sent him from the disaffected provinces of Khorassan and Mazanderan, which had been perfectly devastated by his victorious troops; thanks to the efforts of his majesty's twenty-fifth son. He hoped that this news would gladden the governor's heart and spread universal satisfaction throughout England when known there.

The governor said that this was unheard-of prosperity, and, as well as we could understand our interpreter, made suitable compliments on the occasion. He then thought it necessary to give us some intelligence in return, which, whatever he might think of it, did not sound to our ears by any means favourable. From what we could gather, a civil war was raging in England, for in great exultation he assured us that the viziers of the shah of England, who, as in Turkey, it seems command his armies, had gained a signal victory over a rebel people called "Opposition."

The mehmandar entered into long explanations upon this subject, which we could in no wise understand; and however he and the governor might seem to look upon their king's government as more firmly fixed by this event, still we doubted whether there was wisdom in proceeding on an embassy to a country full of internal broils, and which, as experience had taught us in Persia, could never be completely settled until one shah remained its undisputed master. It was evident that the rebels were still strong, since, by the governor's own account, although daily defeated, yet they were not dispersed. "Ah!" said Mohamed Beg, "the Franks may talk of their management in matters of government; but here is evidently a great want of some Eastern wisdom; a little

of the *tutiai dowlet*, or state collyrium,* is necessary for them, and by the blessing of Allah, you, turning towards Mirza Firouz, "you are the man to teach them how to apply it."

At this the ambassador looked pleased, and hearing us all exclaim *Barikallah*, he curled up his whiskers and said, "that the outset of our voyage, 't is true, had been disastrous, for so we must think when a true believer is counted unclean by an infidel; but we had now proceeded too far to thing of returning; and although things had looked ill, yet he hoped that all would prove favourable at last." Therefore, as soon as the governor had taken his leave, we permitted ourselves to be conducted to our new ship. We parted with regret from our friends on board the smaller vessel, who appeared very anxious to have proceeded with us to England; but when we had been safely placed upon the deck of the large ship, we felt nothing but delight and amazement.

CHAPTER XII.

Hajji Baba describes a large English ship.—Of the individuals whom he meets on board, and his difficulties at adopting European manners.

The ambassador was received with great ceremony on board by the captain, an old man, who, as we conceived, out of compliment to us, had sprinkled his head with a white

* Collyrium, the powder of antimony, is constantly applied by Eastern people to strengthen the eye-sight, and, as a remedy for national affairs, is frequently sarcastically recommended to those whose conduct is open to reproach.

dust, so nicely applied that it did not shake from him. What other motive could he have had for so doing, excepting to evince his humility? He stood with his hat off, evidently to exhibit his dust, making many fine speeches; and then, to show that he did not restrict himself to words only, ordered an immense discharge of his cannon. He then paraded us about the ship, where we found every thing that the heart of man could desire, excepting horses and a green field to gallop over. We here saw nearly three times more guns than in the last ship, and enough men to form the population of one of our towns. Women were there besides, but not in great numbers; indeed, so few, we were told, that the arrangements preserved in our harems might here be reversed, and, if properly distributed, fifty men at least would become the slaves and form the household of one woman. As great plenty reigned within board as if we had the bazar of Ispahan at hand to supply us. We had fruits of all description, as much milk and butter as if the tents of the Iliots were pitched close at hand; and of wine and meat there was a store.

Altogether the scene that we here witnessed was one which struck us with more astonishment than anything we had yet seen out of our own country. "Ah," said we, "if the shah had but one ship in the Caspian, he would burn the fathers of the Russians!" "Inshallah! please God," was repeated around, and we lived in the hope that, our ambassador once established in England, it would not be difficult to learn how to build ships; seeing that the Turks, a nation acknowledged by all mankind to be the asses of the human race, made them, and recollecting that the Persians were endowed with more ingenuity and ability than all the rest of the world together.

The captain then brought his *naibs*, or lieutenants and officers, introducing them to the ambassador, and among the number he specially presented a doctor, who was enjoined to take care of our health. He moreover led a Frank priest

before us, who was the only living sign we had yet seen of religion amongst infidels, for never had we seen one of them even stand still and pray.

The priest was distinguished from the others by wearing black clothes. His chin and lip was just as closely shaved as the rest, and he drank wine without scruple. The doctor, too, had no distinguishing marks of wisdom about him; but it was evident that he was a man of science, for upon feeling my pulse and looking at my tongue, he asked me if I did not feel an ache precisely on a spot on my head which he touched; whether my eyes did not burn, and if my appetite was not gone; discoveries which Mirza Akhmak would not have made in a moon—no, not with all the talismans and astrologers of Persia to assist him.

Having got acquainted with this company, we descended into the apartments below, which were much more spacious and numerous than those of the small ship we had left; and here we found three individuals, two men and one woman, evidently of a higher class than those who form the equipage of ships, and they were presented to the ambassador in their turn. The lady, for she was doubtless a *khanum*, was surprisingly beautiful, of a style of beauty totally different from that of our countrywomen, being fair as a young moon, with hair like the gold wire that forms the head-dress of a bride in Persia. She did not attempt to hide her face when we and the other men entered, nor was there any veil at hand for her to do so had she wished it; but she addressed the ambassador without embarrassment or coyness, and at once, as it was easy to perceive, enslaved his heart for ever. Through the interpretation of the mehmandar she enquired after the Circassian, and offered her good offices to make her stay on board agreeable; but the ambassador assured her that she was nothing but a slave, and that, if she could only get a corner to sit in, unseen by any one, she required no greater happiness.

One of the men was a son of the road, as the wandering

Arabs say, a traveller. He was evidently a person of experience, for his hair was white, which he might have kept from the gaze of the world had he always worn a turban or head-dress, according to our Eastern fashion. The account which he gave of himself was to us incomprehensible; for it seems he was travelling about the world at his own expense for a Frank king, to collect birds, beasts, and fishes, which as fast as he caught he stuffed. The moment he perceived us he eyed us from head to foot, as if he were inspecting horses or camels; and his curiosity was afterwards explained by the knowledge we acquired of his pursuits;—it was evident that, looking upon us as foreign animals, he longed to kill and to stuff us. The other was what the interpreter called a *shahzadeh*, or prince, a native of a large island near which we sailed, called Sicilia. His principality, it seems, consisted in a cargo of merchandise which he was carrying to England for sale, and his history put me in mind of what many of our Persian princes are likely to be at the death of our shah, namely, wanderers and adventurers over the face of the globe. He had little to denote high birth in his person, for he was, even among the Franks, a man of dark and sinister aspect, adopting a mode of disposing his hands in an odd and unseemly manner in his lower dress, which might be royal, for aught we knew, but certainly neither graceful nor decent. He had a vizier in his suite, whom he hired perhaps to keep up his drooping spirits, who for the want of more serious employment played from morning to night upon a sort of guitar.

In this company we proceeded on our voyage. The ship was so large that it appeared to be divided into several *mahals*, or parishes, and we were consequently not thrown so much together as in the vessel which had brought us from Smyrna. I scarcely ever associated with the ambassador, except at meals (for he permitted me to eat and to be seated before him), or when he walked upon the deck; therefore I cannot keep any particular register of his actions; but I, anxious to put

into practice the shah's instructions, immediately began to study the English language, and to that effect made as many friends among the infidels as I could, in order to learn from them the names of every thing I saw. I found no one backward in giving me information, and ere long I began to make myself understood. The ambassador also was much helped in his study of it by every body on board; and one of the lieutenants, in particular, with whom he had formed an intimacy, made out a vocabulary of the most necessary words for his use; and thus our time was well taken up. Besides, he received much of his instruction from the moon-faced lady. She, wonderful to say, was as learned as any scribe, for she could read, and, what is more extraordinary, understood what she read.* She also wrote after the fashion of Europe; but whether she excelled in that accomplishment, we could not sufficiently judge; for being critics in our mode of penmanship only, we could not yet decide upon what might be good writing among the Franks. It was indeed a rare and curious sight to see this fair creature doing all the offices of a mollah, superintending the ambassador's fingers as he attempted to write, and making him read the ugly and crabbed letters common to the books of Europe. For my part, I never got over the habit of reading from right to left; for so perversely awkward are the Europeans, that every one of their books is written from left to right, and the difficulty was daily renewed when I began to read; until I found it necessary to stick a pin into my left hand sleeve, as a memorandum. Mohamed Beg, who pondered deeply upon this subject, after a due consideration of such contradictory habits, came to a conclusion that all people who sit upon the ground, such as Persians, Turks, and Arabs, must write from right to left; whereas all those who use tables, such as Europeans, must use the pen in the other direction.

I shall reserve myself to extend the remarks which my

* The Persians make a distinction between those who read and understand, and those who read and do not understand.

mind has already suggested on the different usages of European life, as opposed to ours, until I have seen more of these extraordinary people; but I cannot omit to mention, that one of the greatest difficulties we at first had to contend with was upon the score of eating. When it is remembered how simple are the manners of our board, where nothing is seen upon the cloth, save the food placed in various-sized bowls and dishes, and spoons of different denominations for taking up the liquids, no one will be astonished when I say that we were quite puzzled at what we saw upon an English table. It absolutely bristled with instruments of offence. We saw knives, with long glittering blades of all sizes and descriptions, sufficient in number to have ornamented the girdles of the shah's household,* as well as a variety of iron claws,† looking like instruments of torture for putting out eyes, or running into criminals' bodies. To these were added pincers, trowels, scoops, spoons of all shapes, and contrivances so numerous that it would take up a whole life to learn their use; and for what purpose? merely to transfer the food from the dish to one's mouth. It is to be imagined that we were very awkward when we first adopted this mode of eating, we who had been accustomed from our childhood simply to take every thing up in our fingers, and carry it with comfort and security to our mouths, without the dangerous intervention of sharp instruments. The ambassador, however, determined from the beginning to persevere; and so did I, in order not to have the daily mortification of being laughed at by the infidels, which they always seemed very ready to do whenever they discerned anything in our habits of life that differed from theirs. Our first essays were rather disastrous, for my chief, in wielding his knife, had nearly cut off one of his fingers; and I, forgetting the claw which I held in my hand, eating for a moment as usual with my fingers, almost put out my eye by

* It is almost an universal custom in Persia to wear a knife or dagger stuck in the girdle.

† The Persian word for a fork is *changal*, a claw.

running the horrid instrument into my face. Then there were ceremonies without end, of which we could not comprehend the necessity. It is proper etiquette that the food in the large dishes should first make a deviation from the straight line to one's mouth, by resting on certain smaller plates before each guest. Then it is not lawful to drink from the jug or bottle at once, but the liquor must first be poured into subsidiary glasses; whilst each sort of mess has its appropriate spoon. It is improper to eat butter with the spoon for soup, or to swallow the soup with a butter ladle. To take up a fowl whole in one's hand would be a mortal sin; much more to offer a bit to one's neighbour, which with us is reckoned so high an honour. In short, to describe the novelties which came under our consideration at every moment would require more patience than so unworthy a servant of the Prophet as I possess; therefore I resolved to let my remarks on this subject remain for the present at the bottom of my memory, in order to bring them forth, *Inshallah*, when fate should again restore us to our country and our homes.

CHAPTER XIII.

The embassy leave Malta, pass Gibraltar, and see England.—Hajji Baba describes some scenes on board ship.

The morning after our departure from the island of Dervishes, upon awaking and looking from the deck, what was our surprise to find the sea covered with ships of all sizes and denominations as far as the eye could reach! They all seemed to be going the same way, as if impelled by one mind, although we could discover no visible mark in the heavens by which they could direct their course. The difficulty was explained

when we found that the Franks had a *kebleh* * as well as ourselves; and that they were guided to it by means of an instrument which, in some measure, answered the purposes of our *kebleh nemah*, † by which, by the blessing of Allah, every true believer can find the straight road to Mecca.

Upon seeing these ships, we thought at first that this might be a part of England; and that the dominion of the sea, of which the infidels in Persia used to boast as belonging to them, might here be exemplified. But we were again mistaken; for what was our surprise when we heard that they were laden with merchandise bound to England; and that the great ship upon which we were embarked was intended to protect them on the voyage!

"But," said the ambassador, when he heard this, "in the name of Ali, is there a famine in your land, that all these ships are going there? or are the English such dolts that they can make nothing for themselves, and that other nations are obliged to supply them? Why, if one ship arrives at Resht ‡ from Russia, or one at Abusheher § from Hind, it is talked of throughout the land as an event; and they bring us as much cloth, china, sugar, coffee, indigo, and other merchandise as will suffice for many months." The mehmandar, instead of repining at the necessities of his country, which required such help in ships and merchandise, seemed, on the contrary, to glory in it; and endeavoured to persuade us that this was, in fact, the cause of its wealth and prosperity. We became more and more perplexed at all we saw, and our impatience to arrive at the seat of these extraordinary people increased every day.

In the meanwhile our time passed on in a manner, when we came to think upon it, that must have been under the in-

* The direction of Mecca.

† A compass, or instrument whereby the direction of Mecca is ascertained.

‡ The Persian port on the Caspian.

§ The Persian port in the Persian Gulf.

fluence of something more than human. Here we were, day after day, week after week, living in the middle of a world of water, going God knows where, and existing upon the mere assertion of one or two men, who had no other proof to show us that we should again see human beings, and once more enjoy the blessings of a life on earth, except a few figures, scratches, and marks on large sheets of paper. By these they pretended to explain that the world was round; that it was intersected by certain lines, all of which are known and numbered; and that, having passed a proper quantity of these, we should infallibly find ourselves one morning in England. What was now to be done, but to put our faith in what they said? Their doctrine was more curious and astonishing than any we had ever heard from our most profound mollahs; and we determined, that if their calculations proved correct, to publish it in our country, and pass for prophets and astrologers such as were never known since the days of Jemsheed.

After sailing many days and nights, land was perceived, and we came to anchor close to a large insulated rock, which the English call Gibraltar, but which the mehmandar assured us once belonged to the sons of Islam; and pointing out a long range of distant lands on the opposite coast, he told us that it was now inhabited by Mahomedans. Pressing him to tell us more on this subject, he said that one *Tarik ben Zeyad*, a famous devourer of iron,* a general of one of our early caliphs, had taken this place from the infidels of those days, and that it had been called *Gibel Tarik*, or Tarik's Mount, after him. We curled up our whiskers, and girded np our loins, upon hearing this history; and forthwith endeavoured to impress our friends on board with more extended ideas of the prowess of Mussulmans. Again we sailed, but we were long getting through a narrow passage, owing to adverse winds; and

* *Ahunkhor*, a common expression, denoting a bravo, a hero.

recollecting the *Bâbelmandab* * of the sea leading to the Holy Mecca, we called this part of our voyage the entrance of the "Gate of Tears."

Having passed it, we continued our course for many days in a colder climate, when a circumstance took place which inspired us with hopes that our voyage was now drawing to a close. The traveller and beast-stuffer, with whom we had become very intimate, was evidently distressed at the appearance of those unequivocal marks of age, namely, his white hairs. Upon comparing our beards with his head, he enquired by what contrivance, old and young, we managed to preserve such a fine glossy black on our hair; whilst, do all he could, he never could prevent his own becoming white. He made us understand that the world in general, taking his white hair as a false datum, supposed him to be aged beyond the truth, whilst he assured us that he was still in the vigour of youth; and argued, that if he could avert such injustice by using artificial means, he felt himself justified in so doing.

We assured him that in Persia we were equally sensible to the decays of age, and had an equal abhorrence of white hairs; and to that effect, from time immemorial, we had used certain dyes, which brought to the same level the beards of old men and of the young. Some preferred the *khenna* by itself, which produced a fine red or orange tint; others, more fastidious, the indigo leaf only, and appeared with blue beards; but the generality used both these dyes combined, which gave the fine black gloss. We then asked the traveller which he intended to use, the red, the blue, or the black?

He appeared to start with horror at the mention of red, swearing that he would prefer his own white hairs to it; but he expressed his wish to make use of the black dye, and this was done apparently unknown to the rest of his countrymen

* This word, vulgarly called *Babelmandel*, received its name of the Gate of Tears from the old Arabians, who considered as dead all those who ventured to encounter the dangers of its navigation.

in readiness to appear with all the colour of youth on reaching his own shores.

Hashem, the ambassador's valet, accordingly promised to prepare the proper dyes, and to renovate this infidel's head. But what was our astonishment the day after, instead of seeing him appear under new colours, to observe his head plastered over with grease, and thickly covered with the white dust common to Franks! We could remark that the khenna had taken well, and but for the white dust and grease his head would have appeared of a fiery red. When we asked Hashem why he had not proceeded to finish with the indigo leaf, which would have made the whole black, we found that that drug had lost its quality by the damp of the sea; and that therefore the head of the bird-stuffer was doomed to remain a fixed red.

It was evident he was much mortified by this disaster, seeing that red hair is scouted as infamous in his country, and he appeared particularly so before the khanum, in whose eyes he evidently wished to hold a high station. But luckily for him, and for us all, the land of England was soon after in sight, and in this new and interesting object were forgotten the miseries of our fellow-traveller, and the ridicule of his crimson locks.

The infidels appeared to hail the first sight of their country with almost as much joy as we, and this confirmed us in the supposition that chance and destiny had much more to do in our stumbling upon it, than all the observations, the lines, the angles, and the large pieces of paper of their astrologers. It was plain that their observations (and that was a discovery first made in great exultation by Mohamed Beg) did not wholly depend upon their knowledge of the heavenly bodies; for upon throwing a piece of lead into the sea, by means of a long line, they found that we were near the land, and having struck bottom, they knew by the sort of soil which attached itself to the lead that it must belong to England.

It is evident that much of what we had heard concerning the dark and dreary climate of England was true: for when

its coast was first pointed out to us, instead of the bright and sunshiny mountains to which our eyes were accustomed in our own country, we here discovered only a low line skirting the horizon, enveloped by clouds and vapour, and this, we were assured, was the seat of the Franks. The reason then (that which always appeared to us so inexplicable) why this restless people should leave their own homes, and encounter so many dangers and difficulties to seek us out, was at once explained. We possessed a commodity which they did not, and without which the life of man is little worth. We saw the sun, and enjoyed sunshine; they were wise enough to know that this blessing outweighed every other. It is true the mehmandar endeavoured to explain it otherwise, by saying, that there existed among the nations of Europe interests of an extent and magnitude that we could not understand, which made it necessary for England, one of the principal of those nations, to send her emissaries into every quarter of the globe, however remote from her own immediate sphere, to make friendships, and extend her commerce.

We, however, would in no wise listen to these reasons, nor allow that any interests which the nations of the Franks might have amongst themselves could compete with those which agitated our vast, important, and ancient monarchies. "As, for instance," said the ambassador to him, "if you talk of foreign relations, what will you compare to one of our *chappows*, or predatory excursions upon a neighbouring state? The men and women slaves, the camels, the horses, the mares, and the sheep, besides the mule-loads of heads which we victoriously seize and bear away on such occasions, are feats indeed, and are not to be brought into competition with the squabbles of a few beardless infidels, who write, and negociate, and talk, and make many words for months, and sometimes for years, about the right of a thing before they come to blows.

"And if you talk of domestic concerns, what are the petty interests of individuals, who work only for themselves and

their own enjoyments, to compare to the labours and exertions of a whole nation striving to accumulate luxuries and riches, for a great king, such as ours, who, instead of thanking us for our trouble, esteems it a great honour that he does us to accept of our offerings, and of the homage of our lives and properties?"

It was in vain that we argued; nothing would convince the mehmandar that his country and his government were not the best in the world; and he always finished by saying. "Wait till you see England; you will then judge with your own eyes; and you will then tell me which are the happiest people, the English or the Persians."

CHAPTER XIV.

They reach Plymouth.—Their first impressions upon seeing an English town.—Difference between an hotel and a caravanserai.

At length our ship cast anchor; no one enquired or seemed to care if it was a fortunate hour for so doing, but, without a moment's consideration, down went the anchor, and our destinies were fixed. But previous to this event, before we approached the shore, we held a conversation with the inhabitants by means of certain flags hoisted on our masts, which the captain assured the ambassador would in the course of a few hours announce to the king of England his arrival, although the seat of government from the port was distant at least as far as Tehran is from Ispahan. This contrivance we much admired, although we little understood how it could be put into practice, notwithstanding the assurances of Mohamed Beg, who argued that the English must have taken a hint from the Persians, for he brought to our recollection

that part of our ancient history which relates to the downfal of the tyrant Zohak; that event having been brought about by fires on the tops of mountains, which were to be signals for a general rising of the people, and of his death. Be that as it may, we soon found the benefit of the invention; for instead of being obliged to remain on board for forty days, as we were threatened, ere two had elapsed the answer to our signals was received, and full permission granted us to land, and to proceed to the foot of the English throne.

This was a happy day for us, indeed, and, without even thinking of asking permission of our astrologer, the ambassador at once determined to leave the ship. He ordered his suite to prepare for the journey, to collect the baggage, and not to forget the saddles, bridles, and horse equipages. We armed ourselves, and with pistols in our belts, swords by our sides, and each a spear or a carabine on our shoulder, we boldly descended the ship's side, and got into boats prepared for us. We took affectionate leave of our friends on board; for although their business was fighting, to give and to receive blows, yet peace and good-will had marked their conduct towards us. The red-haired traveller slipped on shore under the ambassador's protection, and, accompanied by the young interpreter, who now had become our mehmandar, we at length pushed from the ship, whilst the air resounded with the cannon that was fired to announce that event.

The Circassian, who had not stirred from her corner since she had first come on board, escorted by Mahboob and Seid, went on shore in a separate boat after the ambassador's departure. During the short time we had passed among the Europeans, there was one difference between them and us which we remarked and wondered at. This was the respect and deference they paid to women. The golden-haired khanum who had been our fellow-passenger was idolised by them. She no sooner appeared than every one arose, and no one seemed to think of themselves or anything else until she was seated in the most commodious and agreeable manner,

Did she go on the deck, there was nothing done either by the officers or the men which had not her convenience in view. The same sort of attentions would have taken place towards Delferîb, had she shown herself like the khanum; and even in her seclusion, no day passed but enquiries were made whether she had every thing she desired, whether her food was to her liking, and whether anything else could be done to promote her happiness. These observations were confirmed by what took place during the short time we were on board previously to landing at Plymouth; for no sooner had the ship cast anchor, than women approached in boats, and were permitted to come on board. They were none of the most beautiful, 't is true, not the best bred, but still they were treated with proper decorum.

Saadi saith, "The more fruit is forbidden, the more it is coveted;" and so we found it to be the case in the seclusion of the Circassian. The moment she appeared, although impenetrably veiled, the whole population of the ship was in readiness to look at her. It is well that the ambassador did not witness this scene, or else all his wrath would have been excited; he who now thought himself representing royalty might perhaps have exacted the same honours towards his slave as the Asylum of the Universe does towards his women when they issue forth in public.* But I question whether such a ceremony as the *courouk* would have been understood by the infidels, to whom looking upon a woman's naked face is as common as looking upon any other piece of permitted flesh.

Our sensations upon rowing to the shore were such as we conceived the body of the true believer might feel when seeking for his soul he finds it, and sits down to all eternity near a river of milk in the seventh heaven. Although every thing we saw, we were convinced, was impure, and defiled by the presence of mortals doomed to eternal fires, still how did our

* Before the shah's harem leaves the palace, a proclamation is made, ordering that no man appear on pain of death. This is called the *courouk*.

hearts open when we gazed upon green fields, fresh flowers, and running water! Indeed patches here and there were quite as green as the green of Persia. The numerous houses attracted all our attention, all painted and ornamented as if they had been prepared for the reception of the shah. We landed amidst an immense crowd, quite as curious and as anxious to see us as the people of Iran had been to see the English embassy when it came into Persia. But there appeared to us a total want of police; no *ferashes* with sticks to keep the mob at a distance; not a blow was struck, not a foot turned up. Had the English been laughed at for having no beards as much as we were for having them, there would have been no end to the stripes inflicted; but not a thing was done either to control the looks or words of the infidels, and they laughed as much at their ease as if there was no retribution at hand.

The mehmandar had provided carriages to take us to the caravanserai; a species of conveyance completely new; for although we had seen the Turkish *arabahs* at Constantinople, yet they were nothing to compare to what we saw here. We were driven off at a rate that almost took away our breaths; and before we could well ascertain into what sort of a machine we had been inserted, and how it was that we were carried away with such amazing velocity, we were landed at the door of the caravanserai.

When the mehmandar had talked to us of a caravanserai, we conceived that we should see a building open to every man and beast who might choose to walk in, and take possession of whatever room or stable that might be vacant, without being under any obligation, except to the pious founder of it. But what was our astonishment, when we alighted at the door of a house, at the gate of which stood several denominations of Franks, without their hats, and two or three women unveiled, all ready to receive us, and who, placing themselves in a sort of procession, preceded the ambassador until they reached a room fitted up with

looking-glasses, and surrounded by many contrivances too numerous now to mention. The mehmandar then told us that this was to be our habitation for the present, and added, that whenever we wanted anything, we had only to pull a string pendant from the wall, when slaves ready to obey our orders would appear, quicker than even the *gins* did to Aladin.

All this bewildered our senses. Here we were in a house which no shah of Persia, since the days of Noushiran, could have seen, not even in a dream—fitted up with more luxuries than decked our largest palaces—with windows glazed with the purest glass—with carpets of such little account, that every one walked over them in their shoes—with walls beautifully painted—with chairs enough to seat all the elders of Tehran; in short, with such inconvenient abundance, that it was long before we could be convinced to look upon it as the abode of the stranger. "Adieu," said we, "adieu, the vaunted hospitality of the East, if this is the way the stranger is received by the European!" But what was still more extraordinary, we had remained in this state of surprise not a few minutes, when in came a fair-faced daughter of England, asking us through the mehmandar, whether we should like to "see our beds;" at least so we understood her. We knew of no other beds than those which we carried about and spread on the floor, and therefore we all willingly pressed forwards to the sight; and here our wonder was again excited. The shah's throne, on which he sits to administer justice, and to make the two extremities of the world tremble, was not more magnificent than the bed intended for the ambassador. It must have been constructed upon the model of the famous peacock throne of the Moguls. Upon four pillars of curiously wrought wood was raised a canopy of rich stuffs, from which were suspended curtains as ample as those which screen the great hall of Tehran. The seat was overlaid with the softest and most luxuriant mattresses, and pillows to recline upon were raised one above the other in

heaps. Here our moon-faced conductress proposed that the ambassador should pass the night; and the invitation, as may be expected, was greedily accepted; an event to which she appeared perfectly accustomed, inasmuch as it was settled without the least indication of a smile or a blush on her part. "Allah! there is but one Allah!" exclaimed Mirza Firouz; "I am in a state of amazement. To eat dirt is one thing, but to eat it after this fashion is another. If pollution did not meet us in the face at every turn, I should say that our fortune is on the rise, and that our star is labouring hard in our service. We have not only the repose of paradise made ready for us, but also the houris thereof awaiting our pleasure."

Of a sudden a great sensation appeared to be made in the caravanserai, and the ambassador was informed that the Circassian was arrived. The infidels, still treating her with the same attentions that we had remarked on board ship, were bringing her straight to Mirza Firouz, when they were prevented by the sagacity of Seid and Mahboob. Not one of them could understand that she was only a slave; the mehmandar himself, when he reached England, seemed to take part with his own countrymen in paying her a respect that was not her due. "Where shall we put the lady?" said he to the ambassador.

"Lady, indeed!" said Mirza Firouz; "what words are these? You know better than I that she is no lady; that she is only a poor slave; and, therefore, for the love of Ali, do not allow her to be treated as a lady. Give her a corner, and there let her sit."

The curiosity which she seemed to excite among the English was beyond anything we could have conceived—it far exceeded their curiosity to see us; for although nothing could be greater than the contrast between our hairy chins and their smooth faces, yet they seemed entirely to forget us in their desire to see her. They thronged the house from morning to night, watching the windows of the room which she was said

to inhabit. Not satisfied with looking, they made strange noises in their language, which none of us could understand; and, what was more extraordinary, there was a painter ready to draw her portrait the moment she should show herself. "If slaves are thus treated in this country," said we, "what a happy lot must attend the wives!" Indeed, if to walk about without a eunuch, to leave their faces exposed to the gaze of men, and to be allowed the free use of their eyes and tongues, be happiness, the English women possess it in a supreme degree.

CHAPTER XV.

The ambassador is visited by the governor of Plymouth.—He dines, and goes to bed, but cannot sleep.

Mirza Firouz was much mortified that no person, great or small, had been sent by the government to meet him at his landing. No one had said the *khosh amedeed*, "you are welcome," to him, which a Persian says even to a Jew when he has passed his threshold; much less had any one enquired whether his brains were in good order, or whether his spirits were well wound up. The *istakbal*,* that commonest of ceremonies, which is always performed in Persia towards a stranger, was here totally omitted; and when we recollected with what honours and attentions all English ambassadors had been received by us, we unanimously exclaimed at the want of hospitality which marked our reception, and regretted our ever having left our own country. We fell tooth and nail upon

* The istakbal is a deputation of the principal of the town, which is either headed by the governor, or sent by him to welcome the arrival of a stranger of consequence.

the mehmandar, uttering loud complaints against the government; but he excused himself by saying, that the customs of England and Persia were different; and that he hoped, if we would have patience, we should soon find that what was omitted in empty words and compliments would be fully made up in substantial comfort.

However, we had not long been installed in the caravanserai before the ambassador was waited upon by the governor of the city. He came unattended by any suite. He had no led horses, no running footmen before him, no pipe-bearers, no shoe-holders, no ferashes to clear the road with sticks; but he walked in with his hat in his hand, and, without in the least seeming to think where he was to sit, placed himself in the first chair that was at hand. The ambassador, who is all courtesy and politeness, and who understands perfectly how high up in the room every man is entitled to, was quite shocked at seeing the governor in a place only good enough for a *kedkhoda**, and after much entreaty persuaded him to sit on the sofa next to him. Indeed, if the mehmandar had not told us that this was the governor, we should have taken him for little better than a *fakir;* and although we were assured that he was a commander of many ships, and a lion in the fight, yet he was so very small in person, and so very quiet in manner, that it required all our imagination to convince ourselves of his greatness. He was moreover seventy years old.

This being the first officer of consequence whom we had seen in England, the ambassador thought it right, for our interests, to produce as favourable an impression as possible on his mind, and accordingly put into practice all those attentions and well-set speeches of which he is so eminently the master. After he had enquired three times over whether his health was good, his brains right, and his spirits up, he turned round to me and the mehmandar, and said, "Praise

* A *kedkhoda* is the principal officer of a parish, or a village.

be to God, the governor is a fine youth; there is not his equal in the fight; he is all accomplished; he is a person, in short, upon whom one's eyes like to look. We are happy to have met with such an individual on our first landing; it forbodes good luck; our fortunes are on the rise; the king of England, it is evident, is a prince of great wisdom, to have chosen such a man for his representative. By being acquainted with such like persons, the friendship of the two countries will be cemented, and the Persians and English will henceforth call each other brothers. The mehmandar having, as it appeared to us, in six words interpreted this, all that the ambassador got in answer was, "Oh!" How what he had to say could have been thrown into so short a word, we have still to learn. The ambassador waited for some time for an answer to this speech, and was curling up his mustaches, and smoothing his beard, in the hopes of an equivalent return of compliment, when the governor broke a long silence by remarking that it was a fine day; not meaning, as we should have said in Persia, that the sun shone because of the joyful event of the ambassador's arrival, but that it really was fine, and did not rain. We all looked at each other, and as soon as he had taken his leave, and when the mehmandar had also left us, we gave full vent to our feelings.

"Did you ever see such an ass?" exclaimed one,

"A governor, indeed! a Persian dog would make a better," said another.

"Praise be to God," said a third, "where are the Franks, and where the Persians? A Persian camel-driver would speak better than this infidel."

Then we all fell to praising the wit and the eloquence of our ambassador, who indeed had excelled himself on this occasion, considering the poor subject before whom he had made his first display. We said, of a truth the shah has chosen a man who will make his face white in this foreign land; and one who will give the infidels a proper specimen of Persia's superiority over every other. Our assurances in

some measure soothed his displeasure at the treatment which he had hitherto received; and we consoled ourselves by the reflection, that it would be as unfair to judge of the whole of the Persian people by the Arab sheikh who governs Bushire, as it would be to judge of the English by the governor of Plymouth.

The dinner at the caravanserai was served up very much in the same fashion as it had been on board our ship; but our astonishment never ceased when we saw all the silver and rich ornaments that were displayed on our table.

"Can this be a caravanserai," said we, "or is this a deception practised upon us? We are lucky if at a caravanserai in Persia we find a poor wretch of a *baqual* at the gate, to sell us a loaf and an onion; but here are the riches of a *Hatem Tai*."

The mehmandar assured us that it was a caravanserai, and nothing but a caravanserai; and at every town in England we should find, not only one, but several such as this, and in many instances much better, and more magnificent. However, there was one little secret which having explained, he materially diminished our satisfaction, and made us doubt after all whether our own ruined buildings were not better, and that was, that at the winding up, and when on the point of departure, a certain little thing called a "bill" was brought, in which every mouthful eaten, every candle expended, and every glass broken, were carefully registered; and that the amount was instantly paid, without even an appeal to the cadi, or a general cry of justice and no justice, or else the stranger's goods were seized, or perhaps his person put into prison.

Our time passed on rather slowly and dull enough until the hour of bed. We amused ourselves principally in pulling the strings which hung near the fire-place, to try whether such a ceremony would actually produce the appearance of the slaves, or servants, of the caravanserai; and sure enough they came, and tired enough they seemed to be; until at length our pulling had no farther effect; and the charm we

supposed was broken by too frequent a repetition of it. But when we were fairly tired and sleepy, the round-faced maiden, whom we had seen in the morning, again made her appearance, with a lighted candle in her hand, and invited the ambassador to repose, to which he willingly assented. This was the signal for a general departure, and we each of us were then inserted into a well covered throne, as before described.

The night was passing on very successfully, when I was awoke by the ambassador's voice somewhere in the house. I got up as well as I could in the dark, and found him apparently in great distress, walking about in dishabille, followed by the master and mistress of the caravanserai and all their servants. The parties could not understand each other. The infidels were looking quite aghast, wondering what the ambassador could mean; whilst he was venting his rage in a strange mixture of Persian and English words. As soon as he perceived me, he exclaimed, "I 'm dead, I 'm dead; they have killed me! May their houses be bankrupt; may they all go to *Jehanum!*" Upon enquiry it was found that the people of the caravanserai, conceiving we must always be cold because we came from a hot climate, had so heaped the ambassador's bed with coverings, that no sooner had he got in amongst them than he began to smother. He escaped as if from certain death, and taking refuge in the passage, by his noise and exclamations gathered around him all the caravanserai. Having relieved his misery, we again retired to our beds; but our wonder never ceased when we saw how constantly and unconcernedly the infidel females mixed with the males, and with what little concern the men saw their wives and daughters waiting upon us, and performing all the offices which we can only command within our harems. On this occasion we discovered that there could be no distinction between men's and women's apartments in an English house, as there is in a Persian; for had that been the case, their inhabitants could not all have risen so much with one accord.

The women certainly did not look as attractive as during the day, for their faces were encircled with small bits of paper, which we took for talismans placed there either to guard their beauty, to keep off the evil eye, or to charm away wrinkles and whiskers.

We were sadly off for our ablutions, for water was to be found in every place except where we wanted it. In a small room into which we were shown, it was made to rush in and disappear as if by magic, in a much more extraordinary manner than through the pipes of our fountains. This attracted the notice of the idle *jelowdars* and stable boys; and when they wanted something to amuse them and pass away the time, they found it in making the waters play in this place, to the great annoyance of the Franks. If contrivances so ingenious as this existed in Persia, instead of being confined to a small dark chamber, they would be placed before the shah in broad daylight, and the contriver clothed with a dress of honour. To say the truth, we frequently determined in our discussions with each other, that the English rendered complicated that which was intended by nature to be very simple.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Ambassador proceeds on his journey.—Novelty of stage coaches to Persians.—Hajjî Baba's remarks upon English travelling.

The mehmandar now informed us that we were to make preparations for our journey to the capital. Our chief was somewhat startled at this, for he expected that some Frank of consequence would have been sent from the foot of the throne to conduct him to London: and that, waiting his

arrival, he might have had time to enjoy the sweets of repose after his long voyage. He also expected that an arrangement, similar to that made in our own country on the passage of an ambassador, or a stranger of consequence, would have been made here, whereby we should be much advantaged; for well did we recollect how the last English embassy, on its journey through Persia, had enriched themselves by the provisions collected from the towns and villages through which it passed. We also recollected how many of the faithful had been made to suffer out of compliment to the infidels; and we contemplated the enjoyment of retaliating on the feet of the English farmers some of the bastinadoes which had been inflicted on the Persian rayats. But all our dreams vanished when the mehmandar told us, that on the next day, shortly after morning prayer, a coach was to conduct us to the foot of the throne. He warned us to be ready at a particular hour; for he assured us, that which we could scarcely believe, that such was the despotic nature of the men who drove these coaches, that they would not wait any man's pleasure, not even for their own shah, did he happen to require the delay of an hour or two. And the fact proved his words true; for on the following morning, when we had scarcely done combing our beards, and before we had settled the direction of the *kebleh*, preparatory to our prayers, we were alarmed by the appearance of the mehmandar, who, in the greatest haste, ordered us to hurry to the coach, for not a moment was to be lost.

"But what is the haste," rejoined I, "in the name of the blessed Hussein? Have we not all the day before us? The sun is not so hot here as in our country, requiring us to leave our resting-place so early!"

"We have nothing to do with the heat of the sun," answered the mehmandar; "time is not thrown away here, every minute is of consequence."

"But who throws away time?" exclaimed Mohamed Beg, still on his knees, and repeating his "God forgive me."

between his lips. "Is it throwing away time to say one's prayers? Our blessed Mahomed—"

"Man!" exclaimed the mehmandar, "what does the coachman care for your blessed Mahomed?"

Of a sudden the sound of a horn was heard, like that used at our hot baths to call the women to bathe, and this, we were informed, was the last stage of the coachman's impatience. This was succeeded by the voice of the ambassador himself, who roared out, "Ah, ye unsainted men! Ah, ye children of burned fathers! why do ye delay? Do ye not perceive that the Franks are waiting? Arm yourselves and be mounted." Upon which, without saying a word more, we girded our loins, put on our swords, thrust our pistols into our waists, tied on our cartouch boxes, seized our long carabines, and putting our proper leg foremost on crossing the threshold, saying the *bismillah*, we left the caravanserai, and sallied into the street.

Our chief called to me, and said that I was to proceed with him; that Seid, Mahboob, and the Circassian were to do the same; but enjoined me to see the others off without delay. The mehmandar, having inserted four into the inside of the coach, was proceeding to put in a fifth, when he was stopped by loud cries. "In the name of Ali, by the soul of your father, there is no more room; we shall die." The more the mehmandar entreated, the more they showed resistance. They had seated themselves most agreeably on their heels, after our fashion, and every corner was occupied. At length, by main force, the mehmandar threw in a Frank who was to accompany them to London, shut the door upon them, hoisted Hassan the cook, and Feridoon the barber, on the top of all, and, before we could say "God be with you," they set off like an arrow shot out of a bow. I had never seen anything so wonderful since I was born. Hassan and Feridoon both, in the face of all mankind, were each of them seated by an unveiled daughter of the Franks, who little

seemed to care for the actual touch of men acknowledging a different faith to their own.

The most extraordinary feature of the character of the English is, that they seem to look upon nothing as impure. They will touch a Jew as soon as one of their own tribe, and require no extraordinary ablution after it. But nothing in fact ought to surprise us on that head, when we reflect that the unclean beast is cherished and eaten by the kings, lords, and commons of all the different nations of Frangistan.

The ambassador followed in an hour after, accompanied by the mehmandar and myself in one carriage, and by the Circassian and her two attendants in another. I never enjoyed anything so much as this mode of conveyance. In this the English certainly are superior to the Persians; for although our *takhteravan* * is very agreeable in its way, yet nothing can exceed the ease and convenience of the carriage. In the *takhteravan*, when the mules take to trotting, or when the one proceeds willingly and the other refuses to go except by beating, the sufferer in the cage between both undergoes strange motions; but in the carriage all is agreeable. It is so easy a motion that one might go through one's prayers in it, smoke one's *kalioun*, or eat one's dinner. We at first found it attended with the great inconvenience of want of air. By certain pulleys glasses are drawn up; but not being able to put them down again, we were nearly stifled, until an infidel showed us the secret of the contrivance. I question whether carriages would ever become of general use in Persia; for, after all, what is there like the horse for the conveyance of man? It is the universal use of this animal that makes the Persian what he is, namely, active and enterprising; whilst the Frank, carried about in his carriage, takes the place which our women would occupy, and debases his manhood seated on soft cushions, sheltered

* A litter carried between two mules.

from heat and cold, instead of bestriding a hard saddle, exposed to and hardened by the vicissitudes of weather.

We travelled through a country, the whole of which was better watered and kept than either the gardens of the Takht Kajar at Tehran, * or the eight paradises of Ispahan. Not a stone was to be seen on the road. We supposed that the *gins* and *peris* kept it clean; for, excepting when the shah makes his entry into one of our cities, when the people are turned out to heap up the highway at his approach, we had never seen anything so well prepared. We frequently asked each other whether this had been done by way of preparation for the ambassador's arrival; but the mehmandar assured us that it was the same all over England; and at length we believed it, particularly when we remarked that our passage through the country created no greater sensation than if a string of camels were crossing the desert; and that if people did look at us, instead of bowing the head to the earth, as we had been ordered to do to the English embassy in Persia, they only laughed and pointed the finger.

We travelled all the first day, and rested at night in a caravanserai, superior to the one at Plymouth. What was our surprise to find that we had proceeded above thirty parasangs; a distance which, in our country, would have taken us three or four days to perform! Here was neither loading nor unloading of mules, nor sore backs of horses to complain of, no *yakhdans*, no pots and pans, no cookery to perform, no cook to carry; all seemed prepared at a moment's notice, as if the shah himself had been expected; as if the country had been laid under contributions months beforehand. We were agreed, that had Ismael Beg Telai, the Golden Ismael as he is called, the shah's favourite, had he, provided with the most absolute firman that was ever issued, been sent in advance to Ispahan, the most abundant city in Persia, to accumulate provisions, and to prepare for the arrival of the king of kings,

* The *Throne of the Kajars*. The name of the king of Persia's summer palace.

he never could have performed what we saw done with the most extraordinary ease, unexpected as we evidently were, in our passage through England. The moment our carriages appeared, as if they had had prophets and star-gazers amongst them to warn them of our arrival, every body was in motion to be of use to us. They all appeared to know as well as ourselves what we wanted, and every thing was done without our speaking a word. Who has ever seen a caravan depart in Persia, or even a string of mules loaded, without a thousand uplifted voices being heard in universal wrangle; "justice!" "no justice!" being banded from mouth to mouth, as quick as blows falling on the *felek?* But here, as Ali is my witness, not a word was spoken; the horses appeared to run of their own accord to the carriages, ready and anxious to be harnessed. The drivers were all dressed, whip in hand, and before I could have counted my beads we were on the road again. And when we reached the caravanserai, instead of witnessing, as we frequently do in Persia, a general battle between servants and masters, cooks and mule-drivers, where each one is to pass the night, some seizing upon one room, some upon another; here, on the contrary, the most astonishing order prevailed. Each new comer is paraded in procession to an apartment, which is as much his own as if he had resided in it twenty years, where he finds a fire provided for him, and where strings, ready for his pulling, ring corresponding bells, and produce corresponding waiters; and where the more noise he makes, the more trouble he creates, the more the owners of the caravanserai appear to be pleased. When a dinner is ordered, it is wonderful to observe what alacrity and stir are created throughout the house, whilst we in Persia, after a long day's march, are happy to get our *pillau* without the previous necessity of beating our cook. But, at the same time, I must observe, as sure as night succeeds the day, never did we touch a morsel—never did we go to the right or the left—never did we leave the caravanserai, without that inevitable consequence of all things in England, to wit, a bill.

CHAPTER XVII.

They reach Bath, and approach the capital.—Sensations of the Ambassador at an English reception.

The next day we travelled as many parasangs as the day before, with the same ease and comfort; passing several large towns, and seeing sights so strange and novel, that it would require the pens of all the mirzas in the shah's gate to record them. We stopt at one city, in particular, to see what appears to be very uncommon among the Franks, namely, a bath. The city itself is called *Hummum*, or Bath; and strange enough it appeared to us, that so much consequence should be made of that which no Persian village is without; which exists in almost every street in our cities, and which is the necessary appurtenance of every Persian gentleman's house. But the secret of the consequence given to this place was, that the waters here, like those of Broussa, near Stamboul, are medicinal; and we were highly amused at the contrivances put into practice to restore the sufferers to health. The ambassador complained of a pain in his shoulder, and the Frank who showed us the establishment drew out a brush made of the bristles of the unclean beast, which he assured us would, if well rubbed over the part, produce instant relief. We recoiled from the sight of this instrument as if we had seen a snake. The infidel then invited us to walk into a pool where many Franks, both men and women, were taking their pleasure; but we had had pollution enough for once by the sight of the brush, and positively refused to accede to his entreaties.

The sight of the baths led to an animated dispute with the mehmandar, upon the subject of cleanliness. We asserted

that the Persians were the cleanest people on earth, and the Franks necessarily the dirtiest. I said, "You English, for instance, scarcely ever use a bath. You wash your hands and face, and then think yourselves clean; whereas the commonest man in Persia never passes a week, and the man of any consequence scarcely a day, without washing their whole persons."

"That may be the case," said the mehmandar, "but the cleanliness exists only as long as you are in the water; the moment you are out of it you return to your shirts worn for weeks before; to your trousers, which pass from father to son; and to your sheep's skin cloaks, that go through whole generations. We change our linen daily; the poorest man is clean from head to foot once in the week at least."

"What is the use of his cleanliness in dress," said I, "when he defiles his inside by eating swine's flesh? By the blessed Mahomed! twenty years of double prayers, when we return to Persia, will not purify us from the contamination we are likely to catch during our stay among you."

"Do not throw away your words in premature talk," said he; "you will eat swine's flesh, without scruple, believe me, before you have done with us."

He almost made me sick with the thought of such abomination; and being once more installed in our carriages, we continued our road towards the foot of the English throne.

Upon arriving at our resting-place at night, the ambassador was met by two mirzas, from the gate of the English shah, with carriages, and two royal *chappers*, or couriers, who were ordered to prepare every thing for his accommodation; and accordingly they had spread a table with all sorts of meats, fruits, and sherbets, to which they invited us to sit the moment the ambassador had alighted from his carriage. We saw that this dawn of attention from the king of the country was pleasing to the ambassador; and we anticipated the *Istakbal* that would meet us the next morning; for we were informed that we were only ten parasangs from the city, and

that we should certainly enter it before the *muezzins* could call the noonday prayer. This put us all into good humour. The ambassador consulted with Seid what *caba* he should wear on the occasion, what shawl he should wind round his cap, and ordered his diamond-hilted dagger to be got in readiness. I had remarked on many occasions that our dark faces and black eyes were not displeasing to the fair daughters of England; and therefore I merely put on a clean shirt, which I had also remarked was a great passport to an Englishman's approbation. I tightened my waist, whilst I expanded my shoulders to their fullest extent by putting on my broad-sleeved *tekmeh*. We all took care to curl the *zulfs* behind our ears. Seid shaved the ambassador's head; I left mine unshorn till we should meet Feridoon the barber. The Circassian was veiled closer than ever; and although we had no astrologer with us to ascertain a fortunate hour for entering the city, yet as the ambassador had had a good omen the evening before, we were satisfied that our good fortune was on the ascent.

We entered the carriages prepared for us with considerable emotion, considering what an important event entering a city under our circumstances must always be, and fully prepared to do justice to the dignity of our shah by the manner in which it was the ambassador's intention to receive the *Istakbal*, which we made no doubt was preparing to receive him. The mirzas accompanied the ambassador in the same carriage; and we remarked to them in what a different manner Persians approach a city, on occasions of ceremony, to what appeared to be usual here. It was the custom amongst us, we assured them, to move very slow; much ceremony, and many complimentary speeches were made; we smoked on the road; our *shatirs*, or running footmen, preceded our horses, and, on the entrance of an ambassador, the stick was abundantly administered to the crowd, in order to call forth admiration at the vigilance of the police, and to show the king's authority. Sometimes, when terror was to be struck, the city gates were ornamented by ample portions of human bodies, and heads

were laid in heaps before the royal palace. But here we remarked that it was exactly the contrary. The infidels who were driving our carriages galloped their horses more like cavalry making a charge against an enemy, than like men conducting the representative of the shadow of Allah upon earth.

As we approached the city, we remarked that, in many parts, the walls were painted in white characters, evidently after the manner of our country, and no doubt for the same holy purposes. I copied several such inscriptions, and hoarded them up with much care, to introduce them in my speech, when I should be able to express myself with sufficient ease in English.*

We were now told that we were only about three parasangs from the foot of the throne; and in proportion as that distance diminished, the stir on the road increased. It appeared, from the immense number of people who were whirling by in coaches, and conveyances of every description, that the population of the city must have been apprised of our approach; for well did I recollect, on the day that the last embassy from the shah of England reached Ispahan, when all its inhabitants were ordered out to meet it, that some of the most curious were to be seen at the head of the great mass even before the entrance of the *hezzar dereh*, or the thousand acres. But still it was extraordinary that no proper notice was taken of us; for if perchance we were discovered in our rapid course, it was only to point, or to laugh, or to hoot at us. We strained all our eyes in the direction upon which we were proceeding, when, under a thick yellow vapour, we saw what was evidently an immense city; and now the ambassador began to look about him for the grand deputation. We perceived no troops, nor any horsemen running to and fro with

* The words *ya ali! hou! hak! ya allah!* are frequently painted on the walls of the Persian mosques, and even houses. What Hajji Baba remarked here must evidently allude to the competitors in blacking, and to the pertinacious Eady.

anxious looks. The two British mirzas sat unmoved; but the mehmandar, who, from having seen our country, guessed what was passing in the ambassador's mind, said that he hoped we should now soon come to an end of our journey; and that then the ambassador would be convinced of the desire of the English nation to make his stay happy.

"And is it the custom of your country," exclaimed Mirza Firouz, "to smuggle an ambassador into the seat of your government, as if he were a bale of prohibited goods?"

The principal mirza, through the mehmandar, then assured the ambassador that it was not an English custom to send deputations on the road; but that he would not fail to receive all the attentions due to his high rank, as soon as he had reached the house which had been prepared for him.

"If such be your custom," said our chief, "by the head of the shah, believe me, it is a bad custom. Go to Persia—learn manners there. The ceremony of *Istakbals* is as old as Jemsheed. After all, there is some difference between the entry of an ambassador and that of an old woman, although they must be the same in your estimation, since the one seems to produce as little sensation as the other." Then turning to me, he said, "Hajjî, by my soul, if I had known, when I received my dismissal from the shah's presence, that I was to travel all this way, to encounter the waves and storms of the sea, to live with infidels, to be rubbed with a swine's brush, in short, to devour more abomination than ever fell to the lot of any one true believer, I would rather have shaved my beard, and lived in a corner all my life, with ashes on my head. Ah! Mirza Sheffi!" exclaimed he; "you old unsainted vizier! this is all your doing. If I do not defile your grave, and that of the whole of your ancestry, before I die, then my name is not Mirza Firouz."

The two English mirzas sat mute with astonishment at the volubility which all at once possessed the ambassador's tongue. They mildly pointed to a beautiful garden, through which we

were driving, saying, "this is one of our public walks, and one of our places of amusement."

"Shut up the windows," roared Mirza Firouz; "nobody shall see me so disgraced. I, who am ordered to make the shah's face white in this foreign land—I, who am the first ambassador whom the shah has ever dispatched hither, to be treated with as little ceremony as an ass-load of old rags would be in Persia! It is a disgrace not to be borne."

We continued to whirl along with unequalled rapidity, and, with the glasses up, we streamed from every pore. Nothing was to be done but to sit quiet. The mirzas and the mehmandar talked earnestly to each other. The mehmandar endeavoured all he could to explain away what so much grieved the ambassador; but all conversation was at an end by the new sort of noise which the carriage made upon entering the body of the city. We caught only rapid glimpses of streets, houses, shops, and novelties too numerous to be described at this moment, and at length stopped at a door, situated between several other doors of exactly the same dimensions; and there, to our joy and amazement, we beheld our countrymen, whom three days before we left at Plymouth, and whom, to say the truth, we expected never to see again.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of the Persians in London.—They mistake a lord for a doctor.—Of the house in which they are installed.

The ambassador got out of the carriage, with his temper all crooked, totally ignorant whether in so doing the hour was fortunate or unfortunate. Nobody appeared before him to say, "You are welcome;" no one with a present in

his hand to greet him; not even a pomegranate was offered him; and rushing up a rapid flight of stairs, he threw himself in despair upon a sofa. In vain was he invited to partake of a magnificent repast of sweetmeats, fruits, and ices, which had been prepared, and which the English mirzas and the mehmandar assured him had been provided at the express orders of the government—nothing would console him—he swore his face was black, and black he swore it should remain.

The mehmandar then presented him some food in a dish, and asked whether he would not eat.

"Eat!" said the ambassador: "if all your receptions are like this, and if you think to wipe off the disgrace which my shah has this day received by giving me to eat, you are much mistaken. Let me see some one to say 'Welcome' on the part of your shah, and then, perhaps, I may eat. No salt will be lawful till then."

"But do you count the British mirzas for nothing?" said the mehmandar.

"Mirzas, indeed!" exclaimed he in a fury: "did we send a writer of firmans, and a clipper of paper, to your ambassadors? What words are these? Don't beat the air with more useless words! My face is black; your face is black; and your government's face will also be blackened (praise be to God!) throughout the world when this fact is known!"

Seeing that nothing could be made of him in this humour, we left him to roll on the sofa, whilst Seid rubbed his feet, and Feridoon, the barber, kneaded his back and loins, which produced relief more effectual than either speeches from the mirzas or the mehmandar.

I consoled myself for the miseries of the last hour by seeking the company of my countrymen. I found them settled near the entrance of the house, in a large room, supported at one end by two pillars, surrounded with chairs, and encumbered by a large wooden case mounted on four legs. Here they had spread their carpets, arranged their saddles

and trunks, hung up their carbines, swords, and pistols; and had made all the arrangements usual in a caravanserai. There was no end to the many strange things which we had to say to each other. They had travelled through the country in a style worthy of kings, for their carriage was provided with every convenience; horses ready harnessed at frequent intervals were awaiting their arrival to carry them on with increased rapidity; and they had not once had recourse to either sword or carbine, such little impediment had they found. 'Tis true they were obliged to proceed whether they would or not; for the inexorable driver would not give them time even to prepare a *kalioun;* but they found so much pleasure in being, as it were, masters, whilst every body seemed slaving and toiling for their advantage, that, to hear them talk, they would not have cared if the journey had never come to a close. On arriving at the house in London, they were at a loss, amidst the variety of rooms which it contained, where to deposit themselves; but knowing from experience how much more convenient and safer it was to keep together, and to sleep under each other's protection, they settled to remain where I found them, rather than to take separate beds and separate rooms at the top of the house. They were visited every morning by a good old infidel, a doctor, so they thought, who had been very kind to the cook, who felt unwell from the fatigue of the journey. He had generously felt his pulse, and had sent his deputy to give the proper medicines. We were expressing our admiration of Frank doctors, when, at this very moment, the said old man came in accompanied by the mehmandar. We all rushed to have our pulses felt, and our tongues looked at, which is the Frank mode of ascertaining health, when the mehmandar, to our astonishment, burst into a fit of laughter.

"What news is this?" said he. "What do you do thus for?"

"He is our doctor, praise be to God!" said the cook; "he has cured the pain in my heart."

"Doctor! exclaimed the Frank; "he is no doctor—he is my uncle!"

"Well," said I, "and suppose he is? he may be a doctor, and your uncle too; there is no harm in that, is there?"

"But he is one of the *omrahs*, a lord, and a man of the sword; he never made up a drug in his life."

"How should we know that?" said the cook; "how are we to distinguish between your lords and your doctors?"

This puzzled the mehmandar; for truly every body seemed to be on an equality in this strange country. To judge of people by their dress here was impossible. Finery certainly was not the criterion; for if it were, then those who drove the coaches in the streets, and those who stood behind them, must be the nobility of the land, for they were the finest drest people we saw. We found, when we came to draw inferences from all that met our eye, that our difficulties increased; and therefore, until our senses should have become more expanded, we thought the best plan for the present was to seat ourselves upon the hill of patience, and open the eyes of astonishment upon the prospect of novelty.

In the meanwhile, accompanied by the mehmandar, I made a survey of the house that had been allotted to us by the English shah. It must have recently been taken by force from some native khan; for we could scarcely suppose that any body would willingly have surrendered up the immense property, which we remarked that it contained, to strangers. The old lord high treasurer, who was obliged to give up his house to the last Frank embassy at Tehran, managed his matters better, for he took away all his magnificent carpets and *nummuds*, all his silken door-curtains, all his China bowls and silver candlesticks, and substituted for them old worn-out articles, which answered the purpose just as well. But here there was no end to the magnificence displayed. Larger mirrors than any that had ever yet reached Persia were placed against the walls. Chandeliers equal to the shah's in his palace of Negaristan; carpets, sofas, chairs,

beds, every necessary of life in use among Franks, were seen, of all sizes and denominations; things of which we could not discover the use, and things of which, when we were told the use, appeared useless. For instance, we found chairs of all fashions: some to keep one's legs up; some to let them down; some to loll with the right arm, some with the left; others to support the head. Now, this to us, who have only one mode of sitting, namely, upon our heels, appeared an excess of madness. Then there was one set of tables to dine upon, another set for writing, others again for washing and shaving. But where should I end were I to attempt description? The same difficulties existed about the rooms. The room in which the servants had established themselves was one appropriated for eating. To eat any where else is improper—to sleep there would be sacrilege—to make a bath of it would create a rebellion. Then above this were several large apartments, with couches placed in various corners, where the whole of us might have slept most conveniently; but these we were informed were the Franks' *dewan khaneh*, where the masters received their visiters. One thing was most certain:—they have no *anderoon*, no separate apartments for their women. Men and women all live together; a man's room may be next to a woman's, and no difficulty made about it. How things could go on in this manner it was still left to us to discover; and the ambassador was at some loss to know where to deposit the Circassian, until we found a very good apartment, separate from the rest, where she might live unseen, and unable to see; happy in the enjoyment of her own customs. The universal exposure of their faces to the gaze of man by the infidel women was still to us a matter of the greatest surprise. Occasionally we remarked women wearing a sort of apology for a veil, green, black, or white, but it was merely a screen from wind, dust, or sun; but never was the impure eye of man ever taken into consideration. However, as upon this subject, as well as upon the relative situation of the sexes in this infidel, swine-eating

country, I shall have much to relate and much to expose, I will restrict myself at present to say, that during the whole day, the day of our first arrival, we did nothing but inspect the curiosities of our residence. Our constant progress from the top to the bottom, in which there were more steps than would take a man to the highest minar in Ispahan, at length so fatigued us, that we concluded, in order to encounter such fatigue, we ought to abandon our high-heeled green slippers, shod with iron, which slipped off frequently in the descent, and adopt the flat-soled shoes of the Franks. Well did we recollect the conveniences of our own houses in Persia, when compared to the one we now inhabited. There we scarcely ever had to mount a step; it was all even ground. On the same surface was the harem, with its fifty rooms, and its intricate passages; the vast *dewan khaneh*, with its open front ready to catch the smallest breeze that blew; the broad court, planted with trees ornamented by flowers, and refreshed by splashing fountains. Here, on the contrary, every thing was upside down. If we wanted to cook our meat, we descended to the bowels of the earth; if it were necessary to eat it, we went to its surface. If to sit and rest, we were perched midway; and if to sleep, we clambered into the chambers of the air. Mohamed Beg, the Locman of our party, who was constantly endeavouring to acquire good reasons for what we saw, was of opinion, that England being an island, it was necessary to save ground; for if all her houses, as in Persia, were spread over the surface of her territory, she would form one vast city, and no room would be left for agriculture. But Persia being a country the limits of which were unknown, it signified little how much of her surface was covered by buildings; there would always be plenty to spare. And this remark, he argued, was confirmed by the well known circumstance, that every man in Persia thought it incumbent upon him to build a new house for himself, and leave the house of his father to fall into ruin; whereas in England the son came into possession of his

father's house, and felt himself bound to keep it in repair; as naturally as in Persia the son becomes the owner of his father's fur coat, and the daughter of her mother's state trousers, feeling themselves bound to cherish and preserve them.

CHAPTER XIX.

Of how they pass the first night in London.—English noises different from Persian.—An English vizier visits the Ambassador.

We passed the first night very ill. Each of us had a bed, the curtains of which were so pretty that we longed to cut them up for *alcoloks*,* or to bind them round our waist; but we were unaccustomed to their heavy coverings, and found, after we had been a short time under them, that our coat and trousers became disagreeably oppressive. We all agreed that certain white pieces of loose linen, which accompanied each bed, would make excellent shirts; and Taki, the ferash, who had only one, determined immediately to improve his stock. The whole household was on the stir long before the Franks thought of moving; but Mohamed Beg was much puzzled about the true hour for saying his morning prayer, for we heard no *muezzins* to announce it from the mosques, and besides, the nights were so much longer than any we had been accustomed to, that we had almost settled amongst ourselves that the sun never rose in this ill-conditioned city. We had walked about the house for several hours almost in total darkness, and were in despair waiting for the dawn,

* The under vest, usually made of flowered chintz.

when at length we heard noises in the street, indicating that the inhabitants were awake. During the whole night at intervals we had watched the cries of what were evidently guards of the night, who, like the *keshekchis* on the walls of the *Ark*,* announce that all is right; but those we now heard were quite different. At first we thought they might be muezzins appointed to cry out the Frangi *azan*, the invitation to the inhabitants to arise and pray; and indeed, looking at them through the twilight, we were confirmed in our idea, for they were dressed in black, as all the English men of God are; but we were evidently mistaken, because, although they uttered their cry in a variety of loud shrill tones, yet still no one seemed to rise a moment the sooner, or to have the least idea of praying on their account. And still we were uncertain; for when the day had completely broken, Mohamed Beg came running in in great joy, exclaiming "*Muezzin! muezzin!*" and pointing to the top of one of the minars which are seen on all the houses, we there saw one of these street clergymen, crying out his profession of faith with all his might.

As the day advanced, strange noises, such as we never hear in our cities, became audible. Among others we distinguished a bell, whose sound, similar to that sometimes heard from the churches of the Armenians at Julfa and Etchmiazin, made us again suppose that this might be the true mode of calling the Franks to their devotions; but it appeared to be the signal for a general cleaning of houses and house doors. This operation was the business of women; and we imagined that it must have something to do with their religion, for they performed it as an act of penance on their knees. And we found, too, that our own house was undergoing the same ceremony; for, to our astonishment, we discovered that women, provided no doubt by the government for our use, had slept under the same roof with us, and were doing that which is the business of our *ferashes*, or carpet-spreaders.

* The king of Persia's palace is so called.

The ambassador, having been refreshed by the help of his barber, arose in better humour, and announced to us that he had had a dream, which having been advantageously interpreted by Mohamed Beg, his spirits were wound up, and he devoured no more grief. He had seen Mirza Sheffi with his feet in the air, his back on a carpet, and four *ferashes* flourishing their sticks over him, whilst the Asylum of the Universe was eating a *pillau* of gold instead of rice; and this was so sure an indication of the speedy destruction of his enemy, that he had now nothing left to wish for. His good humour was increased by the arrival of a Frank of consequence, who was announced to him as the mehmandar appointed to attend him, during his stay in England, by the English shah, and who talked our language with so much facility and purity, that every thing seemed now to promise fair for making progress in the object of our mission. He not only spoke Persian, but he wrote it with as much elegance as one of our best *moonshis* : he had read all our best authors; had Hafiz and Saadi at his finger's ends; and, to say the truth, we soon found out that the ambassador would have been happy had he not been quite so learned, since he was every now and then obliged to chew the cud of shame, and swallow the bitter draught of ignorance.

The mehmandar announced to the ambassador, that it was the intention of the king of England's vizier for foreign affairs to call upon him on that day; and that the *vizier azem*, or the prime minister, would visit him on the next. This surprised us exceedingly. "What!" said we, "is all the visiting to be settled without one single quarrel? These Franks must have a poor idea of their own dignity, of what is due to their shah, if they concede at once that which generally forms one of the principal questions of our negociations. When the last English embassy reached Tehran, a good month elapsed ere it was settled who should take the first step from off his *nummud*, the Frank or the Irâni; and it was only after a laborious compromise that they at last met at a third person's on neu-

tral ground. Here viziers drop into our mouths without our scarcely giving ourselves the trouble to open them." After all, we concluded we were Persians, and that was saying every thing. Who can deny a Persian's precedence?

The vizier came at the appointed time. He was attended by only two persons, who freely sat before him without asking his leave. "What a difference," said we, "between one of our shah's viziers and this personage!"

"*Bah! bah! bah!*" said I, "a vizier is somebody in our blessed Persia! See him, when he leaves the gate of his house surrounded by a hundred servants and dependents; some watching the least turn of his head to catch a glimpse of his eye; others running at the side of his stirrup, in officious haste to kiss his knee; others, again, claiming the protection of his skirt to present a petition. Then if a poor wretch happens to obstruct the road as he is about to pass, how lustily the ferashes beat him! how his camels are hustled away, or his mules, packs, and all, thrust into the kennel!" Hitherto we had seen nothing in the men of office in England which could make their places at all desirable; and what was our astonishment when we were told that the individual who now visited the ambassador was no less a personage than the vanquisher of the famous Tippoo Sultaun, the captor of the splendid city of Seringapatam; one whose power had been greater than that of all the Mogul chiefs put together; one who could make the sun rise by the twinkle of his eye, and annihilate the moon by the shake of his head. And here he was, with white dust on his head, seated on a chair instead of a throne, paying a first visit to one less than one of our shah's shoe-bearers, when he himself had had shahs and nawabs waiting to kiss the dust of his feet. "Strange vicissitudes!" exclaimed Mohamed Beg: "this it is which Saadi meant, when he said, that the life of man is like the traveller in the mountains of Kâf. If at the summit, he receives the rays of light before any other mortal; if half way down, he is partly obscured; if at the bottom of the valley, all the world

look down upon him." It was evident from the dignified expression of his eye, which caused us ever after to call him the "eye of the state,"* and from the easy flow of his language, that he was not only a son of words,† but one who could rule kingdoms; one in fact, who understood the difference between right and wrong, whether he governed Christians or Hindoos.

The ambassador expressed his desire to the English vizier to be immediately admitted to the presence of the shah of England, in order to present the letter and the presents with which he was charged; and notified to him that the king of kings had ordered him, upon pain of losing his head, to receive his audience in less than three days after his arrival.

The vizier assured the ambassador that every thing should be done to meet his wishes, as far as was consistent with the customs of England; but that as the king, his master, was only to be seen at stated times, he was fearful that some little delay must arise before the audience could take place.

Mirza Firouz seemed surprised at this, and explained, that the shah of Persia made himself daily visible to his subjects; that before the noonday prayer the selam took place, when his majesty being seated on his throne, the great officers of the court stood before him, as well as all others whose duty led them to seek the royal presence; and that an ambassador might have an audience on the very day of his arrival if he chose it, provided the stars and the astrologers were propitious.

The English vizier then said, he was afraid that he must apologise for the incivility of the English stars, since they would necessarily oppose themselves to the ambassador's wishes on this occasion, and keep him longer from the presence of the king than was agreeable to him; but that as soon as possible he should have his audience.

This intelligence threw dismay into the ambassador's heart; and as soon as the vizier had taken his leave, he broke out

* A title frequently given to viziers. † Eloquent.

into the following exclamations: "*Wahi! wahi!* what misfortune has fallen upon my head! If this is to be the case, my soul is at an end; I shall be disgraced before men, and my wife and child will be sold to the Turcomans! That old flint-hearted Mirza Sheffi will then have got me into his possession; he will defile my father's grave, and prevail against my mother." Then addressing himself to us, he continued:—"Ay, *Batchah!* say, children, what shall we do? where shall we go? Our faces will be black! Our king is a despotic king; and he takes no more account of men's heads than a mule does of the thistles it devours."

I ventured to allay his apprehension by saying, "The truth is, O Mirza, that you say right, and you do nothing without calculation; but by the soul of your child, are we not Persians and Mussulmans? and if we are fallen into the hands of an ignorant and unclean generation, whose fault is it, if it be not that of our destiny? The chief of our nation is a despotic king, there is no doubt of that; but powerful as he is, can he prevail against that which is written in the book of fate?"

"The Hajjî says right," exclaimed Mohamed Beg. "*Takdeer*, destiny, after all, is what we must all look to: we eat, we drink, we sleep, we arrive, we depart, not an action of our lives but is predestined; and if it be ordained, O elchi, that you cannot see the king of the Franks before a certain day, what can you, one of God's creatures, do to the contrary?"

"And if it be my destiny to lose my head," exclaimed the ambassador, "what then?"

"Why, then, off it goes," answered Mohamed Beg very quietly, "and may mercy await you!"

"*Mashallah!* praise be to God!" said the ambassador; "I am your humble servant. If I know then that my head is to be cut off, shall I not try to keep it on my shoulders? Go to, go to, Mr. Astrologer; learn better doctrine; or, by

the shah's beard, you shall find that your heels are predestined to take up the position of your head."

Seeing him in this untoward humour, we left him; and we were happy to hear him order his *kalioun*, which we knew always operated as a sedative, whenever the fire of agitation had been kindled in the furnace of his heart.

CHAPTER XX.

The Ambassador is visited by the English prime minister.—Hajji Baba's remarks upon men in office.

The visit of the minister for foreign affairs had been so abrupt and unexpected, that we had not had time to prepare refreshments suited to the dignity of his character; an attention which is never failing in our own country, however different it may be among the Franks. He had only been treated to the common ceremony of sweet and bitter coffee, with intervening smoke; and as we were come on a friendly mission, the sweet coffee, emblem of the good feeling which prevails between the two countries, was served first; whilst the bitter, being reserved for the emblem of the disagreements which sometimes intervene between sovereigns, was presented last. Whether the vizier understood the delicacy of this procedure, we were at a loss to say; we rather thought that his propensities were neither peaceable nor warlike since he scarcely tasted the sweet draught, and absolutely made wry faces at the bitter one. We were, however, better prepared for the visit of the prime minister: Hassan, the cook, was ordered to exercise all his talent, and to dress a breakfast, which would at once show his art, and give a specimen of

our national luxuries. He prepared several sorts of *pillaus*. He so judiciously mixed sweets and acids, meats and vegetables, and poured over the whole such abundance of liquid butter, that the emblem of blending the interests of the two countries, he assured us, was perfect. Then nothing could be more delicate than our sherbets, and the sweetmeats, particularly the *gezenjibin*,* that luxury peculiar to Persia, and of which considering where our destinies were directing us, we had brought a large store. Several of our sherbet bowls had been broken on the journey, and Hashim was at a loss how to reimplace them, until, recollecting that he had seen certain vases, some painted, others white, placed in different parts of the English houses, he took possession of three of the handsomest, and served up the sherbets in them. The young mehmandar, who happened to have inspected the *conchas*, or trays, as they stood prepared for the breakfast, at the sight of these vases burst into indiscreet laughter, of which none of us could understand the meaning, until explaining the use to which they were generally applied, we were obliged to hide the face of shame under the veil of ignorance; and rendered thanks to Allah, that we had so providentially escaped the quicksands of pollution.

The prime vizier came, unattended by any suite. We remarked that there was a difference between the dress of the viziers and that of other men; the peculiarities of which we concluded pertained to their office. For instance, black silk bags hung at the back of their necks; and as they were something similar to the satin and brocade bags in which the letters of our kings and princes are sent, we conceived this might indicate officers of despatch; but then, on the other hand, they wore a long thin weapon by their side which might, for aught we knew, mean a sword, and thus indicate a lord of the cimetar, but that it looked more like one of our campaigning spits, upon which we make a hasty *kabob;* and

* Manna.

thus they might be taken for the shah's head cooks. Upon enquiry of the young mehmandar, he told us that this was the dress of ceremony common to Franks, and was the same which they wore when they appeared before their kings, and was now put on in honour of the ambassador.

The prime vizier was a dervish in appearance, so mild, so kind, that we marvelled how the affairs of this great country could be directed by him, when we considered how much vigour and bloodshed must be necessary to keep a large populace in order. Our shahs, who generally act as their own first minister, are the great instruments of government in our land; but in Turkey, every new grand vizier, in order to establish his reputation for decision, and to create a wholesome fear, generally finds it necessary to begin his career by spilling human blood. He either decapitates a Christian merchant who is too rich, strangles a Janissary, or hangs a Jew. Now it was plain from all the English vizier told us, that he had never cut off a thief's hand, nor even nailed a baker's ear to his own shop-door.

A very handsome breakfast was served up to him, but which, strange to say, did not seem to his taste. The ambassador helped him to the choicest bits with his own fingers; he even put his hand into the same mess of rice with him, and gave him his own spoon to drink sherbet with; but he could not be prevailed upon to make the most of the good things before him. We tried him with some *gezenjibin*, which he scrupulously examined; but when Hashim, the footman, had dexterously broken it with his hands, and blown the dust from it with his mouth, he did not seem inclined to carry his curiosity further. "Surely," said we, "this infidel cannot affect to think us impure, that he does not choose to taste our food; he who will not scruple to eat swine's flesh, and to drink of the forbidden wine? and this, too, when our ambassador has laid by his own scruples, has shut his ears to the commands of our holy Prophet, and has treated the Frank, as if he were a true believer." We found

that we had still much to learn concerning this extraordinary people.

The ambassador was visited in succession by several other viziers, each of whom held separate departments in the state. There was one whose utility we could not in the least comprehend. He was called the *jungle* vizier; and we were told that his sole occupation was to keep an account of the woods and forests in the kingdom. We concluded that it was throwing away money to pay an officer for looking after that which, in Persia, was esteemed an incumbrance, and which, instead of attaching any value to it, we looked upon as spoiling the face of the country. Strange indeed would it appear to the king of kings were we to inform him that what is only fit for firewood in Persia is here esteemed worthy the superintendence of a minister of state. There would be no end to the expenses of government, we thought, if so high an office was to be established for every one of God's gifts to man; at that rate, we might as well create a vizier for our Persian deserts, and make him keep a register of the millions of useless and uncultivable parasangs of sand which are spread over our country, or he might pass his time in counting the trees of the forests of Ghilan and Mazanderan, and tell the shah how many wolves, and bears, and lions belonged to him. Upon making these remarks to the mehmandar, he opened our understandings, by explaining what must necessarily be the value of timber in England; as necessary to her existence as a race of good horses and sharp swords are to Iran. And, indeed, we were soon brought to agree with him when the ambassador received the visit of the ship vizier, whose department was one of such vast importance that he was obliged to have recourse to the help of several deputies, who work under his guidance. Having ourselves sailed in two ships of war, besides seeing many more, we could well understand their importance; for we conceived that to manage even one would require all the wisdom and experience of a statesman; how much more then to manage

above a thousand, which we were told the shah of England possessed. The Turks must look upon the difficulty of such a department in the same light as the English, because they frequently appoint viziers, and even muftis, to command their ships. In Persia, although the sea washes Bushire and Ormuz on one side, and Asterabad and Resht on the other, we scarcely know what a ship means; and when, please God! we should return to our own country, the stories that we should relate of our voyages would be set down as tales fit only for the Thousand and One Nights.

Many visiters came. Who and what they were it was impossible for us to determine. They were described to us as men in office; some attached to the shah's court; some with, others without, professions. Our greatest difficulty in receiving their visits was to ascertain who were persons of consequence, and who were not. We trusted that in time we should be able to make the proper distinctions; but at present they almost looked like one and the same person. Their dresses were made upon one model; they all shaved alike; they all sat in the same place;* and they almost all made the same compliments, and the same remarks. One person visited the ambassador, who interested us very much, because we recollected of what great consequence his compeer was at the court of our shah; this was the master of ceremonies. But, oh! what a difference between the two individuals. The *Ishcagassi*, the shah's master of ceremonies, in personal appearance has few equals in the world. He is a *kajar*, one of the king's own tribe, who are famous for the magnificence of their beards, and he is blessed with one which surpasses that of his royal master. His dress and manners are unrivalled; his language is the same; and his knowledge in the niceties of *chum wa hum*† is greater than that of any man of the court. He is altogether a fine specimen of a son

* The rank of a person in Persia is very much known by the seat he takes on the side carpet.

† Flattery and compliments—humbug.

of Iran. But the person who appeared before the ambassador as the king of England's master of ceremonies was an old, fat, and superanuated khan, who tottered so much upon a pair of swoln legs, that we naturally asked whether he had not been receiving the bastinado upon them. He made many apologies for not having called before. We asked him why did he come at all? But at the same time the ambassador, eager for the moment of his audience, and expecting some message to that effect, pressed him to say when we might prepare ourselves. To our delight and satisfaction he informed the ambassador that the king, who generally resides in a castle in the country, would be at his palace in the city in three days, and that there he would receive the embassy. Our joy knew no bounds. "*Alham du lillah!* praises to God!" resounded from our lips; and we loaded the old limping khan with more caresses, and made him more fine speeches and professions than if he had been the king of England in person.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Ambassador prepares for his audience of the king of England.—An intervening difficulty occurs.

Although the intelligence we had received from the old master of ceremonies had not been announced in form to the ambassador, yet from that moment we began to make preparations for his audience of the English shah. The presents were unpacked, and a list made of them. The letter of credence from the king of kings was inspected; and the ambassador began to discuss the clothes which he was to wear on the occasion. We also made enquiries upon the best mode

of presenting the horses. They had arrived in safety, strange and wonderful to relate; for who ever thought, upon our leaving Persia, that they were to abandon the land and the green sward for which, by nature, they were intended, to travel for months on the seas. The ambassador was determined to present *Mûrwari*, the Pearl, as a horse which had been honoured by the riding of the Asylum of the Universe himself, and was, therefore, anxious to exhibit him to the infidels with all the pomp and circumstance attending a royal horse. He enquired of the mehmandar whether, after the manner of our ancient horses, his belly, legs, and breast, could not receive the golden tinge of the *khenna*; but he was disappointed to find that the application of this dye, so ornamental both to man and beast, had not yet reached these obscure regions; and, therefore, that some other plan must be pursued. The mehmandar promised to exert his ingenuity and that of his own country artists; and we trusted that when the day came every thing would be done worthy of the dignity of our shah and of our country.

The mehmandar, to our great joy, confirmed to us what the master of ceremonies had announced. The shah of England would receive the embassy ere a week had elapsed; and when Mohamed Beg compared the day to a corresponding one in our calendar, we were rejoiced to find that it fell precisely after the most unfortunate of our days, namely, "misery Wednesday." *

Mirza Firouz then made enquiries as to the manner in which this ceremony was to be performed; to which the mehmandar answered that he would be received with the same honours as ambassadors from other powers.

"And how is that?" said the Mirza.

"The king," said the mehmandar, "will receive you in

* The Persians hold all Wednesdays as unfortunate. The last Wednesday of the month of Sefer is the day upon which they expect the last trump will sound at the day of judgment, and that implicates all other Wednesdays.

his apartments. You will proceed in your carriage to the palace. You will be met by the master of ceremonies, and presented by the vizier for foreign affairs; and then you will deliver your credentials."

"And so, by my beard," exclaimed the elchi, "you expect that I shall be satisfied with this reception?"

"And why not?" said the other. "This is the way other ambassadors are received, and what would you have more?"

"What do I know of other ambassadors?" remarked the shah's representative fiercely. "There are kings of various denominations in the world, and such are their representatives. I only know whom I am to represent. My sovereign sits upon the most ancient throne in the world. If you want to know who were our ancestors, I will trace them back to you from the time of Noah. After all, the Peishdadians were of some account. And when you come to compare your Frank kings, whose names have never even reached Persia, to our ancient sovereigns, it is plain that you are not many steps from the spot where people devour their own folly."

"What words are these?" exclaimed the mehmandar. "Do you wish to change the manners of our country? If your shah chooses to wear a beard, it is no reason that our shah should. Every nation has its own customs."

"When your ambassador in Persia," said Mirza Firouz, "reached the Imperial Gate of Tehran, was he received in the manner that I have been here? No. The king's *amou*.* was sent to welcome his arrival before he even entered the city. And when he proceeded to his audience, the streets were lined with troops, salutes were fired, sugar was thrown under his horse's feet; drums, trumpets, and cymbals resounded throughout the city; the bazars were dressed; the populace were ordered to pay him every respect. He was

* *Amou*, or uncle, is an epithet often given to favourites or playmates, and is here used in that sense.

clothed with robes of honour, and he was allowed to stand in the same room in which the king of kings himself reposed. And, by the beard of the Prophet, I swear that if I am not treated in the same manner, I will proceed as a private individual to the palace, I will ask to see the king, I will place my shah's letter into his hands, and, having said my *khoda hafiz shuma*, 'May God take you into his holy protection,' I will straightway leave the country, and return whence I came."

"That may be very well to say, as far as you are concerned," said the mehmandar, "but my sovereign is somebody also, and is likely to be consulted on this question. Suppose he were not to agree to your visit?"

We saw the storm was impending, and that the mehmandar's words might as well have remained at the bottom of his throat. The ambassador's face was thrown upside down; the hairs of his beard became distended; and he oozed at every pore.

"In short, then," said the ambassador, his eyes flashing fire, "am I an ambassador, or am I not?"

"Is my king a king, or is he not?" said the mehmandar, to which, angry as he was, in his own language he mumbled something to himself about "dam, or dammy," which word caught the Mirza's ear; and he, recollecting it to have been frequently used on board ship, mistook it as an epithet applied to himself, and his wrath then broke out something in the following words:—

"'*Dam*,' do you say? Am I '*dam?*' If I am '*dam*,' then you are the father of '*dam*.' Why should I remain here to be called '*dam?*' After all, I am somebody in my own country. I will defile the grave of '*dam*'s' father. I and all his ancestry. I am not come all this way to eat '*dam*,' and to eat it from such hands." Upon which he flung out of the room, leaving the mehmandar to open the eyes of astonishment, and to eat the stripes of mortification.

After this the mehmandar covered his head with his hat,

looked at his watch, buttoned his coat, put on his gloves, took up his stick, and then saying to us, "May your shadows never be less," he deliberately left the house.

We, who were accustomed to the ambassador's manner, saw nothing extraordinary in what had happened. He had played his part like an able negociator; he had satisfied us that he was upholding the dignity of the Asylum of the Universe; he knew that his conduct would work in his favour at his own court; and his enemy, Mirza Sheffi, would not have gained a step upon him. He soon returned to us, mightily satisfied with himself, and was not a little delighted when we told him, that, in truth, if the Franks wanted a lesson in the duties of an ambassador, they had only to come to him. "They think," said I, "because they have looking-glasses in their houses, which we have not; because they make clocks, and penknives, and cloth, which we do not; and because they have got possession of Hind, which once was ours, that we are men to sit behind them, and that they may lead us as they would a *yedek** with a leading-string; but it is not so, praised be the Prophet. We are Persians, and Inshallah, by the help of the ambassador," said I, "we shall teach them to play at hide and seek round our little fingers!"

"Yes, yes," exclaimed Mohamed Beg, "God is great; may he ake the elchi into his holy keeping. Whatever a Frank may do, let us recollect that he is still an infidel. Whatever he may eat, be it swine's flesh or be it lamb's, it still is unclean."

After this we sat down quite contented, and passed away the morning in applauding the ambassador for having taken so vigorous a measure for asserting the dignity of our shah in a foreign land. But as the day passed off, and the mehmandar not appearing, we began to think that the Franks might not approve of our mode of opening a negociation; and that if they should happen to take us neck and heels and

* A led horse.

thrust us out of their kingdom, Mirza Sheffi might hint to the king of kings that his majesty's representative, for want of proper judgment, had been clothed with a *kalaat* only fit for the grandfather of stupidity.* This apprehension began visibly to work upon Mirza Firouz. He enquired at every moment whether the mehmandar had returned; and, by way of consoling himself, he walked about the house enquiring of every one he saw, "After all, did not I say well? In truth, my answers were like arrows. A *kizzilbash*, a Persian red-head, did not come all this way to have his heard laughed at!"

At length his impatience and anxiety getting the better of every other feeling, he sent me to the mehmandar's house with an orange in my hand, and a message requesting that he would not fail to eat his *sham*† with him on that day. I knew that when these infidels were once angry, it was not easy to restore their brains to a state of sanity without some good management, and therefore I approached him warily. But to my surprise, instead of finding his nature in a state of perverseness, he looked just like one of us after a quarrel, that is, as if nothing had happened, and he immediately acceded to the ambassador's wishes of dining with him.

When he arrived I was in the room with Mirza Firouz, and their meeting was upon the same terms as usual. Putting his hand on the memandar's back, and then patting his side, he exclaimed, "Mashallah! Praise be to God! You are a man, indeed! See what it is to have been in Persia! Now, an untravelled Frank would have been really angry, and would at this moment have been eating his rage. But you are a man knowing the world. You know when to begin your anger, and when to leave it off. Hafiz very properly said, 'True love is like a fool's anger. It burns even when the reason for it is gone by.'"

To this the mehmandar answered, "May your friendship

* An old ass. † The evening meal—the dinner.

never diminish. I have made known your wishes to the vizier for foreign affairs."

"Well," said the ambassador, all of a sudden excited, "and what did he say?"

"He said," returned the infidel, "that there would be no difficulty in giving you a public audience. We have plenty of troops, and plenty of coaches, abundance of fine clothes, and fine things, and you shall go before the king, accompanied in any manner you choose."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the ambassador, "wonderful! I do not understand you English at all! You make no difficulties. You leave no room for negociation."

"Not upon trifles," returned the mehmandar.

"Trifles? do you call an ambassador's reception a trifle?" said Mirza Firouz. "There is not a step made on such an occasion as this in Persia which is not duly measured. And do you call the dignity of sovereigns nothing?"

"The nations of Europe were fools enough in times past," said the mehmandar, "to make matters of etiquette affairs of state, and they used to lose intrinsic advantages in pursuing these ideal ones; but they are become wiser; we look upon etiquette now as child's play. However, in consideration of your being Persians, and knowing no better, we do not hesitate in giving you as much of it as you please."

Upon this the ambassador stroked his beard, pulled up his whiskers, and sat for some time in deep thought. He felt himself lowered in the estimation of the Franks, whilst at the same time he was aware that he could not act otherwise than he had done. At length he exclaimed, "And so the English think that we are men from the woods, asses, beasts of burden, and know nothing of what the world is about? Be it so, be it so. But this know, that a nation who can trace its ancestry to Jemsheed; who counts a Jenghiz Khan, a Tamerlane, a Nadir Shah, an Aga Mohamed Khan, ay, and a Fatteh Ali, amongst its kings, is not accustomed to child's play, and, moreover, is not at all inclined to take example from the

kings of Frank for any part of its conduct in matters relating to its own dignity."

Upon this, and after a little similar give and take between the parties, they dined, and the table-cloth of hospitality became the *maîdan*, the arena for the race of good fellowship.

CHAPTER XXII.

The audience of the King of England is described, as well as the Ambassador's mode of settling precedence among his own suite.

The long wished-for day at length arrived, and the note of preparation was heard throughout the household. To my utter disappointment, I awoke with such a *dildardi* (a heartach), that I found it impossible to stir without pain, and I entreated the ambassador to allow me to remain at home, to which he acceded without any difficulty. This rather astonished me, considering how anxious he was to be surrounded by his suite on all state occasions, and made me conclude that he still looked upon me as a spy on his actions, and one who would report to his disadvantage any neglect in upholding to the utmost the dignity of our sovereign.

It was delightful to behold the ambassador dressed for the occasion; and as far as it is possible for the thorn of the dessert to resemble the splendour of the full-blown rose, he stood an excellent representative of our king of kings. The Franks, 't is true, little understood the privileges which he enjoyed in wearing certain parts of his dress, which we alone knew he could no more have dared to adopt at Tehran, than he would to eat swine's flesh before a mollah. He wore that

distinguishing badge of royalty, a *jika*, on his cap. His sword and dagger were studded with precious stones, and the pearl tassel of a vizier was suspended from his girdle. We all exclaimed, "Mashallah!" as he appeared before us, and involuntarily we made the inclination of our bodies which we only make to our princes.

"The master of the horse came early to announce that the horses were ready to proceed; and that, with the greatest difficulty, he had succeeded in making an infidel paint Murwari. "It had been done," he said, "in a manner sufficiently well for England, but in Persia it would have been esteemed a total failure; for, in lieu of a bright orange-colour, the animal had come out a dirty brown from under the hands of the English painter."

At about noon the streets began to fill with troops, who lined them on both sides; and shortly after a train of most magnificent carriages, driven by richly-attired coachmen, attended by servants profusely ornamented after the manner of Franks, drove up to the door. A great khan of the court waited upon the ambassador to invite him, on the part of the shah of England, to attend his audience; and when every thing was in readiness, and the suite disposed of in the different equipages, he stepped into a carriage which, we were assured was used to convey the king's own person, and the procession then proceeded towards the palace.

As I looked from the window, wrapped up in my sheep's skin, the procession of the English ambassador through Tehran to the foot of the throne of the king of kings came to my recollection, and I made a comparison in my own mind with what I now saw passing under my eyes. It must be owned, thought I, that processions are more magnificent in my own country, and in Turkey, than those of the Franks, if this be a specimen of them. What principally attracted attention here were our own horses, who, by their spirited play, their curvetting and plunging, seemed delighted to be once again brought into action; but all the rest consisted of

coaches, which, though splendid, yet after all are objects of but trifling interest. Now our processions being performed on horseback, the person, whoever he may be, who is the object of them, is immediately brought into open notice, is subject to the gaze of the crowd, and a great interest is produced.

I waited patiently until the ambassador returned, which he did in the same manner he went, and then, eager to know how every thing had passed off, I stood before him. I found him surrounded by the suite, and they were all apparently in the highest good humour.

"Ah! Hajjî," he exclaimed upon seeing me, "you have indeed lost a sight. A wonderful good shah is this one!" said he. "By my own soul! it is in no manner strange that the English should love their king so much. He showed me the same kindness that a father would to his son. It is evident that he bears the true stamp of royalty upon him. The manners and forms of his court, 'tis true, are widely different from ours; but kings are no doubt the same in all countries; for his commanding look and tone showed me how much he is a king, and put me in mind of the dignity of our own Asylum of the Universe."

"One great difference between them," exclaimed Mohamed Beg, "is, that one stands before this king in full security, whereas God only knows how that is before our own shah! The conscience of Persians, I do believe, has been placed in the nape of their necks; it is there that their good or evil works pinch them when in the presence of Fatteh Ali Shah. As for the English, to judge by those who stood round their king, they seemed as unconcerned and as secure as if they and their prince were upon equal terms."

"I spoke well," exclaimed the ambassador, "did I not?" said he, looking towards his servants.

"Mashallah!" they all exclaimed.—"Plato could not have spoken better," said Ismael Beg, the nazir.

"In truth," continued the ambassador, "nothing could have been better ordained for the dignity of our shah!"

"Nothing," exclaimed Mohamed Beg. "For when we had reached the 'kissing place,'* we neither took off our slippers, nor did we bow our heads to the ground; nor did we acknowledge ourselves to be sacrifices."

"How was that?" said I. "Was there no threshold, no throne, no prescribed spot for taking off your shoes?"

"What do you say?" exclaimed the ambassador. "I stood as near the king as I stand to you. I put the shah's letter into his own hands. The king himself stood. We all seemed to be of one *mejlis*. † Going before the king in this country is child's play, compared to what it is in Persia. One neither sees the *felek*, nor the bastinadoing stick; not the semblance of an executioner is exhibited; and I do really believe that if any one of us had even ventured to spit before his majesty, there would have been somebody at hand to say, 'Much good may it do you!'"

"This is strange," said I. "Kings have but a sorry place of it in this country."

"Yes," exclaimed Taki, the ferash; "and we ferashes should have nothing to do, for every body seems so mighty good."‡

"Ay, but," said Mohamed Beg, "I think the mehmandar told me once, that if in England a man cursed the king, and swore at his beard, that he was liable to be beheaded."

"That's bad," exclaimed the mirakhor, in an under tone. "I would rather get the bastinado now and then, and have the full use of my tongue."

"*Gorumsak!* rascal!" exclaimed the ambassador, "if the shah heard you, he would cut your tongue out. Keep to your horses, and let us hear no more of your ass's language.

* By kissing place, or *bosgah*, is meant the royal apartment, the threshold of which is kissed before entrance, according to strict Eastern etiquette.

† Assembly.

‡ The *ferashes* in Persia beat offenders on the soles of the feet.

—Who was that old man," said he to Mohamed Beg, "who did his best to walk before me as we proceeded to the presence?"

"How should I know?" said the master of the ceremonies. "When I stepped out with my cane of office to clear the way, he, with a long and slender white wand, attempted to push me off; and seeing him shake it to and fro in a strange manner, I thought this might be part of the Frank etiquette; but when I discovered that the vibration of his elbow proceeded from palsy and not etiquette, and that by this he was constantly on the point of rapping your shins, I thought it but right to assert my precedence, and took my place accordingly."

"Well done," said the ambassador; "it was a strange scene taken altogether, and thanks to Allah we have not disgraced ourselves."

He had not long dismissed us when the noise of uplifted voices was heard in the apartments below, and the tumult at length became so great, that the ambassador himself issued forth from his room to see whence it proceeded. He found Ismael Beg, the nazir, and Aga Beg, the mirakhor, in violent dispute upon precedence. The former asserted that he was entitled to walk first in the procession; the latter urged the contrary; and from this simple subject the parties in opposition digressed into such gross personalities, that a most violent state of things was the consequence.

The ambassador finding that his orders for ceasing the dispute were disregarded, he ordered both the disputants to receive blows on the mouth with a shoe-heel, which was about being inflicted vigorously upon the mirakhor, when, with all the resolution of a man about doing something new and desperate, he rushed by us all, made for the street-door of the house, and exclaimed, "I'm king George's man! Ya! king George." Upon this the ambassador gave a signal for general chase, and at the head of his household, he succeeded in catching the culprit just as he had reached the threshold.

"I'll king George you!" said the ambassador, catching him

by the curls behind his ear. "If I do not make you and your father burn for this, I am nobody in this world. I'll king George you!" Upon this, with the help of two or three of us, he threw him down, and having pounded his head for some time on the floor, called for a pair of scissors, with which he inflicted upon him the greatest disgrace a Persian can undergo after the loss of his beard; he cut off his *zulfs*, or curls, and then set him loose.

This was a disagreeable ending to the successful doings of the morning, and set us all exclaiming, "*La illaha, illallah!*" for the rest of the day. We could only account for it by the following circumstance:—A Frank, having been appointed to wait upon the servants by way of interpreter, had taken advantage of his knowledge of the Turkish language, to talk to them of the freedom enjoyed by all ranks of people in England; he informed them that every man was under the protection of the laws—that no man had the right of bastinadoing another—that that privilege only belonged to judges appointed by the king. With such-like doctrine he greatly destroyed their ideas of submission and dependence.

Aga Beg had imbibed these principles, but it turned out that on his first venture he had brought his beard to a bad market. His mortification at the loss of his curls was without bounds—he was proud of them—he was greatly fond of ornamenting his person, and to find himself thus at once robbed of that which distinguished him as a *kasheng*, a man of fashion, was more than his philosophy could bear. He cursed the Frank interpreter, the Frank king, and the country he had been brought to; and swore that if he could by any means find his way to Persia, he would that moment take horse, and never stop until he had got within sight of Demawend, and the turrets of Tehran.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Of the etiquette of English visiting.—Of bell-ringers, and marrow-bones and cleavers.—Of the East India Company.

The very day of the ambassador's audience, and for several days after, the house was thronged with people of all descriptions; their principal object being to leave certain little square bits of paper, upon which were inscribed their names and their place of residence, avowedly as a mark of respect to the ambassador; but we were assured that many other meanings were attached to this act, which at present were not discernible, but which in time would be duly divulged. We wondered what possible result could arise from a parcel of invisible people leaving unknown names at our door, and began to conceive that there might be some *shaitanlik*, as they say in Turkey, or devilry in the wind; but the mehmandar assured us that such was the custom of the country. Every card meant a visit; and he made it clearly comprehensible to us, that if visiting in England was carried on after the manner of Persia, where the visiter first announces his arrival by a messenger, and then sits through the ceremony of three *kaliouns* and as many cups of coffee, that no life would be long enough to go through the ceremonial. Upon this the ambassador thought every moment too long until he also had acquired the means of making and returning visits; and when his own name upon a pack of cards was exhibited to him, he exclaimed, "*Shukur Allah!* praise be to Allah!" and immediately ordered a vigorous distribution of them.

We were also visited by men with small books in their hands, whose intentions were quite incomprehensible to us. One man, after the manner of Turkey, required a *bakshish*,

or fee, because he assured us that bells had been rung for joy at our arrival, and that he had helped to ring them. Of bells we had never before heard as emblems of joy; in our country they announced the arrivals of caravans, and occasionally the existence of unbelievers' churches; but seeing that this was the only public demonstration of joy we had received, the ambassador did not hesitate to bestow what was necessary.

Then came a man who made a register of every person who paid his court to the king; and he required a fee. "Oh, this is wonderful," exclaimed the ambassador; "by the beard of the king, let us ask this man some questions," said he; "we shall doubtless learn much from him of the customs of infidels."

We found that this was not an official duty, or one imposed upon him by the court, but optional. His revenue was considerable, considering the extreme anxiety which he assured us existed in most people to see their names registered; and the punishment which he inflicted for a resistance of his fee was the non-insertion of the name of the person so resisting. But those whose profession was the least intelligible to us were a company of men who, by way of congratulatory music, were educated to beat the bones of oxen against large hatchets of iron; and they asked for *bakshish*. We endeavoured to gain some insight into this strange custom, without success, and at length resolved that they must assimilate to our *lutis*, or mountebanks, whose never-failing drums might well be set off against the horrid sounds which must proceed from the English performers on beef-bones and iron.

In fact, every moment added to our stock of information upon Frank manners; and in the presence of the ambassador, we were discussing every thing we daily saw, when the mehmandar came in great hurry to announce the visit of the kings of Hind.

"Oh Ali!" exclaimed the ambassador, "how it this? kings are coming, and nobody has announced them to us!" We ran to the windows to see the state in which these great personages

came, expecting at least to see them mounted on elephants; when, strange to relate, we saw two common infidels standing at the side of an old dilapidated carriage full of straw, bartering with its ragged driver for the expenses of their excursion; and these the mehmandar assured us were the king and deputy king.

"How?" said the ambassador, "are these the successors to the throne of Aureng Zebe, of Jehangîr, of Shah Allum? You must be laughing at our beards!"

"It is difficult to explain matters in so short a time," said the mehmandar; "they are not properly kings. One is called the chair, and the other deputy chair," first pointing to an arm-chair, and then to a stool, to explain what he meant, and he had scarcely done this when they walked in

It was difficult to know what etiquette to adopt with these personages; but they soon showed us that they required none. They were plain-spoken men, without any airs of greatness, looking more like substantial possessors of good-shops and warehouses than the owners of kingdoms. The ambassador, after the first compliments were over, endeavoured to have his understanding enlightened upon the sort of government they exercised, so novel to Persians, and so little known in the East. It seems that they are the chiefs of twenty-four, all of whom sit upon chairs, and who have the right of speech and of thought upon matters relating to India. After some attempts to clear up our ignorance, they invited the ambassador to visit their palace, where he would learn more of the nature of their government, by actual inspection, than by hours of explanation. It appeared, however, from the little we could comprehend, that although they possessed kingdoms, they were not in fact kings; that the revenues of these kingdoms did not belong to them, but to others who enjoyed the fruits of them; that they were partly concerned in occasionally sending out a king, or *firman* firmai,* to Calcutta; but that they, their Indian king,

* A governor by firmans.

their fleets, their armies, were subject to another greater personage still, who was one of the king of England's viziers, who lived in a distinct corner of the city, and that he again was the immediate servant of the real shah of England and of Hindostan.

Bewildered with this complication of real kings, and little kings, viziers, sitters upon chairs, and sitters upon stools, we held the finger of suspense upon the lip of astonishment, and pondered upon all we had heard, like men puzzling over a paradox. At length our visiters took their leave, and the ambassador promised that he would shortly fix a day for getting better acquainted with "Compani," of whom he and his countrymen had heard so much; and about whose existence it became quite necessary that Persia should, for the future, have clear and positive information. Instead of re-ascending their crazy coach, the kings (for so we ever after called them) walked away upon their own legs, and mixed unknown and unheeded in the common crowd of the street.

When they were well off, we all sat mute, only occasionally saying "Allah, Allah! there is but one Allah!" so wonderfully astonished were we. What? India! that great, that magnificent empire!—that scene of Persian conquest and Persian glory!—the land of elephants and precious stones! the seat of shawls and kincobs!—that paradise sung by poets, celebrated by historians, more ancient than Iran itself!—at whose boundaries the sun is permitted to rise, and around whose majestic mountains, some clad in eternal snows, others in eternal verdure, the stars and the moon are allowed to gambol and carouse! What! is it so fallen, so degraded as to be swayed by two obscure mortals, living in regions that know not the warmth of the sun? two swine-eating infidels, shaven, impure, walkers on foot, and who, by way of state, travel in dirty coaches filled with straw! This seemed to us a greater miracle in government then even that of Beg Jan, the plaiter of whips, who governed the Turcomans, and the countries of Samarcand and Bokhara, leading a life more like a beggar

than a potentate. But we were in the country of miracles; not a day, no, not an hour, passed without our hearing or seeing something which all the grandfathers Persia ever had, or might have, had never seen even in a dream!

CHAPTER XXIV.

Of the Circassian slave, Dilferib.—She adopts the European dress, but refuses to uncover her face.

During all this time the Circassian had lived securely confined to her room; and she would probably have continued so, happy and unmolested, had there not existed amongst these infidels a sufficiently unjust law, which prohibits any one from enjoying the property of his own slave, little examining whether such slave likes his state or not. It tyrannically forces every one to be free; and had it taken effect upon the Circassian, she would have been reduced to the dire necessity of uncovering her face to the gaze of all mankind, and living in open converse with the despisers of our Prophet and the Imams. As soon as this law was intimated to the ambassador, he did not hesitate to offer her freedom, and he immediately told her that she was at liberty to do what she liked.

"Oh Prophet! Oh Mahomet! exclaimed she, "you would not have me so degraded as to go about the streets, with my face uncovered, like one of these unblushing women! No, no; I stay where I am."

"But you are free," said the ambassador; "this is a free country; there are no slaves here—go; there are the gardens; there are the green fields—go, make your soul happy!"

"My soul wants nothing," said she, "but the countenance of my master. Let me work for him; let me make his clothes;

let me embroider his skull-caps; let me take care of his money and his jewels. I want nothing more. I will think of the rose and the nightingale when we return to Iran; in the meanwhile let us recollect that we are in the hands of disbelievers, and therefore let us put our trust in Allah."

The ambassador was so pleased with the self-devotion of his slave, that he ordered her to have what clothes she pleased, and expressed a wish that she should leave off her Circassian dress, which had now become ragged, and adopt the gowns of the Franks. He said that the shah had ordered him to bring back to the royal harem models and specimens of the Frank women's dresses; and he ordered Dilferîb to begin by trying them on her own person. Accordingly, a dark-green velvet was selected for her first gown, and an English dress-maker was ordered to fit it to her shape. The dress-maker suggested the necessity of a great many more articles of attire too numerous to describe; but the ambassador objected to them.

"No, no," said he; "let us be content with the outside of things, and let the hidden take care of themselves."

The gown was made, and great was the joy produced. The Circassian was ordered to be clothed in it. She put earrings in her ears, dressed her hair after the manner of Europe, and then stood before her master; but in so doing, she shivered throughout her frame, as if she had been clad in the snows of Demawend.

"What ails thee, child?" said he; "why do you shiver?"

"May it please my aga, my lord," said the poor girl, "if such be the clothes of the disbelievers, their women must be made of the flesh and blood of animals; I am freezing."

Upon examination we found, that, excepting the one single covering of the green velvet gown, she stood as nature had made her. No wonder then that she shivered. The ambassador said that he would consult the English women upon the articles which she ought to wear; and in the meanwhile, resuming her Circassian costume, she recovered the warmth

she had lost, and replaced the green velvet gown over all to give a finish to her appearance.

In the meanwhile we found that the whole city had been thrown into a ferment of curiosity. Our house was thronged with the women of London, and with those tongues of theirs, which as Saadi saith, "make the heart to talk, and the foot to walk, without the *mehmandari* of the head," they set on foot a sort of pilgrimage to the shrine of this unfortunate maiden. But in so doing, Allah! Allah! wonderful sights did they exhibit to us poor sons of the faithful. Marvellous eyes! without mercy, without compassion were they! I really saw some beauties among them, before whom our blessed king of kings (upon whom be mercy and peace!) would be happy to creep on his hands and knees. They, however, cared so little about being seen, that it never occurred to them once to attempt to throw a veil over their faces. Poor Franks; thought we, to be restricted only to one for life! If our divine Prophet had set up his staff here, instead of the blessed regions of Mecca, he would have given his followers six instead of four. For my part, I died daily; and as for our ambassador, we all saw how it would be! His heart would become roast meat before another moon was over, and he would soon be reduced to the veriest "*Majnoon*"* that ever got thin upon cheek nurture and eye food.

But day after day they came to see the Circassian, bringing with them all sorts of toys and presents; all out of compassion, said they, to her imprisoned and deplorable state of slavery. Some gave her pictures, others dolls, others books. Dilferîb was grateful for their attentions, and deplored their degraded state; but she became indignant when they endeavoured to persuade her, and even to attempt force, to wear their stockings. To her astonishment they protested that nothing could be more indecent than to appear with naked feet.

* The Persian Abelard—the lover of *Leilah*.

"How?" exclaimed Dilferîb! "you make such a point of covering your legs, and still, in defiance of all modesty, you expose your faces! Strange ideas of decency you must have indeed! All women's legs are alike. There can be no immodesty in leaving them naked; for nobody, by seeing them, could know one woman from another; but the face, that sacred spot, sacred to modesty, sacred to the gaze of none but a husband; that which ought to be covered with the most scrupulous delicacy; that you leave uncovered, to be stared at, criticised, laughed at, by every impudent varlet that chooses. Allah! Allah!" exclaimed the offended Dilferîb, to a young female infidel who was one day pressing upon her acceptance a pair of long cotton stockings, "*Astafaralla!* Allah forgive me! Are you mad? Has your brain become diseased? Give me free legs, a muffled face, and the favour of the holy Prophet, and say no more. Strange ill luck has ours been that has brought us to a country where the women cover their legs, and uncover their faces!"

But with all their good nature towards Dilferîb, there was part of their conduct which we could in nowise understand. Although they all freely came to see her, yet not one would help to cheer her solitude by procuring her a companion.

"Who would keep company," said they, "with a woman who is not married to the man she lives with? It was as much as their reputations were worth."

There was one person to whom the ambassador offered various advantages, if she would live with and educate his slave, who became quite outrageous at such a proposal. She would walk and talk with men in the open streets, look at men, take them by the arm, be visited by men, and nobody would think the worse of her for such doings; but she became all rage and fury the moment it might be said of her that she did the like with one of her own sex, who stood in the predicament of the unoffensive Dilferîb. Now, what should we say of such a woman in our country? Why, her hair would

be cut off, and she would be paraded throughout the city on an ass, with her face to its rump, and its tail in her hand, and then thrust out into the open desert as one soiled with impurities. Such is the difference of manners in different countries: who can doubt for a moment which is best? when in the blessed Koran we read these words:—"Speak unto the believing women, that they restrain their eyes, and preserve their modesty, and discover not their ornaments, except what necessarily appear thereof; and let them throw their veils over their bosoms, and not show their ornaments, unless to their husbands, or their fathers," &c.

Now, every ornament that an Englishwoman possesses, she shows to whoever chooses to look at them. Every father, son, husband, brother, in the country can look at her. She wears nothing to restrain her eyes; and, consequently, nothing to restrain those of any one else. And as for modesty, and as for throwing veils over bosoms, Allah! Allah! our blessed Prophet himself would have had severe work of it here! What then was our fate? we poor strangers, to whom women were new; who had never seen others than our mothers, and occasionally our sisters, excepting those amongst us who were married; we who, when the shah's wives were abroad, were obliged to run for our lives, and to hide ourselves as if death was walking about seeking to devour us; and thus to have a world of houris, such as no paradise could ever boast of, thrown open to our view, fascinating our eyes, and bewildering our senses; all to be seen without any apprehension of a jealous husband, without the fear of empalement! The change was too great for our natures, and we talked and dreamed of nothing else. For my part, although, after the dangers which I had undergone in the possession of the unfortunate Zeenab, and the malignant Shekerled, I imagined myself cured for ever of the soft passion; yet here at every step love jumped into my soul, and my heart thrilled with ecstasy at the contemplation of the irresistible attractions of the infidel daughters of the Franks.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Ambassador is admitted to an audience of the Queen, and displays his presents.

The presents which the ambassador had brought to the shah of England became the talk of the whole city. Every body ran to see the horses. The shawls were the envy of the women; and the poetical mirror excited universal admiration. He was now waited upon by a khan, whom the mehmandar introduced as the master of ceremonies of the queen of England, and whom we supposed might be the chief guardian of the seraglio; but the words of the English elchi in Persia were confirmed. We were assured that the Franks did not prepare and appoint such officers, and that no watch was placed over the honour of the king's women. The business of this khan, he explained, was to introduce persons worthy of such an honour to the royal *banoo*, and he accordingly invited the ambassador and his suite to an audience. Notwithstanding this invitation, the ambassador, still fearing that he might offend by such a liberty, anxiously enquired whether the shah of England was privy to this arrangement; but it did not seem that his permission was at all necessary, for she saw and conversed with all men who were agreeable to her. Seeing that such really was the custom of the country, the ambassador, without fear of any kind, and expressing no solicitude about us, his followers, freely accepted the invitation, and the next day was appointed for the audience. In the meanwhile, he delivered the presents with which he was intrusted for the English queen to the khan, but reserved to himself the duty of presenting the letter into her own hands.

We were strangely excited by the expectation of what we were about to see. A Persian scarcely dares to think upon the pictures which his imagination forms of the dazzling splendour, and the unrivalled beauty of the inhabitants of the shah's harem; and here we were on the very threshold of those delights which even in our country were the theme of every tongue. We were going to see the women of the king of the Franks, perhaps his daughters. Such good fortune could fall to the lot but of few! "Praise be to Allah!" said we, "if the beauties that we hourly see in the highways, and at the corners of the streets, be such as to enslave our souls, what must be the charms of those who have enslaved a king's heart; of those who, perhaps, are not permitted to meet the gaze of the multitude like other women, and whose charms must be like the gems which lie secure in the royal treasury!"

The ambassador dressed himself with unusual splendour, adorning his person with a shirt made by an infidel sempstress, embroidered at every extremity, and whiter than the snows of Agridagh.* I, remembering those parts of my face which had attracted the capricious Shekerleb, made my best efforts to renovate their beauties. Every hair in my beard was newly dyed and perfumed, my mustache curled to the corners of my eyes, and the locks behind my ears received a fresh glow. The morning came, we were all dressed, the ambassador sprinkled rose-water over the muslin and silken covers of the auspicious letter, and then mounting the royal carriages which had been sent for us, we proceeded to the palace.

We were received by nothing but men. There was no appearance of the house being inhabited by women; every thing living was male. How different from our countries, where nothing in the seraglio can put the fair prisoners in mind of man, saving the presence of their own husbands, and perchance their brothers! After having been paraded through

* Mount Ararat.

several rich apartments, in which we saw nothing that indicated womankind, we at length at a distance espied petticoats, and little by little came in sight of some very grotesque looking females, who, for aught we know, might be royal wives, for by their shapes they were evidently bidding fair to add, each in their turn, some *shah zadedh*, or prince, to the already doubtless numerous royal family. As we approached, we began to find that we must be mistaken, for some were so old as to make so fortunate an event for them quite impossible; and therefore we concluded, that what had attracted our eyes was in fact nothing but a most extraordinary caprice of dress, and which we afterwards learned was worn at court only, no woman venturing to approach the royal person who had not so deformed herself.

We now evidently were on the very margin of our hopes. The women who stood before us we supposed might be some of the *khanums* and *beggums* about the court, who were doing the duties of the antechamber; but what was our surprise when the master of the ceremonies paraded the ambassador before a lady, standing with her back to a magnificent mirror, and she, we found, was the great *banoo* of the country. Whatever might have been our expectations, we were very soon awed into a respect and consideration for the august personage before whom we stood, much beyond that which we thought it possible any woman could have inspired. She had more the looks of a grand vizier than a woman. She asked the ambassador questions which only learned men in Persia ask; questions which would have puzzled some of our deepest scribes. The king of England, it was plain, was very wise to dispense with the care and superintendence which we exercise in our harems over such a wife, for with her wisdom she might have governed an empire, much less herself. From her quiet and dignified manner we ever after called her the *Aram banoo*,* the Calm Princess. When

* This is a title frequently applied to persons of dignity.

the ambassador presented the letter with which he was charged, the queen enquired whether it was written with the *banoo*'s own hand? I saw the blush of confusion overspread the ambassador's face, for, alas! writing is not the accomplishment of a Persian lady; and therefore what could he say? He owned that it had been written by the great moonshee of the state; and when the queen looked on the translation, she smiled; but whether in admiration or otherwise, no one was present to inform us.

She then inspected the presents, and principally fixed her attention upon the full suit of a Persian woman's dress. The beauty of the embroidery, the richness of the stuffs, and the brilliancy of the gold and precious stones with which it was ornamented, seemed to attract her admiration. She was anxious to have every part explained, and every woman in the room crowded near the ambassador as he showed how it was to be worn. They understood the nature of the chemise, although they marvelled at its make, and enquired why the skirts were so short? They made many remarks on the *jubbehs* and the jackets; but when they came to the trousers, their merriment, though tempered by the dignified presence of the queen, could scarcely be kept within bounds. They looked at themselves, and then at the *zeer jumehs;* there was no resisting their mirth. Stiffened with brocade, and padded with cotton, the object of their merriment stood erect in the middle of the room, and certainly made an extraordinary contrast with the flowing robes worn by the Frank women. An *arac gîr** attracted great admiration, owing to the great labour of needle-work bestowed upon it, and every body present was anxious to know how so small a cap could sit on the crown; but when the head-pins were produced, the difficulty was explained. Certain magnificent *lahafs*, or quilts, were prized by the queen, as well as the Cashmerian shawls and the Ispahan velvets.

* A skull-cap,—literally, a catcher of dew.

The ambassador acquired credit by explaining the medicinal properties of the *mûmiai** (so famed in Persia), of which he had brought a small quantity in a gold enamelled box; and we thought that there was much incredulity to be read in the different faces round us, when he averred, that, should a man, horse, or chicken, have a leg broke, and a bandage spread over with the unguent be bound round the fracture, a moon will scarcely pass ere the leg will be quite restored to its former state.

We had been so much taken up in attending to the queen, that we had not looked about for those beauties, her daughters, upon whom our imaginations had so fondly dwelt. We saw no moon-faces, no cypress waists, no antelope eyes, no silken tresses that touched the ground; but presently we bowed the head to several gorgeously-dressed ladies, upon seeing whom we were obliged to exclaim "*Mashallah!* Praises of Allah!" for fear the evil eye should assail them. They also asked many condescending questions, and through our ideas of king's daughters, which were drawn much from imagination, and much from what we had read of in Antar and the Thousand and One Nights, were here not verified, yet we came away satisfied that a veiled face was of much less consequence in this country than in ours; and that reason and sense here did the business of guardians and duennas.

We eagerly enquired whether the royal daughters were wives also; but, strange to say, they were not. "How?" said the ambassador to the mehmandar. "Why does not your king do as ours? Why does he not oblige your viziers and great khans to rub their foreheads upon the threshold of the royal palace, and receive, as the greatest boon that can be bestowed upon them, the hands of his daughters in marriage? Our king not only condescends to confer suchlike benefits, but frequently extends his munificence by

* A precious gum, which distils from a rock in Kerman.

bestowing upon them presents of his own children, adding thereto the more aged *banoos*, their mothers; and by the royal beard, I swear, that if they do not immediately fall upon their faces, kiss the ground, and say, "May the shadow of the king of kings never be less! may the royal house prosper!" their heads would not be worth a piece of black money each! By your father's beard! we settle these matters better in Persia."

Enquiring farther, we found that royal persons among the Franks marry after the manner of Mussulmans; that is, they do not see the husband or wife intended for them, but take them upon description. Some old woman is sent by the husband to look at the intended bride; she is wooed at a distance, and then is brought to him; and be she fair, or be she otherwise, she becomes his wife.

We whispered into the mehmandar's ear, asking whether any of the ladies before us were the king of England's slaves; or whether perchance they might purposely have been kept out of sight? but he repeated what we never before had fully believed, that his majesty had no slaves, and that of wives he had but one. "But has he no dancing women belonging to his court? no story-tellers? no setters to sleep?" said we.

The mehmandar assured us that such persons were not in use in Frank courts; that men and women danced together, for their own amusement, and not for pay; that story-tellers were rather avoided than patronised; and as setters to sleep, although there was in fact no want of them, yet that they were not made official appointments about the person.

We left the queen with our eyes much more open than they were before our interview. Every day taught us something new; and what before seemed unintelligible, particularly on the subject of women, began now to stand clearer before our understandings.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Difficulties of settling the direction of Mecca in London.—The Persians determine to adopt their own customs, and kill their own mutton.

We had been so much taken up by our various visitings, that we scarcely had had time to reflect that we were Mussulmans, and that we were living amongst infidels. Such had been the dissipation in which we passed our days, that the duties of praying and washing at our appointed times were daily becoming lax, to the horror of Mohamed Beg, who, being a strict observer of our faith, did not cease upbraiding us for our neglect, and strongly upheld the necessity of keeping ourselves pure from the contagious example of those around us, who, in fact, appeared to live in the world without any religion at all. He had been anxious to settle the true direction of the *kebleh*,* which he had never yet done in England to his satisfaction. His *kebleh nemah*, or compass, had unfortunately been broken; and he was doubtful whether any compass we might procure from the deriders of our faith would set us in the right way; and even whether it might not purposely mislead us, by pointing to some impure spot, instead of the sacred shrine of our holy prophet. Then, to his utter dismay, he had not seen the sun once since our arrival; and he was seriously apprehensive that the accounts which, in Persia, were currently believed concerning Frangistan were about being realised, and that England, in fact, had no sun. He therefore began to give up all hope of settling his kebleh, until one morning,

* The point to which Mahomedans turn in prayer—Mecca.

with joy painted in his countenance, he rushed into the presence of the ambassador, followed by many of the servants, exclaiming, "*Mujdeh!* good news! the sun is come! the sun is here!" and, in fact, upon looking up, amidst a yellow atmosphere, composed of smoke and vapour, there we saw it, sure enough. But many of us were inclined to doubt whether this could be the glorious luminary that we had in Persia, for there nobody had an eye strong enough to brave its brilliancy; whereas, here we gazed upon it at our ease, quite as well as if it were a moon. However, having satisfied ourselves that it was, in fact, the sun, we were all very happy; and seeing that this auspicious sight took place upon a white day,* the fifteenth of the month, we exclaimed, "*Mobarek!* good fortune!" to the ambassador; whilst Mohamed Beg became convinced that he had acquired the true direction of the land of our faith.

But this joy of ours at seeing the sun was the cause of confirming many of the English in their ignorance concerning our religion. We were taken for worshippers of fire, and they concluded that we adored the sun. One of their khans, a lord of great consequence, who sat in the king's assembly, and gave his opinion upon things fitting and things unfitting, never approached the ambassador without saying "Well, sir! no sun yet!" One day, when it was freezing, he found the ambassador seated near the fire, warming himself. "Oh, sir," said he, "I see you are worshipping the fire!" Upon this, Mirza Firouz, in wrath, exclaimed to me, who was standing before him, "What words are these? He does not know, that if we were worshippers of fire, it would not be the offensive smoky fires of his country.† Even

* Superstitious people in Persia make a distinction between lucky and unlucky days, which they call black and white days; the 13th, 14th, and 15th of every month are white days.

† The Guebres keep up their sacred fire with fuel that produces neither smoke nor smell. They do not allow bones, ordure, or filth of any sort, to be mixed with it; and will not even permit it to be lighted by blowing with the mouth, for fear of any impure odour.

the Guebres, who are scarcely good enough to manure our fields, are scrupulous as to the purity of their fire; what then must we be, who look upon them as the uncleanest of infidels?" Then turning to the mehmandar, he said, "For the love of Allah! tell the khan that we never worship fire in our country except when it is cold;" to which Mohamed Beg, who was also in the room, added, "And tell him that our holy Prophet, blessed be his name! hath ordained, in the forty-first surai of *the* Book, 'worship not the sun, neither the moon; but worship God who hath created them.'" This did not seem to satisfy the khan, but he entered into a long explanation, through the mehmandar, about an ancient infidel who seemed to know a great deal more about our country than any of our own historians; and who, in spite of all we could say to the contrary, had made him and all England believe that we worshipped fire; and, moreover, that we cut our horses' throats in honour of the sun.

"Ha, ha!" exclaimed the ambassador, who was always ready for a joke; "seeing that you have no sun in your country, to whose honour, may I ask, do you cut your horses' tails?"

The khan then went his way, rubbing his hands, saying that fire was a very good thing.

Deploring the ignorance of the nation we were doomed to live with, we determined no longer to lose sight of what was due to our religion, but to adhere to the practice of those ordinances decreed by our blessed Prophet, and to stand forth as champions of the true faith; accordingly, we determined to kill our own mutton. The English servants, when they saw Hassan, the cook, about to cut the throat of a sheep in one of the apartments of the house, exclaimed against the filth that such a custom would create; but when they heard Mohamed Beg roaring out the *Bismillah*, and otherwise explaining our law, which forbids man to eat that out of which the blood hath not flowed, they opened the eyes of astonishment, and dropped the head of acquiescence. The am-

bassador also ordained that every fowl, for the future, was to have its throat cut, and to be thrown on the ground to bleed to death, after the Persian manner; so that, by the blessing of Allah, we might eat our food without endangering our consciences.

Having established these customs, we began to pray and eat more at our ease than we had done since we left our country; although we were convinced that, living in an impure country, our prayers could not be of the same avail, no, not by one half, as those made upon our own soil. Mohamed Beg threatened us with a double allowance of praying, which would not fail to be decreed to us by the mollahs the moment we reached Persia, saying there was no *behest*, no paradise, for those whose entreaties to the throne of Allah came from a land "overrun with swine, and overflown with wine," for they would be arrested before they came to the gates of the highest heaven. This operated agreeably upon our spirits, and made most of us cease praying; "for," said we, "if we are to pray double upon returning to Persia, what use is there in praying at all whilst we are in England?" Right happy were we at this scheme, notwithstanding the solemn looks of Mohamed Beg, who wagged his head to and fro, and exhorted us never to lose sight of the dignity of Mahomedans, and of the duties which our faith enjoined.

We now ventured to walk through the streets, although our dress and appearance attracted much observation; but as we proceeded through the great labyrinth of the city, we began to fear that we should never find our way back. We had nothing by which to direct our steps, for every house appeared the same in our eyes. All the doors were alike, and the windows of the same shapes. There was neither bath, nor caravanserai, nor barber's shop, nor even a dunghill, that we could discover, from whence we could take a fresh departure; but when we got into a great street it was interminable, and one might walk more in a straight line than in the *Chahar Bagh* of Ispahan. We lost ourselves so fre-

quently, even at short distances from our own home, that I determined to adopt a plan which I had practised with success in the forests of Mazanderan, when I was a prisoner amongst the Turcomans. There I cut notches in the trees as I went, and by this means recovered myself if I lost my way. Here I provided myself with a piece of chalk, and marking every corner, I at length succeeded to walk great distances, and to find my way back without the help of any one. But these excursions were hazardous, for we were among a strange people, and scarcely a day passed without an adventure. Once I had strolled to some distance with Mohamed Beg; and as good luck would have it, our walk took us into green fields. There were many people walking to and fro; it was probably a Christian festival; the day happened to be fine, and the sun shone almost as bright as in our country. We came to a beautiful spot, with grass smooth as a carpet, and Mohamed Beg exclaimed, "Allah! Allah! what a charming place for saying one's prayers." At this moment a clock of one of the mosques struck the English noon, and he could no longer resist. "There is the *zohor*, noon," said he; "and although we have no muezzin to make the profession of faith, and to call us to prayer, still let us not disregard the notice. Here is water at hand; we will wash, and then make our devotions." To say the truth, I never had been a great sayer of prayers. Since the days when I was a prisoner in the sanctuary at Kom, where I had prayed enough for the remainder of my life, and where I had had a surfeit of genuflexion, I had always played at "hide and seek" with my religious duties, never going on my knees unless there was danger in not doing so. The absence of all such necessity in this unholy country was to me one of its greatest attractions, and therefore I cared not to leave it. But at the same time I did not wish to offend my companion; and although I refused his invitation, yet I assured him that I would wait until he had finished his devotions.

He first washed his hands, arms, feet, and back of his ears, in an adjoining stream, and having ascertained the direction of Mecca, he sat down and combed his beard. He then took from his person his seals, rings, looking-glass, and every thing of value which he had about him, and taking the piece of holy earth,* together with his beads, from his breasts, he placed them before him, and put himself in the first attitude of prayer. By this time the infidels began to gather around us. What they took us for, it is difficult to say; most likely for jugglers, for they all looked with intense interest at the different trinkets which Mohamed Beg had displayed on the grass. As he stood up with his feet joined together, emphatically pronouncing the *fatheh*,† upon raising his hands before him, I verily believe that they expected to see him vault into the air, or make a somerset, as I have seen some of their own mountebanks do in the street; but when he merely went through his prostrations, touching the piece of holy earth, inscribed with the names of our blessed Prophet and the twelve Imans, with his forehead, they seemed quite disappointed; and one of them had the insolence to take it up, and to hand it about to his fellows to look at. Upon this my Persian pride was roused. Reprobate as I was, I could not see ourselves so insulted, and a bit of our holy Mecca so abused. I darted forwards to snatch the relic from the hand of one of the infidels; my effort was received with loud hootings. Mohamed Beg now in wrath got upon his legs, and, heedless of anything but the insults offered his religion, drew his knife, and would have buried it in the bowels of one of the infidels, when he received a blow which must have been inflicted by some unseen agent, some *dive*, or some English *gin*, which was thrown so exactly into the very centre of his stomach, that his wrath was soon turned into vomiting; his beard became distended, his face turned white, and his

* The Persians at prayers place before them a piece of clay, said to be part of the soil of Mecca, and which is stamped with holy invocations.

† The first prayer in the Koran.

eyes streamed. Never had prayer been so little propitious. Instead of pouring forth blessings, his mouth consoled itself with curses; and whenever he could take breath, it was refreshing to hear him devote the whole English nation to perdition, and announce to them that their fathers were now roasting in the fires of *Jehanum.*

Our situation was not very enviable, particularly when we saw an inclination on the part of the surrounding mob to proceed to something more violent than beating Mohamed Beg's stomach. There was one man more violent than the rest, who performed many feats, the object of which we could in no wise understand: he clenched his fist, put it close to my nose, and then took off his coat. This I conceived implied hostility, although I knew that taking off a hat implied the contrary. To my astonishment, I saw another man in the crowd step forward and also divest himself of his coat: strange compliments, thought I, but I was soon undeceived. In one of the parties I recognised one of the English servants employed by the ambassador; and had scarcely had time to make myself known to him, when, to our extreme horror and amazement, Mohamed Beg and I saw a fight between these two men, the equal of which we had never before seen, not even by the shah's best *pehlivans.* They fought with great vigour and resolution; but our servant, in a very short time, was the victor. His blows fell thicker upon his antagonist's face than upon the feet of a sufferer under the bastinado in Persia, until every feature was lost, and he begged for mercy. After he was well beaten, they both shook hands, and walked off apparently good friends. We, however, could not recover our astonishment, nor could we at all comprehend the object of our servant's interference, although he assured us that he only fought out of compliment to us. We had frequently before heard of the hospitality of the Arabs to a stranger; of his killing his last sheep for his entertainment; of his depriving himself of every thing rather than that his guest should suffer: but that he should stand up, and fight, and

run the chance of losing his eyes, or getting his nose knocked off, or his head broken for the stranger, that we had never yet heard. And yet we had seen this very act performed by an infidel, whom in our minds we condemned to eternal punishments. Mohamed Beg puzzled his head for a long while how to find some satisfactory reason for this phenomenon; but all he could discover was, that the beating which had most likely been intended for him had, by the interposition of fate, fallen on another. We returned home making many exclamations, and astonished the ambassador by a recital of all we had witnessed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Hajji Baba describes the opening of parliament.—Of certain English customs, and love at first sight.

About this time there seemed to be a great and universal stir among the English. Houses which had remained empty all of a sudden appeared to be inhabited. The streets, which we before thought abundantly populous, were now positively so thronged with people and carriages, that it was with difficulty one could pass; and the women began to run about, and to knock at each other's doors in a manner quite strange to behold. The whole scene put us in mind of the return of the shah, his court, and his camp, to Tehran, from his summer's campaign in the plains of Sultanieh.

We enquired the cause of all this, and received various reasons. We were told that the great council of the state was about to sit; and that, although the country had already more than one thousand and one volumes full of laws, yet that more were wanted. Some said, that the government

squandered away too much money, and that less must be expended for the future. Others assured us that the council met to discuss an old question, upon which they had argued for these last hundred years, and upon which they were not further advanced than when they first began; and this was, whether seven millions of their population should continue to be discontented and rebellious, or the contrary. We would not believe any one of these statements; for we asked, does it stand to reason that a nation so powerful, so prosperous, and so abounding in riches, as this, could lay itself open to such unheard-of imputations? The ambassador determined to learn as much of the truth as possible, in order to transmit it at full length to the shah.

"How!" said he, "we have only one book, to wit, the Koran, which contains all our law; and here," said he, "we find that camel-loads of books are not enough! If every *cazi* and *sheikh el Islam** in England, who, perchance, might be sent to dispense justice over the land, were to travel, they would require at least fifty camels to carry about their requisite knowledge. Then as to settling what the government is to spend, in the name of Allah, what may be the use of a king, if he has not unlimited command over his treasury? Our king of kings would cut off any body's ears, did he dare call into question the right of a sovereign not only over his own wealth, but over the property, ay, over the lives of all his subjects. The other question was past our comprehension; it related in some measure to religion. From what we heard, it was plain that Mahomedans would have but a sorry existence of it in England; for if her own subjects were not allowed to pray after their own fashion, what, in the name of the shah's beard, could we expect? If they are looked upon as dogs, we might be treated as dogs' uncles!"

Notwithstanding this extraordinary conduct of the English towards their king, it appears that he goes willingly every

* Titles given to Persian men of the law.

year in state, surrounded by all the majesty and magnificence of a crowned head, to open the deliberations of the council, and even to invite them to settle how much he ought to spend; how many ministers; what number of generals; how many troops; what quantities of ships; what ambassadors to maintain; in short, how many expenses of every description he ought to incur. They even have the audacity, we were assured, to settle in what manner he ought to support his own wife. If one half of this were true, we concluded that we might as well believe the other half; and, in order to be convinced with his own eyes, the ambassador willingly accepted an invitation to be present at the ceremony of opening the council, which, from what we could learn, resembled in some measure the great *selam-i-aum*, the great prostration of the people before the shah in Persia, on the festival of the *No Rouz*.

The mehmandar informed the Mirza Firouz that the number of persons admitted to the shah's presence on this occasion was restricted to a certain few; and therefore it was proposed that neither I nor any of his Persian suite should be of the party. Accordingly we saw him depart, accompanied only by the mehmandar; but we determined to make our way to the scene of action, in order to observe the passage of the royal procession. The whole city was in motion. Never before had we seen such an assemblage of infidels. We, a handful of true believers, looked indeed rather insignificant in the great mass; but we were proud of being such, and would not have given one hair of our beards for the millions of black hats that waved to and fro before us. We posted ourselves under a tree in a garden leading to the house of assembly. Several avenues bordered the road through which the king was to pass; and, in order to keep it clear, on each side were posted cavalry, mounted upon superb horses. For the time being we attracted more attention than anything else, and were beginning to feel the insolence of the crowd, when luckily their attention was soon after diverted from us by the approach

of the king, and we opened all our eyes to see his majesty pass. Before the procession had reached us about a *maidan*, we heard strange and unaccountable sounds, which we took for the English mode of paying homage to their monarch; sounds which in some measure assimilated to the greetings made by the Arabian women upon the approach of a great personage. They were a mixture of cries, groans, and hisses. As the great coach in which the king sat drew near, the rush of the crowd was immense, and immediately there issued from the thousands that stood near us such a shower of hisses, that we felt sure that no king could be more beloved by his people than this. So much loyalty was instantaneous in its effect; it was as catching as fear; and, almost involuntarily, we added our most unaffected hisses to those of the surrounding crowd, the hue of our faces almost becoming black with the exertion. All the collected serpents of the plains of *Mogan** in a rage could not exceed the noise we made. We became the point of observation to all beholders. But what was our astonishment, I may add consternation, when, instead of meeting with the encouragement and commendation we expected, we found ourselves surrounded by a host of men, with short painted sticks in their hands, backed by some individuals of the cavalry, who most unceremoniously invited us to dislodge from our tree, and to walk away with them to places unknown!

"What do these men want?" exclaimed Mohamed Beg; "what dirt do they eat?"

"Shall I give them a taste of the knife?" asked Aga Beg, the master of the horse.

"Use no violence, by your child's soul!" exclaimed I, "or they will strike our stomachs, as they did Mohamed Beg's."

The scene becoming much confused, we were about being very awkwardly situated, when a well-dressed Frank stepped up, and, seeing who we were, immediately interfered, and

* A tract of country near the river Araxes, famous for its numerous serpents.

explained to the men with painted sticks, that whatever we might have done it must have been through ignorance. He released us from their superintendence; and having kindly accompanied us to our home, we there explained all that had happened; and then to our confusion we found, that instead of paying honour and respect to the shah of England, we had in fact been treating him worse than a dog.

"*La illaha illallah!* There is but one God!" exclaimed Mohamed Beg. "What a country is this! Who ever thought of abusing one's king, to his face too! Let us leave this people; they are too bad. One never sees them pray; their wives are without shame; and they heap abomination upon their own king's head."

"By my soul," exclaimed Aga Beg, "I thought that hissing was the Frank mode of doing honour. We have all made a feast of abomination!"

"But pray, sir," said I to the gentleman who had escorted us home, "tell me by what chance is it that the English people receive their king after this manner?"

"The popularity of our king," said he, "depends upon circumstances, which no human power can control. The people are ignorant, and are led by designing demagogues. Bread is dear, they hiss the king; trade is dull, they hiss the king; they hate peace, they hiss the king; the queen behaves ill, they hiss the king. The following year, perhaps, bread is cheap and trade brisk, they cheer the king; his ships or his armies gain a victory, they smother him with kindness; his ministers make good speeches, and talk of reducing taxes, they will lay down their lives for him. Who can account," said he, "for popular favour, or popular disfavour? It is as uncertain as the wind that blows."

"I tell you what, sir," said I, taking hold of the tip of my beard, and holding it out to him, "do you see this?"

"Yes," answered he, "I see it."

"Well, then, by this I swear, and I can swear by nothing more sacred, that if the people of Tehran, upon the presence

of their shah, were even to spit in his presence, or to do any thing by look or speech that indicated disrespect, he would order a *katl-i-aum*, a general massacre, to take place, and would not leave one rogue of them to look at the sun the next morning. By all the Imams, it is as true as I stand here."

The gentleman at this speech opened his eyes with astonishment, and seeing, perhaps, how cheap we held other people's heads, he made us a low bow, and took his leave.

By this time the ambassador had returned, and when we had related to him and to the mehmandar the adventures of the morning, they consoled us by laughing at our beards, and said that, if we expected to find in the English mob the same servility which existed in the Persian, we were much mistaken.

"They are as different," said they, "as the dirty puddle in which a camel drinks is to the sea, which at one hour is agitated by a hurricane, at another lulled into a dead calm."

Mohamed Beg answered, for his part, that he would rather belong to the puddle, if what he had seen to-day and the day before, when he had been so mauled, were acts illustrative of the people of England.

The ambassador then described his adventures:—Never had man seen so much in so short a space of time. A king on a throne; dresses of all descriptions; gold, silver, velvet; sticks, swords, and gold maces; men with extraordinary wigs sprinkled with dust; a multitude of *omrahs*, with scarlet and ermine cloaks; a rush of men, with a *kedkhoda*, covered with false hair, at their head; and to crown all, women! "Oh, such women!" said he: "I was in love with them all; they were all unveiled; I saw much flesh whiter than snow; eyes that killed; and teeth which smiled delight!"

We had never before seen our ambassador in such a state. But there was one fair creature above the rest, of whose charms he raved; he had never conceived that anything human could be so beautiful; his heart was on fire. It was plain that this circumstance alone had reconciled him to a residence among the infidels; and now we learned to appreciate the truth of

that saying of our immortal sheikh, "Be you seated in the most lonely shade of the valley of the angel of death, and let love be your companion, the desert will appear a paradise, and your wretchedness will seem beatitude." He called her his *jalibelgeloob;* * swore that the leaf of her eye † was more tender than that of the rose; that she was more brilliant than a moon fourteen days old; ‡ and that she was in the very eye-ball § of her age; in short, he made one believe that she was a very phœnix, "the one of ones."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A dinner is given to the Ambassador.—Of the precedence of women.—Of wine-drinking.

There seemed now to pervade one new and universal impulse throughout the city to congregate in a thousand different manners, for objects which to us were totally novel. The men sought the women, and the women received the men. In the morning they met at occasional visits to talk upon matters of little importance; then they congregated in troops on horse-back, or in carriages; they then dispersed and separated into different companies to eat; and although by the time they had done this it was our time for going to bed, yet again they met in larger and more numerous assemblies, to dance, or to sit, or to be pressed together in masses in a manner difficult to explain. In this we were told they followed their own pleasure; nor were these great meetings at all for the honour of their king, as our principal ones generally are, but purely for their own gratification. When we meet in large bodies it is usually

* Ravisher of hearts.

† The eyelid.

‡ An eastern image for mistress.

§ Pinnacle.

to attend our shah; and although we do congregate and eat together occasionally, yet who ever thought of doing so in the unbounded manner of England?

The mehmandar came into the ambassador's room the day after his appearance at the house of parliament, and said, "Here are five invitations to dinner to-day."

"Allah, Allah!" exclaimed the ambassador, "five invitations! who can eat five dinners in one day?"

"It is not necessary to eat them all," answered the mehmandar; "it is enough that you accept one. You eat one dinner, but you may go to as many evening assemblies afterwards as you please. Here is a whole handful of invitations."

We remained perfectly astonished. "Who can go through such labour," said we, "and then live? We are Persians; we go to sleep when the last prayers have been chanted, and we awake with the dawn. How is this?"

"You will soon get accustomed to our manners," said the mehmandar. "We make little distinction between day and night at this season."

Without more difficulty the ambassador, accompanied by the mehmandar and myself, went to the dinner in question, which was given by one of the viziers. He dressed himself in his best, putting on the cap of ceremony with the shawl round it, and girding himself with his diamond-hilted dagger. He had found it more convenient to adopt the shoes of the Franks, (excepting on very great occasions, when he preserved our own high-heeled slippers), because it was impossible for him to be always accompanied by his shoe-bearer. He intimated that I was to accompany him, and accordingly I also made my person as fit to be seen as possible.

No one came to inform us that the entertainment was ready; no one said the *Bismillah!* but we went straight to the vizier's house; and we were announced by very loud knocks on a closed door, inflicted by strong servants. Other servants having appeared from within, we were invited to walk in.

The ambassador's name was then called out at stated intervals, until we were ushered into the hall of meeting. Here, at the threshold, we were received by the vizier, who himself was walking about, as well as most of his guests, for there appeared to be perfect liberty on that score. We then went to the vizier's wife, who seemed to be quite as much at home as her husband, and did her best by sweet smiles to make us welcome. There were several other khanums, very civil and handsome. If any portion of a veil had been thrown over them, to hide certain parts of their very white persons, I should have been in a fever of love at once; but as it was, I scarcely thought of them as women. The conversation began by every person present appearing anxious to know whether we had seen the sun on that day; for it was ascertained that it had been seen, but whether for one hour, or only half an hour, there appeared to be some serious doubts. The ambassador, evidently tired at this constant allusion to our supposed worship of the sun, turned off the observation by a compliment to the vizier's wife. "You do not want a sun in your country," said he, "when you have such suns as the khanum's eyes to give light and joy to the world!"

When this was interpreted, it produced a universal cry of approbation, and was immediately taken up, with the greatest good humour, by the vizier himself, who said, "If his excellency is to be an apostate, and if he is to worship these suns (pointing to the lady's eyes), instead of his own, we must look about us. We must begin building harems, and manufacturing veils."

Upon this, a great deal of agreeable joking took place, which animated the whole party, and, indeed, gave us an insight into the English character we had never before acquired. We, Persians, who are so fond of a good saying, were delighted to find that so much merriment could exist among persons who usually live in a fog; and the ambassador, who thought that there might be some etiquette among them, as to

who should lanch the first joke, seeing that they were in general so taciturn, willingly ventured to break the spell, and never lost an opportunity for the future of putting in his word whenever he could do so with propriety.

The entrance of a person with white dust on his head, to invite us to the feast, put an end for a time to the good humour that had broken out; and when the company stood up, we discovered that there existed among the English to the full as much etiquette about precedence as in our country. But Allah! Allah! who, let me say, were the objects of it! Mohamed Beg, when I related the fact, would not believe it. Women!—they, the women, took precedence. They walked out of the room first, whilst the men seemed to struggle for the privilege of leading them forwards. Every honour was intended towards our ambassador; he was invited to make his way with the vizier's wife, his right hand placed in her left; and, considering that this was the first time he had performed such a ceremony, he really did it amazingly well. Without even thinking of washing our hands before we began to eat, both men and women proceeded to the scene of action. What we Mussulmans were to do with our left hands was always a subject of deep consideration; but in a country of infidels we took liberties that no other emergency could ever sanction.

We entered a large room, in the centre of which was spread a table more curiously ornamented than any we had yet seen. Around this we placed ourselves, but not without much of the difficulty of etiquette. I avow that, saving our own beards, which looked out of character among the smooth chins that wagged round the board, I was delighted at the sight. 'T is true that much more noise was heard than during one of our entertainments; for the unceasing activity of the servants with creaking shoes, the clash of plates, the ringing of glasses, the slashing and cutting with sharp instruments, and, above all, the universal talking of the assembly, created a din to which we were little accustomed, and which in Persia would be

esteemed as highly indecorous.* But it was an enlivening sight; and excepting the absence of a Hafiz to chant the luxuries of our wine, of the excellence of which even our blessed Prophet could have had no idea, the entertainment would have been perfect. Of what the numerous dishes were composed, I did not give myself the trouble to consider; and without pausing to enquire whether the mutton had properly bled, or whether the poultry had died the true death, I ate whatever came in my way. I certainly made one or two scrutinising pauses at a new sort of flesh, and which I fancied might be that of the unclean beast; but "in the name of Allah!" said I, "what is the use of stickling about pollution, when we have now been steeped in it ever since we have lived among the infidel?" and so I ate of every thing that was offered to me. If Mohamed Beg had been with us, he would have been blowing over his shoulders during the whole of the entertainment. The ambassador seemed to be as much at his ease as any one of the most experienced eaters of a dinner among the English themselves. He managed the spoons, knives, claws, and pincers, with surprising dexterity. I must own that I was not so fortunate, for I made one or two mistakes merely from the force of previous habit, which evidently had an unfavourable effect upon those around me. I shared my neighbour's bread, which is here looked upon as offensive as it is otherwise in Persia. I drank out of his glass; and once I presented a bit with my fingers from a dish before me, at which he made a start as if I had offered poison. Although we did not sit with our knees double, but were quite at our ease upon chairs, with legs pendant, yet the great length of the entertainment almost killed me. At length there was a general move, but to my astonishment, the women only took their departure. This was the nearest approach to our own

* Persian servants in attendance at an entertainment are scarcely heard. They do their work without shoes; and as there is no handing of plates, and no changing of knives and forks, the quiet is great compared to the din of our tables.

customs which I had yet seen, and I asked my neighbour why this distinction was made? why the women alone went? He seemed puzzled for an explanation. "Is it thus ordained in your scriptures," said I, "or is it ordered by your king?" Still he was at a loss for an answer; and I concluded that this might be a custom borrowed from Islam. My neighbour hinted that the absence of the women left the men at greater liberty to talk and drink wine. "Ah, then," said I, "you must have adopted that maxim of the East, which saith, 'First dinner, then conversation;' but if drinking be your object, this is not the way to set about it. Do as we do in Persia; get up betimes in the morning; go into a garden; seat yourself near a running stream; put flowers on your head; have songsters and nightingales; drink till your senses are gone; wait till they return; then drink again, and take no thought of time; let day and night be the same, until at length you have so completely soaked yourself with wine, that it is time to cry out, 'Enough! enough!'"

Whether my neighbour understood my attempt to explain myself in English, I know not, but he eyed me with astonishment.

At length the dinner was over, and with unwashed hands we proceeded to the room of assembly, where we found the vizier's wife and her khanums ready again to receive us.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Ambassador goes to Almack's.—Hajji's observations on waltzing and quadrilling.—He scrutinises an exquisite.

We had not long returned to the ladies, when the vizier's wife, who, by her agreeable manners, had fairly taken possession of the ambassador's beard, invited him to follow her

to a place of general entertainment, of which she herself, as we understood her, was a sort of queen; and which we discovered from the mehmandar's interpretation was a meeting of all the principal mirzas, khans, and begs of the English nation, together with their wives and daughters. It was called Almack's; and here the ambassador and I were confirmed in an opinion which we had previously formed, that much of the English language was derived from the Persian and Arabic. What could Almack's be but *al mags?* the marrow, the pith, that is, the cream of the English nobility. But we enquired, as we yawned with approaching drowsiness, "What can induce the princes, mirzas, khans, their wives and daughters, to select this hour of the night for meeting? Is there no other opportunity in the twenty-four hours for the performance of this august ceremony?"

"Oh," said the vizier's wife, "there is no time for explanation now. You will soon see; and then your question will answer itself."

The ambassador, with great good humour, did as he was desired; and although we were both of us dying with sleep, yet we proceeded in the train of the vizier's wife; the vizier himself and most of his guests following also.

Who would believe in Persia were I to describe faithfully all that I witnessed on this fortunate night? Would they believe me when I told them that I saw more diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and jewels of every kind, collected in this room, than the shah of Iran, or even the father of the great Mogul, had ever possessed? that I saw more women at one view than existed in the harem of the Asylum of the Universe, and more beauty in one little corner than had ever been seen throughout the vast regions of Asia; skins more resplendent than that of the angel Gabriel; necks that would put a peacock's to shame; eyes to inflame, and forms to enrapture the veriest dervish who lived in the mountains of *Cheheldîr?* "*Bah! bah! bah!*" said I to myself, "whatever of life,

whatever of joy, whatever of enjoyment exists, here is the *Almags*, here is the very essence of them. Where is Persia, her beards and sheepskins, her long veils and hidden females; and where England, her riches, her adorable women, and the powers of enjoyment and sociability which she dispenses to her children!"

This was my first impression, and I believe it was written on my face, because soon after I was accosted by a man of agreeable conversation, in my own language, who asked me what I thought of the scene before me.

I did not like to make him suppose that we were such Turks* as not to have seen the world; and, suppressing all my real astonishment, I answered him very quietly, "*Bad neest*, it is not bad."

My new friend, who, it seems had been in India, and in the southern parts of Fars, smiled at my answer, and remarked, "You will allow that this is a more agreeable sight than if the women's faces were veiled, as they are in Persia?"

"Yes, yes," said I; "I see but one defect; why is there such a large proportion of old women? They at least might be veiled."

"Perhaps," said he, "that would be an improvement; but in this free country every body has a right to do what they like with their own face."

"But have you no means," said I, "of getting rid of superfluous old women? It is said of our shah Abbas, that he was reduced to the necessity of killing some of his old eunuchs, who did not die off fast enough to please him."

"Ah," answered my friend, laughing, "the death of one old woman here under such circumstances would produce a rebellion. We have no shah Abbas in this country." He then very kindly volunteered to explain to me many things which, from his knowledge of our customs, he was aware must be new to me.

* *Turk*, in Persian, implies lout, boor, peasant.

He first pointed out one of the king's sons, a prince of the blood royal, who was walking about in the crowd like any other person, talking and being talked to. The only mark of distinction which he enjoyed was, that nobody turned their back upon him if they could help it. "Ah," said I, "our *shah zadehs* would not be satisfied with that; they would not come here without a *pahendaz*,* and without receiving a handsome present upon entering the door. Does not your prince get anything for his condescension?"

"Beyond tea and bread and butter," answered my companion, "I know of nothing else."

"Wonderful!" said I: "you are an incomprehensible people; kings and their sons are of no consequence in this country compared to what they are in ours; you would make one suppose that they are as little thought of by you as common mortals are by our kings and princes."

"Merit," said my friend, "merit of whatsoever kind, that is our great *kebleh*; that is the point to which we all pay our adoration."

"And what may the merit of that man be," said I, pointing to one with an eagle's eye, "who attracts every body's attention; and near whose person it seems to be a privilege to approach? He must be a king, at least, if the other be a prince."

"You are a man of quick observation," said my informant; "for that person exemplifies what I have just remarked. He is no prince; he is the greatest conqueror of the age— the pacifier of the world— the vanquisher of what was esteemed invincible; though of noble descent, he began a soldier's career, like many a youth before him, with nothing but his sword and his heart to carry him through life; and has raised himself by superior merit alone to be the shield and breastplate of his country, and the admiration of nations."

"But see," said I, "see, what can he be doing? By the

* Spreading the ground with shawls and rich stuffs.

beard of Ali! he is pouring out a cup of tea for that oldest of all old women! he is performing the office of one of our valets! What sort of custom is that?"

"There is no degradation in doing a kind act," said my friend.

"No degradation," exclaimed I, "for the pacifier of the world to be feeding old women! What words are these? If our Nadir Shah, whom you will allow was at least as great a blood-drinker as this *ghazi* of yours, did not keep up the respect due to him by cutting off at least a score of heads per day, he could not sleep quiet. What would he have thought of your old women?"

"Our feelings on that head," said my companion, "must and ever will remain incompatible. But come," said he, "come and see the dancing—this is new to you, I am sure —this will not fail to please you."

We proceeded to where a circle of the most beautiful young maidens that the imagination can conceive were seriously occupied in varying the postures and attitudes of their persons into every combination of hand and foot, whilst young men, each in their place, were also going through a great many contortions, and taking much exercise. There was a profound decorum observed. If hands were touched, it was only by the tips of fingers—glances there were none —no smiles—they danced as dervishes might dance; and evidently it was a serious business.

My companion was aware that in our countries no one danced save those who are hired for that purpose; and therefore he assured me that all those who exhibited themselves here were doing so for their own pleasure.

"Not that man surely," said I, "whose face bespoke pain, whose feet bespoke tight shoes, and who discovered to us the exertions he made by the streams that poured from his fat person?"

"At all events he is not paid for his exertions, whatever may be his motive," said my friend. "Our hired performers

you will see when you visit a place prepared on purpose for such exhibitions."

"But what is the meaning of this?" said I, observing an universal change to take place in the dancing; for much as I had remarked the decorum which reigned in the first process, so much was I struck by the want of it in that which followed. Men and women in pairs, face to face, with hands grappling with each other's persons, were now swinging round with heedless velocity; sometimes rebounding from each other, at others striking against rival dancers, and making altogether an exhibition that I did not conceive could belong to the gravity and propriety which otherwise existed in the assembly.

"Custom familiarises us with every thing, said my communicative friend; "this dance is of recent importation; it was violently opposed at first; but we have a certain tyrant among us called 'Fashion,' much more despotic than even your king of kings, whose decrees are more powerful than either reason or sense of propriety, and who, as you see, overthrows decorum, and makes of us, a nation naturally inclined to admire every thing that improves the dignity of our nature, a nation of frivolous and ridiculous imitators."

"Can I believe my eyes?" said I, very abruptly: "as I love the blessed Mahomed, there is your grand vizier dancing!"

"Yes," said my friend, coolly; "we all dance; the king and all his court dance; the grand vizier, the chancellor of the exchequer and the treasury, the viziers for things without and things within, the commander-in-chief and the horse guards, the lords of the admiralty and the navy—we all dance. There is no law against our heads of the church and our grand muftis dancing; our young clergymen dance, and so do our young lawyers."

"By your own soul, and by the beard of my ancestors, I swear," said I, "that if our shah was to catch one of his

viziers dancing, he would spoil his sport for the future; he would give him such a bastinado on the soles of his feet that every toe would in its turn remind him of his folly."

I perceived a strange looking *birish*, or "no beard;"* his clothes pasted tighter to his body than those of any other man present, as if he were in the deepest wo †; his head flattened at the top, and curled out behind; his neck stiff, and in his deportment full of nothing but himself. Withal, he appeared to be a deceiver and a *cherb-goo*, or an oily speaker, a sayer of fat things. "Who can that personage be?" said I to my companion; "in our country he should soon teach his mincing feet better manners, and he should limp for something."

"That sort of person now-a-days we call an exquisite, a dandy; formerly he would have been called a "d——d buck," so much does fashion even change our forms of speech."

"*Dambuk*, *Dambuk!* said I, doubtingly; "this must then be a descendant of one of the old unknowns—of one before the flood—a *nîmser*, or flat-head. How odd it is that our languages should be so nearly allied."

"How?" said my companion, not understanding me; "he is the modern of moderns; there is not a jot of antiquity about him."

"Ha, then," said I, "you have not read our history. *Dambuk*, according to our *tarikhs*, or histories, was a flat-headed man, a descendant of a king of the ante-Adamites.‡ Now, have you understood?"

My friend laughed, and said, "A capital joke, by heavens!" and soon left me to repeat it to his friends.

During all this conversation I had lost sight of my ambassador, whom I discovered, shortly after, surrounded by many

* Youths, particularly effeminate-looking youths, are so called.

† Among the Easterns, to say of a man that his vest became tight to his body, is a figurative mode of saying he put on mourning.

‡ See d'Herbelot and Richardson.

khanums, who seemed to be making a strict scrutiny of his dress; but he was entirely absorbed in the charms of one young person, whom he had successfully seated next to him and upon whose splendid attractions he gazed with all the intenseness of a *majnoun*. I kept at a humble distance, for after all I was only like Saadi's bit of clay, which derived its scent from its connexion with the rose; and although I should have enjoyed a nearer acquaintance with some of the bewitching eyes which surrounded me, yet dreading the jealous disposition of my chief, I determined for the present to hide myself behind the veil of insignificancy.

When the hour of departure was come, which was about the time of our morning prayer, I took leave of my friend, and wishing that his friendship for me might never be less, I accompanied the ambassador to the carriage.

CHAPTER XXX.

Of the Ambassador in love.—He goes to the opera, the play, and longs to kidnap a clown for the use of his shah.

When we were in the carriage, the ambassador, unable to contain his emotions, exclaimed to me aloud,—

"Ah, Hajjî, by your beard, my heart is gone! my soul is become roast meat! Did you ever see such eyes, such teeth, such hair? Her skin is so exquisitely fine that one might trace the colour of the wine through it in its passage down her throat. No Georgian maid that was ever yet born would be worthy of holding her shoes. But what use is there in my feelings? We are Persians; and these infidels would not give us their daughters, even if we should consent to shave off our beards and wear a hat. What is to be done? Ah, Hajjî, speak."

"What can I say, O ambassador?" I answered. "In truth she is a beautiful creature. By what good luck did you discover her?"

"She is the same," said he, "whose eyes met mine on the day I went to the great assembly of the king and his lords; and this evening, as soon as I saw her, it was evident that we were one, for our eyes met again. Her mother brought her to me, and love since then has taken seat in my heart. What is to be done?"

"We must make some verses upon her," said I. "Such a thing without poetry can never be."

"But, indeed," said the ambassador, "I did say plenty of enraptured things to her in verse! but who could understand me? 'T is true, the mehmandar endeavoured to interpret my expressions, but instead of softening her heart, she, her mother, and those around us, only laughed, and asked me to write down what I had said."

"And what did you say?"

"I recited that charming ode of Hafiz, which begins, —

> 'O Zephyr! go say to that tender fawn,
> Why have you driven us to the deserts and the mountains?'

"If her heart was not won by that," said I, "it is not to be won at all. Then you must send her presents; some shawls —paint for her eyes—turquoises, to increase your luck. You must write her a letter in red ink."

"Ah!" said the ambassador, as he stepped out of the carriage, "this is a dangerous country for a Mussulman. The eyes of the women are without pity: they slay right and left; and the customs of the nation are so seductive, that all we have to do is to put our trust in Allah."

From this time forwards the ambassador never took me, nor any of his suite, to the assemblies of the English. Whether he feared that we should be spies upon his actions, and repeat to our shah, to his prejudice, the influence which the manners and customs of the infidels had acquired over him,

or whether he apprehended that we might become his rivals in the conquests which he flattered himself his own personal attractions might make over the world of houris which had opened to his view, none of us ever discovered; but he went abroad for the future accompanied by the mehmandar only, whilst we remained at home, counting our beads.

However, when it suited his dignity that his suite should attend upon him, then we shared his pleasures. He went occasionally to the great show-houses, some of which are royal establishments, and of which there were many in the city, and then he took us with him, although Mohamed Beg, who was daily trying how to keep to the ordinances of our faith, usually endeavoured to remain at home.

The ambassador's principal place of public resort was a house fitted up for no other purposes than music and dancing. The first night of our appearance there (although we had been warned by the mehmandar that we should see marvellous sights) was, indeed, a night of wonderment. The ambassador was inserted into a small cell, like a bee in a honeycomb, from whence the sight which burst upon him was such that words cannot describe, and which no Persian, who had not seen it, could ever be made to comprehend. In every part of an immense house, more spacious than one of our largest mosques, in cells similar to that of the ambassador's, were seated men and women openly, and without the shadow of concealment; below was a sea of heads; the whole place was lighted up by lamps and candles, more numerous than the most splendid fire exhibition ever given at the court of the shah. The music to us was incomprehensible; thousands of instruments produced a confusion of sounds, which seemed perfect heaven to the English, but which to us were new and astounding. We longed to give them a specimen of what our players of the *kamouncha* could do, and to treat them to a crash of the shah's *nakara khaneh*, his brazen trumpets, his heart-stirring drums. Of a sudden an immense curtain drew up, and straight we saw a succession of sights that no pen can

describe. First came a tragical story, which nearly set us crying; and then feats of dancing, the wonders of which no person could ever conceive, not even in his dream. The story was chanted from beginning to end; and certainly if the voices we heard, both from men and women, had been tutored to sing our songs, and had they performed before our shah, he would have fallen from his throne in a trance of delight. As for the dancing, it was in every respect so astonishing, that opinions were strongly divided between us, whether those who danced were live figures or automatons. We talked much upon this subject, and many of us would not be convinced that our senses were not deceiving us, when a good-natured Frank offered to clear up the difficulty. He conducted two of us through many long, narrow, and crooked passages to the very spot where the dancers were performing; and there, indeed, he effectually convinced us that what we had seen at a distance were real men and women. And to our surprise we found, that the *gins* and *peris* who had been flitting about were nothing but painted mortals, which, when closely inspected, looked more like demons than the inhabitants of paradise.

There was a man of science who frequented the ambassador at the opera, and who did not cease extolling the beautiful voices of the European singers. 'Tis true, few of them were English, but we were tired of eternally hearing of *Catlani*, *Trimzani*, as if they stood alone in the world, and as if we could not boast of our singers and musicians too. At length, one night, when the ambassador had had his soul dried up by these constant praises, he said,—"You may talk, sir, as long as you please of your Catlanis, and your Trimzanis; but, perhaps, you have never heard of our *Barbut;** he, indeed, was a singer!"

The ambassador continued to frequent this place, until one night, he found that an attempt was made to represent his own countrymen, which he fancied was a slight upon himself. He

* Barbut was a famous master of music to Khosru Parvis, king of Persia, and the inventor of the Barbitan, a musical instrument.

assured us, that not only had they made the Asylum of the Universe dance, and brought forth his whole harem unveiled to do the same, but that they had had the audacity to get up a *pas de deux*, as they called it, between our blessed Prophet and a queen of the Franks. After this, the ambassador became shy of this entertainment, but he occasionally went to other theatres. These show-houses, the interior magnificence of which surpasses every thing that we had heard or read of, even of the palaces of forty pillars of Jemsheed, and the seven paradises of Baharam, are the nightly resort of the English people. "In the name of Allah!" we exclaimed, "the English must be the most idle nation under the sun. The fêtes of our *No Rouz*, the celebration of the death of Imam Hussein, and some other of our annual festivals, are sufficient for the recreation of the people of Iran; but here amusement is unceasing, and every day with them seems to be the beginning of a new year."

The first night of our appearance at a great show-house, we saw the representation of a story well calculated to excite our feelings. Although we did not understand what was said, yet the acting was sufficient. An old shah, white and decrepit with age, was thrust from his kingdom by his own children, and driven to the utmost verge of desperation. We all shed tears, reflecting what might be the fate of our blessed shah in his old age, beset as he is with such a numerous and hostile family of sons. We eagerly enquired from the mehmandar how it was possible to get one so old to personify the character, when, almost immediately after, a young and handsome man came to pay his respects to Mirza Firouz, and was introduced as the unfortunate king who had just been driven from his kingdom. We could scarcely restrain ourselves from touching him, as, with one voice, we all exclaimed, "*La illaha illallah!*" He seemed quite delighted with our astonishment, and assured the ambassador that his approbation was the greatest eulogium which could be passed upon his performance.

To this heart-rending amusement succeeded more buffoonery than ever was performed or conceived by our most renowned *luties*, or mountebanks. The famous jester of Shah Abbas was a mere child to the one whom we saw here. The convulsive laughter of the ambassador, and the involuntary wagging of all our beards, produced by his inimitable acting, must have been a source of considerable congratulation to him. He had a mouth which opened and shut to any dimensions; limbs which seemed to belong to his neighbour as much as to himself; and a body entirely flexible. The ambassador immediately conceived a plan of enticing this man to Persia; he felt sure that the best present which he could offer to the shah on his return would be a *luti* of this description. His own influence would thus be effectually secured; and with so powerful an instrument in his hand he felt that he might baffle every machination which the grand vizier, his open and avowed enemy, might plot for his destruction. But when he was informed by the mehmandar of the enormous sums actors of his reputation are sure to realize in England, his plan fell to the ground.

We stared with astonishment when we heard that this buffoon was paid more than the shah's chief executioner; that the man who had acted the old king never failed to receive a greater sum annually than our grand vizier; and that the revenue of the first woman singer at the opera exceeded that of many of the king's sons.

"*Derough, derough!* a lie, a lie!" was immediately heard from each of us; but when we saw into what a rage this word inevitably threw the Mehmandar, and, indeed, every Englishman to whom it was addressed, we put the finger of suspense on our lips, and only renewed the expressions of our mutual conviction when we were alone; asserting that such unheard-of expenditure, for objects in themselves so frivolous, could only be the act of a nation of fools, and not of the wise and calculating people among whom we were living.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Hajji and his chief begin to talk English.—The Ambassador makes a mistake, and gets into a dilemma.

I BEGAN now to make myself tolerably well understood in the English language. 'Tis true that I was very often incomprehensible; and many words which I had picked up from my friends on board ship I soon found were none of the most refined, and did not pass current at court. The ambassador, too, ventured in great measure to free himself from the tutorage of the mehmandar, and to speak for himself. He had more opportunities than I of exercising his knowledge, and occasionally got into difficulties by too great confidence in his own powers.

An instance of this occurred which is worth recording. He, as usual, had been to an evening assembly, when on the following morning he called for me in a great hurry.

"For the sake of Ali," said he, "bring me immediately that vocabulary of English words which the *foozool*, that over officious person, on board the last ship taught us. I am in the greatest fear that I have made some terrible mistake, and that the designing wretch has purposely misled us. Should he have made me draw a dog's skin* over my face, *wallah, billah, tallah!* by Allah, I 'll drag his liver through every hole in his body."

I brought it to him without delay, and then in great anxiety he ran over the words, written, for the sake of better pronunciation, in our own character.

"I am right," said he, half exulting, half mortified; "and

* This is one of the modes of expressing an act of indecency.

if I am right, then that bankrupt lieutenant has laughed at my beard. Please Allah, I 'll burn his father if ever I catch him. He has disgraced me before the world."

"How was it?" said I: "perhaps it is not so bad as you imagine."

"I was in conversation with a lady last night," said he; "a lady of high consideration; a wife of one of the *omrahs*, and one whose good opinion I am anxious to secure for many reasons. She was very inquisitive about our customs, and asked many particular questions concerning the general appearance and domestic habits of our women. 'And now tell me,' said she, 'what sort of a woman may your wife be?'

"'*Very good wife, ma'am*,' said I, in English.

"'But what sort of a person has she? is she tall or short?'

"'*Very good person, ma'am; little short, but waist like cypress tree*,' said I.

"'What sort of eyes has she?'

"'*Very good eyes*,' said I; '*as big as that*,' touching the tip of my thumb with the tip of my fore-finger.

"'What sort of mouth? what sort of teeth?'

"'*Very good mouth, very good teeth, ma'am. Teeth like* murwari, *pearl*.'

"I then endeavoured to explain to her as well as I could every other particular which she seemed anxious to know; but in giving an account of the dress of our women, and its different articles, I made use of some words which were either ridiculous, or indecorous, for when they had struck her ear, I immediately perceived that I had eaten something very filthy. She did not appear angry, but surprised, abashed, and amused; whilst I looked like an ass, a twice-dotted ass.* I streamed at every pore. I wished myself at the bottom of the sea. I felt that I was less than a dog; less even than a Frangi dog; and my misery, instead of subsiding, only increased, when I perceived my *khanum* unburdening her as-

* *Khur be teshdíd,* an ass with an accent. *Tashdíd* denotes the accent which doubles a letter.

tonishment to her sister, in a manner which seemed to produce much extravagant merriment, and which left me looking more like a fool than ever. It was evident that in a quarter of an hour every woman in the room must have been made acquainted with my mistake; and no doubt by this time there is neither man, woman, nor child in the city who is not holding me up to ridicule!"

"But is there anything so infamous," said I, "in saying that in English which in Persian is a common expression?"

"Ah!" said the ambassador, you do not know the English so well as I. They are greater laughers at bears than we ourselves; and although we are total strangers to their manners, yet if they discover the least deviation from them, they remark it with the most pitiless precision. It was but the other day that I was indulging myself in a stretch and a yawn after a long dinner, when I perceived that the eyes of all the company were upon me with looks of amazement. Had I eaten of the unclean beast, they could not have stared more."

At this moment the mehmandar came in, and we immediately referred to him for the real value of the words which the ambassador had used.

He looked vastly amused when the whole circumstance was laid before him; and said, "The words are, without doubt, some of the coarsest of which our language can boast, and you must have picked them up on ship-board, or from some low-bred persons in the streets."

The ambassador then explained that the whole blame lay with his unsainted teacher, the lieutenant. Still he was anxious to clear himself from the imputation of ill manners, and asked whether there were any dictionaries in the English language to which he could refer, "for," said he, "if the words are there, I am safe." The mehmandar talked much of a certain thing called Fashion, which made some words proper, and others the contrary. He then said, "I will look at the dictionary which is esteemed the standard in our language," and immediately fetched a volume from

among his books, written by one Johnson, who it seems is the *Kamûs** of England. On turning to the proper page, to the inconceivable delight of the ambassador, the obnoxious words were found. This greatly quieted his apprehensions, and he longed, in self-justification, to send an explanatory note to his friend, the khanum; when the mehmandar assured him that the lady had good sense enough to perceive that his mistake was quite involuntary. "It will only put her to the necessity," said he, "of answering your note; whereas, she very likely would wish to be supposed ignorant of the whole transaction."

"Strange things do I hear," said the ambassador; "we in Persia, whom you know are very particular in covering our speech with the veil of decency, even we are not so refined as this."

"Ah!" said the mehmandar, "no refinement can approach that which is now expected from the well-bred in England. Ingenuity is at work daily in inventing new words for those which not very long ago used to pass as perfectly admissible."

"And, in the name of the Prophet," said the ambassador, "let me ask, since you are so extremely particular, which is the most approved manner amongst you for cloaking the word 'wife?'"

"We have no cloak for that word," said the mehmandar; there can be no indecency in using the word 'wife.'"

"There," remarked our chief, "the feelings of the two countries are completely at variance. We esteem that designation as very improper. No one ventures to ask another after his wife. Light of my eyes!" exclaimed he, "don't you see what a thousand improper allusions are implied in that word? No, we enquire after each other's houses. Instead of coarsely asking, without any disguise, as you do here, how does your wife? we say, and then always with a certain degree of mystery, how is it with your house?"

* A celebrated Arabic dictionary, so called, compiled and abridged, as it is said, from another in sixty-five volumes.

"That may be very convenient," said the mehmandar, "when the enquiry embraces an indefinite number of wives; but here, as we have only one at a time, such a sweeping expression is unnecessary."

"Again," said the ambassador, "allow that nothing can be more proper and refined than the word *bismillah*,* which we repeat before we begin any action: it appears to sanctify it, and to propitiate its success. If it were known that you never use it, my countrymen would class you with the Cûrds, whom they call *shâîtan bacheh*, children of the devil, because they never pronounce the *bismillah;* particularly on certain important occasions, when every good Mussulman never fails saying it."

"Exclamations of so serious a nature," said the mehmandar, "lose their value, and become improper when used upon every common occasion. As, for instance, what can be so absurd as that cry so common in the streets of Tehran, 'Cucumbers! cucumbers! in the name of the blessed Imam, cucumbers!'"

"And what can be more preposterous," returned the ambassador, with much animation, than your passing one universal curse over every thing that comes in your mind. On board your ships every thing is either 'dam good,' or 'dam bad!' It was either 'dam fine ship,' or 'dam bad ship!' You call one lady 'dam pretty!' to another you say, 'dam ugly fellow!'"

To this the mehmandar could say nothing.

This conversation being ended, the ambassador determined forthwith to procure a master who should instruct him in the English language, "lest," said he, "by making more mistakes, we leave a bad name behind." I also, in conformity to the commands of the shah, assiduously renewed the study of it, in order that I might be able to make a translation of all the books in that language.

* In the name of God.

There was another Frank dialect to which our thoughts were turned, for we had been frequently asked by our friend, the khan, who took us for fire-worshippers, whether it was taught in our schools: he called it Latin.

"Latin!" said the ambassador, "what have we to do with Latin? we never heard of such a language."

"It is taught in all our schools and colleges," said the khan. "Nobody can get on in the world without Latin."

"Our monarchy has existed ever since the days of Jemsheed and Noushirvan without Latin," said the Mirza; "our Fath Ali Shah is a great king without Latin, and we hope to burn the fathers of the Russians without Latin; after that, of what use can it be to us?"

"If you are ignorant of Latin," said the khan, in amazement, "perhaps you can talk French, or Italian? they are universal tongues."

"No," said the ambassador, "neither French nor Italian. I suppose," added he, smiling, "your Lordship talks both Turkish and Arabic?"

"No," said the khan, "quotations in either of those languages are not expected in Parliament; therefore nobody learns them. Whenever you get a House of Commons in Persia, you must learn Latin."

"Yes," said the Mirza, "*bashed*, so be it; we will wait till then." For ever after, we never called our friend the English khan, by any other name than *Latini goo*, or the Latin-monger.

CHAPTER XXXII.

English women visit the Ambassador.—He receives letters from Persia.—He gets into an unexpected scrape.

We had now been several months in England, and little by little began to adopt many of the customs of the infidels. When two of us walked out together, instead of holding each other's hands as in our own country, we proceeded arm in arm: moreover we made no scruple occasionally to be seen in a similar predicament with a woman. The ambassador's carpet spreader, barber, and grooms, were frequently met in the streets escorting the maids belonging to our establishment. We ceased eating with our fingers; we drank beer like Christians, and it was irksome to sit even for half an hour on the ground with our legs bent under us. Mohamed Beg was the only one who adhered to our own customs, and who was ever exhorting us to follow his example.

Mirza Firouz himself had made such progress in the good-will and affection of the natives, that the gate of his house was continually thronged by them. The women in particular came in crowds; sometimes in company of their husbands and brothers, at others in separate bodies; sometimes by twos and threes, and occasionally entirely alone. They came without fear or shame; many who, without even knowing the ambassador, thought it quite sufficient to ask for the Circassian, and walked up our stairs as they would to a show-house. They certainly took liberties with us which they would not dare to do with their own countrymen, taking us no doubt for animals from the mountains,

and looking at us as they would at wild beasts. The ambassador, however, who was as sharp-sighted as a lynx, did not allow such advantages to remain fallow. He became friends with most of the celebrated beauties. He had brought a large stock of shawls, and other precious commodities, purposely for presents, which sensibly diminished in proportion as his friendships increased. He criticised the brilliancy of eyes, the beauties of complexion, the smallness of feet, the circumference of waists, and fragrance of the breath of his acquaintance, with as much quickness as the most experienced of the English *kashengs*, or exquisites. He professed to be really in love with the first object who had attracted his admiration, but in fact his heart generally remained in possession of the last pair of bright eyes which had shed their lustre upon him. In love with himself, and in love with those around him, he passed a life which one of the faithful in paradise might have envied. In short, his spirits were always wound up, and his brain overflowed with sanity.

But as our sheikh wisely saith, "What rose-bush can always be green, or what rotundity is there which will not occasionally be blighted with leanness?" In the midst of all this prosperity, a despatch arrived one morning from the foot of the throne of our king of kings, dated from the imperial stirrup, which gave the ambassador serious matter for cogitation. As fast as he unrolled the numerous letters addressed to him, so did he give us a notion of their contents by his exclamations.

"So that bankrupt pacha of Arz Roum has been lodging a complaint against me," said he aloud, "for having cut off my shatir's ears! May his liver become water! *Inshallah!* I will make him look less than a dog when I return. And that old fox, Mirza Sheffi, has not lost this opportunity of making the shah's face turn upon me; back luck attend his ancestry! Let me but once get the free use of my tongue before the shah, we will see who of us will stand the tall-

est. With all his cunning, I will outtalk him and all his clan! Ah!" said he, turning over his letters, "at length I have found one from my house." He hastened to open a *malfufeh*, a small note enclosed in a larger letter, which evidently was from the khanum, his wife. As he read, he became much agitated; his nostrils dilated, and his beard spread itself out. Although he would willingly have kept his feelings secret, yet they were too strong for him, and he broke out thus:—"Would that the Circassian, her father and mother, and all her tribe, were at the bottom of the sea, before I had seen her! Wonderful ashes have fallen on my head! So I'm not counted one amongst mankind in my own family, for having taken her into my household! I am to be called a *namerd!* a 'no man,' and I know not what else. After all, when she returns to Tehran, she will be an accomplished person, and the khanum will possess a slave such as no other wife in Persia possesses. Ah!" said he, "my existence is turned into bitterness with this harem gossip! What is to be done? Ay, Mahboob!" speaking to his confidential black slave, "we'll send her back forthwith, and my soul will be free!" Then taking the collar of his coat in his hand, he shook it well.

He continued to talk long upon the subjects contained in his letters: at one time reviling the prime minister, and praising the shah; at another holding himself ill used by the shah, and praising himself; then lanching forth against his own wife and her relations; then bewailing his fate at being thrown thus far from his home, among infidels; and again in unbounded terms praising the excellence of those infidels, their honesty, their good faith, and uttering a fervid wish that he might pass his life amongst them. All this, we knew, was produced by the excitement of the moment; for when he came to his own sober reason, he was quick-sighted enough to look upon the decrees of fate as inevitable, and to bend to a necessity which no human agency can avert.

As the business of the day proceeded, we had almost for-

gotten our letters; and subjects, which in our country would have produced conversation for a month, here were almost immediately wiped from our memories by the active and busy life common to an existence among Franks. The ambassador had learned to be extremely interested in certain printed papers which were issued every morning to the public, because scarcely a day passed without his finding the most minute transactions of his own life therein recorded. "Now let us see," said he, "what these cowardly publishers of lies will say of me to-day? I shall have the contents of my letters brought before me; and no doubt they will tell me that the shah is preparing the *felek*, the bastinado, for me at my return." Towards the close of the day, however, there did occur a circumstance which was in fact noticed by the lie-tellers, although nothing came from it save much personal fear to the ambassador, and some amusement to the lookers-on.

About our time of going to rest, we heard a strange commotion in the ambassador's *dewan khaneh*, or hall of audience. Knocks, stamps, loud voices became incessant, and they increased to an alarming pitch, quite sufficient to be heard in the neighbouring houses. Striving to gain admittance, I just caught a glimpse of the shah's representative, without either cap or coat, apparently in a very confused state. He shut the door upon me with violence. The mehmandar, who happened to be in the house, also hastened to know what was the matter; but finding that no entrance into the scene of action was allowed, we retreated. The noise still continued, and our apprehensions increased. At length Mahboob, the ambassador's slave, came down in great trepidation to the mehmandar, entreating him for the love of Allah to go to his assistance. I accompanied the mehmandar into the *dewan khaneh*, and there the first thing we saw was a well-dressed lady stretched upon the sofa, and a younger one standing by her side weeping. The mehmandar enquired the reason of this extraordinary scene? The lady stared at

him for some time, but would give no answer; the other only sobbed. At length the principal person, who pretended to take the mehmandar for the ambassador, roared out, "Do you take me for a fool, not to see through your trick? You have gone and shaved your beard off, and now want to frighten me by assuming a new character. But I will not go. Nothing shall force me from this spot." Upon which the mehmandar, who was acquainted with the manners of his country, told her that if she did not immediately take her departure, he would call the night-watch and eject her by force. Seeing she could do nothing more, she flung herself out of the house, followed by her handmaid; and so ended a scene worthy of the Thousand and One Nights.

Our chief had made a rapid retreat to his bed-room, and we saw nothing of him till the next morning, when, with the greatest good humour, and not without some confusion, he gave us the following account of this strange adventure:—

"After I had read my letters, I mounted my horse and rode into the Park. I was in deep thought upon their contents, and was looking neither right nor left, when I was stopped by a servant, who, pointing to two women on foot, said that a lady would be glad to speak to me. I made my bow to the eldest of the two, who, without shame or hesitation paid me many fine compliments, and told me that she would be very happy to make me an evening visit. 'There is no harm in that,' said I. '*Bismillah!* in the name of Allah, come.' She assented, and I took my leave. I thought but little of this adventure at the time; but I remarked that she was not like an Englishwoman, having the dark features of an Asiatic; and that she was neither young nor handsome. Owing to the ancient custom which we adopt in Persia of leaving our door open to all comers, I did not hesitate in admitting her. She came, accompanied by a young person, who might be her maid, or her companion, for aught I knew; at all events she was her inferior in rank, though not in beauty, for she was surprisingly handsome. I did not exactly

know how to behave to such visiters. The woman said much that I did not understand; but I discovered that she was not an Englishwoman, but a Portuguese. The interview was becoming very dull. I did as I would have done in my own country under such circumstances: I ordered fruit and wine to be placed before us; but tired of my madam, I addressed myself to the young beauty. My attentions, I soon perceived, were misplaced. The young one betrayed fear, the older jealousy—a storm impended—the Portuguese looked black and portentous. I had frequently witnessed the effects of jealousy in our harems, but had never seen it carried to the pitch I saw it now. The woman stormed and raved. Up went one arm, down went the other. She followed me round the room; she beat me; she knocked my cap off my head; she tore my *caba* to bits. 'There is but one Allah!' I exclaimed, in the extremity of my fear. I was totally at a loss to know what she wanted, or what could pacify her. I offered her money; she took it from me, and threw it at the great mirrors which hung about the room. The young girl in the meanwhile was sobbing aloud. At length, tired of this horrid state, I escaped from her, and locked myself up in my bed-room. You know the rest. For the love of Allah, now tell me who this strange woman could possibly be? It appeared to me that she was a *khanum*. Her well-dressed servant, her own dress, her attendant, all bespoke her a person above the common ranks; but such jealousy as hers, such blows as she inflicted, by my beard, I think could only belong to the *shaitan* in person."

The mehmandar was as much puzzled as ourselves how to account for what had happened. He warned the ambassador against receiving into his house persons who were not properly introduced to him; remarking, that London was not like Ispahan, where every individual was more or less known, but that it was an immense receptacle for all sorts of characters, multitudes of whom lived by dishonest means; and such

very probably was the lady in question. In short, he hinted that she was nothing more nor less than a foreign *jafjaf*.*

"But," said the ambassador, "those bankrupt lie-tellers will immediately publish to the world that I was beating my Circassian slave; and in addition to the other lies told of me, I shall be looked upon as a monster of cruelty. What is to be done? By the blessed Ali, I will send her to my house at Tehran, and then my soul will be free!"

Upon this determination we parted.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Of English lies.—Hajji Baba makes a new acquaintance.—He describes the Hogg family.

This event was soon forgotten, and the ambassador, following his own pleasures, lived almost exclusively with the infidels, and abandoned his suite, I amongst the number, entirely to our own pursuits. Whatever may be said of the propensity of Persians to lying, we found out that a system of deceit was carried on in England which exceeded anything that we could boast of in Persia. Scarcely a day passed but the ambassador was asked to lend his name to the extension of a great lie. One man pressed upon him the acceptance of a coach-whip, and immediately he inscribed upon his shop, in large letters, "Coachmaker to the shah of Persia." On another occasion Mohamed Beg and I were walking quietly along the streets, inspecting the shops, when a person in an apron stepped up to us with great humility, and invited us into his house. He was a maker of leather breeches; he

* A courtezan.

insisted upon measuring each of us for a pair. In vain we told him it was not the custom of our country to wear leather breeches; such a garment was unknown in Iran. Nothing would satisfy him; he persuaded us to accede to his wishes, and measured we were. We afterwards heard that his object in doing this was to write up, "Leather breeches-maker to the prophet Mahomed." This was evidently done to laugh at our beards, nor do we think that any one in his senses could have invented such blasphemy, until we were assured that there was a well-known shop, situated in the most frequented part of London, where the existence of a God was openly denied; where the Christian religion was called a cheat; and where all sorts of blasphemy might be bought at so much the *miscal.**

One of the principal persecutions which the ambassador underwent was from the theatres and show-houses. In order to attract a crowd, they constantly invited him to attend their performances, announced his appearance in large printed characters all over the city, and at the same time published the falsehood, that he had named and ordered the play to be acted. How could he, when he had scarcely got through the first leaves of an English spelling book? However, when he was sorely pressed, he generally sent me to the theatre to personate him, and appointed one of our English servants to pass for the mehmandar. It was at one of these places, at a theatre called Horse Opera, where I was taking upon myself the airs of my master, pulling up my whiskers, and looking upon every one present from the heights of my condescension, that I got acquainted with a large English family, consisting of an amazing fat father, and of a very lean mother, with their son and three daughters.

They were seated in a box next to mine, and my elbow occasionally touched one of the younger daughters. This brought on looks, smirks, and an indication of desire to get

* Twenty-four grains make one miscal.

acquainted. At length the mother, leaning over to her daughter, said, "Present his excellency with an orange." Upon which, blushing through an amazing pair of red cheeks, she hesitatingly held out her hand with the fruit. A compliment so entirely Persian, and so indicative of good-will and friendship, was received on my part with an immediate avowal of gratitude, and I used expressions similar to those which I would have used in Persia on such an occasion. Upon this the papa got up, with much formality. He was a complete *bajbaj;* * one who evidently had settled that Paradise was situated in the middle of his own body; and that lambs stuffed with pistachio nuts were the only riches worth being prized in this world. He thanked me for my civility; and hoped for the future that the English and Persian nations would be united in the strictest bonds of friendship.

Putting on an ambassadorial air, I said that it was evident he was a man of sense, a man of learning, one who knew the world, and a *dowlet kha*, a lover of his country; and that I should not fail letting the shah know what a faithful servant I had found in him. †

He seemed to be rather confounded at this speech; but he soon recovered himself, and asked me a few questions, such as whether we had anything like this in Persia (pointing to the theatre); whether we had horses like these; whether I talked French; and whether I was married and had children.

Upon my answer that I was not married, I observed that the young ladies put on new looks, and adjusted each a bit of their dress.

The mamma's attentions to me were unceasing; and before the entertainment was over I was acquainted with the whole history of the family, as well as with all the excellencies and expectations of her daughters. By this I perceived that she

* A man whose flesh shakes with fat.

† The shah of Persia calls every man his *noker,* or servant.

was an accomplished old *taftaf*. * The eldest, she assured me, was a very good girl; she was trying to convert Jews; was very fond of the poor, for whom she made stockings and petticoats, and taught their children herself. The second, who was the beauty of the family, was also the most accomplished; she danced and sung well, could draw flowers, and talk Italian. The youngest, she added, promised much, but was too young to be noticed yet; she was not out; she had not broken her shell, as the Turks say. She hinted that they would be very rich, because they had plenty of wealthy old aunts; and now for once I discovered a good reason why the English took such great care of their old women. Then she talked of her husband, who was every thing that a good husband ought to be, very rich and very generous; he was obliged, 't is true, to provide for his sons, but still he had enough to be liberal to his daughters also.

"*Mashallah!* praises to Allah!" said I; "he is also very fat;" and I added, "what may his fortunate name be?"

"Hogg, at your excellency's service," said she. "It is an old Scotch family, and we flatter ourselves that we come from some of the oldest of the stock."

"*Penah be khoda!* refuge in Allah," exclaimed I to myself; "a family of the unclean beast! and old hogs into the bargain! My luck is on the rise to have fallen into such a set. And pray what may yours and the young ladies' names be?" said I.

"We're all Hoggs, too," said the mother, "as you know: this girl," presenting me to her eldest daughter, "her name is Mary; the second is Bessy; the third, Jessy."

Upon this the young maidens thought it right to talk to me; and little by little we all became one.

I was overpowered with questions. The eldest enquired whether or no we were converting our Jews; the second was anxious to know if I went to Almack's; and the third en-

* A gossip.

quired, with great humility, what was my opinion concerning *Iskender*, or Alexander; was he a great conqueror or not? To all this the mother listened with great complacency; and I was becoming interested in the conversation of the beauty, whose moonlike face and flowing ringlets had attracted my observation, when the curtain fell, and the company began to disperse. Upon this the papa Hogg presented me with a card, as is usual among the Franks, and requesting permission to wait upon me, we separated.

My personification of the ambassador was of short duration; for whether my appearance did not entirely come up to their ideas of so great a personage, or whether, like many of their countrymen, they liked asking questions, my new friends managed to learn from my English attendant who I really was, what was my name, my title, and my situation.

Whether they thought ill or the contrary of me for my conduct, I little cared. It was evident that they were persons of no great consideration; and I had lived long enough amongst the English to know that the object which principally animated their exertions, and concentrated their wishes, was the being allowed to associate with the great. "Allah! Allah! what a difference with the Persians!" exclaimed I: "a man in the middle ranks of life fears the great khan as he does his ruin; he hides his riches, and puts on his meanest coat when he goes before him."

However, I might have saved myself the trouble of a thought as to my conduct at the theatre; for the next morning arrived my Hoggs at our door, leaving a whole handful of cards, and an invitation to me, the Mirza Hajjî Baba, to dine with the *Saheb* and *Bibi* Hogg, as they say in India, on some day in the ensuing moon. "I suppose," said I, "they must have some faith in astrologers, since they have fixed, no doubt, the first day on which there is a favourable conjunction of the planets for our feast."

I kept these my new acquaintance secret from the ambassador; for although I might have frequented them or any one

else without his knowledge, so little did he heed where I went, still I felt that in thus choosing new friends for myself I might excite his over-jealous mind, and perhaps draw upon me his censure. At the same time I did not wish that the Franks should be acquainted with the sort of subjection in which I stood before him. Little do English people know how much every inferior amongst despotic nations is in the power of his chief. They, the English, appear totally independent of each other; and my friend Hogg puts his hat on one side, and brushes by a king's son without any sort of fear; whilst I, in my own country, would scarcely do as much towards the prince's scullion. In taking these precautions, I found that a scheme had crept into my brain, engendered by subjects daily discussed by the young infidels of my acquaintance. I recollected all that the mother Hogg had related to me concerning the wealth with which her daughters were to be endowed, and there appeared to me no good reasons why I should not try to obtain a share in such a prize. 'Tis true, my first essay in fortune-hunting had proved abundantly unsuccessful, and the cries of Sugarlips and her demons of women expelling me from the house still rung in my ears; but what a total difference was there between her and the moon-faced Bessy! I had not sold pipe-sticks in the English bazar. I might be the son of a Persian *beglergbeg* for aught the Hoggs knew; and as long as I kept them from the ambassador, there was no knowing to what lengths I might not proceed. I might be married to a beautiful infidel, and in possession of thousands, before he or any one of my countrymen could have time to pick the dust out of their eyes, or unlock the surprise of their understandings. "Let an Ispahani alone," said I to myself in secret satisfaction, "for advancing his own little fortunes. Am I not handsome enough for any one? My beard is still as black as on the first day it was called a beard; and if now and then a grey hair should appear, have we not plenty of *khenna* and *reng* * in the house

* Drugs for dyeing the hair.

to make it all perfect again? I begin now to understand English, and, if I can only acquire half the *chum wa hum* * in speaking it which I possess in my own tongue, by the soul of Ali, I will get on the best side of the wisest beard that was ever possessed by a Frank, be he the father of Aflatoon † himself. Besides, the maiden is a jewel in herself; and should I be happy enough to transport her to Tehran, who knows, that in delivering her up to the shah, to what dignities I might not aspire!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

He visits the Hogg family.—Talks English.—Makes mistakes and excites surprise.

I THOUGHT it right to enquire much concerning the etiquettes of English dinners, lest I should make some fearful mistake in the one to which I was invited; and as I found that it was not necessary to withhold visiting until that event had taken place, I ventured to call at the house of my new friends. They lived in one of the great avenues leading from the city. I knocked freely until somebody came, for that I had observed was the best mode of not being oppressed with the indignity of waiting; and when the servant, with looks of haste, anger, and amazement, opened the door, I found that the hour for so doing was fortunate; for when I asked for the master of the house, the slave said that he was not at home, but that his mistress and the young khanums were. To get at once into an European harem in this easy manner was more than I could have expected; and as I walked up a tedious flight of

* Flattery and paying compliments.

† Plato.

stairs, I had full time to pull up my moustache, and to smooth down the stray hairs of my beard into their appointed places. I gave a new pinch to my cap, put it well on one side, gave a fresh twist to my *zoulfs*, or curls, and pressed my shawl well over my hips. All this took place at the back of a huge thick-legged infidel, who every now and then looked behind him to see if I was following; and when we had ascended to a landing-place he stopped, and boldly asked my name. I did not like this, for I immediately recollected how the same leading question was asked me by the fierce attendants upon Sugar-lips, and how soon after I was kicked down stairs by them for my pains. I therefore said, hurried as I was, in my own language, "*Be shûmah cheh;*" * when, to my surprise, he opened the door, and roared out "Be shûmah cheh" before my face, whilst I followed him, utterly confounded at the occurrence.

However, I was soon put at my ease, by the agreeable and flattering reception which I received from the mother Hogg and her daughters. She began by making apologies for the ignorance of her servant, who did not know my rank and title, and who had made such a mistake about my name, "for, said she, "you are a mirza, is it not so?"

"*Yes, ma'am,*" said I; "*what can I do?*"

"But 'mirza' in your country is 'prince,'" said she; "so we read in Morier's Travels: are we right?"

"*He sometime eat dirt, ma'am, but now he right,*" said I, as well as I could speak in their language.

The fair Bessy then asked me whether my father was not a mirza also; and whether I did not come from a long line of princes?

I assured her that our country may in fact be called a country of princes, for we became mirzas at pleasure. The difference between a king's son and myself was, that he carried his title behind him, whilst mine preceded me: and I

* Meaning, "What is that to you?"

gave her to understand that this distinction was in fact so trifling, that there was no great difference between our respective pretensions.

This being established, it was quite amusing to observe the rate at which they started with the word "Prince," as if it had never crossed their lips before. Whatever they addressed to me was prefaced with that monosyllable, until at length, in my own defence, I was obliged myself to ask a few questions.

"*Where is your papa?*" said I to the beautiful Bessy. The mamma answered, "He is gone into the city; he attends to his business every day, and returns in the evening."

"*Ah! then,*" said I, "*he is merchant—same in my country;—merchant sit in bazar all day, at night shut up shop, and come home.—What he sell, ma'am?*"

"Mr. Hogg," said the lady, with some dignity, "does not keep a shop; he is an East India merchant."

"*Then perhaps he sell ham,*" said I, thinking that his name might be a designation of his trade, as it frequently is in Persia.*

"Sells hams!" exclaimed the lady, whilst her daughters tittered. "Why should he sell hams, prince?"

"*Because he one Hogg, ma'am. In our country, merchant sometime called after the thing he sells.*"

"La, prince!" exclaimed the lady, "what an odd custom. Hogg is an old family name, and has nothing to do with the animal. There are Hoggs both in England and Scotland."

"You might as well say, prince," remarked the young Jessy, "that Sir Francis Bacon, the famous Lord Verulam, was a pork butcher;" "and that all our Smiths, Taylors, Coopers, Bakers, Cooks, and a thousand others, were representatives of their professions," added Bessy.

* As for instance, *Ali, bakal*—Ali, the chandler. *Mohamed Beg, hayat*—Mohamed Beg, the tailor.

"Well, I never heard anything like it," summed up the mamma. "Mr. Hogg a ham-seller, indeed! La, prince! what could you be thinking of?"

I soon discovered that I had unheedingly gone blindfolded into a forbidden sanctuary, and I made the best of my way back. I begged pardon in the best manner I was able; said that I was walking without a guide among English customs; and there was no shame in our country attached to being a merchant, and that I thought there could be none in England, where merchants, so I had heard, were possessors, and therefore, kings of countries, which once had been governed by some of the greatest potentates who had ever existed in the East. I then healed all the wounds I had inflicted, by adding, "*Mr. Hogg, perhaps, he one India king?*"

"No, prince," said the lady, apparently quite pacified, "no, not yet; we call them directors, not kings; but he expects very soon to be in the direction: indeed, I believe he is canvassing now." I was going to ask what canvassing meant, when the dervish-like Mary asked me, in a very subdued voice, whether I had been acquainted with any of the missionaries who had lately gone to Persia?

"*Yes, ma'am,*" said I, "*I know one padré, who almost killed by Moilahs at Isfahan. He tell them our prophet one bad fellow—one cheat; they tell him, papa* (the pope) *one ass, and begin stone him; he run away, 'pon my honour.*"

"But your Mollahs acted very wrong," said she, colouring: "why were they not converted?"

"*That not easy, ma'am,*" said I; "*shah cut off head; that one bad thing; then Christian one nasty fellow in Persia—eat pork, drink wine—more bad as Jew; not same as English. English all clean and rich. King of England one strong king. Armenians and Christians of Persia, poor, very poor—very dirty—very bad. No,*

ma'am, a poor Mussulman in Persia is better than one most rich Christian."

"But surely," said this mollah of a maid, "you think of the salvation of your souls in Persia; don't you, prince?"

"Yes," said I, "to be sure," hazarding an English *latifeh*, or joke; "we think much of our true souls, but more of the soles of our feet." I assured her that I was in fact a very indifferent Mussulman, and that I should be ordered to undergo many a penance by our priests on my return to Persia; but if they had any idea that I was likely to turn Christian, they would persecute me to the very verge of desperation, and perhaps take away my life." I then continued thus:—"*King George come to Persia; send one great army, take Persia; make new king there; then Persians perhaps 'come Christians. One padré by himself come, do no good. In Persia all business done with sword.*"

"But we have sent plenty of Bibles to Persia," said Mary; "they must do good."

"*Bible very good, ma'am; Persians no say bad. Koran very good too: Mussulman say your prophet very good prophet; why you no say our prophet good too?*"

"Ah," said she, "we'll make you a Christian before you leave us. You have never been to our church yet, have you?"

I answered that I had never been there, and that indeed I should never have ventured to enter one of their places of worship for fear of the rough treatment which I might be likely to receive; for if a Christian ever ventures into one of our mosques, it is a hundred to one that he leaves it with a whole skin, and I did not know but that I might be treated in the same manner in England.

Mary assured me that their churches were open to every faith, and that their mollahs only wanted opportunities to reclaim the unbeliever from his errors. She then pressingly invited me to go with her family to church on the following day, which I willingly agreed to do.

As I rose to go, the mother spoke very kindly to me; hoped that I would come frequently to see them; whilst Bessy, whose eye had frequently met mine, smiled as she said to me in very good Persian, "*Khoda hafiz shuma.*"*

I expressed my surprise at this, when the mother assured me that since we had met at the show-house, her daughters had thought of nothing but me. That Mary's only wish was to make me a Christian; that Bessy had already learnt much of the Persian grammar; and that Jessy had done nothing but pore over the history of Persia.

This intelligence gave me the greatest satisfaction, and encouraged the hopes I had formed of furthering my fortunes by this acquaintance; and as I left the house I did nothing but meditate on what I had just seen and heard. "*Allah ho akbar!*"† exclaimed I to myself, "are these women?" they might pass for viziers and *mastofees.*‡ Whoever before heard women talking after this manner? What do our women care about the religious feelings of other nations? Do they ever think of learning any language besides their own? And as for the study of history, who is there amongst them who knows the difference between Jemsheed and Shapoor?

CHAPTER XXXV.

He goes to an English church.—Compares it with his own mosque.—He hears a young preacher.

The next morning I went again to the house of my new friends. It was the English *jumah.*§ The bells of the

* May God protect you.

† Great God!

‡ Secretaries.

§ The Mohamedan day of rest.

churches tolled, people of all kinds, both high and low, thronged the streets, and at a particular hour, as if they were proceeding to the gate of the shah's palace, they rushed to their devotions. "How much better," said I to Mary, having made my proper compliments to the family, "how much better would it not be if your churches were always left open like our mosques? Every person then might suit his own convenience as to time; whereas now only a part of your immense population can be admitted into such buildings. A quiet corner, his carpet, and his *kebleh*, is all a Mussulman requires to say his prayers."

"Our public service," answered she, "is regulated by the government."

"There," said I, "we differ; for although our shah be completely despotic, yet he cannot force me to say more *astaferallahs*, or 'God forgive me's,' than I like, or to pronounce the *fatheh* at all, unless it is agreeable to me. He does not superintend the washing of my feet, nor the combing of my beard, nor the cutting of my nails; that is all between me and my conscience."

This conversation took place as we proceeded to the church, previously to which I had made the shake-hand with the father Hogg, and got acquainted with the eldest son. We entered the church in a body, and men and women without distinction were fastened into small square pens. I must own that veils for the women on this occasion were in my mind of urgent necessity, and ought to be enforced by an order from the shah; for who can refrain from looking about him? For my part I could not keep my eyes from wandering towards the pretty face of the moon-like Bessy, do what I would.

I understood much of what was written in a black book which Mary put into my hands, and with such portions I was much struck; they put me in mind of parts of our blessed Koran; but I was not much edified by the conduct of the congregation. The *peish namaz*, or the leader in prayer,

did not himself appear to be in earnest: he neither wagged his head to and fro, as our most saint-like mollahs do; nor did he occasionally keep his body in a state of vibration. As for the people, some looked one way, some another; a few only appeared fervent in prayer, and generally, except being quite quiet, they might as well have been at home. The rich had soft cushions to repose upon, and the poor were provided with more conveniences than at their own houses. Let them go into Mussulman countries, thought I, and there learn true seriousness and devotion. A man will say his prayers in the midst of the most crowded assembly without turning his head either to the right or the left. He sits on his heals, and wants neither cushions nor footstools, as the Franks do. He requires no book to pray from, for his prayers have been lodged within the chambers of his mind ever since he could be taught to recite them; and when he reads the Koran, the only ceremony necessary is that he washes his hands before he presumes to take up the sacred volume. Now, these Franks, thought I, take up their holy book as if it were any other book; washed or unwashed hands is all one to them. Seeing that every body sat or stood in any position they chose, and did not turn their faces in any particular direction, I asked old Mr. Hogg where was the Christian *kebleh?* but he did not seem to understand me. "Cobbler!" said he, "no such person officiates in our churches."

I made him understand that I alluded to the point to which they turn when they say their prayers; for I had always supposed that Christians turned towards Jerusalem in the same manner as we do towards Mecca.

All I could learn from him was that they faced the clergyman when he prayed or preached, and the organ when any chanting was performed.

I saw that the eyes of every one were upon me for talking so much; therefore I wrapt up my curiosity for the present

in the folds of silence, and lent a willing ear to the beautiful sounds which proceeded from the organ, for such strains I had never before heard. The singing of children which accompanied it did not strike me as so impressive as some of the fine voices which are sometimes heard from our *muezzins* chanting our profession of faith, and the invitation to prayer from our *minars*, and certainly not to be compared to the magnificent chant of the *khotbeh*,* before the Asylum of the Universe.

When I thought it time that the ceremony should finish, I was surprised to see a young mollah, whose beard had not yet sprouted, ascend the preaching chair. How could the *reish sefids*, or elders, of whom I saw many in the church, consent to hear the doctrine of one so young? thought I. But my surprise ceased when I saw him draw out a book from his pocket, for he no doubt would preach the doctrine of some celebrated elder, reading it from the manuscript: to suppose that he would venture to speak for himself, appeared to me little less than laughing at the beards of the congregation then assembled.

At length, the whole service being ended, we rose and departed. Had I been a Christian in a Mahomedan mosque, I should have blessed my good fortune that I left it without broken bones; but here, instead of any such apprehension, I only met with approving looks, mixed with expressions of surprise at my extraordinary appearance. Certainly to behold such a beard as mine, surmounted by a tall black cap, single and solitary, amidst a multitude of shaven chins and uncovered heads, must have been a striking object; and I was surprised that I, in fact, excited such little sensation. The lady Hogg did not lose one opportunity, directly or indirectly, of letting the world know that I was a prince, and had managed to introduce me as such to a long line of her acquain-

* A prayer for the king.

tance even before we had quitted the gates of the church; and, when we had again reached her house, I was reminded of my dignity at every instant.

"Well, prince!" said she, "how did you like our church?"

I answered, that the service appeared to me too long, and that nobody seemed sufficiently in earnest.

"But, prince, you surely liked our preacher?"

I observed, that he might be very good to look at; but that we Easterns expected wisdom from a grey-beard and a face of penance, and not from a young *birish*, or no-beard, who might preach the wisdom of Solomon, and the doctrine of the immortal Iman Mousa, till he were black in the face, but nobody would listen to him.

The father Hogg took my side of the argument, and said, "'T was true that he had never tried wisdom out of a beard; but that he always paid most attention when the clergyman preached in a full-bottomed wig."

What that article might be I did not stop to enquire, for I longed much to be making myself agreeable to the fair Bessy; but her sister, the mollah Mariam, as I called her, would not allow me. Whatever I attempted to say, she always managed to bring me round to religious subjects; and before I could cast my eyes in tender glances at the object of my adoration, I found myself seated before a large book of the law, and engaged in listening to the exhortations of my female converter. This did not seem to suit the rest of the family more than it did myself, and I was soon invaded by questions from the mamma, who did not cease asking me, whether I knew this great khanum and that great khanum; whether I was going to this ball, or to that assembly; and who always finished by a sigh, which seemed to say, that she wished herself and daughters were more known, and more invited than they were. It was quite plain, that she was desirous to make me the means of producing visits between herself and

persons of rank. There was one lady, whose name above the others was frequently repeated, who was apparently a sort of *banoo*, or as they say in India, a *begum*, and from whom the protecting shade of an eyebrow would have been of more value than the gold of the Indies. It was upon the threshold of her gate that they wanted to rub their foreheads, and they would have made me their master of ceremonies, if it had been possible. And the object of this was to get a passport to that London heaven, Almack's. When I found that it was the angel, Bessy Hogg, who more particularly wished to undertake this enterprise, I must own that Almack's to me also appeared as the promised land of happiness, and immediately I became thoughtful how I might accomplish her desires. The family had already hinted at their extreme desire to become acquainted with the ambassador; but that was just what I wished to avoid. Still I knew it could only be through him that the wishes of my fair one could be accomplished. What to do was very perplexing; and therefore for the present I sealed my lips with the wafers of prudence, and determined to imbue the hinges of my understanding with the oil of ingenuity.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The Ambassador visits the India House and the East India Directors.—Hajjî Baba meets his new friends.

When I returned home, I found the ambassador taken up in the arrangement of an official visit which he was to make on the following day. It was to the gate of the palace of India, which is situated in a remote part of the city, and con-

tained, from what we heard, a vast number of chambers, in which all the treasures of *Hind*, and *Serendib*, and *Chin** were piled up in endless masses. The whole of the suite were ordered to hold themselves in readiness, and presents suited to the occasion were selected. Among them, as one by which the shah could best show the esteem in which he held the *Coompani*, was a magnificently written and illuminated copy of his majesty's own poetry. It was enclosed in seven fine wrappers, to which were added seven coarser, and was to be presented at a fortunate moment by the ambassador's own hands. The former emperors of India were great patrons of poets and fine writing, and it is possible that, in making this present, the shah concluded that the present possessors of that country might be equally so.

The whole subject of this form of government was still so confused in our understandings, that we longed for the time when with our own eyes we might see and comprehend, and be convinced, that the fables we had heard concerning it were unfounded, and that in fact it did truly and undoubtedly exist.

The ambassador had also to present a portrait of our shah, in which he is represented reposing upon the celebrated pillow of pearls, dressed in all the blaze of his magnificent jewels, his beard sweeping his girdle, his eyes so large as scarcely to leave room for cheeks or eyebrows, and his waist not more than a span in circumference. This we imagined would be esteemed a higher compliment than even the fortunate volume of poetry, particularly as it was the work of that famous artist, Mahomed Naki Shirazi.

The ambassador dressed himself in his superb vest of silver brocade, interwoven with gold flowers. He wore his diamond-headed dagger, and his emerald-belted sword, as well as the pelisse of sable which had so frequently graced the auspicious

* India, Ceylon, and China.

person of our gracious sovereign. Mohamed Beg was decked out as the master of ceremonies, with a shawl round his cap, red cloth stockings to his feet, and the long staff of office in his hand. I was to be the bearer of the book, until we reached the presence of the assembled body, when the ambassador was to take it into his own hands, in order to deliver it to their chief. Each of us had his particular post, and when collected, we flattered ourselves that the effect would be well worthy of the country we represented. We proceeded in carriages, and the distance we travelled through the city we computed might be the same as going round the walls of Tehran; the streets were thronged with a population as dense as that seen in our most frequented bazars; we drove through such a complication of carts, waggons, coaches, and wheeled conveyances of all descriptions, that we thought it a miracle to have got safely through it. To this time we had not acquired any accurate idea of the extent of this amazing city. The avenues to the Indian palace were just as crowded as the other streets; and, without going through any outer court, the ambassador descended from his carriage, at a lofty gate, supported by magnificent pillars of marble, and entered at once into the body of the building. Every corridor was lined with troops beautifully dressed and armed, and music was not wanting to announce our arrival. He was met by several persons who complimented him in the name of the Indian government, and conducted him, followed by his suite, through long and intricate passages, until we reached a large apartment. Here we saw twenty-four chairs, and twenty-fours Franks seated upon them; and these we were told were the *Coompany*. The chief sat upon a higher chair than the rest, and his *vakeel*, or deputy, upon another. To the former the ambassador addressed himself, presenting at the same time the auspicious volume from the king of kings. As we proceeded to divest it of its coverings, the four-and-twenty sitters upon chairs opened their eyes to behold the royal gift,

and their impatience evidently increased in proportion as each cover balked their expectation. At length, when we had come to the last, and when I uncovered the book, the faces of many of the lookers-on dropped with disappointment, for evidently they expected to see something more precious. "'T is only a book!" was heard to pass from mouth to mouth, and then they all resumed their seats. I perceived that the ambassador was in no wise pleased at the little sensation which his offering had produced; for instead of receiving it with both his hands, and carrying it to his head, as we should have done, the chief chair-sitter took it in his right hand, made two or three bows, and said a few words, which the mehmandar interpreted into a long speech. It was then transferred to the *vakeel*, who again passed it to his neighbour, and thus it went in succession to the whole four-and-twenty. I remarked that the greater part of then turned the book upside down; and I said to Mohamed Beg, that if our shah had known into whose hands this precious produce of his brain had fallen, he never would have been at so much trouble to send it so far in search of admirers.

The portrait of the shah was then brought in and exhibited. As soon as it was extended in full length, the ambassador thought it necessary to approach it and make a prostration, as if his majesty in person were present, and this example we immediately followed. But not a chair-sitter moved a muscle; they looked on at the ceremony we had performed in apparent astonishment; for I dare say not one of them could understand to what a degree a Persian carries his respect and veneration for his sovereign.

The ambassador was then invited to visit different parts of the great house, in order that he might more easily comprehend the nature of the business which was there transacted. He was informed that the troops which he saw drawn out to do him honour were composed of men who worked in their warehouses.

"Ah," said the ambassador, "if you can make sepoys of

your miserable Hindoos, there can be no difficulty in turning your porters into soldiers!"*

We then saw the treasury; then were conducted to a large hall surrounded by benches, where, on certain occasions, every man can get up and speak his mind. We were paraded through numerous *defter khanehs* and offices, which showed the immensity of the business transacted by these merchant kings, as Mohamed Beg very aptly called them, and at length were introduced into a beautifully ornamented apartment called the *kitab khaneh*, or the library.

On our arrival here, we were delighted to find, in addition to the interesting furniture of the room, a crowd of handsomely-dressed ladies. As the ambassador entered, they pressed forward to look at us, and the principal ones were introduced to him. To my astonishment, and, I may add, dismay, I espied among them my friends, the Hoggs, the old mother, the three daughters, and the father. How to support the exalted character which I had established among them, and to preserve my humble station near the ambassador, I was convinced would be a work of difficulty. I at first determined not to appear to see them, but soon found that that scheme would be unavailable. The old lady would not let me off so easily; for, whatever the others might do, she certainly would claim her prince for an acquaintance. And I was not mistaken; for she made up to me in great joy, and shook hands with me, to the astonishment of my companions. The ambassador, for my good luck, had been taken to the farther end of the room to see some of the curiosities, and therefore did not witness this joyous meeting. We, also, his attendants, were very soon mixed up with the crowd; and being kindly and officiously taken notice of both by the Hoggs and others of the company, my intimacy with my new friends passed by almost unheeded. The old lady, I perceived, was

* The Persians hold our Indians in contempt as soldiers; a contempt which must have originated in the conquests so easily achieved by their amous Nadir Shah.

very anxious to be paraded up at the head of her daughters, to be introduced to the ambassador, according to the Frangi mode; but I evaded her wish by saying, that it was so entirely against our customs for a man to be the master of ceremonies to women, and to head a string of them, as if he were about to sell slaves in the bazar, that I declined the office, particularly on so public an occasion as this.

Having got rid of this question for the moment, although I was fully aware that no old woman, the mamma Hogg included, would give up her object on so flimsy an excuse, I willingly devoted myself to "the father of Hoggs," *peder ghoraza*, as I called him, and he attempted to explain the various curiosities which were displayed. They were almost entirely Eastern. They were called curiosities in this country, although to us they were familiar objects of common life.

The books were quite beyond the comprehension of my guide. They were under the direction of an old Frank mirza, a very learned man, so my conductor informed me, who was now doing the duties of his office, by showing the collection to the ambassador. I remarked from the titles of some of them, that they were rare and expensive. My friend was anxious to show me all the trophies taken from Tippoo Sultan—his throne—his arms, and parts of his dress; there were also many of the spoils of other Indian chiefs, such as swords, spears, bows and arrows, and shields in abundance. The father Hogg was very anxious to exhibit a handsome sword, which he insisted had belonged to a famous Turk, one "Captain Packer," as he called him. I was puzzled, for I had never before heard or read of this chief; but upon reading the label on the scabbard, as well as the inlaid inscription on the blade, I discovered that it had been wielded by a well-known Turkish admiral, a celebrated *Capoudan Pacha.*

"*Barikallah!* praises be to Allah," thought I to myself: "if you, O Hogg! are the sort of stuff of which they make

kings of Hindustan, what a wonderful government this must be!"

I had not failed every now and then to cast furtive glances at the fair Bessy as she stood in the crowd; but I dared not speak to her, fearful of being remarked by my countrymen. She was escorted by a young whiskered infidel, whose attentions to her did not at all suit the scheme of rapid fortune and enjoyment which I had drawn out for myself; and I began to doubt whether my well-preserved beard, my crisped *zoulfs*, and my narrow waist, however precious they might be in my own eyes—whether they would prevail against the whiskers of the youth, his pigeon-breast, his curled head, and, above all, a certain pair of long spurs to his heels, which I had been assured by some of the English "no-beards" were a shorter cut to a woman's heart than any spell or charm which we Persians might possess. I had heard of silk stockings having been used as talismans in Persia to secure love, but never of spurs. It was a good thing to know, and accordingly I made a minute of it in my mind to be used on the first occasion.

I was about making a speech to the moon-face, and had put a dozen or two of my prettiest English words together for the occasion, when there was a hurry-scurry in the room which announced the departure of the ambassador; and we had collected ourselves together to follow him in due order, when, just as we were taking our leave, I saw the mother Hogg bustling through the crowd; and when she had got sufficiently near me, she screamed out, "Recollect, prince, you dine with us to-morrow."

It was lucky that none amongst us saw from whom these words came; but the ambassador turned round to me and said, "Prince! who does that mean?"

"What do I know, O Mirza?" said I.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The Persians remark upon what they have seen.—Mirza Firouz receives news from Persia.—He rejoices.—Hajjî Baba laments.

When we had reached home, we collected round the ambassador, as we were wont to do, in his *dewan khaneh*, or receiving apartment, until he dismissed us. But before he did this he frequently indulged himself in talking upon such things as we had seen, or upon our own country and families.

On this occasion, addressing himself to me, he exclaimed, "My soul, Hajjî, how did you fare to-day; in what light did you see all these strange things which came before us?"

I answered after our usual mode, "*Aîb ne dared*, there is no harm. *Bai neest*, it was not bad."

"Now," said he, "now we know what the 'Coompani, means. We must immediately make out a representation to the foot of the throne of what we have seen, and state, with care and precision, whatever this day has ascended into our understandings, or has met our eye. Such are the commands of the king of kings."

"By my eyes," said I, "I will write down every thing that I have seen, and make plain all that I have understood; not even a pair of shagreen slippers* which belonged to Shah Abbas shall escape me. However, I will not conceal from you that it occurred to me, and perhaps in my ignorance I am wrong, that the head of one wise man would be worth the collected knowledge of the twenty-four chair sitters, if they were all like the fat merchant with whom I had happened to converse."

* *Cufsh sagri* I have translated shagreen slippers; the word shagreen being probably derived from sagri. Sagri is the skin of the wild ass's back.

"Perhaps you have said right," said the ambassador; "but, for my part, I spoke with one or two men to-day who, in truth, possess wonderful wits of their own; men done to a turn—men with universal knowledge; who can better tell how many hairs exist in the shah's beard than either you or I. By your head, Hajjî, they asked me some questions which required me to put my trust in Allah when I endeavoured to answer them. I am at a loss to account for all I see. Where could they possibly have acquired such knowledge?"

"On the other hand," said I, "I was puzzled by a question or two, which a wild ass on the salt desert would have been ashamed to ask. Having first remarked on the brownness of our complexions, one enquired whether we bred any *caca siahs*, or black brothers,* in our country; another, whether we did not worship the cow." †

"Another positively affirmed," said Mohamed Beg, "that our famous Tahmas Kouli Khan was an Irishman; that his proper name was Thomas O'Calleghan, which we had adopted in our own language; and that subsequently we had called him Nadir Shah."

"That might have been ignorance or impertinence," said the Mirza. "This I know, that those to whom I had the luck to speak were men of knowledge. The old mirza who has the care of the library made me stare with astonishment at some of the books he produced; books which even our shah does not possess, and which only could have belonged to the conquerors of India. The mehmandar assured me that he was a very learned man; and in truth, from what I heard him say, which he did in our own language, he must be a mollah, of whom there can be few the like in the world."

"The mollahs of this country compared with our men of the law!" said Abbas Beg, the mirakhor, contemptuously; "what can they pretend to?"

"Yes," said Mohamed Beg, "for science and learning we

* So negroes are generally called in Persia.

† Evidently confounding the *Persians* with the *Parsees*.

must go to Irân. I have not heard of one astrologer in England, and I doubt whether the best of them could make an almanack."

"What do you know about science and learning, blockheads?" exclaimed the ambassador. "You have only read your own books; but see, these people have read both ours and theirs! By your soul, I swear, that the old mirza whom I saw to-day is the father of all the mollahs and mirzas in Irân. Who ever heard of one of our *ullemahs* being the master of ten languages?"

"That is very true," argued Mohamed Beg; "but allow me to represent that in matters of religion, and for a proper explanation of the *Ahadis*, or the five thousand two hundred and sixty-six sayings of our holy prophet, (upon whom be blessing!) there is no one like the most learned Hajjî Mohamed, the *mushtehed* of Kom."

"O man!" exclaimed the ambassador in triumph, "what has the mushtehed of Kom, or our religion, or the sayings of our holy Prophet, to do with the English? They are infidels, man; they say that our blessed *Peghember** is no such personage; that our Koran is principally taken from the writings of the bankrupt Jews, and of their own scriptures:—they pray for our conversion in their churches."

Upon this Mohamed Beg stroked his beard, blew over both his shoulders, and murmured his profession of faith in a low voice, whilst the ambassador continued.

"Not all the mushteheds who have ever flourished in Persia could make these people change their opinions. On the contrary, they are daily sending their own padres into our countries laden with Bibles, to persuade us to forsake our faith, and to take up their own. After that, talk of your mushteheds! As for our Koran, they have translations of it, so close and perfect, that if you are anxious to know what knowledge they possess, go ask the mirza whom we saw to-day any question concerning

* The prophet Mahomed.

it, and see what an answer he would give you. *Allah, Allah!* he would make your soul jump out of any given hole in your body!"

"After all," exclaimed I, "it is most certain that for wealth, power, learning, and ingenuity, this is a most extraordinary nation."

"Yes," said the ambassador, laughing, "even to our neighbours and allies, the *Coompani*."

"By your beard," said I, "they are more difficult to be understood than anything we have yet seen in it. You must own, O Mirza! that what came under our knowledge to-day in no manner answers to the magnificence of their possessions in India."

"True, you say, Hajjî; by my child's head! by the beard of Fath Ali Shah! you have spoken wisely. What affinity can there be between the dark, smoky, dingy mansion we saw this morning, and the celebrated palaces of Agra and Delhi? And where shall we ever find the brilliancy of the throne of the emperors of Hind, and all the consequence of the great Mogul dynasty, in the twenty-four elderly gentlemen seated on chairs in a back room in Leadenhall Street, for so the mehmandar called their palace?"

"Well spoken, by my head," exclaimed I. "How shall we ever make the worthies at the king's gate at Tehran understand this, is more than I can say. We must speak of what we have seen, and then put our trust in Allah!"

We had scarcely said these words, when a messenger from the gate of the English king was introduced, and delivered to the ambassador a large packet of letters and imperial firmans from the foot of the throne of our king of kings. We continued in the room whilst, with the greatest trepidation and in silent anxiety, he inspected their contents. He first opened the one from his confidential servant, and before he had read two lines of it, he threw it from him, exclaiming, in extravagant joy, "*Al ham dulillah!* God be praised! God be praised! At length in his mercy he has conferred a blessing

upon us. That old dog Mirza Sheffi is dead!" Without more ado he went into a corner, knelt down, and did what he had long omitted to do; he said his prayers.

We all looked at each other in astonishment. I was obliged to shout "*Al ham dulillah!*" with the rest of them, although in truth I ought to have wept; for by the death of our grand vizier I lost my chief protector at court, and the principal security for the continuance of the ambassador's kindness to me.

As soon as he had finished his prayers, he gave way to the most lively joy; he scarcely gave himself time to run over the contents of his letters. Every other idea was absorbed in this great fact; he was freed from the bitterest and most powerful of his enemies; and his own friends and relations would now get into power. At every moment, when he could stop himself in the midst of his rhapsodies, he exclaimed, "Mirza Sheffi is dead!" and for the rest of the day these words were found playing about his lips, as bees are apt to loiter round a favourite flower.

I had not much time at present to reflect how this event was likely to influence my future views, but I soon discovered that the ambassador's manner was altered. He had hitherto preserved a show of respect towards me, because he looked upon me as one protected by the highest authority, though placed about his person as a spy on his actions; but now I discovered a tone of raillery and exultation in what he said to me, which required all my prudence to meet with becoming moderation.

"At last your father is gone," said he to me, before I left the room: "the old unclean dog is dead. It has happened fortunately for you. No luck could last as long as it was attached to the fortunes of such an old piece of carrion. The shah has become possessor of all his property. Every thing he possessed, all that he had stolen, extorted, and amassed in his warehouses, is gone to the shah's gate. His slaves have been distributed among the king's sons and the *omraks;*

and his Georgians have been provided for in the royal household. It is well that you were here, Hajjî, or else you too would have been disposed of."

"I hope your condescension will never be less," said I. "If I have lost a friend, I hope that I have still one left in you."

"Go, go," said he; "make your mind easy. We have overlooked all the past. We are not one who shows a beard of two colours, who one day blows hot and the other cold. We are not lookers-on at the weather."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Hajjî Baba dines with an English citizen.—Of the persons he meets.

I was so much taken up with writing on the following day, that I became apprehensive lest I should not be able to slip away, unperceived by the ambassador, to eat the long projected dinner at my friends, the Hoggs, for the fortunate hour was at length at hand. However, something most opportunely occurred which put me and my despatches completely out of the ambassador's head; and as I stepped from the door to fulfil my engagement, I said, "*Shukur khoda*, thanks be to Allah," and gave my whiskers a fresh twist.

I did not omit to make my person as agreeable as possible. My old Persian shirts, both silk and cotton, had been renewed by some brilliantly white ones made by an English sempstress; for after a hundred thousand difficulties, I had at length extracted from my chief sufficient money to buy myself some new linen, a handsome *caba*, and for the first time, I treated my feet to a pair of silken socks. I passed my time on my way in building a castle relative to my future des-

tinies. Could I but succeed to gain the moon-faced Bessy Hogg for my bride, I would snap my fingers at fate, and live independent, for the rest of my life, of ambassadors, shahs, and governments. As I stepped up to the gate of the house, my foot stumbled, and that circumstance struck me as an omen of ill luck. I waited a long while ere the door was opened to me, which also discomposed me. At length it was opened by a man with much white dust on his head, apparently in a great hurry, and who it seems had not had time to put on his coat. Another, equally in a hurry, eyeing me well from head to foot, accompanied me up stairs, and when we had reached the great room, instead of being received by any one of the family, I found a servant maid bustling about altering the position of chairs, rubbing tables, and beating up cushions. "What news may this be?" thought I. "Perhaps this is not the day; or I am come too soon! We shall see." If I had been in Persia, waiting for the master of the house, I should have seated myself in the lowest place, and taken advantage of the solitude to say my "*God forgive me's*," and to have counted my beads; but here, where there is no lowest place, I did not know exactly how and where to dispose of my person. However, in order to recall some ideas of our own customs, and seeing a small carpet before the fire place, precisely the same as those which we use for saying prayers upon, I there knelt down, took out my rosary, and said my *fatteh*, and began upon a hundred and one *astaferallahs*. I was occasionally interrupted by some one putting their head within the door, and drawing it out hastily again before I could see who it was. At length I heard a knocking, and, tired of waiting, I looked out of the window, and there saw the father of Hoggs dismounting from his horse very deliberately. "It is evident," said I, "we don't count by the same watches. Either my luck is on the turn, and I have missed the fortunate hour, or the inhabitants of this house are totally unmindful of times and places." Very soon after I was relieved by another loud knock, and in

great form a servant announced some event which I could not understand, when, lo! a *khanum* dressed in plumes, a young lady, an elderly gentleman, and another freshlooking man, walked into the apartment. They all looked at me in various ways; the *khanum* smirked, the young virgin gazed at me with a little glass instrument, which she applied occasionally to her eye, the old man looked at me with indifference, the other as if he would speak to me; but instead of accosting me, the four adjourned to a window, and whispered to each other. But immediately after this in rushed the mamma Hogg, followed by her daughters, each in various stages of haste, talking all together, and making many speeches to apologise for not being ready. They then in a body bounded towards me, and "Prince!" in various intonations, was echoed amongst them, asking me sundry questions, fearing that I had been long waiting, and at length making me known to the persons who had just arrived. I saw that the fresh-looking man was a stranger, and he was introduced to the lady of the house by the elderly gentleman. He was then brought up to me, and I was told that he was a very learned man, a professor of many languages, among others of Persian, but that his great strength lay in Chinese.

I thought that I had seen the elderly gentleman before; and, in truth, I recognised in him one of the four-and-twenty sitters on chairs at the Indian palace. Mrs. Hogg then whispered to me that he was called a nabob, because he had been long in India, and had returned very rich; and that he had brought the learned man with him in order that he might converse with me, and interpret to the company what I might say. This *mollah* (for so I shall call him) then made an attempt to make me a complimentary speech in Persian, which I could not in the least understand, and during the whole of the evening, although I often spoke to him, I never could extract more than "*belli sahib*, yes, sir." More company came at distant intervals, and, by turns, I was presented to a doctor of physic, a lawyer, and a *bînbashi*, or colonel, commanding one thousand sepoys.

Every body seemed ready to dine, but a lord was expected, one of the *ameers*, and both the father and the mother Hogg agreed that it would be unlucky to begin without him. Whilst we were all in anxious expectation for his arrival, a knock was heard, every body exclaimed "Praises to the Prophet, here he is!" when in walked the young whiskered beau who had excited my jealousy with regard to the fair Bessy, and who had either been overlooked or unexpected. He seemed to be amazingly well pleased with himself. His salutations consisted of nods; his speech was confined to slight lisps; he looked with complacency at his feet; he appeared uncomfortable about the throat; and he never seemed satisfied with the attitude he had taken on his legs. He soon did what I had been longing to do. He immediately proceeded to perform the ceremony of wagging the elbow with the virgin, and talked with her and her sisters as if no dinner was in expectation. At length, after another half-hour's waiting, the absent lord became present. He was made as much of as if there had been but one *ameer* in the world. The father Hogg first, then the mother after him, presented him to their daughters. He was soon informed that I was a prince, at which he appeared happy; but the rest of the guests were not put under the shadow of his condescension. Whatever might have been his pretensions, however high he might have stood among the nobles of the land, he was more humble, more of a dervish in his appearance, than any one present, and instead of a general puffing up of manner, which the other guests seemed to have adopted, he was not long in producing amongst them a tone of quiet and unpretending civility. He was under no sort of restraint himself; the others evidently were; and even the mamma Hogg, who naturally was all over inquisitiveness, officiousness, and ambition, now lowered her tone, and looked like a sitter in a corner.

At length the door opened, and the ceremony of walking to dinner was performed: it took much time. It was settled that I should hand the wife of the master of the house to table.

The master himself took down the wife of the nabob; and the lord was the conductor of one of the daughters. The others followed as they could.

The table presented a scene worthy of the riches of a king. There were as many glasses, cups, bottles, china, and curiosities, as would fit up the *taukchehs* * of the shah's largest room. Of candles and lamps not even the *Gulistan* † lighted up could boast more. I was seated in the place of honour, on the right hand of the lady of the house (who would believe that in Persia!)—on the other side sat the lord; near me was posted the *mollah*, that depositary of oriental and other languages, in order to interpret what I might not be able to understand. In the neighbourhood were the doctor and the lawyer; but the object of my desires, the rose-bud round which the nightingale of my heart was ever fluttering, was placed far away, and, in turning my head to my right, I every now and then caught a glimpse of her nose, not without, at the same time, and in the same line, encountering the hated nose and moustache of my rival.

The *ameer* said little, but was very civil to his neighbour, the mamma Hogg, who almost exclusively devoted herself to him, leaving me to the *mollah*. The Indian chair-sitter talked much of India, of nawabs, of curries, of crores of rupees. Every thing, in his calculation, seemed to be fixed at so many rupees per month. His wife, who was seated next to the master of the feast, being without the immediate influence of the *ameer*, exhibited all the splendour of her attire. Her arms groaned under the weight of talismans, her neck bore heavier chains than those of our dervishes, and she drank as much wine as any one of the shah's most active dancing women. The principal sign of recognition that passed between me and the man Hogg was the ceremonial of wine, by which much of the friendship, and even the policy, of the English is regulated. To drink wine with a man here is almost equivalent to eating

* Niches, common to all Persian apartments.

† One of the king of Persia's pleasure-houses.

salt with him in Persia. I also established the foundation of a friendship with the other men guests, by drinking wine with them, which shows how favourably inclined to strangers this nation is, seeing that they were the first to invite me to go through the ceremony.

The doctor evidently was a man of great wisdom. Every body lent a ready ear to what he said, for he gave a detailed and particular account of the nature of each dish at table. Some he prescribed as totally forbidden; others he barely allowed to be tasted; there were about two which he said might lawfully be the food of man. He, however, ate of every one himself; and but few of the guests seemed deterred by his words from eating of what they liked. He asked me several questions respecting our food; he went further—he enquired what might be our medicines principally in cases of disordered stomach.

I was at a loss what to answer; for there appeared to me a necessity to use some of my best cloaked words on the occasion. I made several attempts to explain myself in English; nobody could understand me. I recollected the scrape into which the ambassador had got with the *khanum*, and became doubly guarded. At length recourse was had to the *mollah*, and he was asked to interpret what I said. I told him that in cases of indigestion we generally used the *destour*. He boggled at this evidently; but fearful lest his knowledge of Persian should be called into question, he announced to the doctor that we used "the custom of the country." This puzzled matters the more, until the nabob himself came to my assistance, and he answered the questions of the doctor, after a form of words of which I was totally ignorant.

In the meanwhile, the *mollah* grew confused, and evidently much dissatisfied with himself; when, looking at the back of his plate, to his joy, he there discovered some Chinese characters, and, in triumph, volunteered to give the meaning of them. Having previously ascertained my ignorance of that language, he gave a long explanation, which seemed to satisfy

every body of his profound learning, and restored to himself the equilibrium which he had lost.

By this time we had made great progress through the dinner; a general remove had taken place, and the servants handed about certain sticks of a green sort of herb. I looked at the dish, but refused to eat thereof; the mother Hogg, however, pressed me over and over again not to let them pass; and, at length, by way of an overpowering reason, she assured me that they had cost a great deal of money.

"*If dear thing best, ma'am,*" said I, "*better eat tomauns;** *better eat Cashmere shawls.*"

This made the *ameer* laugh; and he very soon showed his good feeling, by going through the wine ceremony with me.

The lawyer had asked several questions concerning our laws; and he was surprised to find that Mussulmans had no other code than that of the Koran.

"But, surely," said he, "you must have lawyers as well as priests? How can a country exist without lawyers?"

I answered that we had different gradations of expounders of the law; and whether they were called priests or lawyers, it came to the same thing. "Then," said I, in my English, "*you, sir, you tell law—what law you tell?*"

"I am a barrister, at your service," said he.

"*You no judge,* sir—*you no cazi?*"

"No," said he, "I am not come to that yet."

"*Ah!*" then said I, "*you ride no white ass?*"

To this he made no reply; but seemed rather disconcerted when he heard every body laughing at what I had said in sober earnest, and which I endeavoured to explain to him was a dignity enjoyed principally by our great *mollahs*, inasmuch as white asses, and even white mules, are looked upon as rare and precious animals.

When every thing was over, the women, as usual, retired, and the men remained to drink. I released myself as soon as

* The gold coin of Persia.

possible from the table, determined to make an effort to speak to "that coy and tender fawn," who had hitherto eluded my attentions, and resolved to try whether my well-organized beard would not bear down the insignificant whiskers of the long-spurred infidel. On returning to the hall of audience, I found her preparing hot sherbet for the company, and during this operation I managed to slip into her hand a copy of verses, in which the strength of my passion was avowed. I pretended that I had written out a Persian lesson, and told her that if she could not decipher it by herself, I would willingly explain it at her first leisure.

She seemed very much pleased, and assured me that it should have a conspicuous place in her album. I did not know what album meant, nor did I ask; but consoling myself by the idea that it meant either her heart or her breast, or some such tender signification, my head touched the skies, and I was almost inclined to cut myself all over with my dagger in her presence, in order to show the violence of my love. But at this moment *Long-spurs* came up to where we stood, and endeavoured to conciliate me by offering to share a snuff-box with me. I was too suspicious of his intentions to accept anything from him; and as I now felt that I had, in fact, gained a strong position in the affections of the fair Bessy, I abandoned the field to him, and took my departure, notwithstanding the entreaties of the mamma and the other ladies to play at various games. "Ah!" said I, leaving the room, "having played at love, my heart rejects all other pastime."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Honours prove troublesome to Hajjî Baba; and he receives *striking* marks of the Ambassador's displeasure.—He dreads a rebellion in England.

I PASSED the whole of the next day in thinking of my love, and writing verses on her perfections. I saw little of the ambassador, who I believe was taken up with nearly a similar occupation in the service of his own charmer; but on the following morning I received a summons to attend him.

I found him walking about the room like a Frank, with one of those large daily sheets in his hand common to England, which he had been reading with his master. As soon as I appeared, he roared out, "For the love of Allah! tell me, besides ourselves, are there any mad *Irânis* in this country?"

"What know I, O Mirza?" was my answer. "Perhaps there may be."

"Who is this," pointing to the paper, said he, "who is this dog's son who calls himself Prince Hajjî Baba? Read, by your soul, read, and see what a dish of filth this lie-speaking paper has been eating."

I looked at the paper, and there, to my dismay I read, with the help of the master, in a large column, a long account of the dinner I had eaten at the father of Hoggs, in which I was designated, in large characters, as, "His Highness Prince Mirza Hajjî Baba." Every body's name was there in the fullest detail. I copied it afterwards in my journal, in order to possess a specimen of that extraordinary custom peculiar to the English, of making a public register of their dinners, and of the people whom they feed. What would the Arab, in his tent, think of such sort of hospitality, he who kills the

fatted lamb for his guests, and lives upon parched corn himself? The writing was thus:—

"Mr. and Mrs. Hogg's grand entertainment, Portland Place.—These distinguished fashionables gave a superb entertainment to his highness the Persian Prince, Mirza Hajji Baba. The table was ornamented with devices emblematical of the friendship that exists between England and Persia. The English lion and the Persian sun were seen shaking hands together in a beautiful transparency. It would be needless to describe the magnificence of the dinner; it is sufficient to say, that it consisted of all the luxuries of the season. His highness was observed to eat much of some of the finest asparagus that ever was seen, provided by Messrs. Peas and Beans, of Bond Street, which cost five guineas the hundred. Among the company to meet his highness, we remarked Lord Softly, Sir Henry and Lady Curry, the famous Chinese philosopher, Ho-Ho, besides a long list of the haut ton."

"Well, have you read?" said the ambassador to me, whilst I was considering what answer to make.

"Yes," said I, hesitating, "I have read. Strange customs have these English! Nobody can eat a mouthful in this country without its being proclaimed abroad, even more publicly than the profession of our faith is proclaimed from the tops of our mosques."

"In fine," said the ambassador, "you will not confess that you, and you only, are the prince who so worthily have been feeding with the Hoggs. Go, go, you have found friends worthy of you."

"It is not my fault," said I, "if I am called a prince. If these blockheads, who write whatever comes into their heads, were to choose to call me the angel Michael, could I hinder them?"

"Go," said the ambassador, as his anger rose, "go, speak no more. A person who makes friends under a false character, who gives himself out for a king's son, and who secretly lives and feeds with unclean beasts, such a person deserves to be blown from the mouth of a bomb. After all, man, I am somebody here; our shah is somebody. Our beards are not to be at a discount because the barber's son of Ispahan chooses to make a personage of himself."

"*Wallah billah!*" exclaimed I. "By Allah, Mirza, I have done nothing in this. If I have committed an offence in eating a dinner, I acknowledge it. If my friend's name happens to be that of the unclean beast, it is not my fault; it was my evil destiny to make his acquaintance. I am a barber's son, 't is true, but why should I be blown from the mouth of a bomb? Why are you so *kem shefakat*, so little kind, towards me?"

By this time, words running high between us, two or three of the servants had slipped into the room and stood before their master, whilst the English teacher, seeing a storm impending, hastily took his departure.

"*Mashallah!* praises to Allah," said the ambassador mockingly to Seid, the black slave, and Taki, the ferash: "see, see, this is a *shah zadeh*, a prince!" pointing to me. "Make your lowest prostration to him. We are nobody now! We are the least of the least before him!"

"What words are these?" said I, becoming angry in my turn. "Why do you speak to me thus? If you were to live more with us, and less with the infidels, I should not be reduced to seek refuge among the Hoggs."

"Do you address me in this manner?" roared the ambassador, his face becoming livid with rage, and every hair of his beard distended. "Have you forgotten who I am, you less than man? Your old cow of a vizier is no longer in existence, that you should give yourself such airs, remember that! The son of a barber may be a prince in England, but he will be less than a dog's barber when he returns to Persia. Go, go," said he, with a most contemptuous toss of his hand, "go about your business, and do not venture to see me again."

"Would to Heaven that I could!" said I, as I was stepping out of the room; but these last words blew up his fury to its height, and screaming with rage, he invoked the servants who stood before him, "He speaks again! Seize, seize him, Seid! Taki! seize that son of a dog, and give him the shoe.

You 'll speak again, will you? You, whose father's grave I have defiled!"

Upon which he, the ambassador, rushed at me, shoe in hand, and gave me two or three blows on the mouth with the heelof it, whilst Seid and Taki held my hands. I immediately made a rapid descent, they after me, until I reached the door of the house, which I opened, and in another second found myself in the middle of the street.

"Where can I go now?" thought I. "There is no sanctuary to fly to; I cannot take refuge in a hot bath, as I could in Tehran. Beside the Hoggs, whom do I know here? And if I were to appear before them, as an outcast instead of a prince, would they take me in?" I wandered about the city for several hours, at one time deploring my hard fate, and making unfeasible plans of returning to Persia; at another, enlivening my present misery by hopes of future good fortune, and of becoming independent of every thing by the possession of the moon-faced Bessy.

I was quietly proceeding along one of the principal thoroughfares of the city, when I perceived a great mass of troops in full march, accompanied by several pieces of artillery, escorted by an immense mob of the dirtiest of the English, who were rending the air with abusive words, and occasionally assaulting the soldiers with stones. I remarked that consternation appeared in the faces of some, whilst others appeared totally unconcerned.

"What news is this?," said I, to a man who had just stepped out of his shop to see the sight.

"Oh," said he, "I believe they are going to take up a man."*

"Only a man?" said I. "If you require this force to take a man, what must you require to take a city?" I was so impressed with this strange scene, that I thought no more of my private miseries, but immediately returned to my home in

* This evidently alludes to Sir Francis Burdett's visit to the Tower in 1810.

all haste. I felt that the ambassador ought to know the state of things. The firmans from the shah, which we had lately received, and which I had read, had given him such positive instructions to ascertain what were the means of this country, and its stability as a government, that to let him be ignorant of what seemed to me an indication of its ruin, would be shameful neglect. Perhaps, too, thought I, he may forget what has so recently happened, and may take me into favour again. At all events, even at the risk of getting more blows on the mouth, I'll tell him into what a state this country has fallen; and if the rebellion, which has evidently begun, is not put down, he will see the necessity of providing for our safety.

I soon found myself at home again, but the ambassador was out. My countrymen were so accustomed themselves to be beaten, to receive the shoe-heel on their mouths, and to be otherwise molested, that they scarcely took notice of what had befallen me. Mohamed Beg alone felt for me, and partook of my misfortune. We talked the matter over, sighing as he expressed a wish that we were all safe in Irân again. When I told him what I had just witnessed in the streets, that it was evident, from the warlike preparations which I had remarked, and from what the man told me when I had questioned him, that some khan or governor was *yaghi*, that is, had become a rebel, and that we possibly might be implicated in danger and bloodshed, he turned pale, and said two or three *astaferallahs* in a breath. We both of us became anxious for the return of the ambassador, in order that no delay should take place to inform him of the aspect of affairs; and we began to calculate how soon we might begin our journey back whence we came.

"I fear," said Mohamed Beg, "that it was an unlucky hour when we left the infidel Smyrna; for it has always been upon my mind, that had we only remained there a week longer, there would have been one of the most for-

tunate conjunctions of the planets that can exist in the heavens. But that bankrupt mehmandar, curse on his beard! hurried us away against every law, human or divine, and see what has happened! A rebellion amongst the infidels! The loss, perhaps, of our lives; or the being carried away as slaves by the conquering party! What shall we do, O Hajjî?"

I endeavoured to console him by assuring him that the danger was not so imminent, perhaps, as he thought; that the king of England had power in his hand; that he was evidently a strong prince, and an owner of ships and guns; and that by the blessing of Allah he might overthrow the rebel khan, who was now disturbing his government. If he could once catch him, by cutting off his head, and putting his family, wives, children, and relations, to death, no doubt, as in our own country, every thing would soon get into its old train again.

"*Inshallah! Inshallah!* Please Allah!" exclaimed Mohamed Beg, with a deep sigh—"*Inshallah!*"

CHAPTER XL.

He makes his peace with Mirza Firouz.—Excites in him certain apprehensions concerning the state of England, and the security of her finances.

As soon as the ambassador returned, Mohamed Beg, as concerted between us, appeared before him, and with conciliatory words informed him, that I was in waiting to unfold certain matters of consequence.

The whole of the morning's wrath appeared to have passed from him, and with the all-cheering recollection in his mind of the death of his enemy, which acted upon his ill-humour

like sunshine upon the damps of a cavern, he was now quite composed, and his spirits were well up. I was summoned before him, and his reception of me was after the following manner: —

"What has happened, Hajji?"

"I beg to represent, for the good of your service," said I, "that I have seen certain things to-day in this city which are necessary should be known to you. Men are in rebellion, troops are arrived, guns are brought in, and it is evident that something is in agitation, which will require us to put our trust in God."

"Is that all?" said the ambassador, holding up his forefinger in derision. "Ay, *barikallah!* ay, well done, prince! thou art a man of observation, and an understander of things. Do you weigh these infidels in the same scale that you would ourselves? Don't you know that the cap which would fit them will not fit us?"

"What do we know?" said Mohamed Beg, taking my part. "A rebel is a rebel, be he in whatever country he may; and a man's head may fly off by the cimetar of an infidel, as well as by that of a true believer."

"Go, make yourselves easy," said the ambassador, "nothing will happen to us, whatever may to the English. I have had much conversation with the vizier, and he has explained to me, that the commotions which occasionally take place in this country are quite necessary to its well-being."

"Such perhaps may be the case," said I, "in all countries. The tyranny of Aga Mohamed Shah became insupportable to Persia, and he was put to death. We are come here to make treaties and agreements with the king of England; if he were to lose his life, how do we know whether his successors would ratify them? Before we go further, I who am the least of your servants, would recommend you to enquire more narrowly into the state of this country, and the stability of the present shah's throne."

"You do not speak ill," said the ambassador: "where is

the mehmandar? let us ask him, what does all this mean? Whatever he says you will duly write down, and by the next letters sent to the shah's gate at Tehran, we will detail all that has happened, and give in a few words a full account of the government of this country."

"It is indeed necessary that our eyes should be kept open, O Mirza!" said I. "For in addition to the symptoms of rebellion and disaffectedness which are showing themselves, I have heard that this country is so much oppressed by debt, and the creditors are becoming so clamorous to be paid, that sooner or later the whole administration must break up, and those who have lent will fall to pellmell, and get back their property in the best way they can."

"Is it so? what do you say? what news is this? what sort of government is this? I am full of astonishment. How is it possible for a state to be in debt? The king takes what is necessary from his people, and there is an end to it. Go, for God's sake, and enquire." All this was said in a breath; and now that the ambassador's curiosity was excited, every other object was forgotten until it was satisfied.

At this moment entered the mehmandar; and the shower of questions which the ambassador immediately poured over him so astonished him, that he looked liked one drenched, whose breathing and power of utterance were taken from him.

"*Sabih mun*, my sir," said Mirza Firouz, "for the love of your mother, inform us of a few things. What is all this that we hear? Is your government turned upside down? Are your khans in rebellion? Are your people running mad? Why is your city invaded by soldiers and cannon? It must be false, that which is said, that all these preparations are made only to seize one man. Is it true that your shah does not know where to bestow his head? Are your viziers' understandings turning round and round? What means this great debt of yours? For Khoda's sake, tell me all you know. My shah will cut my head off, if in relating these things I show the least negligence."

The mehmandar having heard him out, instead of looking disconsolate at this melancholy picture of the state of his country, laughed outright, thereby disconcerting me not a little, who had put the match to this explosion of questions.

"'T is most true," said the mehmandar, "that these troops and these guns which have entered the town have been brought in consequence of the apprehension of some popular tumult, and of the possibility of that tumult breaking out upon the seizure of one man. But make yourself easy: this is not a rebellion such as you occasionally see in Persia, where a khan at the head of his tribe disowns the jurisdiction of your shah, and defies his power."

"That may be true," said the ambassador, stopping the mehmandar's narrative; "but your debt—the money your government owes? tell me of that. If it be so in reality, how will your shah be able to fulfil his engagements towards Persia?"

"Our debt!" said the mehmandar in astonishment: "what of that?"

"Yes, sir," said the ambassador, "your debt. You acknowledge that you have one."

"Certainly, who ever doubted it?" said he; "we have a very large and a very heavy debt."

"Ah! there, you see," said the Mirza, exultingly, "we are not such dolts as you would take us for. Although we are Persians, and live beyond the mountains, yet the business of the world is known to us. We are not without thought, believe me, sir. Persians are not such asses."

"All that may be very true," said the mehmandar; "but what has that to do with our debt?"

"It has thus much to do," answered the Mirza, "that we must come to some explanations. What may be the amount of your nation's debt?"

"Whatever explanations you require, you will receive. I am afraid," said he, "that you have not words in Persian sufficiently comprehensive to embrace the extent of the sum.

Let me see; it will be about one hundred and twenty thousand crores of tomauns!"

"Allah! Allah!" was exclaimed by all of us at one breath. "It cannot be," said the ambassador; "it is impossible: so great an absurdity cannot enter into the conception of man. After all, sir, we are Persians—we are not asses. Your statement is an assertion without meaning. It cannot be."

"It is but too true," said the mehmandar.

"Not all the treasure which Nadir Shah seized at Delhi, added to the riches of the Seffis, the wealth of the *Khonkhor*, increased with the immense accumulation of money and jewels of our present shah, not all these added together would amount to half this sum. England must conquer the whole world, and seize upon its revenues, before she can collect money to pay off the whole of this debt."

"But," said the mehmandar, "we do not wish it all to be paid off: we should look upon such an event as a national misfortune: were it so, we should be reduced to the necessity of burying our money under ground, as you do in Persia, or living by the sweat of our brow in tilling the earth. The possession of money would be an inconvenience; we should have no one to take care of it for us, as we have now, and, moreover, paying us a good sum for being allowed so to do."

"These sort of schemes, to say the truth," said the ambassador to me and Mohamed Beg, "we do not understand. To be overloaded, and to rejoice in the burden, is what neither ass, mule, nor camel would do. You," turning to the mehmandar, "you, it seems, are an exception to this rule." Then playing with the tip of his beard in deep thought, he exclaimed again and again, "*La illaha illallah!* One hundred and twenty thousand crores of tomauns!"

The mehmandar was no sooner gone than we began to give vent to our astonishment and incredulity.

"That man," said Mohamed Beg, "is a liar; he must be

a liar : who can believe his stories ? Feth Ali Khan, our king of poets himself, could never have invented such lies, if he had even tried for them in his dream."

"These Franks, 't is true," said I, "differ totally from ourselves : but, after all, there are things credible, and things incredible. If a man were to tell me that he had seen a house as large as the mountain of Demawend, who would believe him ? not even this lying mehmandar. One has heard of fifty crores, and even a hundred crores, but whose imagination ever compassed the sum he mentions ?"

"True, true, you say," cried out the ambassador : "we must not write this to be laid at the foot of the king of kings. We have already acquired a sufficient reputation for being liars of the first class, that it should be increased by this giant lie. I dread lest the accounts which we have already transmitted be disbelieved, particularly those relating to the ships and guns possessed by the English. Let us hear how they are received first, before we venture upon descriptions requiring a more capacious faith. After all, our heads are of more consequence to us than the strength and wealth of this country, even if all that we hear be true !"

Upon this we parted ; and I wrote what had passed in my journal.

CHAPTER XLI.

The Persians are taken to see sights.—Of Woolwich and its artillery.—Of Hajji Baba's inconvenient friends.

The ambassador at various times had been taken by the mehmandar to see many wonderful things. Occasionally he took one or two of his suite with him, but seldom did I accompany him. He had dined with the heir apparent to the

throne of England; and the accounts which he gave of the magnificence he had witnessed on that occasion were equal to any thing related of the feasts of the great shah Abbas. Others of the king's sons also gave him entertainments: and scarcely a nobleman was there who had not invited him to his house. He was now persuaded to see some of the public establishments; and a day was fixed for visiting one of the great *topkhanehs*, or arsenals of the country.

When the day came, to my astonishment he ordered me to accompany him. On several occasions I had perceived that he wished to make me forget his past ill treatment, and this was a favour which convinced me that my fortunes were again on the rise. I had almost forgotten my Hoggs in the events of the last few days; but now as the sun shone again upon me, I determined once more to pursue my object in cultivating their acquaintance.

We went to a place called Woolwich, and there were received by officers of consequence. There was nothing very remarkable in the buildings; but, by my beard! when we came to see the guns, existence fled from our heads! We saw cannons of all sizes and denominations, enough to have paved the way, if placed side by side, from Tehran to Tabriz; if placed lengthways, God only knows where they would have reached—into the very grave of the father of all Russians, perhaps!

"*Bah! bah! bah!*" exclaimed the ambassador; "say after this that this nation is ruined! Why, here is enough to blow the debt, and the creditors to boot, thousands of parasangs beyond the farthest Jehanum! Go to, go to, my little uncle," said he to me, "let us talk no more of the ruin of England. The friendship of such a nation is not to be thrown away. If the Turcoman or Yuzbeg once knew that Fath Ali Shah was a friend to a king who possesses ten thousand cannon, and ten millions of cannon balls, whose dog would he be to think of disowning his supremacy?"

We were taken from one wonder to another, with our hands to our mouths, sucking the fingers of astonishment and admiration. Secrets were explained which before had been kept under the veil of ignorance. The making of a gun now appeared as easy to us as twisting a piece of sugar. We saw iron flowing about as liquid as the waters of a canal, and becoming a cannon, a ball, a bar or a nail at pleasure.

I noted down what we saw, agreeing all the time with my chief, that in vain I wrote, in vain we might take oaths, we should find no one in Persia to believe us.

Among the officers who conducted the ambassador through the establishment was a young "no-beard," who attached himself particularly to me, and who showed me all sorts of attentions. I was fearful lest this preference might be noticed by my chief, and therefore rather shunned him. The cause of his intentions was explained when the youth informed me that he was a young Hogg, son to the worthy family who had taken me into friendship. When we had shaken our elbows, I enquired after his parents, and to my dismay he told me that he expected their arrival every moment. To prevent their introduction to the ambassador now appeared impossible; and if the mother was to call me prince in his hearing, I foresaw that my former miseries might again he renewed, and that perhaps I should be disgraced in the very face of the assembled company. What was to be done? Seeing that the ambassador was in an excellent flow of spirits, and particularly pleased at having discovered that our apprehensions concerning the distressed state of England must be false, I thought that the best mode of meeting the dilemma in which I stood was to make him a partaker of it; therefore I took the first opportunity of saying to him,—

"If you wish to burn the fathers of those who call me prince, *bismillah!* in the name of Allah, now is the time," pointing to the young officer, "he is one of them."

"What words are these, Hajjî?" said he, kindly; "whatever is gone is gone."

"Sir," said I, "these people do not understand our manners. Whatever I may say, they will persevere in making me a personage, when you know, as well as I, that I am nobody but the son of Kerbelai Hassan, the Ispahan barber."

"Go, go," said he; "say no more about it."

By this time we had been conducted into a handsome room, where we found refreshments spread on a table, and moreover a crowd of well-dressed ladies and khanums ready to receive us. Nothing is to be done in England, we had long ago remarked, without women and eating.

I was soon informed of the arrival of my friends; for the old lady, at the head of her daughters, approached me without ceremony, and at once asked me to introduce her to the ambassador. To this I thought it best to assent; and pointing them out to him, I said in Persian, "These are my friends, the unclean animals. For the sake of your child, say something to them, and then my soul will be free."

He very good-naturedly did as I requested, and said, in his own English, laughingly, and pointing to me,—

"*Prince tell me, ma'am, you very good friends his. He one very good, very great prince, ma'am. He love all Hoggs, and you very much.*"

What was said in beard-laughing the old lady took in good earnest, and bending her knees several times up and down, she seemed to have lost all power of speech, and could say nothing but, "Yes, your excellency! ha, your excellency! hey, your excellency!" Most luckily for me, she seemed entirely to have forgotten me and my principality in her confusion.

She was brought a little to herself when the ambassador, having remarked the attractions of the blooming Bessy, said,

"*Prince very good taste, ma'am. Mashallah! all Persian man like good moon-face.*"

"Your excellency is very kind," said the mother of my fair one: "Bessy is better than handsome, she is good; and here is my Mary, too, she is an excellent girl, and fond of the poor!"

"*Penah be khoda?* refuge in God!" exclaimed the ambassador to me in Persian, "let us be free of your unclean friends!" and turned upon his heel to speak to a very beautiful virgin, who had been brought up to him by her mother.

This movement threw my friends upon my hands. They who now had heard me styled "prince" by my chief, and who were indebted to me for an introduction to him, could not sufficiently testify their gratitude. I, too, flattered myself that I had performed a masterstroke of policy, in turning a situation of difficulty into one of advantage, and thus the sunshine of prosperity again beamed upon me.

I now made my advances to the object of my admiration with more confidence in myself. I presented her with an orange. I sighed once or twice quite loud, close to her ear. I rubbed the skirt of my cloak against the back of her pelisse.

A few other indications of my passion I also continued to make from time to time, which I flattered myself would pass for love; but whether it would be taken for English love, that, to me, continued a point of uncertainty, and I longed to get a lesson from some young practitioner. All I was doing might be set down for Persian manners, and if it were, my labour would be in vain. I became determined to thoroughly understand my business before I proceeded further; and therefore looked about me narrowly to see whether I could discover any exhibition of the tender passion among the company present. My young friend, brother to my charmer, was, I perceived, very closely seated near the beautiful damsel who had been introduced to our chief. I saw that the eyes had much to do in their intercourse. "Ha, ha!" thought I; "we

understand eye-play perfectly; without that there would be no love in Persia." Then helping on shawls, and picking up gloves, appeared to me another requisite. "This is new to me," said I, "let me be mindful of that." I caught the virgin blushing. "Oh! could I but make my fair Bessy blush," thought I, "my business would be complete!" I saw the youth blush too. "I'll cut off my beard," thought I; "for let me blush like the sun, it would never shine through my black hair!" At that moment the ambassador, having seated himself at the table, two old ladies, the chief personages no doubt of the entertainment, were placed on either side of him, which he no sooner perceived than calling aloud to the beautiful houri in question, and at the same time waving his napkin, he asked her to come and sit next to him, to the utter discomposure of the old ladies, who seemed to think themselves very ill used.

There was a general pause at this movement, and it was quite evident that the young folks, as well as the old ladies, were distressed by this summons.

"Very odd!" mumbled out one of the old khanums.

"Very ill bred!" remarked the other.

"This is what they call throwing the handkerchief, I suppose," said an elderly officer to me with a nose as red as his coat, and hair as white as his trousers.

"Throwing what, sir?" said I.

"Why, when one of your nation," said he, "admires a lady, he throws his handkerchief at her; is it not so?"

"That can't be," said I to him as well as I could, "because we seldom use a handkerchief; and when we do, it is to wipe our hands after eating. On a journey we wrap up our cold rice in it!"

The old soldier begged my pardon, seemed surprised at what I had told him, but thanked me for my information, which he immediately repeated to his neighbour: both of them after that held up their hands in surprise.

The ambassador, upon rising from table, released the young

maiden from a situation which evidently had been very little to her satisfaction, although her mother seemed to be in the seventh heaven for the distinction which had been conferred on her daughter. "Let me be naked and unshorn; let me live on roots, and sleep on flints, so that I have but consideration," saith the wild dervish. It is the same among the English: distinction, consideration—these they seek above all other things. The Hoggs would have given wealth for them. For them Mary would become a martyr, Bessy squeeze her foot into a Chinese shoe, Jessy be buried in a cell full of books, and the old mother be dragged through the dirt at the tail of a Duchess *Begum*.

I was full of these thoughts as we drove back to the great city; and excepting my being recognised for a prince, which perhaps might advance my suit with the old folks, I began to despair of being able to win the affections of the fair English maiden.

CHAPTER XLII.

Hajji Baba takes lessons in the art of love.—He puts them into practice, and meets with mortification.

"I WILL no longer live in a state of uncertainty," thought I, as I rose from my bed on the next morning, and I repeated this resolution, as I combed my beard before the looking-glass. "Here are grey hairs coming on apace," said I, glancing at several which obtruded themselves among the mass of black; "and if I delay a day longer, there is no daughter of the infidel who would have me, even were I the first cousin of our blessed Prophet himself!" I determined forthwith to make my love known to the fair Bessy, and to propose lawful marriage to her. The original conversation which I had had with the mother at the play-house was still fresh in my

memory. Since then I had learned that each daughter was to be endowed with above a crore of tomauns; and with that sum in my pocket, what dog was there in Persia who would dare call into question the respectability of my ancestors? Before I ventured upon this step, I determined to take a "fall in Hafiz."*

"Let me see," said I, "what my good guide will tell me." In order to perform this act propitiously, I went through the proper ablutions, said my prayers, and then took the book in hand. I made the necessary invocations, and then with much apprehension opened it. My eyes fell upon the following words:—"Take the rose wherever you can find it, but scratch not your fingers in the attempt."

"Thanks to Heaven," said I, "it will do. As for scratching my fingers, I have done nothing but scratch them all my life-through; and the miseries which an infidel girl can inflict never can exceed what that semi-demon of *Sugarlips* made me suffer. *Bismillah!*" said I, and girded myself with my best shawl on the occasion. But still I felt that I was ignorant of the customs of the Franks, and that I ought not to take such a step without being better acquainted with them. Whether the proposal ought to be made by myself in person; or whether, as in my own country, I ought to send some old *gees sefid*, a grey-headed female elder, to do it for me; whether presents were usual on such occasions; and whether I ought to begin my negociation by laying in a stock of sweetmeats: these were questions which required explanation. I did not like to speak to the mehmandar upon the subject, lest he might suspect me of an intention to run away with one of his countrywomen. I was at a loss of whom to enquire. At length it occurred to me that a hint was sufficient, and that I might as well gain my information from one in the lower ranks of life, as from the highest; since a ceremony so well known must be common to both. The head English ser-

* A mode of divination resembling that of the *Sortes Virgilianæ*.

vant, or *nazir*, in the ambassador's household was an old man, who not long since had married a young wife; and as he was an object upon whom the other servants were wont to pass their jokes, I thought that I might in perfect safety get the necessary intelligence from him. He had shown himself my friend when I had received the shoe-heel on my mouth; and, indeed, whenever blows were inflicted, he always appeared offended, and said "dam!" Of him I enquired how he had managed to get married, and what were the forms preserved among the Franks when the man asked the woman the one question. He went into a long history, part of which I understood, and part remained unintelligible; but the immediate object of my enquiry he made perfectly clear to me. It seems that he was escorting his love to the mosque on a rainy day: she held his arm, whilst an umbrella was spread over their united heads, her father and mother following behind. The rain fell in torrents, and they stopped under a portico for shelter: it was at that particular moment that he asked her to have him; he could not have chosen a better; she accepted him. He agreed with me when I questioned him closely, that most likely had it not been for this particular circumstance, that is the combination of rain, a portico, and an umbrella, he might not have succeeded; and that perhaps he might never have had courage again to do what he then had performed.

This was enough for me. Could I by any means, thought I, secure these accessaries, I would not fail to take advantage of them. I enquired of Mohamed Beg how such objects stood in our estimation as things fortunate or unfortunate. We were agreed that they were all three eminently fortunate. A parasol was emblematical of royalty; no one since the days of Jemsheed, excepting kings or the sons of kings, could use one in Persia. Then a portico, either as an entrance to a palace or a mosque, was ever the emblem of grandeur and prosperity; and, lastly, the rain, we had no difficulty in agreeing, was the blessing above all others for which we prayed, and

which was only another word for plenty and happiness The circumstance of the old man and the old woman walking behind instead of before the nazir and his intended, I also contended was fortunate. Had they been crossing their path, or long in sight, matters might have gone otherwise; for no fact is so well attested, that the very appearance of an old woman brings ill luck, and that a glance from her eye is almost fatal.

During the whole of my attentions to the fair Bessy, I had carefully avoided hinting to Mohamed Beg what was the object which I had in view: his strict principles would never have countenanced the union of a son of the true faith to a daughter of the infidel, unless indeed she first renounced her religion; and even then he never perhaps would have allowed of the eligibility of such an union, except for convenience-sake, as *mûti*. He did not at all seem aware of the ulterior object of my enquiries concerning the combinations necessary to a Frank courtship; and thus far I became fully confident that no one, excepting myself, possessed my secret.

Bearing in mind what I had heard from the English nazir, I determined at once to make a trial of my fortune, and to seek the house of my fair one. In stepping from my own home I put the proper leg foremost; I blew over each shoulder, and, moreover, I did not omit to take with me an umbrella which was standing in a corner of the hall.

Could I be blessed with the same propitious circumstances which had furthered the suit of the nazir, I made no doubt of my success; but, as one of our poets hath said, "Love is made up of uncertainties: like the flowers of the field, which at one time are strengthened by the wind, at others torn to pieces by it, so is it strong and weak by times and seasons;" and so, thought I, it hath probably acted upon the inclinations of the fair mistress of my heart.

Many had been my misgivings as I slowly walked onwards. I frequently thought how much more convenient was the intervention of an old *gees sefîd*,* as practised in Persia on

* Literally, a grey head; an old woman.

such occasions, than the being brought face to face before the decider of one's fortunes. At length I reached the house, and was about to knock three times, when of a sudden the door opened, and behold, the mamma Hogg stood before me, followed by her two daughters—the sainted Mary, and the object of my hopes—the comely Bessy. They uttered an exclamation of delight when they saw me:—this augured well. Had the old lady not been the first to hit me with her eyes, I should have been at my ease; but still, thought I, if I can but get her to walk behind, all may be well still. They invited me to perform one of the daily English ceremonies, which consists in walking about without an object; for when I asked Mrs. Hogg whither she was going, and on what business, she answered, "La, prince! nowhere, to be sure—we are going to take a walk."

With my thoughts intent upon the nazir, I said "*No church to-day, ma'am? you no walk there?*"

"No, prince," said she, "the churches are shut; they are only open on a Sunday."

"*In Persia, ma'am,*" said I, "*mosques open always; people pray when like;*" and in saying this, according to the Frank custom, I offered my arm to the fair Bessy, who, without hesitation, took it, and we proceeded on our excursion, her mother and sister following. We made our way to the end of the great street in which they lived, and then, to my joy, I perceived an inclination of rain. The ladies were for returning; but I persisted so strongly in standing under a range of pillars, which formed the portico to a house, that they could not help siding with me. It rained, and the umbrella was spread over my head and that of my companion. My heart was leaping in my mouth, and I was about to follow the example of the nazir, when the mother, all at once, roared out, just as some people were passing, "Prince! let us go; we shall catch our death of cold if we stand here much longer."

This broke the speech which at that moment was hovering

on my lips, and I remained suspended between heaven and earth. A movement to depart from the mother drove me and my charmer from our place of refuge; and as the rain appeared to increase, it was determined that the "taking-walk" ceremony should be abandoned for the present. We were retracing our steps as fast as possible, when the rain came on in torrents before we could reach the house, and we ran for shelter to a doorway, which stood most opportunely on our road.

"Here, then," said I, "I will seal my fate;" and mentally saying my *bismillah*, I softly whispered to my moonface,—

"*You are my* tooti sheker kha, *my sugar-loving parrot —I love you like one soul mine—you come wife with me, and marry me?*"

She drawled out, "What!" with a strange emphasis upon the word. This having given me time to collect my thoughts, I explained, as well as I could in her language, what were my desires; but in vain I expected to hear the same answer which the nazir received from his mistress. It came not. On the contrary, she quietly withdrew her arm from mine, and saying something which I could not understand about speaking to her mamma, I stood before her, looking no doubt, like an ass which had made a bite at a flower, but had bitten its tongue instead.

"*Ne shoud!* It is not to be!" said I. I was sure that we had received a stroke of the ill-boding eye from the old mother; and without accepting of her invitation to enter the house, I said my *khoda hafiz* in a hurry, and returned home with a thousand unhandsome words flowing from my wounded heart.

"After all, she is nothing but a woman," said I; "why should I be eating so much grief?"

CHAPTER XLIII.

His scheme of fortune-hunting is divulged.—Others besides the Hajji are influenced by money.

Knowing but little of the manners and customs of Franks; fearful of confiding the situation in which I had placed myself to any one, and still unwilling to give up all hopes of so desirable a prize, I laid my head upon the pillow of thoughtfulness, and buried myself under the covering of resignation. After thinking more intensely than ever the learned *Abou Avicenna* did in consulting over a case of imminent danger, I came to the conclusion that patience taken in a bowl, and not in a cup, was now to be my remedy; and all I had to do was to wait for the conclusion of my adventure with the same quiet that every good shiah waits for the twelfth Imam.*

But a day had scarcely passed over my head ere I received a summons to attend the ambassador. So rare an occurrence made me apprehensive that something serious was about to forthcome, and I was not deceived.

"How is it, man," cried out my chief, as soon as he perceived me, "that you cannot leave people alone, and that you must be going about the city, giving us Persians a bad name?"

"A bad name! In the name of *Khoda*, how is that?" said I.

* The twelfth and last, surnamed Mehedi, whom the Persians pretend is still alive, and is to appear with the prophet Elias at the second coming of our Saviour.

"Yes, a bad name! You are not contented with making yourself a prince; but you must, forsooth, be marrying every daughter of the infidel who comes in your way. How is this?" said he.

"Strange and wonderful people are these, O Mirza!" said I. "Who accuses me of a desire to marry? Who am I, to contemplate such an act? I have had enough of marriages, and wives, and brothers-in-law, as you well know, that I should try my fortunes again in that line."

"Are you so much without shame, man," said, the ambassador, "as to stand before me in this manner, with a lie at the beginning and end of all you say? My soul has been turned into bitterness during the last hour by the eternal story of one, who in dulness exceeds a setter to sleep, and who has been asking me so many questions concerning you and your fortunes, that, by the beard of our shah, I am more than dead."

"By your soul, tell me," said I, "who was this person, and what did he ask?"

"He wanted to know," answered he, "who you were? Whether of good family, and if, being a prince, the title was hereditary? and whereabouts might be your principality? and what were your revenues when you came to your fortune? He swore that you wanted to marry his daughter."

"And what did you say?"

"What could I? Laughter came to my assistance, and I assured him that you were no prince; that you were the son of a barber, and that all your inheritance consisted of a pair of razors. What else could I say?"

"Who was he? for the love of Allah!" said I; "was he old or young, fat or lean?"

"What do I know!" exclaimed the Mirza. He was an old man, all fat and blubber; one of ugly aspect; and although he was all this, he yet had the impudence to call

himself by the name of the Author of all things: he called himself *Hâk*." *

I immediately understood that it was the father of Hoggs who had paid this visit, and who had been "foxing," † with an intent to discover how far I might be a proper match for his daughter. I stood like one impaled. I was angry with myself—angry with my ambassador, and I could have sold my friends to the Turcomans. That one who had seen so much of life should thus be taken in, was a reflection too bitter to bear; and the manner in which I was taunted by the ambassador completed to throw my heart upside down, and to turn my liver into water.

"Now, do tell me, Hajjî," said he, "what ashes have fallen upon your head this morning? It is quite evident that this old infidel has made less than a dog of you, or why should the light of your countenance thus be darkened. Tell me, my soul, what has happened?"

"It is nothing, *wallah, billah!*" said I; "it is a story not worth relating; whatever is gone, is gone."

"Speak, man, speak," said the ambassador, between jest and earnest; "what mischief have you been doing in this foreign country? we cannot handle men's beards after this manner. Either you have been enticing this old fellow and his daughter to walk round your finger, or you have not. The question lies between these two points. What have you been doing to him? Why do you lie, and call yourself prince?"

"I have already made my representation," said I, "that I never have called myself prince. These people will make a prince out of a collector of old rags, provided it serves their purposes. Only give them a scarecrow, with a beard and a shawl round its waist, and they will call it by titles with which we clothe our blessed Ali."

The ambassador getting angry, then said, "Will you give

* One of the many appellations of the Deity.

† An Eastern expression for spying.

me an answer, or will you not? By the shah's beard, I swear that if you do not inform me what this story means, I will force you to an explanation. You shall be tied with the camel tie, and thus sit in the darkest hole in this house till you tell me."

"My story is simply as follows: this old man has a pretty daughter," said I; "and if you will allow me to speak the truth, love came over me, and I asked her to marry me. By Allah, I swear by the fortunate salt of the king, by your death, and by our blessed Prophet, and the holy Imams, I swear, that this is the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

At this moment entered Mohamed Beg, to whom the ambassador immediately related the story, and now in addition to the jests and scoffs which I had already endured, here was I about to receive the admonition of the unrelenting master of the ceremonies. He immediately gave me the workings of his mind upon the occasion. "You have done ill," said he. "The ambassador speaks the truth when he says that we shall leave a bad name here. How much the more shall we not acquire it, in our own country, should we return infidels to our faith, dragging infidel women in our train?"

"But who knows," said I, "whether she would not change her faith? Love produces strange miracles; love is of all religions."

"What words are you throwing in the air, O Hajjî!" exclaimed the ambassador. "Don't you know that these infidels are constantly in full thought how to make us converts to their faith; that one half of their population are now translating their sacred scriptures into our language, and the other half employed in printing them; and how can you say that any daughter of England would abandon her faith, to follow the beard of such a poor devil as you through the world? Do not make yourself out quite so much of an ass."

"Then, after all," said Mohamed Beg, "even suppose she

would change her faith for your sake, how could you ascertain the sincerity of her conversion?"

"Oh! as for that," said I, "there can be no difficulty. Let her dye the soles of her feet, her finger-nails, and the palms of her hands with *khenna;* let her tatoo her skin with the proper invocations, and pronounce the *fatteh* after me, she would be as good a Mahomedan as either you or I."

"God forgive me!" exclaimed Mohamed Beg, and counted his beads.

"Go, go to!" exclaimed the ambassador. "What demon has possessed you to set you marrying at this rate. Have you not had enough of Zenab and Shekerleb?"

"Believe me," said Mohamed Beg, "that if you persist in this scheme, the rest of your life will be passed in devouring grief. There are plenty of women in Persia."

"Yes," said I, "but they have no money like these——"

"Money!" exclaimed the ambassador, and the master of ceremonies, both in one breath. "Has your affair* any money?"

"Yes," said I, "she has."

"How much?" said they both.

"A crore of tomauns," answered I, "*nagd*, in cash."

"*Wallah, billah!*" exclaimed the ambassador, in a very altered tone. "Where does she live? which is her number?"

"Do many of these daughters of the Franks possess money?" enquired Mohamed Beg, very significantly.

"The greater part of them are not without it. The people of this country take almost as much care of their daughters as they do of their sons," said I.

"Money is a wonderful thing!" sighed Mohamed Beg, after a long silence.

* The words are *mâl shuma*, your property.

"You old bankrupt," said the ambassador to him, "I spit upon your beard. An infidel becomes a true believer in your eyes, as soon as there is money in the case."

"Let me represent for the good of your service," said he, "that we are enjoined, in almost every page of the blessed Koran, to despoil the infidel; ay, and even to slay him What harm, then, could there be in robbing him of a daughter, provided she were the means of depriving him also of his wealth? We are only thereby executing the commands of the Holy Prophet, upon whose head be eternal blessings."

"Allah! Allah! admirable mollah! excellent casuist!" roared the ambassador. "I suppose we shall see you twisting your curls next, and painting your eyes, to catch an infidel's daughter!" Then turning to me, he said, "Go, Hajjî, go, make your mind easy; when the fat Frank comes here again, I will tell him that you in fact are somebody, and that you once were the child of an old dog of a vizier, who, thanks to Allah, is now burning himself, and all his ancestors, in Jehanum. Let me know, in the mean while, where these crores of tomauns are to be found. In that, I will be your partner. We will go halves. You shall keep the daughter, and I will be satisfied with the tomauns."

Upon saying this, he dismissed us.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Unpleasant consequences of an ill-concerted scheme.—Hajjî Baba becomes angry, and writes an English letter.

I had not long left the ambassador, when a young infidel was introduced into my room; in him I recognised the youth whom I had seen at Woolwich, a Hogg, and brother to

the moon-faced Bessy. At the sight of him my heart received a jar. I had done no harm, 't is true; but no one likes to see another who possesses the secret of one's want of success.

We shook elbows together, and made the "How d'ye do?" and the fine weather. I asked him concerning the state of his family, to which he freely replied; and then, as well as I could understand, he told me that he had come, on the part of his father and mother, to speak to me upon the subject of his sister. He assured me that they felt highly honoured by my attentions, and by my proposals to her.

I was delighted at this, pulled up my mustache at the intelligence, and explained to him, if such were the case, that all was easily settled, for I was ready to marry her at once.

He then began to talk about difference of religion, and hinted that if the marriage ever were to take place, I must submit to go through their ceremonies, and begin by turning Christian. This was more particularly insisted upon by his sister Mary.

I asked what those ceremonies might be; and as far as I could learn, they consisted, first, in having my name cried out in the church, somewhat in the same manner we cry a stolen horse in our streets; then of getting a written permission from certain *hakeems*, or doctors, without which nothing can be done; thirdly, of appearing in the church, with a ring in my hand, which, being put on his sister's finger, nothing more was to be done but that we should abscond for a full month after from the face of the world.

Upon hearing this I remained in a state of suspense. How could it ever be that I, a Mussulman, should make myself of less account than a dog? I objected to the ceremonies, and endeavoured to explain how much more simple it would be if we were to marry after our fashion. We did not go to the mosque. Our respective deputies or *vakeels*

met, agreed upon the terms of our union, and it would depend upon her and her parents to be brought to me through the streets on a horse, with music preceding the procession, or, to make the thing more quiet, I agreed that she might come in a coach.

The young infidel did not seem to relish my proposal. He then informed me, that he was empowered to make some further explanations which related to dower. He said that his sister would receive a certain sum from her father on her marriage, and begged to know what were my possessions, and what I could settle upon her, in case anything were concluded.

I recollected all that had happened to me, upon a similar occasion, on my marriage with Sugarlips; but I felt that nothing of that sort of deceit would pass current here. I was long pausing what to say, being but little prepared for such a question. To say the truth, I had trusted too much to my being thought a prince; and wishing to gain time, I told my young friend, that although I longed to be married, yet that I must think a little upon this serious subject, and then I would let him know. He then urged me again to become a Christian. Since none of the torments necessary to make a Jew or Mussulman were inflicted, I did not see much objection to his request; but I required time to consider of it.

He was then rising to depart, when, as if he had forgotten something, he said, "You know, prince, we are anxious to see our sister happily settled in the world; and, as your country, your manners, and even you yourself, are quite new to us, you will forgive my parents for having acquired as much information as possible on these subjects. My father, in consequence, wrote a letter to the ambassador's mehmandar, requesting his advice and opinion. This is that gentleman's answer: it is right you should read it, and should you have any remark to make, pray do, and you may be certain that we shall give it our most serious at-

tention." Upon this he gave me a letter, and then in good friendship we parted.

"What news is this?" said I. "These people are as much awake as we ourselves. If I have got into the hands of this stubborn truth-speaking mehmandar, it is evident that I am extinguished. Let us see what he says."

Upon this I endeavoured to decipher and understand his letter; but finding how difficult it was so to do, I copied it word for word, and stroke for stroke, in my journal. It was after this manner:—

"*To Alexander Hogg, Esq.*

"Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge the reception of your letter, in which you enquire of me, first, Whether I am acquainted with the prince, Mirza Hajjî Baba? second, Whether I can inform you what may be the extent of his possessions? and third, Whether, from my knowledge of Persia, I would encourage any one of my countrywomen to marry a native of that country?

"With respect to your first and second enquiries, I must inform you, that the person you allude to is no prince, but the son of a barber at Ispahan; and as to his possessions, I should doubt whether he possesses anything beyond the clothes on his back.

"In answer to your third question, I can only say, that I would rather tie a millstone about my sister's neck, and throw her into the sea, than marry her to a Persian. I may be wrong, but, according to my views, it would be devoting her to certain misery. Once immured in the *anderûn*, she would associate with creatures, 't is true, in the shape of women, but whose habits would constantly shock her notions of decency and propriety. And it is not to be denied that she would frequently be witness of all the wicked passions of our nature—anger, strife, jealousy, revenge, and not unfrequently of more horrid crimes. The same varieties of character and disposition, the same mixture of good and evil, 't is true, are to be found in Persia as in all other countries; but few, indeed, are those who can withstand the force of example, and whose good disposition will not be exposed to corruption by the principles of a religion so baleful as the Mahomedan, and by the exactions of a government so degrading as despotism? As for the Hajjî himself, he is by nature well disposed, and had he received the education of a Christian, would doubtless have been a good man; but he has the vices common to a country where men live much by their wits, and, as it were, from hand to mouth. It is this which makes them liars and rogues in spite of themselves; for, as a matter of course, a man esteems it

but common justice to inflict upon others the injustice which he himself has experienced.

"Let me now hope that, after this sincere opinion, you will no longer think that you have provided for the happiness of Miss Hogg, by making her the Princess Hajjî Baba.

"I am, &c."

Having transcribed this letter, I called my friend the nazir, to give me the fullest interpretation of it; and when I thought that I had well understood it, I felt a crookedness of temper, which would, no doubt, have broken out in great violence against the author, had he been present. In my secret thoughts, however, I could not but allow that he was right: but why should he spoil my fortunes, we who had slept in the same room together, and dipped our hands in the same dish? I felt myself disgraced in the eyes of the Hoggs; and I immediately determined to give an answer which would drive existence out of the mehmandar's head, and make him less than a Christian's swine. I therefore wrote, in my best manner, as follows:

"My dear Friend,

"Pon my honour, mehmandar one bad man. What for he want to throw Miss Bessy in sea, sir? What for he write lies, sir? He say, I barber's son. I once was barber's son, but now I 'come mirza. Why he tell lies? He say I poor man, and wear old clothes. Why he say that? My shah very rich, *Mashallah!* and if shah rich, all his servants rich too. What he want more, sir? I very angry.

"Then he say other great lies, sir. He say Persian women bad. Where he see Persian women, sir? He not known one, sir. Then how say whether she be good or bad? In all countries some good, some bad. He say all Persian man bad, all woman bad. That little lie, sir, not good. Love to wife, daughters, and all friends.

HAJJÎ BABA."

Having despatched this letter to the father Hogg, I felt more at my ease; but I determined to let the ambassador know, that if we had acquired a bad name in this foreign country, it was not through our faults, but through the words of that ill-conditioned infidel, the mehmandar. Evidently our chief was now becoming very impatient at the slow mode

of transacting business among the Franks, for the object of his mission had not yet been fulfilled; and as the mehmandar came every day with a new story and a fresh excuse, each of which proved to be one as false as the other, it would not be difficult to prove the baseness of his character. Why then should I not scrape my heart clean, and expose its scouring and the conduct of this infidel at one and the same time?

CHAPTER XLV.

The heir apparent to the British throne visits the Ambassador.—Strange things come to pass.

I was determined to speak openly to the ambassador upon the subject of the mehmandar, and had proceeded to the hall of audience to do so, when I found them both in deep conversation. The moment was not yet come; for in England, as well as Persia, there are times and seasons for all things. The ambassador was now full of a *ziafet*, or an entertainment which he had resolved to give, to which he had it in contemplation to invite the heir to the British crown, as well as all the nobility, the courtiers, and the chief priests. Much management and negociation were requisite before this event could be brought about, and one of the great difficulties was to fix upon a proper day. This we thought extraordinary, because the mehmandar had taught us to believe all days were alike in the eyes of his countrymen; that one was not more fortunate than another. His lies became hourly more palpable. At length a day having been fixed when a gathering of infidels might be made, the printing-houses were set to work to announce it.

When this event was known throughout the town, the sensation was as great as when Fath Ali Shah celebrates the festival of the *No Rouz*. It seemed as if the English had never before seen Persians. The ambassador's door was thronged from morning to night by persons seeking to be invited. One expected an invitation because his cousin had been in Persia, and had seen the shah. Another because he was friend to the brother of a man who had spoken to the ambassador on his landing at Plymouth. A lady was angry at not being asked, because she insisted that, since Persians admitted of a plurality of wives in their harems, the representative of Persia ought to act upon the same principle in the formation of his party.

I had heard no more from my Hoggs; and evidently the representations of the mehmandar had produced their effect. The subject was only now and then alluded to in joke by the ambassador, who asked me, when we should touch the gold; otherwise I had almost forgotten it. But what was my surprise, a few mornings before the fête day, to discover, in a carriage full of infidels, the head of the mamma Hogg making signs to me. "By the beard of Ali, these Franks are mad," said I; then again, being struck by a hope that something propitious to my love might have taken place, I deemed it right to obey the old woman's invitation, and stepped to the door of her carriage.

To my amazement she spoke to me as if nothing had taken place between us: she said, "Ah, prince! how do you do? It is a long time since we have seen you. You forget your old friends. We are not good enough for you now. I see how it is." And thus she continued for a long while, until my head went round and round in endeavouring to ascertain what her meaning might be; when at length, just as she had ordered her coachman to drive away, I discerned the *mutlub*, that is, the real object of her visit. It put me in mind of our Persian letters, the principal part of which consists of compliments, whilst the true meaning is thrown into the margin. Her object was to be invited to the ambassador's fête; and to insure this,

the faithless Bessy was made to shake the tip of her finger with mine. I was not so easily to be taken in as to accede without difficulty to her request; but at the same time secretly hoping that the crore of tomauns might still be forthcoming, I made one of our usual Persian speeches, in which I assured her that the dust of her threshold was collyrium for my eyes, and entreated her never to diminish the quantity of her shadow. With these speeches she appeared satisfied; but from that moment I was visited with a succession of notes, which were sent to me at intervals almost as regular as the crying of the muezzin from the mosque, and which all breathed a desire to see my promises realised. Not wishing to revive the ambassador's jokes, I did not like to apply to him; but a thought struck me. I remarked how the invitations were written out, and taking possession of a printed card unknown to any one, having carefully looked out my words in a dictionary, I wrote upon it, "*One mother Hogg and two head of daughters*;" using the word *ras*,* let me own it, not without some small tincture of maliciousness. I then delivered it myself at their door.

I was surprised at the meanness of the preparations which the English make in expectation of a visit from their prince. Had we been left to follow the customs of our country on this occasion, we should have taught them what devotion to a royal personage means. A *pahendaz*, consisting of costly stuffs, would have been spread from the entrance of the street to the very room in which he was to be seated, and a hundred gold tomauns would have been presented to him at the threshold. But here, no other distinction save a *peishwaz*, or deputation, to receive him at the door of the house with lighted candles, was prepared for his reception. Weeks perhaps would have been taken up in Persia to prepare food for his attendants; whereas here every thing remained in its place until the very day.

* "*Ras*, or head, is seldom applied to others besides slaves.

The ambassador held a consultation with me and his servants upon how we could best show him honour. Taki, the ferash, said we ought to kneel and kiss the ground as he passed; to this Mohamed Beg dissented, for he asserted that no Mussulman ought so to humble himself before an infidel, unless he were forced. Seid and Mahboob, the black slaves, recommended that the Circassian should sing, and play on the tambourine, as she would have done before our shah, or his son, had either of them visited her master. To this the ambassador himself objected, for he feared lest his wife should hear of it, and then Heaven knows what the result might be to him. We proposed entertaining the prince of England with some of our national feats. Hassan, the cook, was a capital eater of fire and spouter of water. Mohamed Beg undertook to recite ten thousand verses from the Shah Nameh. Taki could perform several feats of tumbling and *lûti bazi;* he could also twirl a brass plate on a stick balanced on his nose. If wrestling were required, the master of the horse and the barber were ready to come forwards; and should a long story have been necessary to fill up the evening, I, who had occasionally been called upon to entertain our late grand vizier, was prepared with any parts of Antar that might be required. But all these arrangements were over-ruled by the mehmandar, who said that, as the prince did not understand Persian, the recitation of the Shah Nameh and the long story would be of no use; and, instead of the other feats, he proposed collecting a body of English singers, men and women, who would perform after a manner agreeable to him.

The hour of the meeting at length came. The ambassador had ornamented the picture of our shah with a magnificent frame. Innumerable lights produced a blaze throughout the house, and a seat was prepared for the prince. The company began to arrive, whilst we stood in the hall to see them pass. I and Mohamed Beg, who had been to an Assembly, were not surprised at the beauty of the young women, the great number of the old, their dresses, and their rich ornaments; but the

rest of the suite, who saw this sight for the first time, stood mute with astonishment. "Oh!" said the master of the horse, "half a dozen of these moon-faced damsels carried off in a *chappow*,* and brought to the market at Tehran, would fetch gold enough to set me up as a khan for life."

"Look at that old woman, dressed as fine as the peacock of paradise!" exclaimed Taki, the carpet-spreader, seeing one with skin like Russia leather; her arms and breast uncovered, and her whole person groaning under years, gold, and diamonds: "give her to me as she stands," said he, "and I will say my *khoda hafiz*, or 'God be with you,' and take my departure to-morrow."

The string of odd figures, men and women, was endless. At length, hearing a well-known voice calling out, "Come along, Bessy, come along, Jessy," I espied three women tottering under immense head-dresses, something like those worn by our *Sheikh el Islams*. These were the mamma Hogg and her daughters; who, as soon as she remarked me, roared out, "Well, prince, here we are; see, we have put on turbans, all out of compliment to his excellency the *shaw*, that's what he is called, I believe!"

Upon this they ascended into the great room. I did not like to follow until some time had elapsed, fearful of an explanation; at length, when I did venture, to my horror I saw the mamma exhibiting the card I had written to the mehmandar, and evidently asking him to take her up to the ambassador. She and her daughters seemed to attract the observation of all the assembly. My heart went up and down with apprehension; and I was dreading the taunts or the reproofs of both ambassador and mehmandar, when the sound of many voices was heard roaring out the arrival of the prince of England. The ambassador and mehmandar, with great demonstrations of respect, went forward to receive him; and as he entered the room all the English formed themselves into a

* A predatory excursion.

circle, and made low and profound bows. It was now that I ascertained the truth of what I had frequently heard concerning this royal personage. Every word he uttered was a charm; his smile was like the virtue of a talisman, and a look from his eye must be sure to secure good fortune. I sighed as I recollected what a different sensation was created at the appearance of our own princes, who kept all the world at a distance, whose look inspired fear, whose smile preceded extortion, and whose frown was followed by punishment! As the prince walked slowly round the circle, talking with the greatest affability to the nobles and the courtiers, I perceived Mrs. Hogg and her daughters holding a conspicuous post in the ring, having secured a place by much pushing and elbow play. When the prince approached them, his eye being caught by their immense turbans, he smiled, and asked the ambassador who they were: she, the mamma, was all this time making much play with her knees. The ambassador, not recollecting them, enquired of the mehmandar, who seemed rather puzzled what explanation to make, when the mother again produced the accursed card, from which, by desire of the prince, the mehmandar read aloud, "One mother Hogg and two head of daughters." This produced a laugh which nothing could suppress, although, in watching the face of the prince, it was clear that his good breeding gave no encouragement to it. In the meanwhile the women slunk from the public gaze in great mortification, whilst I too made my retreat.

Having devoured my misery in the best manner I was able, I kept out of the way of observation; but still I had a desire to make another trial to secure the good graces of my charmer; and searching for her and her mother, I at length discovered them in the room where the eating and drinking were displayed. They seemed in no manner disposed to throw their shadows over me. The mother was making up for her mortification by eating whatever came in her way, whilst the

daughters would, no doubt, have willingly hid themselves and their turbans in the lowermost depths. I received no marks of gratitude for having procured them the notice of their prince; and if I built my hopes of attaining the maid and her money on this account, it was evident I had made a false reckoning.

I now returned to my companions, who were in high discussion at all they saw. We were agreed that the fêtes given in our country exceeded what we saw here: for, instead of the space and air which we enjoy, the assembly were gasping for breath in the confinement of rooms closed in on every side. From long residence I had now become accustomed to the promiscuous congregation of men and women; but those of the suite who had not seen a Frank entertainment could not recover their astonishment. The manner in which all ranks of both sexes were pressed together seemed to them only a preparative for something else. The order and quiet of the whole scene was still more astonishing.

"Allah, Allah!" cried the master of the horse. "Pack a room full of Irânies in the same manner, and see the noise that would ensue! The knife would long ago have been in full use, and not a beard would have remained unplucked by this time."

There was an unusual stir and noise at the departure of the prince, and then very soon after the whole house was cleared.

What we looked upon as a mob not to be dispersed very gradually disentangled itself, and without one single accident, quarrel, or act of theft, did this assembly of infidels return in peace to their homes. 'Tis true one great source of quarrel which we possess in Persia did not exist here: no pipe-trimmers or shoe-bearers were collected, consequently there was no precedence among the servants to be contended for. But, on the other hand, the fights going on in the street among the charioteers and drivers of *arabahs* were as great

as might be seen between the *hyderis* and the *neamet allahis* in our own towns.*

"Ah!" said Mohamed Beg, as he remarked the fury with which some of these men without mercy beat their horses,—"Ah! the tyranny which is exercised upon the unfortunate *rayats*, or peasants, in Persia falls upon the horses here!" And upon this we went to bed.

CHAPTER XLVI.

The Persians talk over the preceding evening's adventures.—Of the persons and things they saw and heard.

The next morning, after the ambassador had bathed, his beard being newly dyed and trimmed, his spirits were up, and he spoke to us for a long while upon what had taken place the night before.

"Now," said he, "you have seen what the Franks are. You could not have known them before, and it is only by seeing them frequently after this manner that I myself begin to be acquainted with their customs. They are people without pride, without noise, and friendly to strangers. Did you see their prince? He is the Abbas Mirza of this country. By the holy Prophet, by Allah! I swear that I never conceived that any man could acquire so much power over another as he

* These are two sects in Persia, of which the origin is not well ascertained. Most of the low rabble of the Persian cities take either one or the other side of the question, although ignorant of the real cause of quarrel, and sometimes they fight with sticks and stones until many heads are broken and even lives lost. The most approved reason for this is that which Chardin gives, namely, that Ispahan (where the sects first arose) is situated on the site of two rival villages of the name of Hyder and Neamet Allahi, and in the course of time they were included in the extent of the city.

has over me. I thought Abbas Mirza had made me sufficiently his slave, but here I am bound hand and foot. Such manners —such a power of countenance, with an eye in its full moon* —so condescending, and still so royal —I am sure that Fath Ali Shah would not only accede to all the reasonable propositions which England makes to us, but would even place his throne at this prince's disposal."

"Yes, in truth," said Mohamed Beg, "he is a wonderful Frank. He is, among the English, what the beard of the Asylum of the Universe is among the beards of his subjects —without an equal."

"But then you did not hear his conversation," continued the ambassador. "He said things which made me faint with laughter. He has a turn of wit which quite comes up to some of our jokes. If the shah had not selected me as his ambassador, all other Persians would have been thought asses! Suppose that Turk, Asker Khan, or that cow, Ferajullah Khan, or that madman, Mirza Abul Cossim, had been sent, what dog is there amongst them who could have conversed with this prince as I have done?"

I, who feared to eat abuse for having invited the Hoggs, immediately exclaimed, "Yes! yes! Mashallah! who is there possessing an understanding such as yours! Thanks over and above be to Allah! the shah's face in this country, without your wisdom, would have been black, and we should have remained despised and less than curs."

"You ought to have heard some of my jokes," said he, excited by my flattery. "I made the prince laugh with what I said to an old *begum*, who came up making fine speeches, whose lip and chin were covered with almost as much hair as my own, and who evidently had forgotten to chew her *mastich*. † I said it was impossible that she could carry her kindness and civility farther, since she had let her beard and whiskers grow out of compliment to the occasion."

* This means a quick and penetrating eye.

† *Mastich* is a kind of gum which sweetens the breath.

We all exclaimed, "*Barikallah!*"

"On another occasion," said he, "when I had been introduced to an unfortunate shah who had taken refuge at the English court, and who was so fat that he was obliged to be always seated, I said to the by-standers, *Mashallah!* How happy the poor will be when he is restored to his kingdom! Although none of them understood the delicacy of my observation, still they all said, 'Yes! yes!' and the king himself appeared mightily pleased."

"Excellent, excellent!" said we; "you spoke admirably. We understand your joke: wonderful wit. *Mashallah! Mashallah!*"*

"Again," said he "an old khan accosted me, and asked many questions—How did I like England? What did I think of the women, and of the horses, and of many other things? I was at last tired of him, and said, '*All things very good sir; but one thing little bad—old man ask too many questions.*' This made the by-standers laugh so that they almos died of it, whilst he, the khan, was annihilated."

"Yes, and in truth," said Mohamed Beg, "they do ask many strange questions. There was a youth who enquired whether we were famous now for being good horsemen. We laughed in his face, and told him that none could excel those of Irân. An Irâni, on his horse, with a spear in his hand, was a match for a host—he was a male lion. He then asked if we were taught to draw the bow. We told him that in the days of Jemsheed we fought with bows and arrows, as do the *Turcomans*† of the present time; but that now no nation could manage the gun with our skill. At length he asked whether we were famous for speaking the truth.

* This alludes to the custom called *teil mizan*, when, on particular occasions of thanksgiving, eastern princes weigh themselves with money in the opposite scale, which they afterwards distribute to the poor.

† The Persians assert that the etymology of Turcoman is from "bow and arrow; *i. e. tîr*, arrow, and *comân*, bow.

We then saw that he had, in fact, all this time been laughing at our beards, and making game of us. I informed him if that was the way he took to call us liars, he need not have given himself so much trouble; and that, by the blessing of Allah! if we did lie, it was no business of his.

"He saw that I was angry, and then endeavoured to turn off his impertinence by assuring us, that he had read in an old book that our education consisted of learning to ride, drawing the bow, and telling the truth; and he wanted to know if such was the custom still."

"There was another person," said Taki, the ferash, "who came amongst us, and who made the most extraordinary enquiries. Through an interpreter, who spoke a little bad Persian, he asked us what sort of heads we had. We thought, at first, this was a Frank compliment, as we might say, how is your brain? but it was more than that—for he persisted in wishing to know whether our heads were hard or soft, and he even persuaded me to let him feel my head, which he did by pressing it about with his hand. When he found that it was in fact soft, he appeared to be thrown into the greatest state of ecstasy, and returned to us again with one or two more, who all felt our heads in turn.* We became surprised at this new ceremony; the more so because we had never seen it practised among themselves. All we could discover was that one of their old books recorded that we had soft heads, and they were delighted to discover that it spoke the truth. We remained greatly surprised."

"Another of them," said the master of the horse, "endeavoured to turn our horses into ridicule, but I gave him more in exchange than he brought. He asked me, 'In the name of the Prophet, why do you paint your white horses' tails red?'—'And you,' said I, 'why do you turn your long tails into short ones?'"

"A young *kasheng*, or beau, asked me," said Mahboob,

* The Hajjî no doubt must have fallen in with some one who had been reading Herodotus.

the black slave, "where the Circassian was, and whether she was among the infidel khanums? I asked him, 'Why do you ask?' He said that he wanted to see her; and that by the laws of his country she ought not to be kept in confinement. I told him to go and tell the ambassador so, when he put his finger in his mouth, and went away."

"These people, with respect to the Circassian," continued Seid, the other slave, "make a great many odd observations."

"How?" said the ambassador.

"They say that neither I nor Mahboob are men; and, moreover, that there is a certain conjurer, as well as we could understand, who was able to take her out of confinement at any moment, do all we could, merely by writing a talisman, which in this country is called 'Habeas Corpus.' They also say, that any body who chooses may make her his wife, by taking her into the mountains to a country called 'Gretna Green,' where a dervish lives, who is a worker of iron, and evidently a composer of charms; for he can turn men and women into husbands, and with the same ease as our blessed Prophet could turn sheep into camels."

"What do you say, you man?" said the ambassador, in a tone of derision. "Whatever these Franks choose to tell you, you believe! If they were to tell you that the sun was made of *halwa*,* you would believe it. What have they to do with the Circassian? She sits in a corner, *fakir!* poor thing! and has nothing to say to any body."

"For the love of Ali," enquired Mohamed Beg, "who was that man dressed in black, with a sort of fine sheep's skin on his head, sprinkled with white dust, and a little curtain before his thighs? He was a strange personage."

"He was one of the chiefs of their law, a great *mollah*," said the ambassador. "The great rolls of muslin which our sheikh el Islams wear round their heads, he wears upon his

* A common sweetmeat in Persia and Turkey.

arms; but his dress here was *tebtil*, in disguise. It is only on occasions of ceremony that he puts on his muslin sleeves. He asked me whether we spoke Hebrew in Persia. I told him we despised Jews, and that their language was impure; but that we learned Arabic; at which he appeared pleased, but still he persisted in asserting the necessity of Hebrew. We conversed for some time upon the excellence of our respective languages, when I completely asserted the superiority of ours, by assuring him that it required thirty camels to carry one dictionary. After that he could say nothing. He is a learned man, and spoke many languages."

"But the women! the women! O my master," exclaimed the master of the horse. "Had it not been for the old ones, this would have been the *behesht*, the paradise! In this world I never saw anything like them. For the sake of the Prophet, do present one or two of them to the shah! take them, in order that we may not be called liars on our return. The king of England surely, for the love he bears his brother, would not object to a few of his subjects being carried off."

"Are you mad?" answered his chief. "Little do you know of the English, and of English kings. If an Englishman's dog were to be taken from him by force, for the king's use, he is capable of making those rebels, the opposition, take up arms in his favour, and drive the king's viziers into the deserts. After that, talk of taking away any of his subjects without their consent!"

"By the bye," said the ambassador, turning himself towards me, "speaking of women, who were those walking about with things on their heads as large as the cupolas of our mosques? They were the property of Hajjî Baba, I would lay a good wager. By my soul! explain: is it not so?"

"What can I say?" said I. "After having embittered my life, they have finished by making me eat dirt."

"If these are the same uncleans whom you presented be-

fore to me," said the ambassador, "once was enough in all conscience. However, if they have money, there is no harm done; and you will not forget our partnership."

I rejoiced to have escaped better than I had expected; but still I felt the mehmandar lying heavy on my heart, and I hoped ere long to let him know how little we were pleased with him.

CHAPTER XLVII.

The Ambassador becomes anxious to return to Persia.—He visits a new personage, and of the consequences of that event.

We had now been in England eight months, and, to say the truth, we began to think seriously of our own country. The ambassador complained bitterly that the business about which he had been sent to the English shah remained unsettled; and I never lost an opportunity of insinuating that no faith could be put in the word of the mehmandar, and that *he* must be to blame for the delay. The ambassador at length, whose mind became every day more the prey of anxiety, broke out into bitter words, and thus addressed the mehmandar:—

"After all, sir, our shah is somebody. Iran is a country. We are men. We have money; we have houses; we have produce of the soil; but it is plain that we are here looked upon as your servants. You don't know the Persians, sir. Who amongst them will believe me when I say, that the country I am living in is one, which, if it chose to exert its energies, would swallow up all others. They will turn up their noses at me, put their caps on one side, and in their ignorance will exclaim, '*Goor peder shahi Frank.* The grave of the father of the Franks be defiled.' In the name of

Allah, sir, get me an answer to the requests of my shah, and let me go. We are dead with this delay."

The mehmandar answered after his usual manner. He begged the ambassador to consider that the business between states was not like that between individuals. That besides the embassy from Persia, England had embassies from many other kings and governments, all of whom had important negociations to transact; and that if he would but have a little more patience, he would no doubt be dismissed with honour, and, he hoped, much to the satisfaction of both countries.

The ambassador then urged what he had urged a thousand times before, namely, that his shah was a despotic shah; that he sometimes had a bad custom of cutting off men's heads; and that if he, the ambassador, could not give a good account of this delay, his own would in all probability be disposed of in that manner. "By Allah, let me entreat you," added he: "go to your vizier, swear to him that I am dying with grief; tell him the smoke of this town kills me; if I die, my blood will be upon his head."

The mehmandar swore that all would go well; and then recommended that he should pass his time in seeing many things which he had hitherto neglected. This was his old excuse, and we knew it well.

"What things? What sights?" said our chief. "By dint of seeing things, of running here, running there, you have killed me. The other day you took me to a place, where you assured me that the whole business of the state was transacted, and where I saw a connection of semi-madmen. But, in the name of the Prophet, who ever transacted business after that manner? If you call that a sight, we might as well call the shah's *defter khaneh* a sight, where the grand vizier sits of a morning, surrounded by hundreds of mirzas, mollahs, khans, ketkhodas, peasants, and couriers from all nations; answering one, dictating to another, writing himself, giving abuse to a fourth, and ordering the bastinado to a fifth. That

is indeed doing business; but to be taken into a large room where a parcel of individuals are collected, some onthe right, others on the left of a man with a powdered sheep's skin on his head, all occupied in their own concerns; whilst some one of them is holding forth unheeded, and if heeded, perhaps laughed at; and to call that seeing business transacted it is really laughing at one's beard. After all, we are Persians, and are not without our rules and regulations. We know the world."

"We were unfortunate on that day," said the mehmandar; "none of our good orators happened to speak, 't is true, and you could not have received a good impression of our house of Parliament. There was only one of the opposition expending his breath."

"Opposition!" exclaimed I. "Why those are the rebels: is it not so?"

"Rebels?" said the mehmandar; "what words are these? A man may differ from another in opinion, without being a rebel."

"We don't understand it so in Persia," said I. "The shah would have but a miserable reign of it, if he supposed that any man in his dominions could ever have a different opinion from his own. I have been thinking," said I to the ambassador, "that you would do a service to this country if you would recommend to the king of England to treat this opposition tribe in the same manner as Shah Abbas did the Armenians: some he transplanted to Mazanderan; others he sent to the New Julfa; and others again to different parts of Persia, and thus broke their influence as a body!"

"You do not say ill, Hajjî," said my chief, much pleased with my suggestion, whilst the mehmandar held his tongue in peace, like a man who could say much but would not. He then reminded the ambassador that this was the day when he was engaged to dine at the country-house of a rich *sharoff*, a money-changer, where he would see the manners and customs of that class of the king of England's subjects.

"Let us go," said the Mirza, apparently in despair, "let us go! By dint of seeing and being seen, my liver has turned into water; my soul has withered!" He then ordered me and Mohamed Beg to accompany him, and by the evening we reached a house surrounded by trees, distant about three parasangs from the city.

It was a beautiful place, which would inevitably have belonged to one of our princes, had it been in Persia, whoever might be its owner. There were trees in abundance, running water, and flowers of all hues. The whole was better arranged than anything we had ever seen, even in the royal gardens at Tehran; and whatever could contribute to the enjoyment of man was here displayed.

The ambassador was received at the door by a fat, business-like looking man, and in the hall of audience by a lady and daughters, surrounded by a large company of men and women. There was a something in their appearance which did not look quite like the infidels with whom we commonly lived; and Mohamed Beg, whose instinct at the approach of anything unclean is extremely acute, was the first to observe, that perhaps they might be Jews.

"Jews!" said I, "it cannot be. The mehmandar would never so much degrade us Mussulmans, much less the representative of our shah, by taking him among Jews."

Upon closer observation, we began to be convinced that they could be nothing else, and at a favourable opportunity we hinted as much to the ambassador. He seemed evidently embarrassed at our observation, and did not deny the truth of it; but as some of his own Christian friends were among the party, he kept amongst them, and put the best face he could upon what to a Mussulman must always be a degradation.

"So they have Jews in this country," said I to Mohamed Beg, "as well as in Persia! but see what Jews! they are princes: see the bankrupts! what state, what magnificence! Oh! if we had them in Persia, by the beard of Ali, I myself

would be the first to spit in their faces, and take from them all that came in my way!"

"The mehmandar did wrong," said my companion in an angry mood, "to bring us here. We will burn his father!"

"We will," said I, "we will," too happy to have a good reason for being revenged upon him; and as we were thus taken up, we were accosted by one, who caused Mohamed Beg to say his *astaferallah*, and to close his skirts. "See," said he to me, "one of the unclean tribe is here. For the sake of Imam Hussein, let us treat him as if we were in Persia.

"Let us hear what he says first," said I, when a slouching, thick-skinned Jew, with large saucer-eyes and heavy eye-lids, approached us, and asked us if we had brought any precious stones from Persia, or pearls perhaps.

"*No*," said I in English—"*No—we no bring—you want steal, perhaps?*"

Upon this he laughed, and took my words in joke. He then enquired whether perchance we had any foreign gold to change, and followed us so close, that Mohamed Beg, I verily believe, would have struck him a box on the ear, had I not prevented him.

"*Go, sir*," said I, "*we no Jews—we Mussulmans;*" upon this he went away, but soon returned, followed by another, who by his appearance was not a Jew. This man began by remarking, that it was a fine day, and asked us whether we had such gardens and such houses in our country.

I answered, that if we had such houses and such gardens, they would not belong to Jews as they did here, and *that* was one advantage which we had over England.

"Then perhaps you don't love Jews," said he.

"*No, sir*," said I. "*Christians are bad, Turks are bad, and dogs are bad—but Jews are worse than all. You, sir, are you Jew?*"

"No, sir," answered he, "I am not a Jew,— I am a grocer."

"*A grocer!*" said I: "*what religion may that be?*"

"Oh!" said he, laughing, "it is no religion, it is a trade: we deal in sugar and coffee, pepper and mustard, and groceries."

I then discovered that he was in fact a *bagal.** "*Mashallah!*" said I to Mohamed Beg, "the mehmandar has thrown us into pretty company!" Then turning to our new friend, I asked him if he was very rich, to which he assented with considerable self-importance, and added,

"We say in England, as rich as a Jew, but I do not see why we should not say as a grocer also."

I made him understand, that he ought to look upon himself as very fortunate to be an Englishman, for if he were in Persia, the shah would soon make his riches of service to the public. "He would oblige you to build a caravanserai," said I, "as Shah Abbas did his rich citizens, and if that would not be enough, he would force you to found a college, build a mosque, and endow a body of priests."

"Ah!" said the grocer, "we pay taxes and duties enough here, without coming to these extremities."

By this time the entertainment was ready, and an immense company sat down to a most magnificent table, covered with a succession of dishes, so varied and so numerous, that no Turkish cook could ever have exceeded them. The ambassador was seated between a Jew and a Jewess. Mohamed Beg and I could scarcely suppress our rage at seeing this. "What would our shah say," said we, "if he saw his representative thus situated? Is it not a shame that he permits himself to be in such a neighbourhood? He has forgotten that he is a Mussulman; he is become less than a dog!" The disgust of Mohamed Beg increased as we sat at table, and all his Mussulman principles were developed. "This is the acmé of degradation," said he. "Every precept of the Koran is here set at open defiance. With a Jew on either side—infidels before him—infidels behind him—with

* A chandler.

wine in his hand, and no doubt portions of the unclean animal under his nose—he is making the *khosh guzaroon* * without shame or repugnance! He only wants to have his beard shaved, and to wear a hat, and he would be complete."

We returned to the city, evidently but little pleased with our excursion. The ambassador did not utter a word in the carriage. What we ventured to say only expressed our feelings of abhorrence against Jews; and we did not fail to talk so pointedly at the mehmandar, that we were not without hopes that he felt acutely how well we had burnt his father.

"There are some persons who think themselves wiser than *Asaf*," † said Mohamed Beg, "but who in fact are the grandfathers of stupidity." ‡

"Yes," said I, "Soliman (upon whom be blessings), had he had such men for his viziers, would never have acquired the reputation of being the wisest of all created beings."

The mehmandar did not, however, cease extolling the beauty of the house, the excellence of the dinner, the civility of the host and hostess; and in answer to our attacks upon all Jews, the most he could urge in their favour was, "that they were God's creatures like ourselves, and therefore objects of his mercy."

* A free liver, a jolly fellow.

† *Asaf* is the name of the grand vizier to Soliman, according to eastern history. Among Mussulmans he is looked upon as a model of perfection.

‡ Asses.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

An English holy man visits the Ambassador.—Of the presents he brings, and of the mischief which ensues.

Mohamed Beg passed all the following morning in purifying himself from the contamination which he might have received from the Jews. He bathed, he recited a double quantity of prayers, and even left off his silk trousers for a day. I did not sufficiently partake of his scruples to do the same, but I was not sorry to have an opportunity to give vent to my feelings towards the ambassador, who, although occasionally seized with fits of condescension towards me, generally treated me with slight, since the death of the grand vizier.

We related our adventures among the Jews to the rest of the suite; and taking advantage of the insuperable contempt with which that unclean generation are looked down upon by us, we succeeded in rousing their disgust, as well as keeping up our own.

It so happened, that the day after the Jew day, the ambassador received a formal visit from an English mollah, arrayed in the full dress of his order, bearing in both his hands two Christian holy books,— one a book of prayer, the other the *Evangîl*, the Bible.

He was announced with a solemn face by the mehmandar, whilst we were standing before our chief, and introduced with many bows on the part of the priest. The mehmandar entreated the ambassador to receive him standing, which he willingly did; when the mollah taking from his robes a roll of parchment, highly ornamented and beautifully written, read from it an address, with an audible voice, and an impressive

manner, and then placed in the ambassador's own hands the books of which he was the bearer.

The mehmandar them interpreted the mollah's speech, which was an address from a collection of men who met together for the purposes of making converts to the Christian faith. It stated, that having the glory of God in view, and looking upon his ordinances as the best offering they could make to so illustrious a stranger as the ambassador, they had ventured to present him a copy of their holy scriptures, together with their book of prayer; and that they in consequence had sent their mirza, or secretary, to make them acceptable.

Mirza Firouz, in truth, behaved with great civility on this occasion, and dismissed the mollah with many flattering speeches; but the moment the ceremony was over, and when we had quitted the apartment, Mohamed Beg was the first to cry out that the ambassador had turned *Isauvi*, or Christian. He asserted that nothing could be more clear, for the shameless mehmandar had taken full possession of him, and had entirely kept us at a distance. He had thrown him, said he, almost exclusively into the hands of his own countrymen; and having insured his degradation, by making him keep company with the lowest of mankind, Jews and grocers, it was plain that what had just taken place was the finishing stroke. In short, he had made him a Frank and a Christian.

The representations of the master of ceremonies produced a great effect upon those of his countrymen who heard him, for they began to fear lest they also should be obliged to change their faith. Seid and Mahboob, the slaves, appeared very thoughtful; and it is supposed that they immediately related the whole circumstance to the Circassian, who had become so strict an observer of the rules of our religion that she passed the whole of her time in performing her ablutions, and saying her *namaz*. She took great fright at this change in her lord's principles; and as she was a cou-

rageous girl, it was not long before she taxed him with being an infidel to the purity of Islam.

To those who have witnessed the gathering of a storm upon the mountains of Albors, perhaps the fury which exploded in the ambassador's breast may be imagined. We heard its first violence in the Circassian's room, and then watched it gradually descending the staircases, until it broke out with increased violence in my apartment, in which we were assembled.

"Who presumes to say that I am turned Frank?" roared the ambassador; "who amongst you," cried he, raising his voice louder and louder, "says that I am a *bideen*, a man without religion; who eats the abomination of the Christians, and no longer takes pleasure in Islam? Mohamed Beg, you are one; Hajjî Baba, you are another," turning alternately to us. "What have I done, that you should say this of me? Speak, men."

Mohamed Beg answered, with great deference, "I am less than a dog; still the truth is, that I did not like to see the representative of our shah associating with Jews. What can I say more? I have said it."

"And who are you, you old long-bearded ass, who dare have an opinion concerning anything which I may do? Am I to ask you where I am to go, and what I am to say? The shah permitted you to accompany me, to walk before me with a long stick, to say a few unmeaning words, and to make a few useless bows, and not to trouble yourself with my conduct; for that I will account to him who sent me—not to your dog's face."

"We are Mussulmans," said the master of ceremonies; "and whatever is contrary to our religion, upon that every child of Islam may be allowed to remark. Although I am nothing, yet religion after all is something and, as Hajjî Baba knows, no inducement shall make me forsake it, to herd with infidels."

"And you too, Hajjî Baba," said the ambassador to me

"you all of a sudden have turned a man of God; you, who all your life have been a sinner, a devourer of other men's goods; who were disowned by your own countrymen for turning Turk, and then kicked out by the Turks for being a swindler, say, why am I treated thus?"

"By your beard, O Mirza!" said I, "I have done nothing. Mohamed Beg, who in truth is a Mussulman, was shocked at being made to associate with Jews; and this day, when you were visited by the Frank *mushtehed*,* and accepted the holy scriptures of the unbelievers into your own hands, as you would have done our blessed Koran, he assured us that you were converted to their faith."

"Oh, you dog without a saint!" said he to Mohamed Beg; "Are you a Mussulman to lie after this manner? why am I to bear all this want of respect? I am the shah's representative, and if the shah himself was here he would cut your head off; but as I am a good man I will only punish you with a few blows. Give me the shoe," he cried out to several of us; and having named me as the principal agent, I was obliged to take off my slipper, and inflict on the mouth of my friend as many blows as I could. I went to work as quietly as possible; but with all my ingenuity I could not avoid knocking out a certain old and solitary tooth, which had stood sentry at the door of his mouth ever since the last reign.

The poor sufferer left the ambassador in pain and anger. I heard him vow eternal vengeance; and to me he said, "Oh, you of little fortune! why would you hit my tooth! You did better things when you were a ferash, and beat men's toes."

I swore upon the sacred book that I was without help, that I was ordered to strike; and I only begged that if he were ever obliged to do the same to me that he would not spare me.

* A high priest.

I then tried to comfort him, which was not a difficult matter, since, yielding as he always did to the decrees of predestination, his mind was soon soothed into acquiescence, and even into thankfulness for what had befallen him.

"Out of the dirty manure cometh rich fruits and cucumbers; so out of evil cometh good," said he. "I may now lay my head on my pillow in security, with the certainty that my boy is alive. I cannot now dream that I have lost my favourite tooth, since it no longer exists. But as for our master, (may his liver turn into water!) you will soon hear that his child is no more; for three nights ago he told me that he had dreamed of the loss of a tooth."

Having put a hot fig to my companion's jaw, and bound his face round with a handkerchief, we settled our tempers by smoking a kiliân, and by the evening we were almost ready for another scene. We formed plans for returning to our own country; and although there were many things in England which we should frequently regret, yet on the whole we were agreed that a country of unbelievers was not the place for children of the true faith to pitch their tents in.

"In truth, however," said Mohamed Beg, "beer is a right good thing. See," said he, "what rare inventions these infidels have, even such as we ourselves must prize. This beverage, which is neither wine nor water, is lawful to the lips of a true believer. If our blessed Prophet could turn the milk which is promised us in paradise into beer, what a blessing he would have conferred upon us!"

"Then allow," said I, "that the women here are rare jewels. How much better, is it not, that they should mix with the men?"

"Upon that I am not so certain," said my companion. "My wife is becoming old now, and *Inshallah!* please the holy Prophet, I intend to get a young one on my return to Persia. Now, if we were restricted to one, as these infidels are, I must go on through life with the old one."

"Ah, it is better," said I, "to have an old and steady wife than a young and wild one. Mutual habits fit into each other in the same manner as a skull-cap, by long wear, becomes part of the head; but one might as well attempt to mix oil with vinegar as to make a young woman satisfied with the infirmities of old age for her portion, or the old man easy under the whims of the young girl."

"Ah!" said Mohamed Beg, "many things are good in this land, 't is true, but there are also many bad. Nothing can ever make up for the loss of the sun. We see a sun here, which looks more like one of our lanterns than the glowing ball of light with which the climate of Islam is blessed; and as for their moon, we must put our trust in Allah!"

We were determined, as we wound up the conference, to do our utmost to return to our own country as soon as possible, and we were agreed that the sooner we could dry up the ambassador's soul the better it would be for us.

CHAPTER XLIX.

A scene takes place in one of the great London thoroughfares.—Of the event which is brought on in consequence.

It was evident that some evil star was glancing obliquely at us; for, in addition to the miseries just recorded, which were accompanied by much discord in the ambassador's household, another circumstance occurred which increased his ill humour, and prepared the way for our being sent back to our own country.

Mirza Firouz was passing the evening by himself, bemoaning his hard fate at the difficulties of carrying his business through with the English viziers, and making plans

for returning to Persia, when the mehmandar entered the room with his face turned upside down.

"What has happened?" said the ambassador; "are there news from Irân? Is the shah dead?"

"Nothing of great consequence," answered he; "there has only been a tumult in the streets."

"*Il hem dillillah!* thank Heaven!" exclaimed the Mirza; "I was afraid that that face of yours foreboded some disaster."

"Something has happened, 'tis true," continued the other, "and it partly concerns you."

This roused our chief, and he immediately asked a thousand questions in a breath, which the mehmandar heard out, and then said,—

"The truth is, that what has happened might have become very serious; as it is, nothing is likely to forthcome. A person just now called upon me, in great haste and alarm, stating that as he was walking through one of our streets called Piccadilly, he saw a crowd near a piece of water in the Green Park, and upon endeavouring to discover the reason of it, he saw several Persians, whom he heard were persons of the ambassador's suite. On going nearer, he observed one of them standing naked in the water, whilst another, a black man, was taking care of the bather's clothes. The English mob, it seems, were indignant at this act of indecency, performed in the very face of one of their greatest thoroughfares, and had begun to show their disgust in no very agreeable manner to the strangers: they were pelting the one in the water, and hustling the other. This attack roused the anger of the Persians; and the black, who was amazingly fierce, drew his dagger. Things were looking ill," said the mehmandar, "when my informant left the crowd to seek me out; for the English had secured the parties, dagger and all, and were leading them off, he knew not where. That is all: now send for your servants, and let us see what account they give of themselves."

This narrative roused the ambassador's fury; and by the time the mehmandar had finished, every hair in his beard stood by itself, and the colour of his countenance had assumed a new hue. "Ah, you administrator to others' pleasures! you unsainted cur, Seid, that is you!" said he. "I'll make your liver descend; I'll dry up the current of your soul!" Then seeing me, he told me to call the culprits, as well as the rest of the servants, in order that they might hear his words.

Seid, the black slave, a young, well-shaped, animated fellow, appeared, nothing abashed, with part of his clothes torn and well dirtied, as if he had been rolling in the road; beside him stood his friend Taki, the carpet-spreader, a broad-shouldered, well-bearded, hairy young man, who looked as if he had put on his clothes in a hurricane, having lost part of them, and the other part not being quite adjusted; behind stood the rest of the servants.

"How is this, dogs' sons?" roared out the ambassador. "What has happened? what have you been doing? Am I every day to find that our faces are becoming blacker and blacker in this foreign land? By this beard of mine," touching the tip of it at the same time, "I swear that if you have done wrong, I will take you to the next gutter, and cut your head off, in the face of these Franks and of the whole world, in order to show them that we know what justice means. How was it? speak!"

"What do I know?" said Seid. "Taki, carpet-spreader; Feridoon, barber; and I, were going on our road, when we saw some water. The weather was very hot, as hot as at Ispahan. Taki said he had not bathed since we left Turkey, and as the water looked inviting, he proposed that we should go in. I saw no harm in his proposal, and he went in first. 'Tis true that he had no *loongeh*, bath-wrapper; but we said, what do the infidels know of *loongehs?* so he stripped, and went into the water. He had no sooner plunged than the mob came round: they abused us; they stoned us; they called us Jews; they rolled me on the ground. I thought

they would have killed us; and they were taking us away by force to the butcheries, as we believed, when a Frank gentleman interfered, and set us free; but I have lost my knife, and Taki his sash. That is all, and I have said it."

"Then," said the ambassador to the carpet-spreader, "Taki, by my head, is that all? you, who ought to be a full-done man, do I hear this of you? Will there never be an end of the family of asses in the world? You have exchanged your beard for that of a cow." *

To which Taki answered, "If bathing be a crime, we are in fault; but water is God's gift, and is every man's property. We only know our own laws and customs. Let the Franks teach us theirs, and we will agree to them."

"See," said the ambassador, ironically, "the carpet-spreader is turned philosopher. *Mashallah!* Locman could not have spoken better;" and then turning to Seid, he said, "And what became of the barber?"

"He ran away as soon as he saw the stones flying, and he is not come home yet."

"He did right," said the ambassador; "bravely done, barber! Why did not you do the same? and why did you draw your knife, you with a burnt father?"

"A knife is useless unless it be drawn on the occasion," replied Seid; "I drew it in self-defence."

"What shall we do?" said the ambassador to the mehmandar; "it is plain that these fellows are without judgment; they think that all the world is Persia; they look upon English water as they would upon the water of their own soil; they can make no distinction between one country and another, no more than they can between one man and another; in short, their wit is small; their disposition to be asses great. If you think that they require punishment, speak. Should you insist upon having their ears, they shall be served up to you this moment. Perchance your government might

* A man is said to have a cow's beard when he has done anything unworthy of his own; perhaps on account of its rugged and scanty appearance.

take delight in the possession of their heads; let them say so, and the deed is done. Sir, we are lovers of justice. We do not stop short in our work: we go all lengths."

Upon this the mehmandar made a long speech upon his view of justice, and entreated that no more might be said on the subject, only requiring that we might be reminded that England was not Persia.

I could not help taking this opportunity of saying, "Sir, you boast of the freedom of your country. How do you account for what has just happened, when two poor lads, dying with heat, are stoned and almost put to death, because, in bathing, they take advantage of one of the commonest of God's gifts to man? We do not act thus in the East."

He was rather shaken by this question, and my triumph was enjoyed by every one present. Without waiting to hear more, he soon after left us; and then, indeed, we gave vent to our feelings, ambassador as well as servants, at all we saw, and at all we underwent, in this land of infidels.

"Oh! I am dead, I am dying!" said our chief, stretching out his arms in a yawn; "every day some new disaster befalls me. May I defile the grave of *Elchigiree!* * Unlucky was the day that I left my own country, to come all this way to get my face blackened! And you too," addressing us all in a body, "you make life bitter to me. The infidels love me; they say that, in truth, in seeing me they see a man. If I was left to myself to sit in my corner, there would be no harm in their country; but *you* will not let me enjoy quiet. The long and short of it is that we must return to Irân. The time is come. After all, Persia is the country for us. We there see the sun daily; we have our plains all to ourselves; we enjoy the security of our harems, and, saving the shah's condescension, we care nothing for the condescension of any one else."

"Yes, yes, O master!" said we all, "let us return, let us return."

* The profession of diplomacy.

"If these burnt fathers, these viziers of the King of England, will but give me answers to the letters which I brought, and finish the negociation which I have been ordered to establish, I will go with you," said the ambassador. "If not, you, O Hajjî! will take charge of the principal part of the suite, and proceed with them. I will remain satisfied with my two slaves, and return *chappari*, that is, as a courier."

This was the "first breath" * of Persia that had come to us in good earnest from our chief, and immediately we felt new sensations. My protector, the grand vizier, was no more, 'tis true; but I had the king's condescension in expectancy; I was in possession of a tongue which, excepting the ambassador's, I might say was unequalled; and, above all, I had hope of all sorts in abundance.

CHAPTER L.

The Ambassador shows some true Persian feeling concerning women, exemplified in the Circassian.—Preparations for departure.

The ambassador's scheme of separating himself from the principal part of his servants remained undecided, because he did not know how to dispose of the Circassian. She was a woman, and the only woman of the kind, as far as we could learn, who had ever been brought to England. He felt that he would gain an ill name if he allowed her to go about the world without the protection of her master. Perhaps he did not place sufficient confidence in me to confide her to my care; and to deprive himself of the services of his own slaves,

* This is a pure Persian idiom; as the French might say, *le premier soupçon.*

Seid and Mahboob, who were her constant guardians, was more than he could submit to. Therefore he became without help, and his head went round and round with uncertainty. He had had no reason hitherto to be dissatisfied with her conduct. She had, in fact, proved herself to be the model of a Mahomedan woman; and if the infidels of English would but shake off their prejudices, she would convince them how strongly the obligations of our religion can act upon our conduct. She had never stirred from the house, and scarcely ever from the room in which she was placed on her first arrival. She ate with her fingers, and washed her hands with scrupulous precision. She always said her prayers at the stated time; and made and mended the ambassador's clothes, as a good slave ought.

But a circumstance most opportunely occurred, which, whilst it tended to increase the many miseries of which our chief complained, at the same time helped him to make up his mind concerning the expediency of her departure.

In England the houses of cities are situated in such a manner that no Mahomedan could ever secure the apartments of his women from the gaze of men, without considerable difficulty and inconvenience. Excepting houses which have *maidans* (squares) before them, all are overlooked; and as they are generally built upon the same model, the harem spy knows immediately in what direction to look, if he wishes to catch a glimpse of the women. To screen their wives, the English husbands are satisfied with placing a piece of slight muslin before their windows, whilst walls cannot be too thick or too high for the Persian. It so happened that the windows of the room in which the Circassian was confined were enfiladed by those of a long row of houses standing at an angle with the ambassador's; and when first we arrived, numerous were the heads of the infidels who were seen prying. Could we have seized even one, we would have shown him what it is to disturb the privacy of

our harem! * He never would have walked a step again without the recollection of his rashness!

One night the ambassador returned from an English assembly earlier than usual, and it was evident that he was over and above angry. He had scarcely left his carriage and entered the house, than with a loud voice he called for his black slaves.

"Where is Seid? Where is Mahboob? was echoed throughout the house. They came breathless, although they were between awake and asleep, and the scene which ensued was as follows:—

Amb.—Where were you, ye ill-begotten varlets?

Slaves.—Sleeping.

Amb.—Where is Dilferîb?

Mah.—She sleeps.

Amb.—*Gorumsak!* Rascal! What is this that I hear? Why did you tickle her to-day?

Slaves.—Tickle? We have not tickled her.

Amb.—By my beard—do you see it? (holding it out to them)—I swear that if you lie, I will impale you both. The infidels never tell lies; and one of them informed me, not a few minutes ago, that you were seen at the window this morning, one on one side, and the other on the other, tickling the Circassian. Is this true or not? Speak, before I cut your tongues out.

The slaves then looked at each other, when Mahboob said,—

"I beg to represent that we did tickle her, and that's the truth of it; but then it was for the good of your service."

Amb.—How?

Mah.—She was very low in spirits. She had been crying.

* When a man is found trespassing in another's harem, he is punished on the spot by being impaled with a tent-peg, which is made of wood, a foot and a half long, and cut into a spike at one end. This was told me by a person who had himself inflicted the punishment.

She was tired of her room and of her life. All we could say would not pacify her; so we took her to the window and tickled her.

Amb.—You madmen! who ever heard of such proceedings? Have I not told you a thousand times that she was never to go to the window; that she was never to be seen by an infidel? Why do you not hear my words?

Seid.—There was no harm in what we did. No infidel was to be seen, and the air did her good.

Amb.—If the air did her good, what was the use of the tickling?

Seid.—She wanted shaking; she wanted exercise.

Amb.—I shall die if I remain longer in your hands. What with Mohamed Beg's impertinence, Seid and Taki's bathing in the face of Franks, and the Circassian's tickling, my soul is embittered. She shall return with the rest of you to Persia. I shall then be free. Go, go, he added, and dismissed the culprits, as well as the whole household, for the night.

The following morning the subject of our departure was again discussed; and since the Circassian was now disposed of, there was no longer any reason for delay. We accordingly began to make our preparations, and one universal stir of bustle and cheerfulness ran through the house. The saddles and bridles were brought out and tied up in their wrappers. Our carbines, which had long remained in a corner neglected, were cleaned and made ready for use. Every thing among us now began to wear a character of Persia.

The shah having in part defrayed the expenses of the English embassies upon their arrival in his dominions, so had the English government defrayed a part of the expense of our embassy; but still many debts were to be paid by the ambassador himself, and these he was determined to ascertain previous to our departure. Allah! Allah! when it was known in the city that we were about to depart, the rush of

men and women, with pieces of paper in their hand, was quite astonishing. Each bit had its value, and this the ambassador was called upon to pay. 'T is true that to this moment he had not much disturbed the contents of several sacks of tomauns, which he had brought with him; but when he had cast up into one sum the amount which he was called upon to discharge, he began to shake his head, and went into a corner to think. Had we been in Persia, the difficulty would soon have been settled; for had we not had the money, or perchance the inclination to pay, it were easy to put off the creditor, either by a promise of payment in corn, oil, or tobacco, or, in an extreme case of prompt payment, by a bastinadoing on the feet; but here it was different: for when we came to argue with the holders of these bits of paper upon the exorbitancy of their demands, and to propose modifications, they immediately threatened an appeal to mollahs and judges.

One demand we found so unjust, that we immediately applied to the mehmandar for an explanation and protection from it. This was from a painter, who had painted the white horse which the ambassador had presented to the king of England, on the day of the public audience. After having charged for the paint, the oil, the brushes, and many other things, he inserted a heavy sum for "bodily fear."

"What news is this? said the ambassador to the mehmandar. "This is being worse than Turks, who, on their passage through their own country, charge the poor peasants 'tooth money,' for the trouble of eating the fowls, fruits, and other provisions which they take from them by force. By this account, when a dentist draws my tooth, I may be allowed to deduct a sum for 'bodily fear' from the fee which he has the right to claim."

The mehmandar made an enquiry into this extraordinary charge; and from the painter's explanation found that in undertaking the horse, he had set to work as if he were to paint a house: "but then," said he, "a house does not kick at me

as this beast did; and it was by the mercy of God that my brains were not strewn to the winds of heaven. Surely that circumstance must be taken into consideration."

Strange as this appeared to us, still we were obliged to acquiesce in the demand; and indeed we found that an infidel armed with his bill was quite as formidable as a true believer amongst us armed with an imperial firman: both are absolute.

CHAPTER LI.

Feridoon the barber's scrape.—An English *rahdar*, or turnpike-man, makes exactions.

In addition to the attacks made upon us with bills, the moment of departure seemed to be the signal for a general rising of misfortune. The same evil star which had presided at our leaving Smyrna appeared determined not to leave us in England.

In the middle of a general turmoil, where the ambassador in person, at the head of his servants, was engaged in discomfiting a trunkmaker, who had asked him for the making a pair of *yakdoons*, or camel trunks, as much money as would almost build a house in Persia, appeared an old and ill-conditionel infidel, accompanied by a woman of bad aspect, and sour of visage, headed by a spokesman dressed in dirty black clothes. It turned out, that their object was to make a complaint to the ambassador against Feridoon, the barber, for not having kept his promise to marry the woman who stood before us.

Feridoon was a remarkably intelligent youth, whose eyes were never shut and who was always employed in doing something: for, not like the rest of his companions, he was

scarcely ever seen counting his beads for want of work. He had learnt the English language faster than we had; he could make more *chum wa hum* in it than any of us, and had succeeded in obtaining the most presents from the natives. The old infidel, the complainant, was a manufacturer of soap: he had invented a new kind of soap; and upon the arrival of the embassy in England, it came into his head, in order to give it celebrity, to ask the ambassador to tell a lie for him, and to say that he was the soap's father. The ambassador thinking that this might be a Frank mode of making compliments, saw no harm in the proposal; and ordered Feridoon, since the article in question was in his department, to go and tell the proper lies, affirming that the ancestors of all the children of Persia used this soap.

Feridoon, who could make play under a beard as well as any body, soon became friends with the soap-maker. He succeeded first in securing the possession of much soap; then as his new friend was acquainted with many of the English barbers, he also acquired their friendship; and the collection of razors, straps, scissors, and knives which he made was prodigious. Feridoon in return taught them how to dye hair according to our fashion, an art in which they acknowledged that we excelled, and also gave lessons in the *dustmal*, *i. e.* the shampooing and joint-cracking. They would have persuaded him to set up for himself, and exhibit his art, so well were they pleased with his ingenuity; and had he not feared the ambassador, he probably would: for by the description he gave them of our baths, they were persuaded that without them no country could prosper. But what could a solitary true believer under his circumstances do? He therefore fell in love, at least so the soap-boiler said, and his daughter was the victim.

Such were the circumstances of the case as we first learnt them: but the little man in dirty black said things of the conduct of our countryman, which quite astonished us; and he wound up his complaint, by roundly affirming, that on ac-

count of Feridoon's promises of marriage, the soap-boiler's daughter had lost her character, her hopes of being ever married, and that his addresses had driven away a whole array of prosperous barbers, who were ready to carry her off by force, if she would not cede to entreaty. For all this he asked more than two thousand tomauns.

"By my beard!" cried the ambassador, when he heard this demand, "this is worse than all! These infidels are greater extortioners than anything we can show in our own country." Then addressing himself to Feridoon, he said, "You dog-fathered shaver! what is this I hear? Who told you to go through the city making promises?"

"What promises? what marriage?" said the astonished Feridoon. "'Tis true that I one day asked this woman, who looks, as you may perceive, like one of our oldest *mutiehs*, whether she would be my wife for two months, and which I need not remind you, O master! is a custom commonly adopted by strangers in Irân; but little did I conceive, that for this I should be condemned to pay two thousand tomauns. I made no promise, *Wallah billah;* I only asked her to marry as *mutiehs* marry, and see what has happened."

Upon this, all three began to talk at once. The uproar became great, and we probably should have adopted a Persian mode of treatment, by turning up their heels, when luckily the mehmandar came to our assistance. When the extortioners saw one of their own countrymen thus step forward to take our part, they were struck dumb, and the little man in black began to throw his face into smiles, and to "look at the weather."* The mehmandar sent them away with as little difficulty as a great man disposes of an inferior in Persia; and having done that, informed the ambassador that the imposture was too palpable to be upheld for a moment. The man in black, who was a mischief-seeking mollah, whom the

* Or, as we might say, "to see which way the wind blew."

Franks call "attorney," when he heard the scrape he would be likely to get into, if he persisted in this attack, how the shah would insist upon the bastinado being administered to him, he thought it best to go his way.

"But," said the ambassador, "in the name of Khoda, is there no justice in your country? Is every rascal who happens to have an old and disgusting daughter to dispose of, to exact money from innocent strangers, as if he were one of the royal executioners?"

"A breach of promise of marriage is a serious thing in our country," said the mehmandar. "Our law protects women, whatever yours may do."

"A woman must be courageous, indeed, in a Mahomedan country, to force a man by law to marry her," said Mohamed Beg, who was standing by. "Once within the walls of the harem, her husband becomes her sole lord and master, and then she eats blows, and devours grief, as a matter of course, for ever after."

When we had got rid of this misery, we returned to the charge against the trunk-maker, who would not desist one black coin from his original demand. He was seconded by an array of infidel tailors, shoemakers, makers of shirts, and petty trades-folks, all of whom seemed to look upon what was written upon their scraps of paper as truths not to be contested, as fixed and unalterable as the decrees of the blessed Koran.

At length, with the help of the mehmandar, who, by certain explanations which he made concerning the nature of shahs and their representatives, appeared to soften their violence, and to give a new reading to the doctrines laid down in their bits of paper, they received their dues quietly, and went away without more disturbance. But there was one still left who remained inexorable, and he had been the torment of our existence almost since our arrival. He was a stout unblushing infidel of the lowest class, with a red face,

bulbous, and ready to burst, dressed in a coat, shaggy, like a Georgian *yapâncheh*,* and an apron tied round his waist, divided into two compartments. The demand he made was not to be understood. He said that he had a gate situated on the high road, near which he took post from morning to night, and that ever since our arrival the ambassador's horses had gone through it daily without paying one black coin.

We endeavoured to ascertain whether he was a servant of the English shah, obstinate as he was in his demand, for perchance, said we, he may be a *rahdar*, a public levier of dues.

He said that he did not belong to the king; but talked of another authority, called "trustees," which he seemed to rate higher than a king, for he constantly was saying "trustees ordered this," and "trustees order that."

At length, the ambassador in despair roared out, "We know no king, but George shah; we have never heard of your trustees shah; so, for the love of Allah, go your way. The roads are open to all ambassadors; this is one of the oldest received rules amongst nations. Their persons are sacred, —their path is not to be impeded."

Still the man talked of his "trustees," who could be no considerable personage, since he was his *haznadar*, or treasurer; for he assured us, that if we did not pay him, the money must go out of his own pocket.

The ambassador having ascertained from the master of the horse, that in fact this gate was situated between the house and the stables, and that the Persian grooms had always dashed through without paying, was apprehensive that something might forthcome to embroil the two courts. He said, "We shall have a war of *Basûs* † upon our shoulders, if we

* A cloak peculiar to the Caucasian tribes.

† *Basûs* is the name of an Arabian woman, from whom originated a war so called, which has since become an eastern proverb, to express great events from small causes. Two of the Arabian tribes, it is recorded, fought for above forty years, because a camel, belonging to this woman, broke a hen's

do not mind;" and after many consultations he determined to submit it to the mehmandar, who at once cleared up the difficulty, by explaining that this man was not a *rahdar*, but one who kept the road in travelling order, and he immediately took it upon himself to satisfy his demands.

By this lucky interference, we were at length disengaged from all our difficulties, and nothing more was left to us, but to begin our journey, and to put our trust in God.

CHAPTER LII.

Hajjî Baba pays his visit of leave to the Hoggs.—He attends an English wedding.

The ship was prepared for carrying us to Constantinople; our clothes were packed, and we ourselves were impatient for departure. But before I again put myself into the hands of God, and launched out into the deep, I determined once more to visit the moon-faced Bessy, and, notwithstanding the dirt which I had been made to eat by the Hoggs, to say my "God be with you," and ask forgiveness of my misdeeds.

The king of England had made us suitable presents on our departure; and as I thus became possessor of more than a hundred tomauns, I had been able to provide myself with several articles of dress so becoming, that I flattered myself "Mirza" might be written before my name, instead of after it; and as far as my looks went, no one could say aught thereto. Therefore, with confidence, I appeared at the Hoggs' gate. It was early in the day, and to my surprise I saw a collection of carriages before the house, a circumstance

egg: the owner of the egg wounded the camel with an arrow,—an arrow pierced him in return, and the tribes were instantly in arms.

not common in English life; and as if badges had been secured to protect the house from the evil eye, the servants and drivers of the said carriages wore very conspicuous white bunches of riband on their hats.

"What news may this be?" said I to the servant who opened the door.

"A wedding, sir," said he. "Miss is going to be married."

At these words, although I had long suppressed my feelings on this subject, still the blood came into my face, and my heart turned upon me. I should immediately have retreated, but a woman looking out of the window, who it seems had recognised me, and whom I soon knew was the mamma Hogg, screamed out, "La! there is the prince, I declare!" and soon after I heard her running down the stairs. She invited me to come in, and said so many goodnatured things, that I was without help, and followed her into the room of assembly. What shall I say? Here I found a collection of men and women, better dressed than usual; but, although their persons were gaily decked, their faces looked sad. Seated between her two sisters, and surrounded by other maidens, I discovered Bessy. They were dressed in white, and Bessy wore a long piece of laced linen pendant from her head, which the infidels pretend to call a veil, but which no more screens the face than an English lower garment conceals the shape of the legs. She, poor helpless! looked the saddest of the party. She no longer wore those looks of happiness which so much became her round and cheerful face; but she was thin, care-worn, and her eyes were red with much weeping. I was astonished at this—a wedding in our country is the signal for merry-making; here it wa s plain that the first part of the ceremony is to look miserable.

After having been properly greeted by all present, I was soon let into the history of the marriage by the words without redemption which the mother threw at my ears.

"Well, prince," said she, "so you see we are going to marry our Bessy. She is a dear good girl; draws and sings

beautifully, and will make a good wife, I dare say. She will be very rich; she's to keep her carriage, and is to be vastly happy."

"*What for cry then, ma'am?*" said I.

"Oh! prince," said she, "that's only a girl's nonsense; she is sorry at parting with us. She can't have both us and her husband."

"Where is her husband?" said I, naturally expecting to see my former rival, the well-spurred and well-whiskered young "no-beard."

She told me, in answer, it was the custom that the parties should meet at church; and seeing that I was obliged to abandon all hope of getting her for my wife, I willingly acceded to her request to accompany the bride to church, in order to witness the ceremony.

I could not help going up to the disconsolate bride, to give her my best wishes for her happiness. I said, "May God give you health, and increase of prosperity! May your house be plentiful; may your husband be handsome, and without jealousy; may your children keep clear of the evil eye; and whatever your heart can desire, whatever clothes you may wish to possess, and whatever dainties you may like to eat, may every thing be granted to you at the most fortunate hours!" Having said this, and determining to act well up to the customs of the country, I acted as if I had been her relation, put a piece of gold in her hand, and would have kissed her between the eyes, had she not retreated quickly from me, and pushed me back just as my beard began to tickle her face.

"Well, prince! 'pon my word," screamed the mamma, half in joke, half in earnest; "well, whoever thought of that? La! Mr. Hogg, did you see that?" said she to her husband; "I declare the prince there was a-going to kiss Mrs. Figby as is to be."

The father came up to me smiling, and saying, "I see you are a rare fellow after the girls! ha, prince!"

I looked very grave, and answered,—"*Sir, custom of my country; give gold andkiss.*"

Upon this that daughter of Allah, Mary, came up to me with the bit of gold in her hand, and, with great dignity, said, —"My sister, sir, desires to return you this. Such a present, at such a moment, is offensive."

"*Custom of my country, ma'am,*" said I; "*gold bring good luck; gold make man happy. In Persia, king give gold with his own hand. 'Pon my honour, ma'am, very good custom.*"

When I had said this, they all appeared very sorry to have mistaken my intentions; and then they bestowed as many thanks as they were before disposed to show discontent. Bessy kept the piece of gold with much care, and said that she would remember me as long as she lived, hoping that the recollection of me would give her happiness; but it was easy to see that her heart was bursting into two bits as she spoke.

The moment for going to church now came, and the carriages were ordered to draw up.

I expected to see the bride go and kiss the hearth of her father's house, as is usual in Persia; but she did nothing but arise and stand on her legs.

"*She not go and kiss fire-place?*" said I to the father.

"Kiss fire-place? prince!" said he; "what should she do that for? No, no, we are not such kissers as that." Then, thinking a little, he exclaimed,—"Oh! ay, I see how it is; you are fire-worshippers, I recollect, and do these things. No, no, prince, we are not fire-worshippers."

I had scarcely time to reflect upon the extraordinary ignorance of the English with respect to us and our religion, when I found myself in a handsome carriage, whirling on at a rapid rate in the suite of one or two more towards the neighbouring church.

The whole party, men and women, then alighted; there was no music, no fireworks, no dancing on stilts, no throw-

ing of apples. We walked into a small room, where we met another party, who were the husband's relations. I looked about for the whiskered youth in vain. I asked some questions of the youngest sister concerning him, when she shook her head mysteriously, and turned away from me. I then enquired of the mother where the future husband was, when she exclaimed,—"La, prince! don't you know him? I'll introduce him to you in a minute." She immediately bustled through the crowd, crying out,—"Here, Figby! Mr. Figby, here! I want to introduce you to the Persian." She then brought up to me a heavy, coarse-looking man, far different, indeed, from my former rival, and one whose face was not new to me. Who can it be? thought I, as Mrs. Hogg said,—"Mr. Figby, this is prince 'Hajjî *Barber*.'" The man, with great self-sufficiency, answered, as he proceeded to make the shake-hand ceremony with me,—"We are old acquaintance; we met at my friend Levi's." Then I recollected that this was the *baqal*, the grocer, who had boasted of his wealth to us, and at whose ugly face Mohamed Beg and I had shaken the collars of our coats at the Jew's dinner.

The grief of the poor Bessy was now accounted for: all her sorrows were at once disclosed to me, as if I had read them in the book of her mind. It was evident that she loved the young 'no-beard,' and that force alone had made her marry this ill-possessor of gold and sugar. My heart burned, and my soul became blood, at the reflection, and my friendship for the papa and the mamma Hogg turned back upon me.

These English, after all, thought I, are a bad race. Their souls sleep in money. They marry, they separate, they fight, they make peace, for money. I'll burn old Hogg's fathers; by the beard of the blessed Mahomed, I will! And as I was going to upbraid him for sacrificing his beautiful child to this odious grocer, the procession began to move into the body of the church.

I listened as well as I could to the words of the *mollah*, but I could not follow him sufficiently well to determine what

he said; besides, I was taken up with the form and posture of the wretched Bessy, who was kneeling next to her future husband, and who required all the support of her sisters in a moment which seemed to try her greatest fortitude. There were some words to be pronounced, which, it appears, were to seal her fate for ever, and which evidently required much and long persuasion to entice from the bottom of her throat to the tip of her tongue; and when they had been pronounced, every body was thrown into dismay at seeing the unfortunate victim fall upon the breast of her eldest sister in a swoon.

The truth is, that upon seeing this my heart turned upside down. Although I had been witness to many a scene of misery in my own country, yet, let me say it, in England it appeared to me totally unnatural and misplaced. We had now been so long absent from Persia, where acts of violence are as common as any of the daily occurrences of life, that I was not prepared for what now had taken place before my eyes; and devoting, in my own mind, Hoggs, grocers, and Jews, to the lowest *jehanum*, I put my cap on one side, pulled up my whiskers, and left the church with a fierce look, without saying one word to any of the assembled party. I believe, in my rage, I spit as I left the infidel sanctuary.

CHAPTER LIII.

The Ambassador embarks his servants for Constantinople.—Hajjî Baba describes their voyage thither.

Mirza Firouz having determined to deprive himself of the use of one of his slaves, placed the Circassian in the hands of Mahboob; and, every thing being now ready for departure, we bid adieu to London, and turned our faces towards Tehran. As a parting gift from the Franks, we were allowed,

each of us, to take possession of our sheets and bed curtains, upon which we had long fixed our eyes as excellent materials for cutting up into sashes for our waists. We then received the parting words usual on such occasions from the ambassador; we mutually forgave each other; and, having kissed the English footmen and cried over the maids, we got into coaches, and soon after were installed in the ship provided for us.

Our departure from England was not so brilliant as our arrival; and it was certain that, whatever our ambassador might be, neither of us were treated as the representatives of shahs. On the contrary, we were received on board as merchandise. Our persons and baggage having been duly counted and numbered, we were registered on bits of paper, which were signed by the captain, who thus bound himself to deliver us over, dead or alive, to the Persian agent at Constantinople.

The person who took charge of us, and who was called the captain, was nothing better than one of our own *nakhodas*. He was a coarse, hard-featured man, with a face as weather-beaten as any Turcoman, and who knew no more of our manners or of our country than he did of the delights of paradise. For our daily food he had provided as much beef, fresh as well as salted, as would feed the whole of Mazanderan; of fowls a few, and of rice scarcely any. Luckily, a great part of the stock of rice which we had brought with us from Persia was still untouched, and of that we had a store. He gave us each a hole to sleep in; and to the Circassian he assigned a harem, a small separate room, where she might creep in and out at pleasure.

The moment we left the house, she, poor unfortunate, resumed all her natural flow of spirits. Confined as she had so long been in one room, she had become almost as inanimate as the curtains or chairs which formed its furniture; but now, restored to air and to the sight of human beings, she became almost frantic with joy, and her brain jumped about in un-

ceasing rapture. When it was known that she was contained in the ship, and before we weighed anchor, we were surrounded by boats full of prying infidels to look at her. We even suspected that our captain might have received a little "manure" in his hand, to allow one or two men, without shame, to come among us with books in their hands, to draw or write down all they saw; but, as he found us protected by precautions which the mehmandar had taken to prevent our being molested, he very soon was obliged to read his contract over again, and to raise his canvass to the winds.

I will pass over all that we suffered on board this accursed vessel, at the hands of this infidel without a soul and without compassion. It is sufficient to say, that had it not been for our full belief in predestination, and the conviction that the miseries which we endured had been decreed to us since the beginning of all things, we should have eaten more grief during this our voyage than is served up to the whole body of true believers in the regions of Islam in one year. Allah! Allah! what did we not eat? Grief, storm, tempest, wind, salt-water, even blows from the bankrupt captain; all this we devoured, and yet when we had reached our destination, safe and sound, we returned to our old habits and our old ways, as if the sponge of oblivion had been taken up by the hand of fate, and had wiped from our memories whatever we had endured.

I must, however, say, that our miseries were greatly alleviated by the conduct of the Circassian maid. She met every thing with cheerfulness; and in moments of real danger,—when the storm hung over us, when we were thrown to and fro by the sea, and when we apprehended that every moment would be our last,—she armed us with a courage which appeared supernatural; and, raising our drooping spirits, reminded us ever and anon that the minarets and cupolas of Constantinople would soon be in sight, and that every moment was taking us a step nearer to our homes and our families.

A woman of the Franks could not have done more than she did; and, indeed, when fine weather came, and the heavens were quiet, and prosperity again shone upon us, she was well requited by the repeated exclamations of *Mashallah!* and *Barikallah!* which her heroic conduct extorted from us.

And, indeed, at length the happy moment came; the minarets appeared in sight; we all crowded on the deck to see the glorious view. Even the ugly English captain looked handsome on that day; for then, and then only, did we see the sunshine of a smile break through his brow of storm. And when we cast anchor in face of the golden palaces, the arched mosques, the groves of cypresses, the interminable city, covering hill after hill with every description of tenement, we sighed forth our thanks to Allah, our saviour and deliverer, with a fervour that can only be known by those who, having been in adversity, at length reach the haven of prosperity.

Our first impulse was to rush on shore, and to leave our prison and our gaoler. All my adventures at Constantinople came back to my recollection as if they had only happened yesterday, as we set our foot on the dry land; and being a good guide through its intricate streets, I soon found my way to the house of the shah's agent. Here we expended our first breath narrating our adventures, and asking innumerable questions concerning our friends and families in Persia. We spoke in bitterness of the captain of our ship. Mohamed Beg vowed that he had been more severely polluted by what he had there encountered, than by all he had undergone since our previous residence amongst the infidels. He scarcely ever went on deck but he encountered the unclean beast walking about in open defiance of us. Its flesh was eaten in every corner; and had it not been for our united resistance, it would have been served up to us. Then Aga Beg, the master of the horse, swore by the beard of the Prophet, that for want of a horse he had almost become an animal himself; and no sooner had he reached the agent's house, than, seizing the first steed

which came to hand, he mounted it, and rode backwards and forwards in the street, with a violence which made the Turks themselves believe he was possessed by all the madness of a Frank.

I bestirred myself to provide the Circassian with a proper lodging, and to get our effects on shore; and then went to the house of the English elchi to deliver our letters. On my road I met the captain of our ship, who, seeing me bound to the house of his superiors, and of his men in authority, presented the front of humility to my wondering eyes, and offered to conciliate me with the hand of friendship; but he did not succeed in laughing at my beard; I passed on, leaving him with his mouth open to digest the dirt which he had been eating for the last two months.

I did not find that I met with the same favourable reception among the English at Constantinople as we were accustomed to receive from their countrymen in England. It is evident, that owing to the immense quantity of beards in the Turkish capital, ours were looked upon as of less consequence than house-brooms. No one here offered to shake hands and talk fine weather. They deemed all the purposes of civility and conversation were answered if they put a long pipe in our hands. As we approached my own country, I began to find the truth of the well-known saying, "In the *maidan*, or the public walk, at the sight of thy handsome cloak every one makes way, and saith, '*Mashallah!*' but at home every child can count the holes and darns which it covereth."

CHAPTER LIV.

Hajji and his companions reach Tehran.—He has an audience of the shah, and is clothed with honour.—Conclusion of his adventures.

Having hired our mules, and completed all the preparations for the journey, in the course of a few days we were well advanced on the road to our own country, some of us with heads touching the sky for joy, others with noses in the dust with dejection.

Nothing occurred on the journey worth relating, excepting the meeting with a Frank, who was returning to his country from the gate of the Asylum of the Universe. Dilferîb, who had been placed under the protection of a Persian *catirji*, or mule-driver, on seeing the infidel, uttered an exclamation of delight, such as no woman ever made even upon meeting her father or her uncle. This so much surprised her conductor, that without more ado, he inflicted upon her two or three stripes so violent as to cause her to roar out with excess of pain. We, who really loved her as a sister, immediately took her part, and would have sacrificed the mule-driver to our anger, had we not been stopped by the recollection that our days of freedom were now gone, that we were among Mahomedans, and that to advocate the cause of liberty in woman would only be paving the road to our own slavery and disgrace. This was one of the strongest instances in which we discovered the excellence of a Christian country over our own. However, as we returned to our old habits, the impression which we had received in foreign lands daily became fainter, and at length we began to think that the mule-driver might be in the right, and Dilferîb wrong.

As we crawled along the stony tracks of Turkey, each on

our jaded mule, how often did we not compare our present rate and mode of travelling to the extraordinary things which we had seen in England!

"In truth," did Mohamed Beg exclaim occasionally, "those *khoneh kharab*, those bankrupt infidels, have other merits besides that of possessing beer! *Mashallah! Mashallah!* when shall we ever see those miraculous coaches again? And when shall we again sleep in a Frank caravanserai? Every time I stretch myself upon a stone-floor, I dream of the down beds and the soft cushions of those sons and daughters of Isau."

By expatiating upon things unknown to the inhabitants of the regions we travelled through, we increased the reputation which our countrymen already enjoy of their great powers of misrepresentation; and, in truth, so contemptible did our ignorant and prejudiced auditors appear in our eyes, that, at length, we scarcely deigned to hold converse with them.

At Arz Rûm we visited the pacha, who had not forgotten our ambassador and his crop-eared running footman. At Tabriz we rubbed our foreheads against the threshold of the exalted deputy of the state, the heir to the throne, who asked questions which convinced us, were he to have seen what we had seen, the garden of his mind would have brought forth fruits so beneficial, that his government would soon have assumed the appearance of the fair countries we had left.

I must not omit to mention, that, a few days after leaving Arz Rûm, we were met by a party of Cûrds, mounted upon magnificent horses, and who seemed well disposed to despoil us of the few things of value which we had brought with us from Frangistan. They were about insisting upon the inspection of our baggage, when we were overtaken by a detachment of armed Turks, servants of the pacha of Kars, who immediately took our part, but in so violent a manner that a fray ensued. I was the responsible person in charge of the letters, and other things of consequence, from the ambassador and the English government to the shah, and therefore I felt myself called upon to interfere. I was valiantly throwing

many words at the Cûrds, sword in hand, when, by a sudden turn, one of our opponents threw his horse's tail into my face, and, by another trick, made him kick up so well to the mark, that I received a blow on my mouth, which sent three of my front teeth down my throat, accompanied by a very ornamental bit of my mustache. Such a misfortune, I felt, would do me incalculable mischief; for it would probably deprive me of the power of making use of that tongue and of those wits with which I intended to procure the protection and increase of the condescension of the king of kings towards myself. We were without help, and having by the grace of God got rid of the Cûrds, I wrapped my face and beard round with a shawl, and in this pitiful state entered Tabriz. Mohamed Beg undertook to answer the enquiries of our illustrious prince, whilst I reserved myself to meet those of the shah; for I hoped by the time that my eyes should be blessed with the sight of the snowy Demawend, my face would be in speaking order.

And, indeed, so it proved; for on the day of our arrival at Tehran my whisker was restored to its former beauty, and the only loss which I sustained from our untoward adventure was that of my teeth.

We were met by our friends even before we had left the environs of Caraj, so anxious were they to see us. I had no one to welcome me, saving two of my former associates in the chief executioner's department; but I determined to keep up my dignity, and to avow my intention, by the tone of my manners and language, never again to be ranked among the *alishoons*. Before we had entered the city, a servant from the harem of our late chief, Mirza Firouz, took possession of our much-regretted Dilferîb: from that hour we lost sight of her, and she became as dead to us as if she never had existed.

I proceeded straightway to the house of the grand vizier; and finding that he was at his post at the royal gate, I followed him thither, and with my boots on, overwhelmed as I was with the dust and dirt of the journey, I presented my letters, and stood before him.

The present minister had been no friend of my former patron; therefore he allowed me to stand a few minutes before he invited me into the apartment where he was seated; at length, having inspected one or two of the letters, he said, "*Khosh amedeed*, you are welcome," ordered me into the room, and condescended to give me a convenient place on the *nummud.**

I found many of my acquaintance here assembled, and was soon greeted with many compliments. "Your place has long been empty, and our eyes are enlightened," were expressions poured over me in profusion; and after the grand vizier had risen to report my arrival to the shah, and to lay the letters, of which I was the bearer, before him, numerous were the questions with which I was assailed. "What sort of a place is Frangistan?" said one.

"Praise be to Allah!" said another: "you, O Hajjî! must have seen beautiful women."—An old austere mollah in a corner mumbled out, "Curses on their beards! the infidels are impure, from beginning to the end."

"Is it true," said another man of the law, "that their women are without shame, and that their men never used the prescribed lustrations after certain necessities?"

"What words are these?" exclaimed a scribe. "They are of the race of Isau: it is evident that they are all polluted, and altogether unprofitable."

"But they have their *Evangîl*," said a merchant from Bassorah, "and that is something, after all: there are wonderful things in that book."

"It is more contemptible than the egg left by the ostrich in the desert," retorted the old priest. "What is it compared to our blessed Koran?"

I could not help remarking, "You would soon find, O mollah! had you been amongst the Franks, that instead of looking upon the Christian's Bible with contempt, you would

* The thick felt which borders a Persian room.

respect it as the first of books, judging it by the wonderful fruits which it produces."

I saw that I acquired no popularity by this speech, particularly when all the answer which I got in return was,—

"Yes! a gnat may have marrow, and a wing is of consequence to the fly."

By this time the vizier had announced my arrival to the shah, and a *ferash* of the private apartments stepped into the crowded place where we were seated, and with a tone of authority, said to me, "The shah wants you."

Upon this I rose, and collecting my senses around me, as well as I was able, followed the man of blows, keeping my cloak respectfully before me, in order to cover my body. I endeavoured to call to my recollection all those modes of respect and veneration, which a residence among the Franks had in a great measure obliterated, in order that I might use the becoming form of words in addressing my royal master; and which I well knew were necessary to secure to myself a comfortable possession of my ears.

As I dipped my head in passing the low door which leads into the court of the *khelwet*, or private apartments, I perceived the head and shoulders of the king of kings just apparent above the ledge of the open window at which he was seated, and then made as low an inclination as I could without touching the ground. I was then walked through different avenues of trees, until I reached a spot within speaking distance of his majesty, where the *ferash* ordered me to stop; when the king perceived me, and after a dignified pause, he cried out, "come forwards;" and then, with trepidation, I stepped onwards in my boots, for such is the etiquette; and when I had got to the brink of a basin of water, close under the royal window, I knelt down and kissed the ground.

"Are you Hajjî Baba?" said the shah.

I made a low bow.

"You are welcome."

I made another bow.

"Have you brought any *peish-kesh*, any present for the *Shahin-Shah ?*" said his majesty, smiling.

"My soul is both your sacrifice and your *peish-kesh*," said I. "Whatever your slave possesses is the shah's. I have brought twenty pieces of Frank gold to be laid at the foot of the throne." Upon which, drawing the money from my bosom, being a part of that which I had brought from England, I placed it on a gold salver brought to me by the ferash, who laid it before the king.

"Hajjî Baba is a good servant," said the king to the vizier. "He has returned with a white face; he holds the countenance of the shah as of some value."

"Yes, yes," said the grand vizier, "wherever the royal condescension alights, there white faces are to be found."

Upon this a *kaliân* was brought to the shah, who having refreshed himself with a long whiff, deliberately looked upon upon me a while, and said, "Well, Hajjî, so you have seen Frangistan—what sort of a place is it?"

"Owing to the condescension of the Asylum of the Universe," said I, "it is not a bad place."

"How is it, compared to Persia?" said the king.

"As I am your sacrifice," said I, "there can be no comparison."

"Well, well," said his majesty, "every country must have its pleasures; but, in truth, what is there in the world like our Irân? eh, Mirza!" turning to his vizier, and quoting these well-known lines of Hafiz, which begin with

> "Joy to Shiraz' charming plain,
> Where smiling peace and plenty reign!"

"*Ai Barikallah!* oh beautiful!" cried the vizer, "beautiful!"—"But," said the statesman, "Hafiz, whose dog was he, compared with what our own king of kings has said and sung?"*

* Fath Ali Shah is himself a poet of some eminence.

"You do not say ill," said his majesty, stroking down his beard. "We have also made our couplets; but, in truth, that unsainted poet was a wit of whom we shall never more see the like. He was a Shirazi, and worthy to be native of such a place." Then turning to me, he said,

"Have the Franks any poets?"

"May I be your sacrifice," said I, "they have; but to say that they approach to either Hafiz or Saadi, may God forgive me for thinking so!"

"But they have no nightingales," said the king; "say that, I will believe you."

"They have none," said I, "but of dogs they have abundance."

The shah was pleased at my attempt to be witty, and taking me up with a loud laugh, he was pleased to exclaim, "Well you said, Hajjî, by the soul of the shah! and good dog poets I dare say they make."

Upon which the vizier exclaimed, "*Mashallah!* the wit of the king is not to be mistaken; as to that we must cry, Trust in Heaven!"

"So they have poets!" said his majesty; "what else have they got? It is said that their women are good, is that true?"

"Of that there is no doubt," said I: "they would even be worthy, so thinks your slave, of standing before the shah himself."

"Is it so?" said he. "We have them here of all nations, Circassians, Georgians, Armenians, Jewesses; we want a Frank woman to be complete. Why did you not bring the shah a present of one, eh, Hajjî? By the shah's beard, you would have found favour in our sight had you done so."

"What am I to say, O king of kings? Your slave is in fault. Such was the number I saw, that I could not find one in my mind sufficiently of merit; but if your majesty would order your ambassador, who is still in England,

perhaps he might be able to obey your majesty's commands."

"You do not say wrong," said the king. "We want a Frank woman." Then turning to the vizier, he said, "What else was it that we wanted from that country? Is it now in your recollection?"

"May I be your sacrifice," said the vizier; "your slave thinks it was a spying-glass."

"True, true," answered the shah, recollecting himself; "it was a spying-glass; a miraculous spying-glass. Is it true," said he to me, with some hesitation, "is it true that they make a spying-glass in that country which can overlook a mountain? Is such a thing really made?"

"Since your majesty says so," said I, "it must be so; but, in truth, it was not my good luck to meet with it. But, as I am your sacrifice, may it please your majesty, I have seen things among the Franks equally astonishing; and, therefore, there is no reason that it should not exist."

"What things did you see? Speak boldly."

"I have seen a ship," said I, "going against a fierce wind, with the same velocity as a horse, and that by the vapour which rises from boiling water."

"Hajjî," said the king, after a stare and a thought, "say no lies here. After all, we are a king. Although you are a traveller, and have been to the Franks, yet a lie is a lie, come from whence it may."

My tongue almost became constipated at this reproof; but taking courage, I continued with vehemence:—"By the salt of the king, may my head be struck off this moment—I am your sacrifice—as I live, I swear that such is the case, and if there be a Frank here, and he be a man, he will confirm my words."

"Say it again," answered the king, softened by my earnestness. "What vapour could ever be strong enough to perform such a miracle?"

I then explained what I knew of a steam-engine, and how it acted upon the wheels of a ship.

"But to produce steam enough for such a purpose," said his majesty, "they must have on board the father of all kettles,* grandfather, and great-grandfather, to boot; large enough to boil a camel, much less a sheep."

"Camels, your majesty!" exclaimed I, "large enough to dress a string of camels!"

"Wonderful, wonderful!" exclaimed the shah, in deep thought; "well, after this, there is no doubt that they can make a spying-glass that looks over the mountain. Order some to be sent immediately," said he to the vizier.

"By my eyes!" said the minister, calmly and obsequiously.

"What other thing did you see, Hajjî?" said his majesty to me; "but open your eyes—recollect—no falsehoods—or otherwise, by the shah's beard! we are without compassion."

"Upon my eyes be it!" said I. "Many are the miracles which, owing to the condescension of the king of kings, it has been your slaves good fortune to see. Every night, amongst the Franks, magicians, with lighted torches, run about the streets; and where there is nothing to be seen for lighting, neither candle, lamp, wood, or wick, they produce an instantaneous light, which burns all the night through."

"What news is this?" said the king. "Excepting at Badkoo, which every one knows is a place of miracles, and where a vapour comes to the earth's surface which ignites, I have never heard of this which you relate."

"I well recollect now," answered I, "as I am your sacrifice, that a mercantile infidel assured me that England could manufacture a sacred flame, far purer than the natural fire which issues from the ground at Badkoo, and which is so ne-

* *Abu-al-Adham*, the father of kettles; so the Arabians call the large caldron in which, on occasions of great hospitality, they dress a sheep whole.

cessary for the temples of the Guebres and Parsees, and export it at a cheaper rate than any fire of the sort which can be procured either at Yezd, Surat, or Bombay."

"Is it so?" said the shah. "I have always heard that the English were great merchants, and could manufacture broad cloth; but I never yet heard that they could manufacture a sacred fire."

"By the head of the king I swear," said I, "that this is true; and if your majesty should doubt the words of your slave, order your ambassador to bring a box full from England, and it will reach the foot of your throne unhurt, even should it blow more violent tempests of wind than those which your humble slave encountered on ths seas."

"So you encountered great tempests?" said the shah. "Say on, Hajjî; every thing you have on your heart, say on."

"Yes, may it please your majesty," said I, with a ready wit which flashed over my mind like lightning, "one tempest we encountered on our passage from England to Constantinople so great, that venturing to look overboard to see how fast we were going for the good of your majesty's service, and happening to leave my mouth open, a fierce wind entered, and blew three of your slave's teeth down his throat." Upon this I opened my mouth, and showed the damage which my jaw had sustained from the kick of the Cûrdish horse.

"Are there such winds, indeed?" asked the shah. "In truth they rush down with violence enough from the neighbouring heights of Albors, sufficiently strong to blow the beards from our chins; but the existence of such a wind as you describe has never yet reached our understanding."

Happy was I to have had the wit to turn my misfortune to such an advantage, for it was plain that my narrative had much interested the royal breast, and I trusted to my ingenuity to turn all my real or pretended sufferings in my travels to still greater advantage, and, if possible, to secure for myself some permanent situation about the court. I then entered

into a detail of our journey; spoke of our privations, the impurities we had encountered, the indignities to which we were exposed, and of our hair-breadth escape from shipwrecks, pirates, and monsters of the deep, which so worked upon the imagination of our beloved shah, that with that goodness of heart for which he is so celebrated, he ordered that I should immediately be invested with a dress of honour.

What shall I say more? I was dismissed from the royal presence with my head touching the skies; the condescending words of the Asylum of the Universe had sunk deep into my heart. I was treated with respect by every body, owing to the favourable reception I had met with; and perhaps all reasonable persons would say that I could have nothing more to wish for. But shall I be forgiven when I declare that still I had something to wish for? shall I proclaim the vanities of my inmost thoughts? Let me say it then, I longed to be a khan. I longed to be paraded through the town for three days, with a firman stuck in my cap. I repeated the title so often to myself, that I thought I could in justice demand it. Mirza Hajji Baba Khan sounded so well, so much as a thing which ought to be, that I could no longer doubt such a favour ever could be refused. I then began quietly to give hints of my expectations; to say that I had great hopes of their completion; and that in fact the shah himself, whether in earnest, or by mistake, instead of calling mirza, had in fact called me khan.

But, as I said before, the grand vizier was no friend of mine, and he lent but a deaf ear to what was so openly spoken of by every body at court. He felt that if I were to be made a khan, what more could be done for the ambassador himself, who was his relation by marriage, when he returned from his embassy? Besides, how could he lend his hand to advance one who was the creature of his bitterest enemy, the late prime minister?

Notwithstanding my disappointment, still I lived in hope. In the meanwhile I consoled myself with the possession of the money which I had buried at my departure, and which I

had found untouched. I pass my days in exciting the wonder of my countrymen by the relation of my adventures. I am privileged to stand before the king. And who knows? time, opportunity, and my tongue, will not be wanting to help me in the accomplishment of my wishes, and in filling up the measure of my ambition. And now, gentle reader, Hajjî Baba kisses your feet, seeks protection at the skirt of your coat, and hopes that your shadow may never be less.

APPENDIX.

Extracts from Mr. James Morier's Second Journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor, to Constantinople, between the year 1810 *and* 1816.

No. I.

(See page 401, Note A.)

"As the Persian Ambassador attracted much interest in England, it may be gratifying to his friends, and not unacceptable to others, to receive some account of his residence in this country.

"His first surprise on reaching England, was at the caravanserais, for so, though no contrast can be greater, he called our hotels. We were lodged in a gay apartment at Plymouth, richly ornamented with looking-glasses, which are so esteemed in Persia, that they are held to be fitting for royal apartments only: and our dinners were served up with such quantities of plate, and of glass ware, as brought forth repeated expressions of surprise every time he was told that they were the common appendages of our caravanserais. The good folks of the inn, who, like most people in England, look upon it as a matter of course that nothing can be too hot for Asiatics, so loaded the Ambassador's bed with warm covering, that he had scarcely been in bed an hour, before he was obliged to get out of it; for having during all his life slept on nothing but a mattrass on the bare ground, he found the heat insupportable, and in this state he walked about the greatest part of the night, with all the people of the inn following him in procession, and unable to divine what could be his wishes.

"One of the public coaches was hired to convey his servants

to London; and when four of them had got inside, having seated themselves cross-legged, they would not allow that there could be room for more, although the coach was calculated to take six. They armed themselves from head to foot with pistols, swords, and each a musket in his hand, as if they were about to make a journey in their own country; and thus encumbered, notwithstanding every assurance that nothing could happen to them, they got into the coach. His excellency himself greatly enjoyed the novelty of a carriage, and was delighted at the speed with which we travelled, particularly at night, when he perceived no diminution of it, although he was surprised that all this was done without a guide. We were met at two posts from London by two gentlemen of the Foreign Office, who greeted him on his arrival; but he grew very anxious as we proceeded, and seemed to be looking out for an *Istakball*, or a deputation headed by some man of distinction, which, after the manner of his own country, he expected would be sent to meet him. In vain we assured him that no disrespect was intended, and that our modes of doing honour to Ambassadors were different from those of Persia: our excuses seemed only to grieve him the more; and although to a foreigner the interest of the road greatly increased as we approached the city, yet he requested to have both the glasses of the carriage drawn up, for he said that he did not understand the nature of such an entry, which appeared to him more like smuggling a bale of goods into a town, than the reception of a public envoy. As for three of his servants who followed us in a chaise behind, they had nearly suffocated themselves; for, by way of experiment, they had put up all the glasses, and then when they wished it could not put them down, so that they were quite exhausted for want of fresh air.

"He who had witnessed the manner in which our ambassadors had been received in Persia, particularly the *levée en masse* of the inhabitants who were sent out to meet him at every place where he stopt, was surprised to see the little notice that he himself in the same situation in England had attracted, and the total independence of all ranks of people.

"Although he found a fine house, and a splendid establishment, ready to receive him in London, and although a fine collation was laid out upon the morning of his arrival, nothing could re-

vive his spirits; so much had he been disappointed at the mode of his reception.

"His first object was to deliver his credentials to the King as soon as possible, because in Persia it is esteemed a slight if that ceremony be delayed. In this also he was disappointed, for on the first Wednesday, the usual levee day, His Majesty happened to be unwell, and, consequently, there was a delay of more than ten days before he could be presented. He bitterly lamented his fate, and daily affirmed, that for this he should lose his head on his return to Persia. When the day came, he was naturally anxious about the reception which he was to find: he had formed his ideas of our court from what he recollected of his own, where the King's person is held so sacred, that few have the privilege of approaching it. He had a private audience at the Queen's House, and from the manner in which he expressed himself after it was over, it appeared that the respect which he had hitherto felt towards our monarch was diminished. There are many ceremonies exacted upon approaching the Shah of Persia. He is first seen at a great distance, he is approached with great caution, and with many profound inclinations of the body. In his immediate vicinity, the shoes are taken off, and none enter the room in which he himself is seated, without a special command from him. Here the Persian entered at once into the same room where His Majesty was standing. He made no inclination of the body, he did not even take his shoes off; and, what is more, he put his credentials into His Majesty's own hands. He said, that he had expected to have seen our King seated on a throne at a distance, and that he could not have approached within many paces of him: his surprise then may be conceived, when, on entering a small room, he was taken to a person whom he took to be a *capijee*, or porter, and was informed, that this was the King of England. He said, that if any blame was imputed to him for not having delivered his credentials immediately on his arrival, that all would be pardoned him, when he should assure the Shah, that he was not desired to take off his shoes as he approached our Monarch. These circumstances will perhaps show, of what importance it is, upon the introduction of an Oriental Minister to the King, that care should be taken to show him the court in its greatest splendour.

"He arrived in London in the month of November, and the gloom of the weather had a visible effect upon his health and spirits. For two months he never saw the sun, and it was fully believed by his suite that they had got into regions beyond its influence; when one day several of them rushed in to him with great joy to announce that they had just seen it, and that if he made haste he might perhaps see it also.

"It was surprising to observe with what ease he acquired our habits of life, how soon he used himself to our furniture, our modes of eating, our hours, our forms and ceremonies, and even our language, though, perhaps, with respect to the latter acquirement, it might rather be observed, that he soon learnt sufficient just to misunderstand every thing that was said. He who had sat upon his heels on the ground all his life, here was quite at his ease on chairs and sofas; he who before never ate but with his fingers, now used knives and forks without inconvenience.

"Of some things, it would be impossible from mere description to give any just idea. Such was an opera or a play to the Persian. The first night he went to the opera, evidently the impression of surprise which he received on entering his box was very strong, although his pride made him conceal it. His servants had been sent to the gallery, and upon going up to hear what was their conversation, they were found wrangling amongst themselves, whether or no the figures they saw upon the stage were real men and women, or automatons. He was taken to see King Lear, and the story, which is likely to effect one whose natural respect for majesty is so profound, brought tears from him in great plenty, although he did not understand the language in which it was acted. No people would have a greater taste for scenic representations than the Persians, if we may judge from the effects which they produced on these individuals.

"When it is known that a Persian *mejlis* or assembly is composed of people seated in a formal row on the ground, with their backs against the wall, some idea may be had of the Persian Ambassador's surprise upon entering an English rout. The perfect ease of his manners and unembarrassed conduct on such occasions, will be as surprising to us, as the great crowd of men and women, hotly pressed together for no one apparent purpose,

was to him. He gave an entertainment of a similar description at his own house, to the astonishment of his domestics, whose greatest surprise was how little noise was made by such a crowd, for, said they, 'What a different scene would such a number of people have made of it in Persia!'

"On his being taken to hear a debate at the House of Commons, he immediately sided with a young orator, who gained him over by his earnest manner and the vehemence of his action; and at the House of Lords, the great object of his remark was the Lord Chancellor, whose enormous wig, which he compared to a sheep-skin, awoke all his curiosity. There was considerable pleasure in observing his emotion when he was taken to St. Paul's Cathedral, on the anniversary of the charity children, where he acquired more real esteem for the institutions and the national character of England than he did from any other sight, for he frequently after referred to his feelings on that occasion.

"He was one day waited upon by a deputation from the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, composed of three reverend gentleman, who in their robes presented him with a Bible and prayer-book superbly bound, and addressed him with a speech written on parchment. As they spoke the address he was requested to stand up, which he willingly did; but when they had departed, his servants were all unanimous that he had been made an *Isauvi*, that is, a Christian.

"He frequently walked in Kensington Gardens by himself. As he was one day seated on a bench, an old gentleman and an old lady, taking him for one of his own attendants, accosted him. They asked him many questions:—How does your master like this, and how does he like that? and so on.— Tired with being questioned, he said, 'He like all very well; but one thing he not like—old man ask too many questions.' Upon this he got up laughing, leaving the old gentleman to find out that he had been speaking to the ambassador in person.

"If the whole history of his residence in England were worth the narrative, it is evident that this note might be greatly lengthened; but, perhaps, that which would afford the most amusement, would be the publication of his own journal, which he regularly kept, during his absence from Persia; and which

on his return there, was read with great avidity by his own countrymen.

No. II.

(Extracted from page 169 to 232.)

"We entered Teheran on the 9th of November, and were received by an *Istakball*, or deputation, headed by Mahomed Khan *Amou*, or Mahomed Kahn the Uncle, so called, not because he was the King's Uncle, but because he had been the King's playfellow; for *Uncle*, among the Persians, as well as among the Arabs, is an epithet of affection frequently used to fondle and caress the person to whom it is applied. With this character, united with the circumstance of his being a *Cajar* by birth, we were assured that the distinction conferred upon us was very considerable. He was attended by a great body of the king's cavalry, mounted upon fine horses, who made a display of their horsemanship as we proceeded in slow procession towards the city. Many of them particularly excelled in the *Keikaj*, an exercise that consists in turning about on the saddle at full speed, and firing backwards upon a pursuing enemy. This they learn from their childhood, and it gives them great confidence and dexterity on horseback. It is probably the remains of the old Parthian custom, so frequently alluded to in ancient authors,* with this difference, that fire-arms are now used instead of bows and arrows.

"We were lodged in the Ameen-ad-Dowlah's palace until houses should be appropriated for the fixed habitation of the embassay. Two were shortly after selected, but in a manner that will show of what frail tenure are possessions in Persia. The one formerly belonged to Mirza Baba, who had held the situation of *Berlerbeg* (a principal officer) of the city; but who, if the expression may be used, *fell rich*, and was put to death.

* Οἱ δὲ βάρβαροι ἱππεῖς καὶ φεύγοντες ἅμα ἐτίτρωσκον, εἰς τὄπισθεν τοξεύοντες ἀπὸ τῶν ἵππων. Xenophon, Anab. lib. iii. c. 3.

Fidentemque fugâ Parthum, versisque sagittis.—Virg. Georg. lib. iii. v. 31.

Miles sagittas et celerem fugam.

Parthi.—Hor. lib. 2. Ode xiii. v. 17.; also lib. 1. Ode xix. v. 11. &c.

Another horrid circumstance gives celebrity to this house, for in one of its small rooms was immured, literally *bricked up*, Saduk Khan Cheghaugee, whose crime had been what is here called making the *Ada ul sultanet*, or aspiring to the crown; but having been discomfited in a battle near Casvin, he was persuaded to give himself up to the king, provided that his blood was not spilt. To this the king gave his promise and kept it, for he was starved to death. Alexander pledged himself towards Nabarzanes, '*after the Persian manner*,' as Curtius calls it, that he would not hurt him;* but not with the same reserve of conscience as his present majesty, for he pardoned Nabarzanes, although he was chiefly moved to this act by the depraving influence of the eunuch Bagaos.

"The other house belonged to Mahomed Khan, the chief of the Camel Artillery, who upon a salary of 300 piastres, or about 30*l.* sterling per annum, had contrived to build himself not only this, but another infinitely finer house. Of this the king was aware, and consequently made no scruple of accepting it as a present with one hand, and presenting it to the British embassy with the other. Mahomed Khan showed us no sort of ill-will for the loss he had sustained; but, on the contrary, professed for us the sincerest friendship, and said that for the future we should be more intimately united: and consoled himself with the usual Persian professions, *Māl-e-mun, māl-e-shumah, māl-e-shumah, māl-e-mun* — 'My property is yours, and yours is mine.' He had a house in our neighbourhood superior to the one which had been taken from him, and we always found him true to his professions. The character of neighbour in the East is indeed in some measure sacred; and the Persian word *Hemsieh* (under one shade) which it expresses, gives a good idea of its friendly signification.

"The first days of our arrival at Teheran were almost exclusively engaged by discussions on points of etiquette. The ambassador demanded that he should deliver the King of England's letter into the Shah's own hands — that on account of his superior diplomatic rank, he should be treated with greater honours than had been shown to all preceding ministers — and

* *Nec dubitavit Alexander, fidem quo Persæ modo accipiebant, dare, "Inviolatum si venisset fore."* Quintus Curtius, lib. vi. c. 4.

that he should receive the first visit from the Grand Vizier. The Persians resisted the first demand, saying it was contrary to their usage — to the second they answered, that with regard to greater honours, they had on former occasions exhausted all which they had to give; but that now, the most they could do was to place the ambassador's chair nearer to the throne than had been practised in preceding audiences of ministers. As for the last, they refused positively to accede to it.

"In order to carry his principal point, the ambassador was obliged to compromise his first visit to the king to a private audience. Attended by me, and his escort of Indian cavalry, we proceeded to the palace, where we were received by the master of ceremonies of the *Khelwet*, or private apartments, who conducted us to the presence. The king was seated in a small upper room, and when we had perceived him, we made our obeisances with all due respect, until we were stopt at about thirty paces in front of him, where we left our shoes and walked on the bare stones until we were close to His Majesty. Here the king said, '*Khosh Amedeed,*' You are welcome; and '*Biah ballah,*' Come up; when we mounted a narrow flight of steps that led at once into the room. He was seated on an embroidered carpet, spread on the ground in a corner. Opposite to him stood the Grand Vizier Mirza Sheffea and Ameen-ad-Dowlah; and on one side four pages richly dressed, one bearing his crown, a second his sword, a third his bow and arrows, and the fourth his shield and battle-axe. The ambassador was conducted by the Grand Vizier, and stooping down presented the letter to the king, who pointed to a spot about two or three inches from him, where he placed it. After that he presented the diamond ring with which he was charged as a present from the King of England, using appropriate expressions on the occasion, to which the King answered, by pointing to the letter and saying, 'This is better than a mountain of diamonds." His Majesty then desired the ambassador to seat himself, which he did on the ground; and after that ensued a conversation, in which the king, with great dignity, expressed the high esteem he entertained for our nation. The ambassador seized this opportunity to extol the conduct of the King's envoy during his stay in England, to which His Majesty seemed to listen with pleasure;

and then ordered Mirza Abul Hassan Khan to be called, who soon after appeared, and stood below with his shoes off, by the side of a basin of water. He then said to him aloud, '*Vferin, aferin*, well done, well done, Abul Hassan, you have made my face white in a foreign country, and I will make yours white in this. You are one of the noblest of the families in my kingdom, and with the help of God, I will raise you to the dignities of your ancestors;' at which words the Mirza knelt down and actually touched the earth with his forehead.

"Some time after this, the ambassador had his public audience, when we saw the king in great splendour. He was decked in all his jewels, with his crown on his head, his *bazûbends*, or armlets, on his arms, seated on his throne. We approached him bowing after our own manner, but the Persians bowed as David did to Saul, *who stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself* (1 Samuel, xxiv. 8); that is, not touching the earth with the face, but bowing with their bodies at right angles, the hands placed on the knees, and the legs somewhat asunder. It is only on remarkable occasions, such as that above mentioned of Mirza Abul Hassan Khan, that the prostration of the *Rouée Zemeen*, the face to the earth, is made, which must be the *falling upon the face to the earth and worshipping*, as Joshua did (Joshua, v. 14). Stated distances were fixed for taking off our shoes: some of the ambassador's suite being obliged to take theirs off at a considerable distance from the king, whilst others, whose rank gave them more privilege, kept theirs on until near to the stairs which led into the room. As the Persians allow to their monarch a great character of sanctity, calling him *Zil Allah*, the shadow of the Almighty, they pay him almost divine honours. Besides making the *Ziaret*, as before stated, the taking off their shoes implies that the ground which surrounds him is sacred; and this circumstance will illustrate what the captain of the Lord of Hosts said unto Joshua; *Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy*. —Joshua, v. 15.

"The jewels disposed over his dress are embroidered on the stuff. Large stones of considerable value are placed on the shoulders. Upon his crown, which is very heavy, and set with jewels, is inscribed—Help from God, and speedy victory. On

the front of it is placed the *Jika*, an upright ornament of jewellery, which is the great distinction of Persian royalty. The *bazúbends** (ornaments that are fastened above the elbow) are composed of precious stones, of great value, and are only worn by the king and his sons. They must be distinguished from the bracelets used by the ancient Persians,† in the same manner as they are worn at this day in India; and are, I should conjecture, nearly the same sort of ornament which was brought to David as a token of Saul's death,—viz. *the bracelet that was on his arm*—(2 Samuel, i. 10.); and which probably in those days, as it does now, indicated royalty. ‡ When the people of Israel wished for a king, it was on the declared principle, that they might be governed "*like all the nations.*" Saul was the first king under this establishment; nor can we doubt that the customs of the surrounding nations were punctiliously observed towards him in his public appearance, his going to war, etc.

"The throne upon which the king sat was ascended by steps, upon which were painted dragons. It is surrounded by a balustrade, and the whole of it, which is overlaid with fine gold, beautifully enamelled, we were told cost one hundred thousand tomauns. The throne of Solomon was ascended by steps—*there were stays on each side of the sitting place*, and, what is its principal feature of ressemblance, was *overlaid with pure gold.* 2 Chron. ix. 17, 18.

"This audience passed off like that which I have before described in my former journal; and I will therefore proceed to relate that the ambassadress also paid a visit of ceremony to the King of Persia's chief wife, called the *Banoo Harem*, whom, for want of a more appropriate title, we styled the Queen of Persia. The ambassadress was introduced into a large open room, at one corner of which was seated the queen, dressed out in truly Persian splendour. Large gilded knobs appeared on her head-dress, which was of a great size; and the other parts of her attire, like that of Zobeide, the caliph's favourite in the Arabian Nights, were so loaded with jewels that she could scarce-

* *Bazú* is the part of the arm above the elbow.

† See the Sculptures of Persepolis.

‡ See Harmer, vol. ii. p. 453. The word translated "bracelet," is, by the Latin interpreters, better given as *armillæ*.

ly walk. In a corner of the room stood some of the king's children, so stiffened out with brocade, velvets, furs, and jewellery, that they almost looked like fixtures. Great numbers of women were arranged in rows without the room, all ornamented with jewellery; and on the whole there appears to have been a great display of magnificence, although it did not amount quite to what the Persians would have made us to conceive. The ambassadress presented the Queen of England's picture, most beautifully set round with brilliants of the purest water, to the personage before whom she was seated, who was quite unconscious of the beauty of the workmanship; but we afterwards learnt that it was greatly admired by his majesty, whose discrimination in these valuables is very acute. Whilst the ambassadress partook of some refreshments, her two maids were led out by the attendants to do the same; but no sooner were they amongst them, than the Persian women fell upon them like harpies to analyse their dress, of which they expressed the most unbounded curiosity. It is agreed by the Persians that the dress of our females is in every way preferable to theirs; but they will not allow the same in favour of the dresses of our men.

"The grand vizier refused so positively to pay the first visit to the ambassador, that at length, after a long negociation, in which violence and conciliation were used alternately, the business was brought to a sort of accommodation, by an entertainment given in the Ameen-ad-Dowlah's house by the ambassador, at which the grand vizier was to be the ambassador's guest. Of course the grand vizier gave it out that he had been the Amen-ad-Dowlah's guest, and the ambassador that he had been his; but notwithstanding the fermentation which it excited at the time, when they met they were soon reconciled, and parted in great good humour with each other. No people are more punctilious upon the *deed wa baz deed,* the visit and its return, than are the Persians; and it was on that very account that we judged it of importance to be strict in keeping up to this etiquette.

"Not long after our arrival the Persians commenced their preparations for the celebration of the death of Imam Hossein. This takes place during the first ten days of the month of Moharrem, which is the first month of the Mahomedan year. *Moharrem,* in Arabic, means sacred, prohibited by law; and is so

called because, even before Mussulmanism, it was held unlawful among the ancient Arabs to make open war upon each other during that month, as well as during the months of Rejeb, Zeccad, and Zilhej. The first ten days of the month of Moharrem are called by the Mahomedans *Ayam Almadoodaut,* or the reckoned days, because they believe that during these ten days the Koran was sent in detached portions from heaven to be communicated to mankind. The tenth is generally called the *Ashoureh* by all sects of Mussulmans; but the Persians and the other followers of Ali call it also the *Rooz Catl,* or the *Rooz Hossein,* the day of murder, or of Hossein, because they believe that on that day Hossein was killed.

"Hossein was the second son of Ali, and brother of Hassan; and having refused to recognise Yezid for the legitimate caliph, was obliged to quit Medina, and retire to Mecca. The inhabitants of Cufa, of which the major part had a great partiality to the family of Ali, hearing of his retreat, invited him to take refuge amongst them; and having proclaimed him, and unanimously received him as the lawful caliph, they declared Yesid to be an usurper. Yezid no sooner heard this than he despatched Abadullah, one of his captains, with troops to march against him. This officer having met Hossein in the plain of Kerbelah, on his road to Cufa, accompanied only by sixty-two persons of his family, killed him and all those with him, in the 61st year of the Hejira.

"The tragical termination of his life, commencing with his flight from Medina, and terminating with his death on the plain of Kerbelah, has been drawn up in the form of a drama, consisting of several parts, of which one is performed by actorson each successive day of the mourning. The last part, which is appointed for the *Rooz Catl*, comprises the events of the day on which he met his death, and is acted with great pomp before the king in the largest square of the city. The subject, which is full of affecting incidents, would of itself excite great interest in the breast of a Christian audience; but allied as it is with all the religious and national feelings of the Persians, it awakens their strongest passions. Hossein would be a hero in our eyes; in theirs he is a martyr. The vicissitudes of his life, his dangers on the desert, his fortitude, his invincible courage, and his

devotedness at the hour of his death, are all circumstances upon which the Persians dwell with rapture, and which excite in them an enthusiasm not to be diminished by lapse of time. The celebration of this mourning keeps up in their minds the remembrance of those who destroyed him, and, consequently, their hatred for all Mussulmans who do not partake of their feelings. They execrate Yesid, and curse Omar, with such rancour, that it is necessary to have witnessed the scenes that are exhibited in their cities, to judge of the degree of fanaticism which possesses them at this time. I have seen some of the most violent of them, as they vociferated *Ya Hossein!* walk about the streets almost naked, with only their loins covered, and their bodies streaming with blood by the voluntary cuts which they have given to themselves, either as acts of love, anguish, or mortification. Such must have been the cuttings of which we read in holy writ, which were forbidden to the Israelites by Moses;* and these extravagancies, I conjecture, must resemble the practices of the priests of Baal, who *cried aloud, and cut themselves after this manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.*—1 Kings, xviii. 28. See also Jeremiah, xvi. 5, 6, and 7.

"The preparations which were made throughout the city consisted in erecting large tents, that are there called *takieh,* in the streets and open places, in fitting them up with black linen, and furnishing them with objects emblematical of the mourning. These tents are erected either at the joint expense of the *mahal,* or district, or by men of consequence, as an act of devotion; and all ranks of people have a free access to them. The expense of a takieh consists in the hire of a mollah, or priest, of actors and their clothes, and in the purchase of lights. Many there are who seize this opportunity of atoning for past sins, or of rendering thanks to heaven for some blessing, by adding charity to the good act of erecting a takieh, and distribute gratuitous food to those who attend it.

"Our neighbour Mahomed Khan had a takieh in his house, to which all the people of the mahal flocked in great numbers. During the time of this assemblage we heard a constant noise of

* Levit. xix. 28. Deut. xiv. 1.

drums, cymbals, and trumpets. We remarked that, besides the takiehs in different open places and streets of the town, a wooden pulpit, without any appendage, was erected, upon which a mollah was mounted, preaching to the people who were collected around him. To speak occasionally from a pulpit was one of the offices of the early successors of Mahomed, who joined in their persons the sacred and royal character. In process of time this function passed to inferior persons. An European ambassador, who is said to have intrigued with Yezid in favour of Hossein, is brought forwards accordingly to be an actor in one of the parts of the tragedy, and the populace were, in consequence, inclined to look favourably upon us. Notwithstanding the excitation of the public mind, we did not cease to take our usual rides, and we generally passed unmolested through the middle of congregations, during the time of their devotions.

"Such little scruples have they at our seeing their religious ceremonies, that on the 8th night of the Moharrem, the grand vizier invited the whole of the embassy to attend his takieh. On entering the room we found a large assembly of Persians clad in dark-coloured clothes, which, accompanied with their black caps, their black beards, and their dismal faces, really looked as if they were *afflicting their souls.* We observed that, *no man did put on his ornaments.** They neither wore their daggers, nor any parts of their dress which they look upon as ornamental. A mollah of high consideration sat next to the grand vizier, and kept him in serious conversation, whilst the remaining part of the society communicated with each other in whispers. After we had sat some time, the windows of the room in which we were seated were thrown open, and we then discovered a priest placed on a high chair, under the covering of a tent, surrounded by a crowd of the populace; the whole of the scene being lighted up with candles. He commenced by an exodium, in which he reminded them of the great value of each tear shed for the sake of Imam Hossein, which would be an atonement for a past life of wickedness; and also informed them with much solemnity, that *whatsoever soul*

* Exodus, xxxiii. 4.

it be that shall not be afflicted in the same day, shall be cut off from among the people. (Lev. xxiii. 29.) He then began to read from a book, with a sort of nasal chaunt, that part of the tragic history of Hossein appointed for the day, which soon produced its effect upon his audience, for he scarcely had turned over three leaves, before the grand vizier commenced to shake his head to and fro, to utter in a most piteous voice the usual Persian exclamation of grief, '*wahi! wahi! wahi!*' both of which acts were followed in a more or less violent manner by the rest of the audience. The chaunting of the priest lasted nearly an hour, and some parts of his story were indeed pathetic, and well calculated to rouse the feelings of a superstitious and lively people. In one part of it, all the company stood up, and I observed that the grand vizier turned himself towards the wall, with his hand extended before him, and prayed. After the priest had finished, a company of actors appeared, some dressed as women, who chaunted forth their parts from slips of paper, in a sort of recitative, that was not unpleasing even to our ears. In the very tragical parts, most of the audience appeared to cry very unaffectedly; and as I sat near the grand vizier, and to his neighbour the priest, I was witness to many real tears that fell from them. In some of these mournful assemblies, it is the custom for a priest to go about to each person at the height of his grief, with a piece of cotton in his hand, with which he carefully collects the falling tears, and which he then squeezes into a bottle, preserving them with the greatest caution. This practically illustrates that passage in the 56th Psalm, 8., *Put thou my tears into thy bottle.* Some Persians believe, that, in the agony of death, when all medicines have failed, a drop of tears so collected, put into the mouth of a dying man, has been known to revive him; and it is for such use that they are collected.

On the Rooz Catl, the tenth day, the ambassador was invited by the king to be present at the termination of the ceremonies, in which the death of Hossein was to be represented. We set off after breakfast, and placed ourselves in a small tent, that was pitched for our accommodation, over an arched gateway, which was situated close to the room in which his Majesty was to be seated.

We looked upon the great *maidan*, or square, which is in front of the palace, at the entrance of which we perceived a circle of Cajars, or people of the king's own tribe, who were standing barefooted, and beating their breasts in cadence to the chanting of one who stood in the centre, and with whom they now and then joined their voices in chorus. *Smiting the breast* (St. Luke, xviii. 13.) is an universal act throughout the mourning; and the breast is made bare for that purpose, by unbuttoning the top of the shirt. The king, in order to show his humility, ordered the Cajars, among whom were many of his own relations, to walk about without either shoes or stockings, to superintend the order of the different ceremonies about to be performed; and they were to be seen stepping tenderly over the stones, with sticks in their hands, doing the duties of menials, now keeping back a crowd, then dealing out blows with their sticks, and settling the order of the processions.

Part of the square was partitioned off by an enclosure, which was to represent the town of Kerbelab, near which Hossein was put to death; and close to this were two small tents, which were to represent his encampment in the desert with his family. A wooden platform, covered with carpets, upon which the actors were to perform, completed all the scenery used on the occasion.

A short time after we had reached our tent, the king appeared; and although we could not see him, yet we were soon apprised of his presence by all the people standing up, and by the bowing of his officers. The procession then commenced as follows; —

First came a stout man, naked from the waist upwards, balancing in his girdle a long thick pole, surmounted by an ornament made of tin, curiously wrought with devices from the Koran, in heigth altogether about thirty feet.

Then another, naked like the former, balanced an ornamented pole in his girdle, still more ponderous, though not so high, upon which a young dervish, resting his feet upon the bearer's girdle, had placed himself, chanting verses with all his might in praise of the king.

After him a person of more strength, and more nakedness, a water-carrier, walked forwards, bearing an immense leather sack filled with water slung over his back, on which, by way of

bravado, four boys were piled one over the other. This personage, we were told, was emblematical of the great thirst which Hossein suffered in the desert.

A litter, in the shape of a sarcophagus, which was called the *Çaber Peighember*, or the tomb of the prophet, succeeded, borne on the shoulders of eight men. On its front was a large oval ornament entirely covered with precious stones, and just above it, a great diamond star. On a small projection were two tapers placed on candlesticks enriched with jewels. The top and sides were covered with Cashmerian shawls, and on the summit rested a turban, intended to represent the head-dress of the Prophet. On each side walked two men bearing poles, from which a variety of beautiful shawls were suspended, at the top of which were representations of Mahomed's hand, studded with jewellery.

After this came four led horses, caparisoned in the richest manner. The fronts of their heads were ornamented with plates, entirely covered with diamonds, that emitted a thousand beautiful rays. Their bodies were dressed with shawls and gold stuffs; and on their saddles were placed some object emblematical of the death of Hossein. When all these had passed, they arranged themselves in a row to the right of the king's apartment.

After a short pause, a body of fierce-looking men, with only a loose white sheet thrown over their naked bodies, marched forwards. They were all begrimed with blood, and, each brandishing a sword, they sang a sort of hymn, the tones of which were very wild. These represented the sixty-two relations, or the martyrs, as the Persians call them, who accompanied Hossein, and were slain in defending him. Close after them was led a white horse, covered with artificial wounds, with arrows stuck all about him, and caparisoned in black, representing the horse upon which Hossein was mounted when he was killed. A band of about fifty men, striking two pieces of wood together in their hands, completed the procession. They arranged themselves in rows before the king, and marshalled by a *maître de ballet*, who stood in the middle to regulate their movements, they performed a dance, clapping their hands in the best possible time. The *maître de ballet* all this time sang in recitative, to which the dan-

cers joined at different intervals with loud shouts and reiterated clapping of their pieces of wood.

The processions were succeeded by the tragedians. Hossein come forwards, followed by his wives, sisters and relatives. They performed many long and tedious acts; but as our distance from the stage was too great to hear the many affecting things which no doubt they said to each other, we will proceed at once to where the unfortunate Hossein lay extended on the ground, ready to receive the death-stroke from a ruffian dressed in armour, who acted the part of executioner. At this moment a burst of lamentation issued from the multitude, and heavy sobs and real tears came from almost every one of those who were near enough to come under our inspection. The indignation of the populace wanted some object upon which to vent istelf, and it fell upon those of the actors who had performed the parts of Yezid's soldiers. No sooner was Hossein killed, than they were driven off the ground by a volley of stones, followed by shouts of abuse. We were informed that it is so difficult to procure perfomers to fill these characters, that on the present occasion a party of Russian prisoners were pressed into the army of Yesid, and they made as speedy an exit, after the catastrophe, as it was in their power.

The scene terminated by the burning of Kerbelah. Several reed huts had been constructed behind the enclosure before mentioned, which of a sudden were set on fire. The tomb of Hossein was seen covered with black cloth, and upon it sat a figure disguised in a *tiger's* skin, which was intended to represent the miraculous *lion*, recorded to have kept watch over his remains after he had been buried. The most extraordinary part of the whole exhibition was the representation of the dead bodies of the martyrs; who, having been decapitated, were all placed in a row, each body with a head close to it. To effect this, several Persians buried themselves alive, leaving the head out just above ground; while others put their heads under ground, leaving out the body. The heads and bodies were placed in such relative positions to each other, as to make it appear that they had been severed. This is done by way of penance; but in hot weather, the violence of the exertion has been known to produce death. The whole ceremony

was terminated by the *khotbeh,* which is an action of prayer for Mahomed, his descendants, and for the prosperity of the king; and was delivered in a loud voice by a man, *the best crier of his time* (as Xenophon calls Tolmides,*) who is celebrated for his strong voice, and, indeed, deservedly so; for at about fifty yards' distance from us we heard every word he said, notwithstanding the noise of the multitude which surrounded us.

After the solemnities of the Moharren were over, the Persian ministers entered upon the negociation of a definitive treaty with the ambassador, which occupied them during the winter; and I should have been happy to give an account of the discussions which the subject of it involved, if the official character which I held in the embassy did not forbid it. Unacquainted as the Persians are with the law of nations, and unaccustomed to the discussion of great political questions, we found their ignorance a great impediment to the progress of business. Whatever demand we made, however clear and self-evident, they always thought that it had, or might have, some recondite meaning, which they could not understand; consequently they never acceded to it without discussions so long and violent, as frequently to end in quarrel. They have but a very confused idea of Europe, and the position of its different states. The great mass of Persians, very much like their ancestors,† look upon Europe as one state, which they call *Fireng*, and all Europeans *Firengees*. Those who are a little better informed, divide us into *Franciz* and *Ingliz*; and the Grand Vizier, who perhaps has seen every European that has been at the Persian court during the present reign, has at length acquired the names of the different nations of Europe, and those of the prime ministers of the leading courts. Of Bonaparte, from the likeness of his history to that of their own Nadir Shah, they have a very high idea; and as many of his acts were quite in the oriental style of despotism, they not only feared but admired him: for one of the first qualities which they require in a monarch, is *rishadet*, or courage, but that sort of courage which is allied with tyranny.

Fear of the Russians was their strongest feeling; and the great object of their politics with that power was to get a resto-

* Anab. lib. ii.

† Herodotus, Polymnia, iii.

ration of Georgia. The war that was carrying on between them, however, consisted more of predatory incursions, on the part of Persia, such as the Scythians are recorded to have made,* than of regular warfare. We had a specimen of this policy not long after our arrival at Teheran; for one morning, in great agitation, the Grand Vizier's confidential secretary, attended by Mirza Abul Hassan Khan, came to announce to us a great victory gained by the Prince Royal over the Russians. Their account of it was, that the Persians had killed 2000, taken 5000 prisoners, and twelve guns, and had possessed themselves of the town of Shisheh. We soon after heard the real truth, which reduced their account to 300 killed, two guns taken, and 500 made prisoners. Upon questioning them why they exaggerated so much, when they knew how soon the falsehood must be discovered, they very ingeniously said, "If we did not know that your stubborn veracity would have come in our way, we should have said ten times as much. This is the first time our troops have made any stand at all against the Russians; and you would not surely restrict so glorious an event in our history to a few dry facts?"

The circumstances which led to this victory are as follow:—The Prince Royal had seen with sorrow an immense population of his wandering tribes emigrate from his provinces to those of the Russians, and his object was to compel them to return. He collected his army at the end of January, and marched towards Mogan. It consisted of 9000 men, according to the Persians; of 14,000, according to the English officers who were employed in it. Part was composed of undisciplined *Tuffenkchees*, the common infantry of the country, and part of *Serbaz*, troops disciplined by European officers. There was also a body of undisciplined cavalry, as well as a corps of flying artillery, with twelve guns, which, indeed, proved the most efficient part of the army. Before he crossed the Araxes, the prince had heard that 800 Russians, with two guns, were posted at the village of Sultanboot, not very distant from Shisheh, and he determined to attack them. The Russians, who were accustomed to these sort of *impromptus* from the Persians, and who had never heard more of their artillery than of a few lame guns, which were

* Herodotus, Melpom. xvi.

usually dragged in the rear of their army, felt such confidence in their small number, that they neglected to send to Shisheh for succours, where there was a garrison with a commandant. The attack took place in the morning. The Russians, in negligent confidence, were surprised to see a well-directed fire of grape open upon them, which in a short time killed 300 of their men; and finding that they had a more skilful enemy to cope with than before, they shut themselves up within the walls of the village, where, after a little negociation, they capitulated. One of the articles of capitulation was, that their heads were not to be cut off; an act which, in Persian and Turkish warfare, is a common custom. During this fight, ten tomauns were given for every head of the enemy that was brought to the prince; and it has been known to occur, after the combat was over, that prisoners have been put to death in cold blood, in order that the heads, which are immediately despatched to the king, and deposited in heaps at the palace gate,* might make a more considerable show. Two of the English serjeants were killed on this occasion, and, after the battle was over, one of their bodies was found without its head, which was discovered amongst a heap of Russian heads. It had, doubtless, been severed by a Persian, who, passing it off for a Russian head, had received the price fixed for such a commodity.

The prince, on this occasion, behaved like a generous enemy; for when the commanding officer of the Russians, who had been severely wounded, was brought before him, he perceived that he was without a sword, and, immediately taking off his own, which was of great value, desired him to put it on and to wear it for his sake. The Persians lost 100 men; a circumstance which rejoiced the king's ministers exceedingly; for on no occasion before had their troops been known to approach near enough to the enemy to get killed. The death of our serjeants settled a doubt that existed among the Persians, whether or not Christians would fight against Christians in favour of Mussulmans,

* Such barbarities make us shudder in England, but they only tend to show how little the manners of Asia have changed since the remotest times. In the history of Jehu, we read, And there came a messenger unto him saying, *They have brought the heads of the king's sons; and he said, Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning* 2. Kings, x. 8.

and this occurrence tended not a little to raise us in their estimation. It was, however, a mortifying feeling to us to be under the necessity of settling such a doubt.

In one of the first visits which the ambassador paid to the grand vizier, he found him dictating a letter to the governor of Mazanderan, which was to announce the defeat of the Russians. When the writer had got to the catastrophe, he asked "How many killed am I to put down?" The grand vizier, with the greatest composure, said, "Write 2000 killed, 1000 made prisoners, and that the enemy were 10,000 strong." Then turning to the ambassador, he said, "This letter has got to travel a great distance, and therefore we add in proportion."

When the king saw the ambassador, he expressed his joy at the event; and said that he had had a forewarning of it by a dream, in which he saw a ruffian about to plunge a dagger into his breast, but that he had been saved by his son Abbas.

The treaty with Persia was signed on the 14th March, 1812, at the ameen-ad-dowlah's house. The king, during its negociation, had gone out of the city on one of his usual hunting-parties, and had desired that it should be concluded by his return. When the plenipotentiaries had assembled, and as they were just on the point of signing and sealing, of a sudden the door of the apartment was thrown open with violence by one of the king's running footmen, who exclaimed, "*Mujdeh!* (good news!) the shah is close to the city, and will reach the palace in an hour;" and, addressing himself to the two Persian plenipotentiaries, said, "I must have ten tomauns from both of you." The ameen-ad-dowlah, whose fear of the king was paramount to every other feeling, arose from his seat in great agitation, exclaiming, "The shah will arrive before we can get to the palace to receive him. Come, Mirza Sheffea, let us go; for God's sake, don't delay." Upon this the ambassador took up his papers, locked them into his box, and said, "Gentlemen, if this be the case, there is no treaty, for I will never again be fooled after this manner." "What, you would not have us killed?" cried out the viziers. "Be the consequences upon your heads," replied his excellency; "but of this be assured, that I will never again

permit myself to be treated with this disrespect." "Well, then," said Mirza Sheffea very calmly, "You go, ameen-ad-dowlah; I will sign the treaty now, and die to-morrow," upon which the ameen-ad-dowlah left his seals with Mirza Sheffea, and with the utmost speed hastened to the palace. The treaty was then signed and sealed, the grand vizier performing that ceremony for his colleague.

No event worth recording took place after this, until the festival of the No Rooz. Our days passed away in dull uniformity, with little to attract us beyond home. We established a fives-court, we rode much on horseback, and took exercise in a considerable enclosed garden attached to our residence. Here I was one day walking by myself, when a party of Persians, half drunk with wine, strolled in, the chief of whom, a young man of rank, came up to me, and evidently supposing I did not understand his language, addressed me with a smiling face and much mock civility, in terms of the grossest abuse, which he thought I should take for politeness. Finding that he was mistaken in his supposition, he immediately fled, and hid himself so effectually that he was not to be found for several days after.

In our rides we usually went out of the town, at the *Derwazeh Shah Abdul Azeem*, or the gate leading to the village of Shah Abdul Azeem, where a market was held every morning, particularly of horses, mules, asses, and camels. At about sunrise the owners of the animals assemble and exhibit them for sale. But, besides, here were sellers of all sorts of goods, in temporary shops and tents; and this perhaps will explain the custom alluded to in 2 Kings, vii. 18., *of the sale of barley and flour in the gate of Sumaria*.

On the 15th of April, 1813, returning from a morning ride about seven o'clock, I saw, at about forty yards from the road-side, a party of well-dressed Persians seated on a carpet close to a rising ground in the plain, with a small stream of water, near a field of rising corn, flowing before them, and surrounded by their servants and horses. As I passed, they sent a lad to me with a message to the following purpose :—The khan sends his compliments, says *khosh bash*, be happy, and requests you will join his party; at the same time the whole company hallooed

out to me as loud as they could, *khosh bash! khosh bash!* I afterwards learnt that this party was given by a yuzbashee, or a colonel of the king's troops, and that they were in the height of enjoyment when I passed, for they were all apparently much intoxicated. We one day met a party in one of the king's pleasure-houses, nearly under similar circumstances; and we found that the Persians, when they commit a debauch, arise betimes, and esteem the morning as the best time for beginning to drink wine, by which means they carry on their excess until night. This contrast with our own manners will perhaps give fresh force to that passage of Isaiah, v. 11. *Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink, that continue until night until wine inflame them.* This, indeed, has been the reproach of the voluptuary from the satirists and moralists of all ages and nations.

Nothing can be so little attractive as the immediate environs of Teheran. Each of the five gates leads out to what the Persians call the *Sahara*, and what we term the desert; a designation not ill applied to the plain of Teheran, for although it is in some places partially cultivated, yet as there are neither hedges, dikes, or railings, to mark the limits of cultivation, the whole has the appearance of a waste. A tree is a scarce object, which is a curious circumstance, when it is known that the region of Teheran is only separated by a ridge of mountains from one of the most wooded countries in the world, the province of Mazanderan. The roots of the Albors, which form the northern boundary of the plain of Teheran, are more embellished by villages, trees, and rural scenery, than any of the other vicinities of the city.

We frequently directed our rides to Rey, because by rambling about its ruins we hoped to discover some remain of antiquity which hitherto had not been seen. We discovered a rude sculpture of the Shapourian age, which was satisfactory, inasmuch as it established the fact, that the present ruins occupy the site of a city which existed before Mahomedanism. This sculpture is to be seen on the south side of the ruined castle on the height (the farthest side from Teheran), and is executed upon a surface of rock, which has been smoothed for the purpose. It represents a warrior on horseback at full speed, with his lance couched, having a globe on his head and a ball on each shoulder. The

performance is rude and imperfect, and the subject not complete, as the outlines of another figure are to be traced on the same rock.

During the winter, the surgeons of the embassy endeavoured to introduce vaccination among the Persians, and their efforts at first were very successful; but, owing to the opposition of the Persian doctors, and to the little countenance which they received from men in authority, their labours had nearly proved abortive. The surgeons, having procured the cow-pock matter from Constantinople, commenced their operations at Teheran with so much success, that in the course of one month they had vaccinated 300 children. Their houses were constantly thronged with women, bringing their offspring to them; and there was every appearance of a general dissemination of this blessing throughout Teheran, when of a sudden its progress was checked by the government itself. Several of the king's *ferashes* were placed at the gate of the ambassador's hotel, nominally as a mark of attention to his excellency, but really to stop all women from going to our surgeons. They said, that if the people wanted their children to be vaccinated, the fathers and not the mothers were to take them to the surgeons, by which means the eagerness for vaccination was stopped; for we soon discovered that the males did not feel one half the same anxiety for their offspring as the women. Notwithstanding the ravages which are annually made among the Persians by the small-pox, for which they have hitherto found no remedy, yet they are so wedded to their own prescriptions, that they rather adhere to them than give their children a chance of being saved, by adopting a new mode of treatment. Almost all the children vaccinated by our surgeons belonged to the poor, who were glad to get their medical assistance gratis, in preference to that of their own doctors, who, in addition to their ignorance, are most rapacious. Two or three instances occurred, which gave our surgeons an opportunity of placing the imbecility of the Persian doctors in the strongest light. One of these instances was as follows: The governor of Erivan, a personage of high rank, had an only son, in whose welfare the king took the most lively interest; and he fell dangerously ill. He was placed under the care of Mirza Achmed, the king's *hakim bashee*, or chief physician; and the

disease increasing, it was thought advisable to call in the aid of the English surgeons, who declared that they could perform a cure, if no one else interfered. They prescribed medicines, which the attendants promised to administer; but in the meanwhile Mirza Achmed had counteracted the effects of the European medicines by his own, which brought the child to the brink of the grave. It happened that the English surgeons were attending the child when the Mirza came in. The former said, there are no hopes, the child will die before to-morrow is over: the latter, in the arrogance of the most profound ignorance, felt the patient's pulse, and said, "Excellent, excellent, nothing can be better; go on with my medicines, and the child will be well to-morrow." The morrow came, and the governor of Erivan's heir was no more. Mirza Achmed attributed all to fate; and, like his compeers, said, when it is decided by God that a man is to die, no human aid can be of avail.

Another instance occurred in the child of Mirza Yusuf, one of the principal *mastofis* (secretaries) of the government. One of his children had already lost an eye by the small-pox: anxious to preserve a second son from a similar accident, he promised to send him to our surgeons to be vaccinated. They waited long for this child, but he was never sent. A month after, the child actually died of the small-pox. When he was reproached for having neglected the aid of our medical men, he beat his head with his hands, and exclaimed, "Curse on my wife! she it was who hindered me from trusting to the Europeans."

The ambassador, during the winter, had frequent interviews with the king, who conversed with him, in the most familiar manner, upon all sorts of subjects. It happened one day that his majesty was in high spirits, or, as the Persians would say, *damaughish chauk bûd*,* and sent for the ambassador to converse with him. The grand vizier, Mirza Sheffea, was also present. After using many flattering expressions, his majesty said to the ambassador, "that he had been informed by his viziers, that in England we had a variety of modes of increasing the revenue of the country, of which they were totally ignorant in Persia.—Now tell me, what might be done here, as you do it in England?"

* This is an idiom purely Persian, for which adequate words could scarcely be found in English.

The ambassador answered, "that one of the things which he thought might be established in Persia, useful to his majesty's subjects, and beneficial to his treasury, was a post for the transmission of letters." He then explained the nature of an English post, its advantages and its profits. "Ay, ay," said the king. "I perfectly comprehend you." Then turning to the grand vizier, he said, "Now, Mirza Sheffea, I'll tell you exactly how it is. You, for instance, have a correspondent at Ispahan. Of course you can't afford to give a messenger ten tomauns every time you have something to say, which on urgent occasions you are now obliged to do; but if you had an opportunity of communicating with him every day, which the post would give you, you would write to him constantly, and your concerns would go on well. Now, that is the utility of the thing. As for the profit, it is thus. We will say, two hundred letters are to be sent to Ispahan, for each of which one *real* will be charged by the post. Now there are about ten stages from here to Ispahan. The men who carry the letters from stage to stage will be contented to receive a real a-piece; therefore giving 10 to the carriers, 190 will remain clear profit to the Shah.—*Be Sher Shah*, * By the head of the king," exclaimed his majesty, "this is excellent. But," turning to the ambassador, "you have more expedients still. Tell me what is there, besides the post, that we have not in Persia?" His excellency would have been happy to drop the subject, for he felt that the information which would be drawn from him might be disagreeable to the grand vizier; but the king being very urgent, he informed his majesty, that one of the great sources of our revenue (but which was resorted to only on particular emergencies) was the income tax, the principles of which he explained, endeavouring to impress upon the king's mind that it was intended to bear more upon the rich than the poor; a principle which the English government kept constantly in view, when the exigencies of the state required the levying of new taxes. "What do you say to that?" said the king to his grand vizier: "These English are extraordi-

* The King always talks of himself in the third person, and frequently swears by his own head: also *Be Jan Shah*, by the king's soul: *Be Merg Shah*, by the king's death: and these expressions, in constant use by all Persians, will remind us of Joseph's speech to his brethren, *By the Life of Pharaoh, &c.* Gen. xlii. 15, 16.

nary people!" The ambassador, in continuation, said, "We have also taxes, that are more particularly levied upon the rich. If a man keeps more than a certain number of horses, he is taxed in a progressive ratio for every supernumerary horse; the same for servants, for carriages, etc." "Did you hear that, Mirza Sheffea?" exclaimed the king. "*I am your sacrifice*; * I am ready to pay whatever your majesty pleases," said the vizier. "That's right," returned the king; "but there is a great deal of policy as well as profit in what the ambassador says: for instance, a governor-general of India makes an immense fortune, and returnes home richer than a *Shazadeh* (a king's son). He sets up great state, and eclipses all the princes; it is of course very proper that he should be made to pay for such advantages." The king then requested the ambassador to make a written note of the different details which he had already given in conversation, and hoped that he might be enabled to realise them in Persia.

Upon another occasion, the king asked the ambassador what had become of the pope. "I hear you no longer acknowledge his supremacy. How long is it since you have been *yaghi*, or in rebellion against him?" His excellency then explained, and gave an outline of the history of Henry the Eighth. "Ah," said the king, "he must have been a clever king indeed! he did just what I would have done. But what difference is there between your religion and that of the Papists?" The ambassador answered, that we had discarded from our service the mummery of theirs; and that they believed in certain doctrines which were contrary to our faith, and particularly instanced that of transubstantiation. "What!" exclaimed the king, "when they eat a bit of bread they really believe it to be flesh? What dolts! You are in the right. I can comprehend eating bread in commemoration of the death of Jesus to be a good doctrine; but that bread should turn into flesh, is nonsense indeed."

At the beginning of April, Mahomed Ali Mirza, the prince governor of Kermanshah, arrived at Teheran. He came escorted by a very few men, and performed the journey in five days, which, for a prince, the Persians allowed was a great undertak-

* Every Persian, speaking to his sovereign, generally prefaces his speech by this expression, *Korbanet shuvum*.

ing. As this personage is likely to be a prominent character in the future history of Persia, I will give an account of a visit which the ambassador paid to him during his stay at Teheran, in consequence of a wish expressed to that purpose by the prince himself. The ambassador requested to be informed beforehand what were to be the ceremonies of the meeting, when he was informed by the grand vizier (who negociated on this occasion), that the prince resided in one of the king's houses, and that as there is one part of the hall of audience where no man can sit, because it is the seat of the king, the prince is obliged to place himself in the opposite corner; that therefore the ambassador could not be placed upon the same *Musnud** as his royal highness, because he would be seated too near his person, and that would be out of all bounds of proper etiquette and respect. To which the ambassador replied, that he could not visit Mahomed Ali Mirzi, except upon the same terms that he had visited all the other princes; that in his visits to the latter, he had always been seated upon the same musnud with them, and that he neither could nor would give up his right to the same distinction on the present occasion. After much resistance, this was apparently granted; and when every part of the etiquette was adjusted, he proceeded with the gentlemen of his suite to the palace. The king had gone out of the city to hunt, on purpose that this visit might take place; because it is part of the etiquette of the Persian court, that the king's sons cannot receive visits of ceremony whilst the king is himself in the palace.

The *Imaret Khorsheed* (or the Palace of the Sun), in which the prince received us, is situated in a garden, behind the great hall of audience in which the king daily sits in state on his marble throne, and is beautifully ornamented in its interior with marble and paintings. When we entered the room in which he was seated, the grand vizier advanced from where he was standing, and pointed to a place about half way down the room, where he intended the ambassador should sit. The latter did not heed this, but walked up close to the prince, and seated himself upon the same musnud, to the trepidation of the vizier and astonish-

* The *Musnud* in Persia is a thick felt carpet, placed across the room, at the farthest extremity from the door.

ment of the prince, who, although evidently annoyed, gave us the usual welcome.

The prince in person is of strong make, of rather vulgar appearance, and of a bad though lively expression of countenance. He talked with great animation, with a loud voice, and much gesticulation. There was much acuteness in what he said;—he asked questions, and then argued upon the answers he received, adhering most obstinately to his own opinions, and not hesitating to give the flattest contradictions. He seemed, however, to be quiescent under flattery; for when the ambassador complimented him upon the success of his operations in the war with the Courd Abdurakhman Pasha, he became very civil, although he affected to treat that war very lightly. "That was nothing," said he; "that cannot be called service; merely doing one's duty to the *Kebleh Alum* can't be called a service; when any of the shah's servants have given their lives for him, then only can it be said that they have performed a service."

The conversation turned upon *Yengee Duniah*, or America; a subject upon which all Persians are very curious and inquisitive. On this topic, we were surprised to find the prince, as the French would say, *ferré à glace*. He appeared to have just been reading the history of America. He talked not only with historical but geographical knowledge, which of all other is the rarest amongst Orientals. He told us the distinctions between North and South America, with great accuracy, and entered into the details of the history of Mexico in a manner that greatly astonished us. The only fact upon which we attempted to set him right, was upon the original conquerors of Mexico. He insisted that they were the Portuguese, and not the Spaniards; and no assurances that we could give him would make him believe the contrary. Throughout the conversation of this prince we remarked a great decision and energy of character, which is in contrast with the character of his brother and rival Abbas Mirza, and which, when the occasion offers, will perhaps give him a decided superiority.

About the 10th of May, Mahomed Khan, the head of the king's camel artillery, who had been sent to Bushire to superintend the transmission of the military stores and presents which

we had brought with us from England and India, arrived at Teheran. He had made levies of men throughout the country, for the purpose of carrying the baggage, which consisted of several carriages, looking-glasses, a grand piano-forte, a large mahogany dining-table, and many other heavy pieces of furniture. As the Persians have no wheeled conveyances, and as the greater part of these articles were too bulky to be loaded on camels, they were carried on the backs of men from Bushire to Teheran, a distance of about 620 miles. It would be impossible to describe the mutilated state in which every thing reached us. One of the modes adopted for lessening the labour of descending the steep mountains between Bushire and Shiraz, was that of fastening some of the cases upon a gun-carriage, and permitting it to run at random down the declivities; by which contrivance most of the carriages were disabled; and of course the things attached to them totally demolished. Of seventy mirrors which the ambassador brought into Persia, he received about one third safe, the rest were entirely demolished.

The carriages which were brought as presents to the king, were not put together until they reached us at Teheran. One that had been built in England on purpose for the king, which was the least damaged, we succeeded to render serviceable, and then the ambassador presented it to his majesty in great form.

It was first necessary to knock down part of the wall of our court-yard, to get it into the street, and then it was dragged with considerable difficulty through the narrow streets and bazars to the king's palace, where the ambassador, attended by the grand vizier, and all the principal officers of the state, were in readiness to exhibit it to the king. His majesty walked around the carriage, examined it very minutely, admired its beauty, criticised its contrivances, and then got inside, leaving his shoes at the door, and seating himself with much satisfaction upon the velvet cushions. Mirza Abul Hassan Khan, the late Persian envoy, Feraj Ullah Khan (the chief executioner), some of the secretaries of state, and other personages of rank, all in their court dresses, * then

* This circumstance will bring to mind the ready obedience of the Persian nobles to Cyrus, who, throwing off their robes, in their costly vests and embroidered drawers helped to disengage the carriages of his army, where they had been stopped in a narrow pass.—See Anab. lib. i. c. 5.

fastened themselves to it, and dragged his majesty backwards and forwards, to his great delight; which he expressed by some good remarks on the conveniency of carriages, and the ingenuity of Europeans, who had brought them to such perfection. The circumstance that surprised the grand vizier the most was, that it could go backwards as well as forwards. The king kept his seat for more than half an hour, observing, that there would be very good sitting-room for two, pointing to the bottom of the carriage as the place for the second. When he had smoked his kaleoon within it, he descended, and made the ambassador a very handsome acknowledgment for so magnificent a present, and ordered the ameen-ad-dowlah to purchase six large horses to draw it: however, we learnt, shortly after, that it was put into a warehouse, where it was bricked up, where it has been ever since, and where it is likely to remain. *

As it was of consequence to our interest that the ambassador should have a personal interview with the Prince Royal, we resumed our tents in the spring of 1812, and departed for Tabriz at the end of May.

I have in my former journal given a description of the road we were about to travel, consequently I shall restrict myself to such observations as may have novelty to recommend them.

On the north bank of the river Karaj, the king is building a palace surrounded by a fort, and a town which is to be called Sulimanieh, from the city of that name, which was taken from the Courdish Chief, Abdurakhman Pasha. The spoils of the captured city and country are to defray the expenses of its construction. We found about one hundred peasants at work upon the fort, which is to be a square of two hundred yards, with four towers in front, and a gate in the middle of each side. The walls are made of sun-burnt bricks, with a previous foundation of common stone, and the archways of the gates of bricks baked in a kiln. The bricks baked in the sun are composed of earth dug from pits in the

* It is mentioned by Pietro della Valle, that, when he was at Ispahan, the English gave a superb carriage to Shah Abbas, who did not take so much notice of it as the present king, and did not even seat himself in it. He looked at it once; it was then put away, and never seen after. 8vo ed. vol. iii. p. 285.

vicinity, which is mixed up with straw, and then, from the form in which they have been cast, are arranged on a flat spot in rows, where the sun hardens them. This stile of building is called the *kah gil*, or straw and clay. The peasants who were at work had been as usual collected by force; and were superintended by several of the king's officers, who, with hard words, and sometimes harder blows, hastened them in their operations. Their fate resembled that of the Israelites, who no doubt were employed in the same manner in buildings for Pharaoh, and with the very same sort of materials. Their bricks were mixed up with straw; they had to make a certain quantity daily, and their taskmasters treated them cruelly if their task was not accomplished. The complaints which they made were natural, and resembled the language used frequently on similar occasions by the oppressed in Persia :—" *There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick; and behold thy servants are beaten: but the fault is in thine own people.*" Exodus, v. 16.

Part of the labourers were occupied in treading mortar, part in bringing clay, and several were employed at the brick-kilns, which had been erected in the immediate vicinity of the building, for baking the bricks.

The Persians, like all Asiatics, have no invention, but build their cities upon one plan. First they make the palace, then the *maidan* or square, then the mosque, and then the bazaars. All these buildings were successively to be erected; and Suliman Mirza, one of the king's younger sons, was then to be installed as the governor, with an appanage of several of the surrounding villages. Such is the charm of a jingle of words to the ear of a Persian, that it is more than probable, that the fitness of seeing Suliman Mirza, governor of Sulimanieh, was the principal reason that gave rise to the project of building a town.

Immediately on passing the bridge over the Karaj, on the right hand, are to be seen the ruins of a fort, which stand upon an eminence, and which a man who was passing by called a castle of the Guebres. All ruins for which the people of the country cannot account are attributed to the Guebres; in the same manner as in Turkey, they are attributed to the *Giaours*. There is every probability that the last word is a corruption of the first, which is now only applied to fire-worshippers in Persia, but in

Turkey to infidels in general. From this eminence is to be seen a very beautiful vale, green, and watered by the Karaj, which, issuing from the mountains, meanders in an easy course, as far as the bridge, where it is straightened in its channel and becomes more rapid and turgid. Its source is in a mountain called Koh Aureng Rudbar, about five fursungs distant. As it descends into the plain its bed expands, and its waters are drained off into different channels for the purposes of irrigation.

On the desert before we reached Casvin, in the grey of the morning we gave chase to two wild-asses, which the Persians call *Gour khur*, but which had so much speed of our horses, that when they had got at some distance, they stood still and looked behind at us, snorting, with their noses in the air, as if in contempt of our endeavours to catch them. The Persians sometimes succeed in killing them, but not without great dexterity and knowledge of their haunts. To effect this, they place relays of horsemen and dogs upon the track which they are known to pursue, and then hunt them toward the relays, when the fresh dogs and horses are started upon the half-exhausted animal. The whole of this account agrees with Xenophon, who says that their horsemen had no other means of catching them than by dividing themselves into relays, and succeeding one another in the chase. *

This animal is common to the whole of Persia, although its proper soil is Arabia. It is mentioned by Xenophon † in several places, and numbered among the wild animals fit for the chase. The modern Persians eat its flesh, and say it is better than that of the antelope. The ancients did the same, and it must be supposed that when Herodotus classes the ass among the animals which the rich Persians roasted whole, and ate when they indulged themselves in better fare than usual, he means the wild ass. ‡ They appear to have been much more plentiful in the days of Olearius § (A. D. 1637), who says, that, at an entertainment given by Sbah Abbas to the ambassadors, thirty-two

* Καὶ οἱ μὲν ὄνοι ἐπεὶ τὶς διώκοι, προδραμόντες ἀνειστήκεσαν· (πολὺ γὰρ τοῦ ἵππου θᾶττον ἔτρεχον) καὶ πάλιν ἐπεὶ πλησιάζοι ὁ ἵππος ταῦτα ἐποίουν· ὥστε οὐκ ἦν λαβεῖν εἰ μὴ διαστάντες οἱ ἱππεῖς θηρῶεν διαδεχόμενοι τοῖς ἵπποις. Anab. lib. c. 5.

† Cyropædia, lib. i.

‡ Herodotus, Clio, 133.

§ Olearius's Travels, p. 735.

wild asses were turned into an enclosure to be shot at, and remarks that their flesh was esteemed so excellent as to be fit for the king's food.

The wild ass is of a light mouse coulour, with a dark streak over its shoulders and down its back. The head is large, but it is much more light and lively than the common ass in its gait. It is of a most obstinate nature, and seems to be extremely refractory under any restraint. Buffon says that it does not differ from the domestic ass, except in its attributes of liberty and independence : he is decided in his opinion, that this is the animal called the onagre, and not the zebra, whose native soil and climate is South Africa, in the countries bordering upon the Cape of Good Hope. *

The wildness and love of liberty which characterise this animal, are beautifully described by the prophet Jeremiah : *A wild ass used to the wilderness that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure.* (ch. ii. v. 24.) And again, when their image is allied to all the horrors of a parched desert : *And the wild asses did stand in the high places ; they snuffed up the wind like dragons : their eyes did fail because there was no grass* (ch. xiv. v. 6.)

On the day before we reached Casvin, whilst we were encamped at the village of Hassanabad, a violent wind arose from the eastward called the *Baad Ruz*. It prevailed from the morning to about two o'clock P. M., when it changed about to the westward, and was then called the *Baa Sheriar*. At the time of the change, whirlwinds were to be seen in different parts of the plain, sweeping along the country, in different directions, in a manner that was quite frightful to behold. They carried away in their vortex sand, branches, and the stubble of the fields, and really appeared to make a communication betwen the earth and the clouds. The correctness of the imagery used by the prophet Isaiah, when he alludes to this phenomenon , is very striking to the Eastern traveller : *The whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.* (ch. lx. v. 24.) *Chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.* (ch. xvii. v. 13.)

In the Psalms, lxxxiii. v. 13 we read, *Make them like a wheel,*

* See Buffon, Hist. Nat. du Zèbre, vol. x. p. 175.

as the stubble before the wind; which is happily illustrated by the rotary action of the whirlwind, which frequently impels a bit of stubble over a waste, just like a wheel set into rapid motion.*

The embassy reached Casvin on the first of June, and before we had entered it, we were met by the *Mirakkor* (master of the horse) of Ali Nakee Mirza, one of the king's sons, and governor of the town, who led with him a horse, ornamented with a gold bridle and a Persian saddle, which he presented to the ambassador, on the part of his master. It has been mentioned, on a former occasion, that a bridle of gold, which means that the head-stall was covered with plates of gold, was always a mark of distinction in Persia, and such as Astyages gave to Cyrus.†

Casvin is a larger town in circumference than Teheran, though not so populous. The vizier of the prince, Teid ali Khan by name, who appeared to us to possess more statistical knowledge than Persians in general, assured us, that he had measured the circumference of this city, and had found it 2000 *gez* (or yards) larger than the capital; that it contains 25,000 male inhabitants, females and children not being counted; and that its manufactures were velvets, brocades, and *kerbas*, a coarse cotton cloth.

The city is environed by vineyards and orchards to a considerable extent, the former of which yield a grape celebrated throughout Persia for the good wine it produces. The vine-dressers water their vines once in the year, which is twenty days after the festival of the No Rooz, about the 10th of April; and the vizier told us, that the soil, which is clayey, is so good, that the moisture it then imbibes suffices until the next irrigation. Water is a very scarce commodity at Casvin, and this is confirmed by the great numbers of *kanauts* which are to be seen throughout its plain, and which conduct streams from very great distances.

The ambassador visited the prince in a palace built by the Seffies, who once held their court in this city. The entrance to it is by an *Allah Capi*, an immense high gate covered with a cupola, which Della Valle, who saw it in its splendour, describes

* In this instance, the original word is the same as in the other, from Isaiah (*galzal*); no doubt the word is sometimes used for the wheel of a carriage; but the attendant imagery in both instances here adduced compels us to accept the meaning as given in Isaiah, xvii.; or, as the Lexicons sometimes express it, *pulvis rotatus*.

† Cyropædia, lib. i.

in these words: *Non è depinta ne ornata di oro come quello di Sphahan, mà è grande, con prospettiva di più maestà, e dentro ha bello, alto, e grande atrio per gli portieri.* * The splendour of those days is now greatly altered, for ruins surround the palace, and the greater part of its once magnificent buildings are themselves in almost total abandonment. We were led through long arched avenues, in which were dispersed a scanty train of servants and, at length were introduced into a court, where we found the prince, in a detached building forming part of the palace, erected by the famous Nadir Shah, and seated on the very same spot in the apartment which that conqueror had fomerly occupied. The comparison between the former and the present occupants, which was naturally excited in our minds by the occasion, made the prince appear but a diminutive personage in our eyes, although he had very agreeable manners, and a countenance expressive of great goodness.

There is a circumstance, in Chardin's account of Casvin, which does not agree with his general accuracy. He says, three leagues from that city is a high mountain, called *Alouvent*. Seeking for a high mountain at that distance was in vain, for the highest point of the nearest range was comparatively low. The mountain of Alwend, to which he evidently alludes, is situated near Hamadan, and distant at least 120 miles. I settled the bearing of Karaj from Casvin with precision, from the top of a ruined mosque, called the Mesjid Bolaghee: for a cape which projects from the range of Albors, which is seen from a considerable distance and marks the site of that place, bears from the mosque S. 59° E. From this same summit may be seen a considerable part of the city, and the whole extent of the royal buildings. The prince has erected a high poligonal tower, for the purpose of taking the air, and looking about him; and although we could not help reflecting that he would have done better to restore some of the fine buildings which were now in ruin, than to build new, yet his tower was not an unpicturesque object, and no bad specimen of his taste. If it were seen in a European country, it would be taken for an observatory. Such, in fact, it may be called now; but it is to observe things below, and not those above.

* Viaggi di Pietro della Valle, 8vo. ed. vol. ii. p. 383.

On the 2d of June we pitched at Sian Dehan, having travelled five fursungs, on a road so good by nature that a coach might have been driven upon it with as much safety as upon a turnpike road. Persia, in general, is a country well adapted for wheeled carriages, and with very little trouble excellent roads might be made, except in the passages from one plain to another, where the ruggedness of the mountains would present serious difficulties.

This seems to have been the case when wheeled carriages were in use; for Darius, after the battle of Issus, kept to his car as long as he was in the plain, but was obliged to descend from it and mount his horse, when he came to the mountain passes.*

I was lodged in the house of a peasant, which consisted of three rooms, one of which was twenty-four feet long and ten broad, was clean, well white-washed, and superior to a peasant's habitation in general. It was roofed by transverse beams, over which were branches of trees, covered by a thick layer of mud plaster, which formed the terrace to the house. Opposite the door was deposited the peasant's provision of corn in a bin built of mud bricks, which is perforated at the bottom, when the corn is brought into use. This same mode of keeping corn I remarked throughout the village.

The next day we pitched at the village of Farsinjeen, and the day after at Abhar: during this part of our march, we strayed from the road, with our greyhounds and fowling-pieces, in search of game. This tract, including the plain and mountains of Sultanieh, is in fact the *Shikar Gah,* or hunting-place, of the King of Persia, where antelopes, partridges and bustards are found in abundance. On both days we saw herds of antelopes; and one of our dogs, a strong hound, succeeded in catching a female that was big with young. Had it not been for this circumstance, I doubt whether we should have ever been successful; for although we frequently afterwards gave chase to them in great numbers, yet we never came up with one; such is the great speed of this beautiful animal.

The antelope is the most common animal of the deer kind in

* Arrian, Exp. of Alex. lib. ii. c. 5.

Persia, as it is in Arabia and Africa. This is probably the δορκὰς, which Xenophon enumerates among the wild animals which the Ten Thousand used to hunt in their passage through Syria,* although Mr. Spelman has translated it *roe-deer*. The Persians call it *ahoo*, but Hafiz, in one of his odes, compares it to his coy mistress by the Arabic name of *gazal*,† which has been adopted by the French in *gazelle*.‡ *Ahoo-chesm*, antelope-eyed, is a common epithet in Persia, and, indeed, is very appropriate to describe the full jet black eye of the Persian women.

The Persians pretend that they have dogs, and moreover horses, which can come up with them; but that is very much to be doubted; although, in their paintings of hunting-matches, they frequently represent the king on the full speed of his horse, putting his spear through an antelope. If they do catch them, it must be by relays, as has already been related of their mode of hunting the wild ass. I must mention, as an instance of the dexterity of Persian horsemen, that when we were near Komesha we saw one of the servants of our Mehmandar shoot a young antelope, with a single ball, from off his saddle, whilst his horse was on the full gallop.

The bustards which we hunted are also most probably the ὠτίδες of Xenophon, for we found them to possess the same qualities which he describes, viz. making short flights, and becoming soon tired. They are a very difficult bird to approach with a gun, and we agreed that the best mode of hunting them was to ride at them on horseback. The Persians call this bird *ahoo bareh*, or young antelope. This is not the only bird which they designate by the name of a beast, for the ostrich they call the *shuter morgh*, or the camel bird. In the latter case the designation is excellent, for when the camel is coming *end on* (as the sailors would say), and only his two legs are seen, it is difficult to distinguish him from an ostrich; but when seen at a distance on the desert in large numbers, it would be almost impossible to discriminate the one from the other, except, perhaps, by relative size.

* Anab. lib. i. c. 5.

† "O western breeze, say kindly to that tender fawn, you have driven me to the mountains and deserts."

‡ See Buffon, vol. x. art. *Gazelle*.

Abhar, our next station, may be called a town, in comparison with the other places which we saw since our departure from Casvin; and, when at a distance, presents an appearance of greater consequence than when it is more closely inspected. Arising above the trees are seen some ruined walls, which occupy an height called by the natives *Caleh Darab*, or, the Castle of Darius. Their materials are large mud bricks, mixed up with straw, baked in the sun, the same which I remarked at Rey, at the *Atesh Gah* at Ispahan, and the same also, perhaps, as those of Babylon. These circumstances will give greater force to the reasoning of Major Rennel, who, as far as I can judge, only wanted the attestation of some existing remains of antiquity on the spot, to prove it to be the ancient Habor, one of the three places to which the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, were sent into captivity.*

The appearance of the king's palace at Sultanieh, situated on a conspicuous eminence, rising from the plain, with a small village close to it, and the town of Sultanieh about two miles from it, is a scene like that which Xenophon relates the Greeks to have found not far from the Tigris. † The modern kings of Persia have palaces in many parts of their dominions, whither they resort for the climate or for the chase. To these palaces are attached villages, in which provisions ‡ are collected for the use of the court, as soon as the motions of the king are decided. The king's principal summer palace is Sultanieh; besides that, he has others at Ojan, near Tabriz, at the Bagh-i-Feen, at Jajrood, near Teheran, at Cheshmeh Ali, in Khorassan, at the Bagh Zemerood, near Demawend, at Zavieh, on the road to Hamadan, and many more of which it would be too tedious to give the enumeration.

When we had reached Zengan, the ambassador paid a visit to the prince governor, a youth of very amiable manners. On approaching his habitation we found carpets spread under a wall in the street, where his vizier was seated transacting business. This custom may illustrate what Job said of the days of his prosperity, when he prepared his seat in the *street*. § (ch. xxix. 7.)

* Rennell's Geo. Syst. of Herodotus, p. 389. † Anabasis, lib. iii. c. 4.
‡ Ibid.
§ This word in the original means a broad place, where was room for administering justice.

On the 10th, we reached Gultapeh, and departed very early the next morning to cross the Kizzel Ozan River, and the Coflan Koh, in order to reach the sultry town of Mianch before the great heat of mid-day.

The Coflan Koh is a range of mountains which would be well worthy the notice of a geologist. Its stratifications have been thrown together by some great commotion into the most extravagant positions. In some places they are perpendicular, in others almost horizontal. On the south side of the Kizzel Ozan is one limb of the mountain, almost entirely composed of chalk, here and there with schistose strata intervening; and on the right of the road, in the descent from Gultapeh, are hills apparently of clay, of conical forms, more or less distended, the strata of which are as if mathematically designed. An immense tract of barren country is seen from the heights above Gultapeh, which extends itself to the westward on both sides of the Kizzel Oran, and also towards Zengan. In some places it appears to have been nearly in a state of fusion, as if an immense volume of liquid soil had been set in motion, and its sluggish masses had settled themselves as the impulse might lead them: in others, as if some powerful engine had broken these masses, and left them in unequal fragments.

We experienced at Mianch one of the many instances in Persia of a great difference of climate between two contiguous regions. At Aukkend and Gultapeh the air was so cool as to be even disagreeable during some part of the twenty-four hours. At Aukkend, in the hottest part of the day, Fahrenheit's thermometer stood at 75°; at Mianch, at 99½.

On the day of our arrival at Tekmehdash we met a Persian *chappar*, or courier, who was travelling in the greatest haste to the King from Erivan, with intelligence that the revolt of the Georgians against the Russians was daily increasing. He wore a long linen bandage that was tightly wound about him in many folds, which the Persians say is of great support to the body. This will perhaps explain what Herodotus * means by εὐζώνῳ ἀνδρι, which Larcher has rendered by "bon marcheur." If it be intended to denote a man on foot, the many bandages with

* Clio, 72.

which the Persian *cossids*, or foot messengers, bind themselves, will also afford a good illustration. They are generally so tightly zoned that they can scarcely stoop, and they also bandage their legs, and tighten their trousers, to be less encumbered in walking.

Before we reached our encampment at Ojan, we were surprised by the appearance of a coach-and-six making its way over a rugged mountain, which the prince royal, as a mark of attention, had sent for the ambassador's convenience. It was dragged by six horses of the artillery, driven by Persian artillerymen, and manœuvred as a gun. It had been given by the Empress Catherine to the Armenian patriarch, who had presented it to the prince; and although it was still in good repair, yet the antiquity of its form, its history, its travels, the very spot upon which it stood, and particularly the mode by which it had been brought thither, all combined to render it one of the most curious objects that we had seen since we had been in Persia. Another surprise that awaited us was the sight of a troop of Persian horse-artillery, dressed like Europeans, with shaven chins, with English arms and accoutrements, booted and spurred, riding with long stirrups, who, headed by an English officer, had come to salute the ambassador as he alighted at his tent door.

Ojan is now a *chemen*, or pasturage, entirely appropriated to the use of the prince. A city of that name was situated upon it, which the Persians say was of considerable extent; but its only remains are a number of wells that are here and there concealed under the high grass. On the summit of the hills, to the southward, are to be seen collections of large stones, like druidical remains, close to the road, which the natives call *jan goo*, places of council, where the chiefs of former times used to meet to consult on their political affairs. These stones are arranged in a long square, and present nothing remarkable but their size and uncouthness.

The mountain of Savalan, one of the highest in Persia, upon which the Persians say the ark of Noah rested, and which is situated in a range of mountains near to Ardebil, is seen from Ojan, on a bearing of N. 67 ½° E.

Every honour that could be devised was shown by the prince

to the ambassador on our entry into Tabriz. The chief personage who came out on the occasion was a child, apparently not more than ten years old, but who was the king's son-in-law. He was the son of Mirza Bozurk, one of the king's ministers resident at Tabriz, and had lately been married to a daughter of the king. European military honours were also added to those of Persia; for, as we approached the town, disciplined troops lined the road to a considerable distance, and presented arms as we passed, whilst a numerous band of drummers and fifers headed our procession, playing country dances and reels in a manner truly astonishing, when we considered that Persians were the performers. Twenty guns were fired as a salute to the ambassador on reaching the house appointed for his habitation, in a style that would have done credit to any artillery.

One of the most remarkable facts, in the modern history of Asia, is the introduction of European discipline in the armies of Persia. When we have seen such discipline entirely destroyed in one Mahomedan state, in spite of the efforts of the government to maintain it—when the prejudices of the Mahomedan religion are considered, and particularly the doctrine of predestination which it inculcates, it must remain a matter of surprise how it has commenced, maintained, and strengthened itself in Persia. It had not indeed janissaries to oppose it, as in Turkey, but it was cried down by some of the princes, and derided by many of the nobles; and, if it had not been for the personal exertions of Abbas Mirza, it must have fallen. Abbas Mirza, in fact, must be looked upon as the origin, the support, and the chief promoter of it, and consequently the benefactor of his country.

In one of his first interviews with the ambassador, he described, with great *naïveté*, what were the first motives which induced him to attempt its introduction among his troops. He said, that he soon found out that it was in vain to fight the Russians without soldiers like theirs; and that their artillery could only be opposed by artillery; and that all his efforts to make an impression upon them, with his undisciplined rabble, had uniformly been unsuccessful. His first essays in discipline were attended with little success; because he had, in the first outset,

to combat the prejudices of the Persian recruits themselves, who rejected the idea of being assimilated in any manner to *Firengees*, and particularly to Russians, whom their national hatred made them despise, or perhaps their fear caused them to hate, more than all other Europeans. To efface such impressions, the prince said that he himself was obliged to adopt a soldier's dress, and to submit to learn the military exercise from a Russian; that he commenced with twenty or thirty men at a time, whom he caused to be drilled in a separate court by themselves, in order that they might not be exposed to the ridicule of the populace; and that it was not until he had ordered his nobles to follow his example, and handle a musket, that he found his scheme making any progress. So far he had succeeded in teaching a few of his men the platoon exercise, to march abreast, to turn about at the word of command, and to beat a drum; but he wanted officers, and he very probably would have got no farther, if the French embassy from Bonaparte had not arrived in Persia at that time; when the officers attached to it were put into commands of large bodies, and they advanced his views to the utmost of his expectations. What were but the rudiments of military science, appeared to him its perfection; and, notwithstanding he afterwards discovered how little his first levies had learnt, yet still, in recollection of the pleasure which their appearance had given him, he ever after entertained a greater partiality for them than for his other troops.

The English mission, which succeeded the French, also supplied him with officers; and his first wish was to raise a corps of artillery, which was done by Lieutenant Lindsay, an officer of the Madras army, in a manner truly astonishing. The effect that the sight of it produced upon us at Ojan has been already described. The zeal of this officer was only to be equalled by the encouragement of the prince; who, putting himself above all prejudices, resisting the jealousy of his officers and the cabal of courtiers, liberally adopted every method proposed, and supported Lieutenant Lindsay against every difficulty that was thrown in his way. He gave him full power to punish his recruits in any manner he chose, and gave him unlimited control over his troop. It was only upon the article of shaving off beards, that the prince was inexorable; nor would the sacrifice of them

have ever taken place if it had not happened, that, on firing the guns before the prince, a powder horn exploded in the hand of a gunner, who by good luck had been gifted with a long beard, which in one instant was blown away from his chin. Lieutenant Lindsay, who did not lose this opportunity to prove his argument on the encumbrance of beards to soldiers, immediately produced the scorched and mutilated gunner before the prince, who was so struck with his woful appearance, that the abolition of military beards was instantly decided upon.

The *serbaz,* or infantry, were placed under the command of Major Christie of the Bombay army, an officer of the greatest merit, who inspired his troops with an *esprit de corps*, that manifested itself on many occasions. Abbas Mirza, who was partial to the corps disciplined partly by the French and partly by himself, thinking that it had acquired more steadiness from its having been longer embodied than Major Christie's, one day proposed a sham fight, in which he would lead his corps, and Christie his. They were drawn out, and the prince's troops attacked with great vigour those of Christie; who, however, ordering a charge of bayonets, put the others to flight. Christie's men, who perhaps did not fully understand that this was intended for play, and who had been warmed by their success, were heard to exclaim, "Oh, that we had ball-cartridges!"

The prince complained to the ambassador, that even now, the new system which he had introduced had a great many enemies, and the most powerful one was his brother, Mahomed Ali Mirza; who had endeavoured to render him and his *nezam* (discipline) odious to the Persians, by attempting to show that, in adopting the customs of the infidels, he was subverting the religion of Islam, which to this day had been upheld by the same sword and the same discipline that had served Mahomed in its establishment. "In order to counteract this," said the prince, "I caused a passage in the Koran, that is favourable to the improvement of the means of attack and defence in the cause of religion to be copied, to be sealed and approved by the chiefs of the law in Persia, and disseminated throughout the country."

The English officers who were employed in Persia, notwithstanding the prince's zeal for improvement, still found many impediments in their way, originating from the confined ideas

which the prince himself had of military science. The necessity of a strict subordination of ranks seemed to him incomprehensible. He did not see why the lieutenant, the serjeant, and even the common soldier, should be debarred the privilege of speaking to him upon matters of service; and why every thing should first be reported to the commanding officer. It was long before he could seize the true routine of service, and was slow to discover the necessity of adhering scrupulously to regulations, which appeared to him to clog rather than to facilitate. After he had one day listened with great patience to a detail of the laws and regulations of our service, he exclaimed with a deep sigh, "This discipline is a most difficult thing;" which proved that he merely looked upon it as the art of making men act in a body by a single word of command, without reflecting upon all the hidden machinery which was necessary to be kept in constant motion, to produce the simple result which he so much admired. The greatest difficulties in the way of our officers, were the knavery and intrigue of the Persian officers appointed by the prince to aid them in their different commands. The men themselves they found most docile and tractable, receiving the discipline quicker than even Englishmen; but the moment a mirza or a khan interfered, all was trouble and dispute. As, for instance, a mirza, who was appointed to pay the men, would keep a per-centage from each man for himself; sums which he received for the supplies of dress, furniture, etc., he would detain to trade with, or put out to usurious interest. A man of some consequence was one day discovered to have stolen two muskets; and similar instances of knavery might be cited without end.

In addition to these difficulties, the officers found that the method of providing recruits was defective. They were in general taken from the wandering tribes of Aderbigian, who are bound to each other by the ties of clanship, and are always ready to support each other upon the most trivial occasion. This produced a constant tendency to what we should call mutiny, but which they style making the *arze*, or an exposition. As raw materials for soldiers, nothing could be better than the Eelauts. Accustomed from their infancy to a camp life, habituated to all sorts of hardships and the vicissitudes of weather, they are soldiers by nature. They have undertaken incredible marches without

scarcely any food and without a murmur. In such qualities, they will perhaps equal any troops in the world; but they are greatly deficient in the soldier's first art, the art of dying. Accostomed to their old modes of fighting, where every man, independent of the other, first took care of his own safety before he thought of killing his enemy, they did not relish our system. A Persian, talking to one of our officers upon that subject, said very ingeniously, "If there was no dying in the case, how gloriously the Persians would fight!" Their ideas of courage are indeed totally different from ours. They look upon courage as a quality which a man may have, or have not, as he may feel at the moment. One of the king's generals, who has the reputation of being a courageous man, was not ashamed to own, that he and a large body of troops had been kept at bay by two Russian soldiers, who alternately fired their muskets at them, and at length obliged them to move away. In talking of the Russians, they say that they are so divested of feeling, that, rather than retire, they die on the spot.

Abbas Mirza himself is said to be personally brave, and that in his different encounters with the Russians he has risked himself further than necessity required. He punishes cowardice, an instance of which we witnessed. One of his generals, Mahomed Beg, had, on some emergency, quitted his post, and run away. The prince degraded him from his rank, tied his hands behind his back, put a wooden sword by his side, seated him on a ass, with his face towards the tail, and thus paraded him through Tabriz.

After the first visit of ceremony was over, the ambassador scarcely passed a day, for a month after, without spending several hours in the company of the prince, when formality and etiquette were laid aside, and when his royal highness entered into all the details of his government, without the smallest reserve. Although sincerity be not the virtue of his country, and although we were warned not to forget that he also was a Persian, yet such appearance of candour was there in his manner, accompanied by such engaging affability, that we all permitted ourselves to believe that he was as superior in mind to the rest of his countrymen, as he certainly was in his exterior qualities. Seldom have I met, in any country, a man so fascinating as Abbas

Mirza. His countenance is always animated, his smile is agreeable and his conversation is full of *naïvete* and pleasantry. In his dress * he is scarcely to be distinguished from other persons, for he generally wears the *kadek*, the common manufactory cotton stuff of Persia, made up into a single-breasted *caba*, with a Cashmérian shawl round his waist. The greatest piece of finery belonging to him is a diamond-hilted dagger, which once was the property of Lutf Ali Khan, and which, on a former emergency, he threatened so sell, in order to defray some arrears of pay to his troops. He wears English boots, and expressed great admiration at the helmets of our light dragoons, which he said he would make no scruple to wear.

To Europeans he is studiously polite : when they visit him, he enters into that sort of conversation which shows a mind eager for information. His rapid manner of talking, which at first appears affected, is quite natural to him, and gives an appearance of sincerity to what he says, because it does not look premeditated. He is fond of reading, and his studies are principally restricted to the historians of his country, of which the Shah Nameh of Ferdousi is his favourite. He expresses great anxiety to be informed about the different states of Europe ; and has got together a large collection of English books, which he frequently looks at without understanding them, and is always desiring plans for getting them translated, but hitherto without success. A copy of the Encyclopædia Britannica was given to him ; and it is related that, in his wish to find out a piece of mechanism, which he was desirous to have made, he had the patience to turn over all the volumes of that work, until he came to what he wanted. He has also got a collection of maps from the printing-press at Constantinople, which he has studied, and which has rendered him about the best geographer in his country. Our conclusions upon the character of this prince were, that, if he had received an enlightened education, and had been brought up with examples of virtue and honour constantly before him, he would not only have been an ornament to his country, but would have classed with the best of men and the best of princes.

* In this respect, and upon the same principle, he is like Alexander. *Cultu, curaque corporis hand multum supra privati modum eminens.* Quint. Curt. lib. i. ch. 4.

On our arrival at Tabriz, we found a Russian officer there, who had been despatched by the Russian commander-in-chief in Georgia, the ambassador, with letters, which contained the wishes of the Russian government that a negociation for peace with Persia might be entered upon through British mediation. Some recent disturbances in Georgia, favourable to their cause, had elated the Persians so much, that they were not in a humour to listen to the proposals which the Russians were inclined to make; but much being still to be done through our interference, the prince did not refuse the ambassador's wish of despatching one of his suite, in company with the Russian officer, to Teflis, for the purpose of more precisely ascertaining from the Russian general, what were the ultimate terms of Russia, and whether he had plenipotentiary powers to treat. In one of our conferences with Mirza Bozurk, in which the utility of Georgia to Persia, as a possession, was discussed, he made a remark that was truly characteristic of an Asiatic logician. Taking hold of his beard, he said, "This is of no use, but it is an ornament."

Not long after, we received letters from Teflis, informing the ambassador that the general was invested with full powers to negociate; that he recommended an immediate armistice should take place; to effect which, he had ordered all incursions into the Persian territory to cease; and that he himself was ready to meet the prince on the frontier, for the purpose of entering upon the negociation. When this letter came, I was despatched by the ambassador to Abbas Mirza, who had been for some time encamped with part of his army in the pasture of Yam, about eight fursungs from Tabriz, on the road to Marand and Nakhjuwan.

I set off, at sunset, with two servants and a guide, and arrived at ten o'clock at Soffian, where it was necessary to refresh myself and horses. Carpets were spread for me at the top of Ket Khoda's house, where I sat for an hour in the moonlight, refreshed by *aub dough*, a sort of butter-milk; and three hours after we reached the prince's camp, the white tents of which, by the help of the moon, we distinguished from a considerable distance. A dead stillness reigned throughout the camp; and such was the want of precaution, that we were in the centre of "a thousand pavilions white as snow," without having been challenged by a

single person. By chance I discovered the tent of Mr. Campbell, the prince's surgeon, where I reposed till the morning, when at an early hour the latter was awakened by a summons from the prince to attend him in the chase.

We heard cries and loud shouts, trampling of horses, people running about in haste, and all the camp in motion. On looking through a slit in the tent, the first person I perceived was the prince himself on horseback, who had issued forth without having given sufficient notice to his attendants, who, yet half awake, were hastening to join him in all speed. The prince returned from his excursion about noon. He had been on the hills which surrounded his camp, in the hope of meeting a tiger, which had been seen a short time before by shepherds. This animal is known to exist in this part of Persia; for Mr. Campbell possesses the skin of a royal tiger that was killed here not long ago; but instances of its being seen are very rare. In addition to his usual hunting equipages, the prince had taken with him a battalion of his trained infantry, who were to surround the spot where it was likely the animal was lurking, and to rouse him by the beating of drums. All their efforts, however, proved unsuccessful: the prince and his attendants consoled themselves by firing with balls across a valley, at a stone for a mark, which produced a continual discharge of musketry, of the noise of which the Persians are extremely fond. Mr. Campbell, who had witnessed the scene, said that it was truly extraordinary to see the dangerous places to which the prince and his followers urged their horses. Indeed, they hold it as a fact, that a horse will find footing wherever a man can do the same; consequently, an ascent however steep, or a soil however difficult, scarcely ever stops them. On this occasion, they rambled about on the tops of the mountains, until an immense precipice completely impeded their progress. The prince, however, sent one of his men to see if if were possible to pass it, who, urging his horse to the very brink of the chasm, stretched his neck over, and, looking about him, reported that it was difficult, but that he thought they might succeed to cross it. Upon which the prince rode to the same spot himself, and, having coolly surveyed the danger, confessed that it was rather too great to be risked. They came down the bank of a very shelving

mountain, which overlooked the camp; and shortly after, he reached his tent, saluted by his troops and their music.

He had not long alighted before he sent me two paniers of fruit, as a present, and, shortly after, one of his officers came to request my attendance. After having been introduced with the usual forms, I was desired to seat myself on the felt carpet (*nummud*) opposite to the prince. He himself was seated tailor-like, at one extremity of the tent, with his cap on one side, leaning forwards in a playful manner over his knees. On one side of him was an inkstand and some papers, and at the other extremity of the tent was Hyder Ali Khan, one of his favourite officers. After saying some obliging things, he asked me for the letters of which I was the bearer, which I then delivered to him. One of them contained a sketch of the treaty recently concluded betwen Russia and Turkey, over which he pondered with considerable attention for a long while, without opening his lips. He then made a sign to Hyder Ali Khan to withdraw, and requiring me to come close to him, he made some very shrewd remarks upon the different articles of the treaty, showing himself a perfect master of the nature of the political relations that existed between those two states. Among the letters of which I was the bearer was the one from Teflis, to the contents of which he paid the most minute attention; and when I informed him that, by desire of the Russian general, the gentleman sent was about returning to us, through Karabagh, by Ganja and Shisheh, in order to inspect the Russian possessions in that part of the country, the prince exclaimed, "Ah, I know those wiles of old; they will make him believe that they are very strong, when it is all the contrary. On the one day they will march a set of men before him; and on the next, changing their dress, they will exhibit the very same set as fresh troops newly arrived." He finished this part of the conference by saying, that he would think upon what was now to be done, that he would write to the ambassador, and that at night he would send for me again, to tell me what was his determination. He then conversed upon indifferent subjects; and when I told him of our agreeable sensations upon beholding his troop of horse-artillery at Ojan, and that we felt ourselves, in some measure, transported to England, his eyes glistened with the most lively pleasure, and he said, "Well, that is just what Mirza Abul Has-

san Khan has told me. He assured me, that on entering Aderbigian he thought himself again in England; and that, if the Persians want to see what England is, they have only to look at the country over which I govern." Poor prince! could he but take one look at England, how great would be the revolution in his ideas! How great would be the probable consequences to the whole of his country, and perhaps to the whole of Asia!

After our conference, the prince sent me more fruit piled up in china bowls, cooled with ice, placed upon a silver tray, and covered with a shawl napkin, for which, according to Eastern custom, I exclaimed, "May the prince's prosperity increase!" and gave to the bearer of the present a small donation of money.

At about nine o'clock in the evening, the prince sent me a message, saying, that, if I would eat my dinner now, he would send for me two hours after. Accordingly, at about midnight, a confidential servant, attended by large lanterns, conducted me to his master, whom I found seated alone in the same place as the morning, and with his tent lighted up by one taper. He made me sit down about a yard opposite to him, near the light, and dictated to me, whilst I wrote in my pocket-book what I was to say to the ambassador. I then took my leave, and immediately mounting my horse, reached Tabriz the next morning at eight o'clock, just as the ambassador was at breakfast.

The position of affairs between Persia and Turkey became very critical about this time; and the whole of our influence was required, both at Constantinople and in Persia, to keep them from hostilities.

It will be remembered that Abdurakhman Pasha, the Courd, after having been defeated by Mahomed Ali Mirza, was restored to his capital, Sulimanich, on condition of paying tribute and giving hostages to the King of Persia. This arrangement gave umbrage to Abdulla, Pasha of Bagdad, who applied to the Porte for a firman to take off the head of Abdurakhman, and to take Sulimanich under his own jurisdiction. The firman having been granted, the Pasha of Bagdad drew out his forces, and proceeded to put his orders into execution. He was met by Abdurakhman Pasha, when a battle ensued, in which the latter, after having been defeated, fled to Kermenshah to seek the protection of Mahomed Ali Mirza, whilst his capital and property fell into the

hands of the Turks. Mahomed Ali Mirza, who long had waited for a pretext to induce the king to permit him to attack Bagdad, immediately espoused the cause of his refugee, and in the strongest terms endeavoured to show that the interference of the Turkish government was an insult to Persia : he urged that his honour was deeply engaged to keep the Courd in possession of his city ; and threatened, if he were not allowed to reinstate Abdurakhman Pasha, he would seek a remedy for his shame by a poniard. The king, whose propensity to attack Bagdad was as strong as that of his son, was only hindered from following that propensity by the fear of offending the English ambassador, who, in the most active manner, had interposed to keep the two states on good terms. On the first solicitation of his son, the king had sent a considerable force to watch the result of the contest between Abdurakhman Pasha and the Pasha of Bagdad, and made use of the ancient Parthian policy on this occasion,* for he gave secret orders to his commander to conduct himself in such a manner as not to take any decided part before the combat, but to side with the conqueror. When it was known that the pasha had been victorious, the king took the merit to himself of having assisted the Turks.

The differences between the two countries were heightened by some circumstances offensive to the king, which had arisen from the treaty of peace concluded between Turkey and Russia; and it was only by the personal influence and active interference of our ambassador, that his majesty was prevailed upon not to use coercive measures for reinstating Abdurakhman Pasha in the possession of Sulimanieh.

During the whole of these transactions the Turkish government had a resident minister at the court of Persia, in the person of Yasin Zadeh Effendi, who took but little share in them. He resided at Tabriz at the same time as we; and it was hinted to him, how useful to the interests of his state would be a visit from him to the English ambassador, whose influence hitherto had prevented the Persians from attacking Bagdad. The Effendi acknowledged how much his government was indebted to the interference of the English ambassador, but said that, as he had

* "Inter Cæsareas acies diversaque signa
Pugnaces dubium Parthi tenuere favorem
Contenti fecisse duos."—*Lucan.* lib. iii.

most positive orders from his court not to visit him first, he was running the risk of his life if he disobeyed those orders, and that therefore he must stay at home.

By order of the ambassador, I visited Yasin Zadeh, whose house was situated in a remote part of the city, and was introduced into a room, where, contrary to the Persian mode of furniture, cushions were placed against the wall. The effendi came in soon after, and although we were in the middle of summer (3d July), he was heaped over with fur pelisses. He was a shrivelled old man, clean in his dress, of placid appearance, and of very polished manners. The few words which he spoke, at the commencement of our interview, were expressive of his thanks for the attentions of our ambassador, and he hinted with satisfaction at the long and ancient friendship which so long had existed between Turkey and England. His slow and methodical manner was strongly contrasted to that which we had been accustomed to see in the lively and animated Persians; but little by little he became more communicative, particularly when he found that I had been at Constantinople, and was acquainted with its localities. *Stambol*, to a Turk, is the centre of all earthly joys; and as soon as we got upon that subject he became quite garrulous. He made a long list of complaints of all the miseries he had endured in Persia; how the water was bad, the bread coarse, the climate disagreeable; and how constantly he bewailed the want of the comforts of Stambol, and how anxious he was to get back to them. The room in which we were seated looked upon a small basin of water, in which was placed a little ship completely rigged, at which the old man was wont to look, as a recollection of his dear Bosphorus. When we conversed on politics, I found him in almost total ignorance of what was then passing in the world. He asked me questions about events that had taken place many months before; and as he was generally six months at a time without hearing from his court, all his information was gleaned from the Tatars, who occasionally were sent to the English ambassador from Constantinople.

The affairs between Turkey and Persia continued for some time after to wear an unsettled appearance, although hostilities had ceased on the Bagdal frontier, owing to the compromise which the pasha of that place had agreed to make, by paying down a

certain sum in ready money as a compensation for the expenses that Persia had incurred in her interference for Abdurakhman Pasha.

We had not long been at Tabriz before our party was joined by the Rev. William Canning and the Rev. Henry Martyn. The former was attached to our embassy as chaplain; the latter, whom we had left at Shiraz, employed in the translation of the New Testament into the Persian language, having completed that object, was on his way to Constantinople. Both these gentlemen had suffered greatly in health during their journey from Shiraz. Mr. Martyn had scarcely had time to recover his strength before he departed again. He remained some time with the Armenian patriarch and his monks at Etchmiatzin, and his memory is highly revered amongst them. He had a relapse of his fever in Turkey; and as he travelled with a Tatar—a mode evidently too violent for his weak frame—his disorder obliged him to stop at Tocat, where he died. The Persians, who were struck with his humility, his patience, and resignation, called him a *merdi khodâi*, a man of God; and indeed every action of his life seemed to be bent towards the one object of advancing the interest of the Christian religion. When he was living at Shirah, employed in his translation, he neither sought nor shunned the society of the natives, many of whom constantly drew him into arguments about religion, with the intention of persuading him of the truth and excellence of theirs. His answers were such as to stimulate them to farther arguments; and in spite of their pride, the principal mollahs, who had heard of his reputation, paid him the first visit, and endeavoured in every way to entangle him in his talk. At length he thought that the best mode of silencing them was by writing a reply to the arguments which they brought both against our belief and in favour of their own. His tract was circulated through different parts of Persia, and was sent from hand to hand to be answered. At length it made its way to the king's court, and a mollah of high consideration, who resided at Hamadam, and who was esteemed one of the best controversialists in the country, was ordered to answer it. After the lapse of more than a year he did answer it; but such were the strong positions taken by Mr. Martyn, that the Persians themselves were ashamed of the futility of their own attempts to break them down; for, after they had sent their

answer to the ambassador, they requested that it might be returned to them again, as another answer was preparing to be given.* Such answer has never yet been given; and we may infer from this circumstance, that if, in addition to the Scriptures, some plain treatises of the evidences of Christianity, accompanied by strictures upon the falseness of the doctrines of Mahomed, were translated into Persian, and disseminated throughout that country, very favourable effects would be produced. Mr. Martyn caused a copy of his translation to be beautifully written, and to be presented by the ambassador to the king, who was pleased to receive it very graciously. A copy of it was made by Mirza Baba, a Persian, who gave us lessons in the Persian language; and he said, that many of his countrymen asked his permission to take Mr. Martyn's translation to their homes, where they kept it for several days, and expressed themselves much edified by its contents. But whilst he was employed in copying it, mollahs (the Persian scribes) used frequently to sit with him and revile him for undertaking such a work. On reading the passage where our Saviour is called the "*Lamb of God,*" they scorned and ridiculed the simile, as if exulting in the superior designation of Ali, who is called *Sheer Khoda*, the Lion of God. Mirza Baba observed to them, "The lion is an unclean beast, he preys upon carcases, and you are not allowed to wear his skin, because it is impure; he is destructive, fierce, and man's enemy. The lamb, on the contrary, is in every way *halal*, or lawful. You eat its flesh, you wear its skin on your head, it does no harm, and is an animal beloved. Whether is it best then to say the Lamb of God, or the Lion of God?"

When Chardin wrote, Tabriz ranked as the second city in Persia. It had, by his account, fifteen thousand houses, fifteen thousand shops, three hundred caravanserais, two hundred and fifty mosques, magnificent domed bazars, and contained five hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants.† At present, if we allow it to be even one-tenth of that magnitude, we shall probably make an exaggerated estimation. The modern town is situated nearly

* I have heard since my return to England that Mr. Martyn's tract has been sent to a mollah of great celebrity residing at Bagdad, in the hope that he may be more successful in refuting it.

† This would be above thirty-six in a house, a proportion which makes the calculation very doubtful.

in the centre of the site of the former one; for on all sides of it, to a considerable distance, are to be seen the ruins of houses, streets, etc., which afford a tolerable idea of the extent of that city which Chardin described. In his view of it, the Mesjid Ali is placed almost in the middle of the city: what remains of that building now forms a part of the fortification. Tabriz at this day is three miles and a quarter in circumference; it is surrounded by walls built of sun-burnt bricks, and by towers of kiln-burnt bricks, placed at irregular distances from each other. An attempt has been made to give the shape of bastions to several of the towers, but no guns are mounted upon them; and if they were, they could be of little use, as the irregularity of the walls baffle all the rules of science. There are seven gates, at each of which guards are stationed, and they are closed an hour or two after sunset, and opened in the morning before sunrise; but such regulations are not enforced with the strictness of the military discipline of Europe, as was proved by a circumstance which occurred during our residence.—The keys of the gates are kept with the governor of the city, and a camp was formed without the town. One of our serjeants going to the camp, having arrived too late at the gate, went to the governor's house to seek the key. He inquired for the governor, and was informed that he was within; he proceeded, and unknowingly found himself on a sudden in the harem, in the midst of many women, who shrieked out when they saw him, and sought to hide themselves. He therefore felt himself assailed by numerous weapons, that were directed at him by a man as well as by the women; and finding himself closely pressed, he aimed a blow at the former, which alighted upon his mouth. The sufferer proved to be the governor in person, and who, in this attack, asserted that he had lost two teeth. Remonstrances were instantly made to the ambassador for this intrusion of one of his countrymen into a spot so sacred to a Persian, but the whole business was very good-naturedly forgiven, as soon as an explanation had been made that the serjeant had erred through ignorance alone.

No public buildings of any note at present exist at Tabris, and few are the remains of those described by former travellers. Indications of the great *maidan* are still to be observed,

and the bazar Kaiserieh is still known, but a wooden roof has been substituted for its former arched one. The *Ark Ali Shah* (the citidel of Ali Shah) is the most interesting structure at present in Tabriz; principally, because it contains a proof of what the labour and ingenuity of a few Englishmen will accomplish under all the disadvantages of a bad administration and a want of resources. This building comprehends within its limits the remains of a mosque (a mass of brick work, as fine, perhaps, as any in the world), about eighty feet in height; at the top of which three small chambers have been constructed, whence the town and the surrounding country are seen as if laid out on a chart. The prince had intended to make the *ark* his own place of residence, but he subsequently preferred converting it into an arsenal, where we were delighted to find many of our European trades in full activity. In the first yard, we saw a range of guns and all the accompaniments of artillery. A numerous body of carpenters and wheelwrights were at work with European tools, superintended by a European mechanic. Farther on was the blacksmith's forge, worked with charcoal for want of coal. Then, in another yard, were piles of shot, with men filling cartridges and other lesser employments. We were led through a suite of apartments, in which were saddlers and workers of leather, store-rooms neatly arranged, and conveniences of every sort.

The Persians are delighted at this place. The prince frequently visits it, takes great pleasure in inspecting all the works, and in learning the uses and properties of every article. His principal delight is a machine for boring cannon, which is worked by a buffalo, enabling him to make guns of any description.

These details will perhaps furnish some idea of the rapidity with which the Persians might be entirely civilised; and if it were ever the policy of any one of the European nations to give a further impulse to the eagerness with which they have already begun to acquire some of our arts, it is not to be doubted, but that the whole of Persia would soon exhibit a very different aspect from what it does at present; and that from this commencement their darkness in religion would perhaps be gradually dispelled.

However agreeable it may be to trace their first progress

towards civilisation, and to anticipate their further advances, we must not confine our views to the more pleasing side of the scene.

Many of the prisoners taken from the Russians are confined in the *ark*. Twenty to thirty Armenian husbandmen, natives of Kara bagh, finding themselves reduced to a state of starvation by the constant inroads made upon their fields by the Persian cavalry, resolved to migrate into the country of Abbas Mirza. On their way they were met by a party of predatory Persian horsemen, who, without listening to their tale, seized them as prisoners, and sent them to Tabriz, where they were thrown, bound and fettered, into a dungeon. During the day-time, they were let out, and driven like cattle in a herd, to work upon buildings erecting within the town, and were beaten without remorse if they made remonstrances, or showed any reluctance to work. At night they were again confined to the dungeon. If it had not been for the humanity of our English artificers who lived in the arsenal, these poor people would probably have died from the united miseries of hunger and unwholesome lodging.

The ambassador, during our stay at Tabriz, was lodged in a house provided for him by the prince, but belonging to one of the wealthiest inhabitants of the place, an old man, by name Hajee Khan Mahomed. The gentlemen of the suite, as well as all the English officers in the Persian service, each occupied a separate house. The owners of these houses were dispossessed of them by the prince's orders; and though they afterwards recovered them, they received no remuneration from the Persian government for the injury and the privation. It is now twelve years since Hajee Khan Mahomed has ceased to possess his own house; nor is it likely that he will ever again occupy it; for no sooner has it been left by one person, than it is immediately given to another. The one which I occupied belonged to an Armenian family, the head of which was a *keshish* or priest. It consisted of several rooms, built upon elevated terraces, looking upon two sides of a square, besides several other small unconnected rooms, situated here and there. A garden was attached to it, in which were apple, pear, cherry, walnut, and *sinjid** trees, besides rose

* The *sinjid* is the jujube tree, of which there are several sorts in Persia. The red Khorasanian juice is esteemed an excellent specific in fluxes.

trees. Beneath my chambers were two under-ground rooms, where lived one of the priest's sons, with his wife. One of the rooms was a magazine for arrack, of which the husband was both a drinker and a vender. But as the prince had prohibited the sale of this liquor and of wine, under very heavy penalties, none was sold, except in a clandestine manner, and that to persons well known. The noises that issued from the adjoining houses were quite characteristic of Persian domestic life. In my immediate vicinity lived an old morose Persian, who daily quarrelled with his women; and I could distinguish the voice of one particular female, whose answers, made in a taunting and querulous tone, did not fail to throw him into passions so violent, that they generally terminated in blows, the noise of which, accompanied by corresponding lamentation, I could distinctly hear.

Then, bordering on the garden wall, scarce twenty yards from where I usually sat, was a society of women, five or six in number, the wives and slaves of a Mussulman, who were either dissolved in tears, sobbing aloud like children, or entranced in the most indecent and outrageous merriment. Sometimes they sang in the loudest tone, accompanied by a tamborine; and then they quarrelled amongst themselves, using every now and then expressions of no ordinary indelicacy. Accident once gave me a view into their yard, where I saw three women surrounded by children, seated on the bare stones, smoking the *kaleoon*. They wore a large black silk handkerchief round their heads, a shift which descended as low as the middle, a pair of loose trowsers, and green high-heeled slippers; and this, I believe, may be considered as a sketch of every Persian woman's dress within the harem, in hot weather.

But there are noises peculiar to every city and country; and none are more distinct and characteristic than those in Persia. First, at the dawn of day, the *muezzins* are heard in a great variety of tones, calling the people to prayers from the tops of the mosques; these are mixed with the sounds of cow-horns, blown by the keepers of the *hummums*, to inform the women, who bathe before the men, that the baths are heated, and ready for their reception. The cow-horns set all the dogs in the city howling in a frightful manner. The asses of the town generally

beginning to bray about the same time, are answered by all the asses in the neighbourhood; a thousand cocks then intrude their shrill voices, which, with the other subsidiary noises of persons calling to each other, knocking at doors, cries of children, complete a din very unusual to the ears of a European. In the summer season, as the operations of domestic life are mostly performed in the open air, every noise is heard. At night, all sleep on the tops of their houses, their beds being spread upon their terraces, without any other covering over their heads than the vault of heaven. The poor seldom have a screen to keep them from the gaze of passengers; and as we generally rode out on horseback at a very early hour, we perceived on the tops of houses, people either still in bed, or just getting up, and certainly no sight was ever stranger. The women appeared to be always up the first, whilst the men were frequently seen lounging in bed long after the sun was risen. This universal custom of sleeping on the house-top, speaks much in favour of the climate of Persia; and indeed we found that our repose in the open air was much more refreshing than in the confinement of a room. That this was a Jewish custom, may perhaps be inferred from the passage where it is said, *That in an evening tide, David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the King's house.* 2 Sam. xi. 2.

During our stay at Tabriz we made such frequent excursions on horseback, that we became well acquainted with its environs. The plain in which it is situated is bounded to the north-east, the east, and south-east, by a chain of barren mountains, conspicuous for their red and ochreous appearance. These mountains rise immediately behind Tabriz, and recede into a deep vale, which being watered by a plentiful stream, is perhaps more highly cultivated than any tract of its size in Persia. Following the river in its course through this vale, beautiful and picturesque scenery is seen on every side. A ruined bridge, a water-mill embosomed in a grove of trees, green lanes leading to a village, and other rural objects, gave a great relief to the eye, after the almost universal dreariness of Persian landscape.

On entering the valley from Tabriz to the left hand, close at the foot of the red mountains, are the remains of a fort, called the Caleh Resheedieh, which even in Chardin's time was a

ruin. The trouble required to scramble to the summit of the old towers is ill repaid, for they command no extensive view; but an idea may be formed, in walking over the ruins, of the style of building in the 12th century, which for solidity and strength surpasses all similar structures of the present day.

To the south-east, at the foot of a sloping hill, is a powder mill, worked by water, erected entirely by a Persian, who acquired his knowledge (according to his own account) by a casual inspection of a similar building at Constantinople. This mill is by far the best modern structure at Tabriz, being composed of brick, stone, and marble, and has cost the prince a vast sum of money. The first object, however, that presents itself on entering the mill, is an iron door, which, in a place so liable to accident, is most evidently misplaced; but the architect feels a confidence that no danger can arise from it, because when a wheel of the mill sets the works in motion, the door is then kept constantly wet. We remarked to the architect, that in Europe, owing to the frequent explosion of powder mills, they were now constructed of cheap and slight materials. Being a good predestinarian, he exclaimed "Inshallah, Please God, this will never blow up. See that of Constantinople, how long that has stood: surely this can last as long." A mud wall, flanked by round towers, closed by gates, encloses this building; but adjacent to it, and still within the enclosure, it is intended, in order to take advantage of the water, to erect a corn mill.

To the northward and westward are several villages, interspersed with extensive orchards and vineyards, the latter of which are generally enclosed by high walls. The Persian vine-dressers do all in their power to make the vine run up the wall, and curl over on the other side, which they do by tying stones to the extremity of the tendril. May this not illustrate that beautiful image used in Genesis, xlix. 22.? *Joseph is a fruitful bough; even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall.* The vine, particularly in Turkey and Greece, is frequently made to entwine on trellises, around a well, where in the heat of the day whole families collect themselves, and sit under the shade.

A considerable part of the population of Tabriz may be said to live in the suburbs, which are every day increasing, and extend

themselves over the site of the ancient city. In all parts of the immediate vicinity are seen large oblong and square blocks of black marble, which formerly were tomb-stones, but now are used in many places as stepping-stones over small streams, foundations to houses, channels for water, etc. These, as well as stone rams and stone lions, are constantly met with. Many of the entrances to the gardens and to the houses of the peasantry, like those of Ispahan, Julfa, and Kashan, are formed of one large stone slab. At the village of Shan Gazan, two miles from the walls of Tabriz, is a high mound of brick, the remains of some very considerable building, but of a Mahomedan age.

THE END.