MRS. BISHOP (ISABELLA L. BIRD).

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JOURNEYS
IN
PERSIA AND KURDISTAN

INCLUDING A SUMMER IN THE UPPER KARUN
REGION AND A VISIT TO THE
NESTORIAN RAYAHS

BY MRS. BISHOP
(ISABELLA L. BIRD)
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'UNBEATEN TRACKS IN JAPAN,' ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. I.

WITH PORTRAIT, MAPS, AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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**PREFACE**

The letters of which these volumes are composed embrace the second half of journeys in the East extending over a period of two years. They attempt to be a faithful record of facts and impressions, but were necessarily written in haste at the conclusion of fatiguing marches, and often in circumstances of great discomfort and difficulty, and I relied for their correction in the event of publication on notes made with much care. Unfortunately I was robbed of nearly the whole of these, partly on my last journey in Persia and partly on the Turkish frontier,—a serious loss, which must be my apology to the reader for errors which, without this misfortune, would not have occurred.

The bibliography of Persia is a very extensive one, and it may well be that I have little that is new to communicate, except on a part of Luristan previously untraversed by Europeans; but each traveller receives a different impression from those made upon his predecessors, and I hope that my book may be accepted as an honest attempt to make a popular contribution to the sum of knowledge of a country and people with which we are likely to be brought into closer relations.

1 I left England with a definite object in view, to which others were subservient, but it is not necessary to obtrude it on the reader.
As these volumes are simply travels in Persia and Eastern Asia Minor, and are not a book on either country, the references to such subjects as were not within the sphere of my observation are brief and incidental. The administration of government, the religious and legal systems, the tenure of land, and the mode of taxation are dismissed in a few lines, and social customs are only described when I came in contact with them. The Ilyats, or nomadic tribes, form a very remarkable element of the population of Persia, but I have only noticed two of their divisions—the Bakhtiari and Feili Lurs. The antiquities of Persia are also passed over with hardly a remark, as well as many other subjects, which have been "threshed out" by previous writers with more or less of accuracy.

I make these omissions with all the more satisfaction, because most that is "knowable" concerning Persia will be accessible on the publication of a work now in the Press, Persia and the Persian Question, by the Hon. George N. Curzon, M.P., who has not only travelled extensively in the country, but has bestowed such enormous labour and research upon it, and has had such exceptional opportunities of acquiring the latest and best official information, that his volumes may fairly be described as "exhaustive."

It is always a pleasant duty to acknowledge kindness, and I am deeply grateful to several friends for the help which they have given me in many ways, and for the trouble which some of them have taken to recover facts which were lost with my notes, as well as for the careful revision of a portion of my letters in MS. I am indebted to the Indian authorities for the materials for a sketch map, for photographs from which many of the illustrations are taken, and for the use of a valuable geographical report, and to Mr. Thistleton Dyer, Director of the Royal
Botanic Gardens at Kew, for the identification of a few of my botanical specimens.

In justice to the many kind friends who received me into their homes, I am anxious to disclaim having either echoed or divulged their views on Persian or Turkish subjects, and to claim and accept the fullest responsibility for the opinions expressed in these pages, which, whether right or wrong, are wholly my own. It is from those who know Persia and Kurdistan the best that I am sure of receiving the most kindly allowance wherever, in spite of an honest desire to be accurate, I have fallen into mistakes.

The retention, not only of the form, but of the reality of diary letters, is not altogether satisfactory either to author or reader, for the author sacrifices the literary and artistic arrangement of his materials, and however ruthlessly omissions are made, the reader is apt to find himself involved in a multiplicity of minor details, treated in a fashion which he is inclined to term "slipshod," and to resent the egotism which persistently clings to familiar correspondence. Still, even with all the disadvantages of this form of narrative, I think that letters are the best mode of placing the reader in the position of the traveller, and of enabling him to share, not only first impressions in their original vividness, and the interests and enjoyments of travelling, but the hardships, difficulties, and tedium which are their frequent accompaniments!

For the lack of vivacity which, to my thinking, pervades the following letters, I ask the reader's indulgence. They were originally written, and have since been edited, under the heavy and abiding shadow, not only of the loss of the beloved and only sister who was the inspiration of my former books of travel, and to whose completely sympathetic interest they owed whatever of brightness they possessed, but of my beloved husband, whose able
and careful revision accompanied my last volume through the Press.

Believing that these letters faithfully reflect what I saw of the regions of which they treat, I venture to ask for them the same kindly and lenient criticism with which my travels in the Far East and elsewhere were received in bygone years, and to express the hope that they may help to lead towards that goal to which all increase of knowledge of races and beliefs tends—a truer and kindlier recognition of the brotherhood of man, as seen in the light of the Fatherhood of God.

ISABELLA L. BISHOP.

November 12, 1891.
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GLOSSARY

Abambar, a covered reservoir.
Agha, a master.
Andarun, women’s quarters, a haram.
Arak, a coarse spirit.
Badgir, wind-tower.
Badragah, a parting escort.
Balakhana, an upper room.
Bringals, egg plants.
Chapar, post.
Chapar Khana, post-house.
Chapi, the Bakhtiari national dance.
Charcadar, a muleteer.
Farāsh, lit. a carpet-spreader.
Farsakh, from three and a half to four miles.
Gardan, a pass.
Gaz, a sweetmeat made from manna.
Gelims, thin carpets, drugget.
Gheva, a summer shoe.
Gholam, an official messenger or attendant.
Hākim, a governor.
Hakim, a physician.
Hamnam, a Turkish or hot bath.
Ilyats, the nomadic tribes of Persia.
Imam, a saint, a religious teacher.
Imamzada, a saint’s shrine.
Istikbal, a procession of welcome.
Jūl, a horse’s outer blanket.
Kabob, pieces of skewered meat seasoned and toasted.
Kēfer, an infidel, a Christian.
Kāh, chopped straw.
Kajanehs, horse-panniers.
Kalian, a “hubble-bubble” or water-pipe for tobacco.
Kamarband, a girdle.
Kanaat, an underground water-channel.
Kanat, the upright side of a tent.
Karsi, a wooden frame for covering a fire-hole.
Katirgi (Turkish), a muleteer.
Ketchuda, a headman of a village.
Khan, lord or prince; a designation as common as esquire.
Khan (Turkish), an inn.
Khanjar, a curved dagger.
Khanji (Turkish), the keeper of a khan.
Khanum, a lady of rank.
Khurjins, saddle bags.
Kizik, a slab of animal fuel.
Kotal, lit. a ladder, a pass.
Kourbana (Syriac), the Holy Communion.
Kran, eightpence.
Kuh, mountain.
Liwa (Turkish), about £1.
Malek (Syriac, lit. king), a chief or headman.
Mamachi, midwife.
Mangel, a brazier.
Mast, curdled milk.
Medresseh, a college.
Mirza, a scribe, secretary, or gentleman. An educated man.
Modakel, illicit percentage.
Mullah, a religious teacher.
Munshi, a clerk, a teacher of languages.
Namad, felt.
Nasr, steward.
Odah (Turkish), a room occupied by human beings and animals.
Piastre, a Turkish coin worth two pence-halfpenny.
Pirahan, a chemise or shirt.
Pish-kash, a nominal present.
Qasha (Syriac), a priest.
Rayahs, subject Syrians.
Roghan, clarified butter.
Samovar, a Russian tea-urn.
Sartip, a general.
Seraidar, the keeper of a caravanserai.
Sharbat, a fruit syrup.
Shroff, a money-changer.
Shuddar (Shooldarry), a small tent with two poles and a ridge pole, but without kanats.
Shulwars, wide trousers.
Sowar, a horseman, a horse soldier.
Takehah, a recess in a wall.
Taktrawan, a mule litter.
Tandur, an oven in a floor.
Tang, a rift or defile.
Tufangchi, a foot soldier, an armed footman.
Tuman, seven shillings and sixpence.
Vakil, an authorised representative.
Vakil-u-Dowleh, agent of Government.
Yabu, a pony or inferior horse.
Yailaks, summer quarters.
Yekdan, a mule or camel trunk, made of leather.
Yohooort (Turkish), curdled milk.
Zaptieh (Turkish), a gendarme.
LETTER XV

ARDAL, May 14.

The week spent here has passed rapidly. There is much coming and going. My camp is by the side of a frequented pathway, close to a delicious spring, much resorted to by Ilyat women, who draw water in mussocks and copper pots, and gossip there. The Ilyats are on the march to their summer quarters, and the steady tramp of their flocks and herds and the bleating of their sheep is heard at intervals throughout the nights. Sometimes one of their horses or cows stumbles over the tent ropes and nearly brings the tent down. Servants of the Ilkhani with messages and presents of curds, celery pickled in sour cream, and apricots, go to and fro. Sick people come at intervals all day long, and the medicine chest is in hourly requisition.

The sick are not always satisfied with occasional visits to the Hakim's tent: a man, who has a little daughter ill of jaundice, after coming twice for medicine, has brought a tent, and has established himself in it with his child close to me, and a woman with bad eyes has also pitched a tent near mine; at present thirteen people come twice daily to have zinc lotion dropped into their eyes. The fame of the "tabloids" has been widely spread, and if I take common powders out of papers, or liquids out of bottles, the people shake their heads and say they do not want those, but "the fine medicines out of
the leather box.” To such an extent is this preference carried that they reject decoctions of a species of *artemisia*, a powerful tonic, unless I put tabloids of permanganate of potass (Condy’s fluid) into the bottle before their eyes.

They have no idea of the difference between curable and incurable maladies. Many people, stone blind, have come long distances for eye-lotion, and to-night a man nearly blind came in, leading a man totally blind for eight years, asking me to restore his sight. The blind had led the blind from a camp twenty-four miles off! Octogenarians believe that I can give them back their hearing, and men with crippled or paralysed limbs think that if I would give them some “Feringhi ointment,” of which they have heard, they would be restored. Some come to stare at a Feringhi lady, others to see my tent, which they occasionally say is “fit for Allah,” and the general result is that I have very little time to myself.

The Ardal plateau is really pretty at this season, and I have had many pleasant evening gallops over soft green grass and soft red earth. The view from the tent is pleasant: on the one side the green slopes which fall down to the precipices which overhang the Karun, with the snowy mountains, deeply cleft, of the region which is still a geographical mystery beyond them; on the other, mountains of naked rock with grass running up into their ravines, and between them and me billows of grass and wild flowers. A barley slope comes down to my tent. The stalks are only six inches long, and the ears, though ripe, contain almost nothing. Every evening a servant of the Ilkhani brings three little wild boars to feed on the grain. Farther down the path are the servants’ and muleteers’ camps, surrounded by packing-cases, *yekdans*, mule-bags, nose-bags, gear of all kinds, and the usual litter of an encampment.

The men, whether Indian, Persian, Beloochi, or
Bakhtiari, are all quiet and well-behaved. The motto of the camps is "Silence is golden." Hadji Hussein is quiet in manner and speech, and though he has seven muleteers, yells and shouts are unknown.

There is something exciting in the prospect of travelling through a region much of which is unknown and unmapped, and overlooked hitherto by both geographical and commercial enterprise; and in the prospective good fortune of learning the manners and customs of tribes untouched by European influence, and about whose reception of a Feringhi woman doleful prophecies have been made.

Tur, May 18.—The last day at Ardal was a busy one. Several of the Khans called to take leave. I made a farewell visit to the Ilkhanī's haram; people came for medicines at intervals from 5 A.M. till 9 P.M.; numberless eye-lotions had to be prepared; stores, straps, ropes, and equipments had to be looked to; presents to be given to the Ilkhanī's servants; native shoes, with webbing tops and rag soles, to be hunted for to replace boots which could not be mended, and it was late before the preparations were completed. During the night some of my tent ropes were snapped by a stampede of mules, and a heavy thunderstorm coming on with wind and rain, the tent flapped about my ears till dawn.

It was very hot when we left the next morning. The promised escort was not forthcoming. The details of each day's march have been much alike. I start early, taking Mirza with me with the shuldari, halt usually half-way, and have a frugal lunch of milk and biscuits, read till the caravan has passed, rest in my tent for an hour, and ride on till I reach the spot chosen for the camp. Occasionally on arriving it is found that the place selected on local evidence is unsuitable, or the water is scanty or bad, and we march farther.
The greatest luxury is to find the tent pitched, the camp bed put up, and the kettle boiling for afternoon tea. I rest, write, and work till near sunset, when I dine on mutton and rice, and go to bed soon after dark, as I breakfast at four. An hour or two is taken up daily with giving medicines to sick people.

There are no villages, but camps occur frequently. The three young savages brought from Naghun are very amusing from the savage freedom of their ways, but they exasperate the servants by quizzing and mimicking them. The cows are useless. Between them they give at most a teacupful of milk, and generally none. Either the calves or the boys take it, or the marches are too much for them. In the Ilyat camps there is plenty, but as it is customary to mix the milk of sheep, goats, and cows, and to milk the animals with dirty hands into dirty copper pots, and almost at once to turn the milk into a sour mass, like whipped cream in appearance, by shaking it with some “leaven” in a dirty goat-skin, a European cannot always drink it. Indeed, it goes through every variety of bad taste.

The camps halt on Sundays, and the men highly appreciate the rest. They sleep, smoke, wash and mend their clothes, and are in good humour and excellent trim on Monday morning, and the mules show their unconscious appreciation of a holiday by coming into camp kicking and frolicking.

The baggage animals are fine, powerful mules and horses, with not a sore back among them. The pack saddles and tackle are all in good order. The caravan is led by a horse caparisoned with many bells and tassels, a splendid little gray fellow, full of pluck and fire, called Cock o’ the Walk. He comes in at the end of a long march, arching his neck, shaking his magnificent mane, and occasionally kicking off his load. Sometimes he
knocks down two or three men, dashes off with his load at a gallop, and even when hobbled manages to hop up to the two Arabs and challenge them to a fight. These handsome horses have some of the qualities for which their breed is famous, and are as surefooted as goats, but they are very noisy, and they hate each other and disturb the peace of the camp by their constant attempts to fight. My horse, Screw, can go wherever a mule can find foothold. He is ugly, morose, a great fighter, and most uninteresting. The donkeys and a fat retriever are destitute of "salient points."

Hadji Hussein, the charvadar, has elevated his profession into an art. On reaching camp, after unloading, each muleteer takes away the five animals for which he is responsible, and liberates them, with the saddles on, to graze. After a time they drive them into camp, remove the saddles, and groom them thoroughly, while the saddler goes over the equipments, and does any repairs that are needed. After the grooming each muleteer, having examined the feet of his animals, reports upon them, and Hadji replaces all lost shoes and nails. The saddles and the juls or blankets are then put on, the mules are watered in batches of five, and are turned loose for the night to feed, with two muleteers to watch them by turns. Hadji, whose soft voice and courteous manners make all dealings with him agreeable, receives his orders for the morrow, and he with his young son, Abbas Ali, and the rest of the muleteers, camp near my tent, cook their supper of blanket bread with mast or curds, roll their heads and persons in blankets, put their feet to the fire, and are soon asleep, but Hadji gets up two or three times in the night to look after his valuable property.

At 4 A.M. or earlier, the mules are driven into camp, and are made fast to ropes, which are arranged the previous night by pegging them down in an oblong forty feet by
twenty. Nose-bags with grain are put on; and as the loads are got ready the mules are loaded, with Hadji's help and supervision. No noise is allowed during this operation.

After an hour or more the caravan moves, led by Cock o' the Walk, usually with two men at his head to moderate his impetuosity for a time, with a guide; and Hadji on his fine-looking saddle mule looks after the safety of everything. He is punctual, drives fast and steadily, and always reaches the camping-ground in good time. When he gets near it he dismounts, and putting on the air of "your most obedient servant," leads in Cock o' the Walk. He is really a very gentlemanly man for his position, but is unfortunately avaricious, and though he has amassed what is, for Persia, a very large fortune, he wears very poor clothes, and eats sparingly of the poorest food. He is a big man of fifty, wears blue cotton clothing and a red turban, is very florid, and having a white or very gray beard, has dyed it an orange red with henna.

My servants have fallen fairly well into their work, but are frightfully slow. All pitch the tents, and Hassan cooks, washes, packs the cooking and table equipments, and saddles my horse. Mirza Yusuf interprets, waits on me, packs the tent furnishings, rides with me, and is always within hearing of my whistle. He is good, truthful, and intelligent, sketches with some talent, is always cheerful, never grumbles, is quite indifferent to personal comfort, gets on well with the people, is obliging to every one, is always ready to interpret, and though well educated has the good sense not to regard any work as "menial." Mehemet Ali, the "superfluity," is a scamp, and, I fear, dishonest. The servants feed themselves on a kran (3d.) a day, allowed as "road money." Sheep are driven with us, and are turned into mutton as required. Really, they follow us, attaching themselves to the gray horses, and feeding almost among their feet.
My food consists of roast mutton, rice, chapatties, tea, and milk, without luxuries or variety. Life is very simple and very free from purposeless bothers. The days are becoming very hot, but the nights are cool. The black flies and the sand-flies are the chief tormentors.

On leaving Ardal we passed very shortly into a region little traversed by Europeans, embracing remarkable gorges and singularly abrupt turns in ravines, through which the Karun, here a deep and powerful stream, finds its way. A deep descent over grassy hills to a rude village in a valley and a steep ascent took us to the four booths, which are the summer quarters of our former escort, Rustem Khan, who received us with courteous hospitality, and regaled us with fresh cow's milk in a copper basin. He introduced me to twelve women and a number of children, nearly all with sore eyes. There is not a shadow of privacy in these tents, with open fronts and sides. The carpets, which are made by the women, serve as chairs, tables, and beds, and the low wall of roughly-heaped stones at the back for trunks and wardrobe, for on it they keep their "things" in immense saddle-bags made of handsome rugs. The visible furniture consists of a big copper bowl for food, a small one for milk, a huge copper pot for clarifying butter, and a goat-skin suspended from three poles, which is jerked by two women seated on the ground, and is used for churning butter and making curds.

A steep ascent gives a superb view of a confused sea of mountains, and of a precipitous and tremendous gorge, the Tang-i-Ardal, through which the Karun passes, making a singularly abrupt turn after leaving a narrow and apparently inacessible cañon or rift on the south side of the Ardal valley. A steep zigzag descent of 600 feet in less than three-quarters of a mile brings the path down to the Karun, a deep bottle-green river, now
swirling in drifts of foam, now resting momentarily in quiet depths, but always giving an impression of volume and power. Large and small land turtles abound in that fiercely hot gorge of from 1000 to 2000 feet deep. The narrow road crosses the river on a bridge of two arches, and proceeds for some distance at a considerable height on its right bank. There I saw natural wood for the first time since crossing the Zagros mountains in January, and though the oak, ash, and maple are poor and stunted, their slender shade was delicious. Roses, irises, St. John’s wort, and other flowers were abundant.

The path ascends past a clear spring, up steep zigzags to a graveyard in which are several stone lions, rudely carved, of natural size, facing Mecca-wards, with pistols, swords, and daggers carved in relief on their sides, marking the graves of fighting men. On this magnificent point above the Karun a few hovels, deserted in summer, surrounded by apricot trees form the village of Duashda Imams, which has a superb view of the extraordinary and sinuous chasm through which the Karun passes for many miles, thundering on its jagged and fretted course between gigantic and nearly perpendicular cliffs of limestone and conglomerate. Near this village the pistachio is abundant, and planes, willows, and a large-leaved clematis vary the foliage.

Leaving the river at this point, a somewhat illegible path leads through “park-like” scenery, fair slopes of grass and flowers sprinkled with oaks singly or in clumps, glades among trees in their first fresh green, and evermore as a background gray mountains slashed with snow.

In the midst of these pretty uplands is the Ilyat encampment of Martaza, with its black tents, donkeys, sheep, goats, and big fierce dogs, which vociferously rushed upon Downie, the retriever, and were themselves rushed upon and gripped by a number of women. The people,
having been informed of our intended arrival by Reza Kuli Khan, had arranged a large tent with carpets and cushions, but we pitched the camps eventually on an oak-covered slope, out of the way of the noise, curiosity, and evil odours of Martaza. Water is very scarce there, three wells or pools, fouled by the feet of animals, being the only supply.

I rested on my dhurrie under an oak till the caravan came up. It was a sweet place, but was soon invaded, and for the rest of the day quiet and privacy were out of the question, for presently appeared a fine, florid, buxom dame, loud of speech, followed by a number of women and children, all as dirty as it is possible to be, and all crowded round me and sat down on my carpet. This Khanum Shirin is married to the chief or headman, but being an heiress she "bosses" the tribe. She brought up bolsters and quilts, and begged us to consider themselves, the whole region, and all they had as pishkash (a present from an inferior to a superior), but when she was asked if it included herself, she blushed and covered her face. After two hours of somewhat flagging conversation she led her train back again, but after my tent was pitched she reappeared with a much larger number of women, including two betrothed girls of sixteen and seventeen years old, who are really beautiful.

These maidens were dressed in clean cotton costumes, and white veils of figured silk gauze enveloped them from head to foot. They unveiled in my tent, and looked more like houris than any women I have seen in the East; and their beauty was enhanced by the sweetness and maidenly modesty of their expression. I wished them to be photographed, and they were quite willing, but when I took them outside some men joined the crowd and said it should not be, and that when their betrothed husbands came home they would tell them
how bold and bad they had been, and would have them beaten. Although these beauties had been most modest and maidenly in their behaviour, they were sent back with blows, and were told not to come near us again. The Agha entertained the Khunum Shirin for a long time, and the conversation was very animated, but when he set a very fine musical box going for their amusement the lady and the rest of the crowd became quite listless and apathetic, and said they much preferred to talk. When their prolonged visit came to an end the Khanum led her train away, with a bow which really had something of graceful dignity in it.

The next morning her husband, the Mollah-i-Martaza, and his son, mounted on one horse, came with us as guides, and when we halted at their camp the Khanum took the whip out of my hand and whipped the women all round with it, except the offending beauties, who were not to be seen. The mollah is a grave, quiet, and most respectable-looking man, more like a thriving merchant than a nomad chief, though he does carry arms. He is a devout Moslem, and is learned, i.e. he can read the Koran.

In a short time the woodland beauty is exchanged for weedy hills and slopes strewn with boulders. Getting other guides at an Ilyat camp, we ascended Sanginak, a mountain 8200 feet high, from the top of which a good idea of the local topography is gained. The most striking features are the absence of definite peaks and the tremendous gorges and abrupt turns of the Karun, which swallows in its passage all minor streams. Precipitous ranges of great altitude hemmed in by ranges yet loftier, snow-covered or snow-patched, with deep valleys between them, well grassed and often well wooded, great clefts, through which at some seasons streams reach the Karun; mountain meadows spotted with
the black tents of Ilyats, and deserted hovels far below, with patches of wheat and barley, make up the landscape.

These hills are covered with celery of immense size. The leaves are dried and stacked for fodder, and the underground stalks, which are very white, are a great article of food, both fresh and steeped for a length of time in sour milk. After resting in some Ilyat tents, where the people were friendly and dirty, we had a most tiresome march over treeless hills covered with herbs, and down a steep descent into the Gurab plain, on which a great wall of rocky mountains of definite and impressive shapes descends in broken spurs. My guide, who had never been certain about the way, led me wrong. No tents were visible, the nomads I met had seen neither tents nor caravan. Two hours went by in toiling round the bases of green hills, and then there was the joyful surprise of coming upon my tent pitched, the kettle boiling, the mules knee-deep in food, close by the Chesmeh-i-Gurab, a copious spring of good water, of which one could safely drink.

This Gurab plain, one of very many lying high up among these Luristan mountains, is green and pretty now—a sea of bulbs and grass, but is brown and dusty from early in June onwards. It is about four miles long by nine or ten broad, and is watered by a clear and wonderfully winding stream, which dwindles to a thread later on. The nomads are already coming up.

The rest was much broken by the critical state of Karim's arm, which was swelled, throbbing, and inflamed all round the wound inflicted by Karun on May 13, and he had high fever. It was a helpless predicament, the symptoms were so like those of gangrene. I thought he would most likely die of the hot marches. It was a very anxious night, as all our methods of healing
were exhausted, and the singular improvement which set in and has continued must have been the work of the Great Physician, to whom an appeal for help was earnestly made. The wound is daily syringed with Condy's fluid, the only antiseptic available, and has a drainage tube. To-day I have begun to use eucalyptus oil, with which the man is delighted, possibly because he has heard that it is very expensive, and that I have hardly any left!

Yesterday I had the amusement of shifting the camps to another place, and Hadji was somewhat doubtful of my leadership. On arriving at the beautiful crystal spring which the guide had indicated as the halting-place for Sunday, I found that it issued from under a mound of grass-grown graves, was in the full sun blaze, and at the lowest part of the plain. The guide asserted that it was the only spring, but having seen a dark stain of vegetation high among the hills, I halted the caravan and rode off alone in search of the water I hoped it indicated, disregarding the suppressed but unmistakably sneering laughter of the guide and charvadars. In less than a mile I came upon the dry bed of a rivulet, a little higher up on a scanty, intermittent trickle, higher still on a gurgling streamlet fringed by masses of blue scilla, and still higher on a small circular spring of very cold water, with two flowery plateaux below it just large enough for the camps, in a green quiet corrie, with the mountains close behind. Hadji laughed, and the guide insisted that the spring was not always there. A delightful place it is in which to spend Sunday quietly, with its musical ripple of water, its sky-blue carpet of scilla, its beds of white and purple irises, its slopes ablaze with the _Fritillaria imperialis_, and its sweet, calm view of the green Gurab plain and the silver windings of the Dinarud.

Above the spring is the precipitous hill of Tur, with
the remains of a rude fort on its shattered rocky summit. Two similar ruins are visible from Tur, one on a rocky ledge of an offshoot of the Kuh-i-Gerra, on the other side of the Dinarud valley, the other on the crest of a noble headland of the Sanganaki range, which is visible throughout the whole region. The local legend concerning them is that long before the days of the Parthian kings, and when bows and arrows were the only weapons known, iron being undiscovered, there was in the neighbourhood of Gurab a king called Faruk Padishah, who had three sons, Salmon, Tur, and Iraj. It does not appear to be usual among the Bakhtiariis for sons to "get on" together after their father's death, and the three youths quarrelled and built these three impregnable forts—Killa Tur, the one I examined, Killa Iraj, and Killa Salmon.

The beautiful valley was evidently too narrow for their ambition, and leaving their uncomfortable fastnesses they went northwards, and founded three empires, Salmon to the Golden Horn, where he founded Stamboul, Tur to Turkistan, and Iraj became the founder of the Iranian Empire.

Killa Tur is a stone building mostly below the surface of the hill-top, of rough hewn stone cemented with lime mortar of the hardness of concrete. The inner space of the fort is not more than eighty square yards. The walls are from three to six feet thick.

Chigakhor, May 31.—The last twelve days have been spent in marching through a country which has not been traversed by Europeans, only crossed along the main track. On leaving the pleasant camp of Tur we descended to the Gurab plain, purple in patches with a showy species of garlic, skirted the base of the Tur spur, and rode for some miles along the left bank of the Dinarud, which, after watering the plain of Gurab,
sparkles and rushes down a grassy valley bright with roses and lilies, and well wooded with oak, elm, and hawthorn. This river, gaining continually in volume, makes a turbulent descent to the Karun a few miles from the point where we left it. This was the finest day's march of the journey. The mountain forms were grander and more definite, the vegetation richer, the scenery more varied, and a kindlier atmosphere pervaded it. In the midst of a wood of fine walnut trees, ash, and hawthorn, laced together by the tendrils of vines, a copious stream tumbles over rocks fringed with maiden-hair, and sparkles through grass purple with orchises. This is the only time that I have seen the one or the other in Persia, and it was like an unexpected meeting with dear friends.

Crossing the Dinarud on a twig bridge, fording a turbulent affluent, which bursts full fledged from the mountain side, and ascending for some hours through grassy glades wooded with oak and elm, we camped for two days on the alpine meadow of Arjul, scantily watered but now very green. Oak woods come down upon it, the vines are magnificent, and there is some cultivation of wheat, which is sown by the nomads before their departure in the late autumn, and is reaped during their summer sojourn. There are no tents there at present, yet from camps near and far, on horseback and on foot, people came for eye-lotions, and remained at night to have them dropped into their eyes.

The next morning I was awakened at dawn by Mirza's voice calling to me, "Madam, Hadji wants you to come down and sew up a mule that's been gored by a wild boar." Awfully gored it was. A piece of skin about ten inches square was hanging down between its forelegs, and a broad wound the depth of my hand and fully a foot long extended right into its chest, with a great piece taken out. I did what I could, but the animal had to be left behind to be cured by the Mollah-i-Martaza, who
left us there. Another misfortune to Hadji was the loss of the fiery leader of the caravan, Cock o' the Walk, but late at night he was brought into camp at Dupulan quite crestfallen, having gone back to the rich pastures which surround the Chesmeh-i-Gurab. The muleteer who went in search of him was attacked by some Lurs and stripped of his clothing, but on some men coming up who said his master was under the protection of the Ilkhani, his clothes and horse were returned to him.

The parallel ranges with deep valleys between them, which are such a feature of this country, are seen in perfection near Arjul. Some of the torrents of this mountain region are already dry, but their broad stony beds, full of monstrous boulders, arrest the fury with which at times they seek the Karun. One of these, the Imamzada, passes through the most precipitous and narrow gorge which it is possible to travel, even with unloaded mules. The narrow path is chiefly rude rock ladders, threading a gorge or chasm on a gigantic scale, with a compressed body of water thundering below, concealed mainly by gnarled and contorted trees, which find root-hold in every rift. Where the chasm widens for a space before narrowing to a throat we forded it, and through glades and wooded uplands reached Arjul, descending and crossing the torrent by the same ford on the march to Dupulan the next day.

Owing to the loss of two baggage animals and the necessary re-adjustment of the loads, I was late in starting from Arjul, and the heat as we descended to the lower levels was very great, the atmosphere being misty as well as sultry. Passing upwards, through glades wooded with oaks, the path emerges on high gravelly uplands above the tremendous gorge of the Karun, the manifold windings of which it follows at a great height. From the first sight of this river in the Ardal valley to
THE KARUN AT DUPULAN. To face p. 351, vol. I.
its emergence at Dupulan, just below these heights, it has come down with abrupt elbow-like turns and singular sinuosities—a full, rapid, powerful glass-green volume of water, through a ravine or gorge or chasm from 1000 to 2000 feet in depth, now narrowing, now widening, but always the feature of the landscape. It would be natural to use the usual phrase, and write of the Karun having "carved" this passage for itself, but I am more and more convinced that this is not the case, but that its waters found their way into channels already riven by some of those mighty operations of nature which have made of this country a region of walls and clefts.

A long, very steep gravelly descent leads from these high lands down to the Karun, and to one of the routes—little used, however—from Isfahan to Shuster. It is reported as being closed by snow four months of the year. The scenery changed its aspect here, and for walls and parapets of splintered rock there are rounded gravelly hills and stretching uplands.

The three groups of most wretched mud hovels which form the village of Dupulan ("Two Bridge Place") are on an eminence on the left bank of the Karun, which emerges from its long imprisonment in a gorge in the mountains by a narrow passage between two lofty walls of rock so smooth and regular in their slope and so perfect a gateway as to suggest art rather than nature. This river, the volume of which is rapidly augmenting on its downward course, is here compressed into a width of about twenty yards.

At this point a stone bridge, built by Hussein Kuli Khan, of one large pointed arch with a smaller one for the flood, and a rough roadway corresponding to the arch in the steepness of its pitch, spans the stream, which passes onwards gently and smoothly, its waters a deep cool green. Below Dupulan the Karun, which in that
direction has been explored by several travellers, turns to
the south-west, and after a considerable bend enters the
levels above Shuster by a north-westerly course. Near
the bridge the Karun is joined by the Sabzu, a very
vigorous torrent from the Ardal plain, which is crossed
by a twig bridge, safer than it looks.

The camps were pitched in apricot orchards in the
Sabzu ravine, near some *elaeagnus* trees, which are now
bearing their sweet gray and yellow blossoms, which will
be succeeded by auburn tresses of a woolly but very
pleasant fruit. Dupulan has an altitude of only 4950
feet, and in its course from the Kuh-i-Rang to this point
the Karun has descended about 4000 feet. Though
there was a breeze, and both ends of my tent and the
*kanats* were open, the mercury was at 86° inside, and at
5 A.M. at 72° outside (on May 21). There were no sup-
plies, and even milk was unattainable.

The road we followed ascends the Dupulan Pass,
which it crosses at a height of 6380 feet. The path is
very bad, hardly to be called a path. The valley which
it ascends is packed with large and small boulders, with
round water-worn stones among them, and such track as
there is makes sharp zigzags over and among these rocks.
*Screw* was very unwilling to face the difficulties, which
took two hours to surmount. The ascent was hampered
by coming upon a tribe of Ilyats on the move, who
at times blocked up the pass with their innumerable
sheep and goats and their herds of cattle. Once en-
tangled in this migration, it was only possible to move
on a few feet at a time. It straggled along for more than
a mile,—loaded cows and bullocks, innumerable sheep,
goats, lambs, and kids; big dogs; asses loaded with black
tents and short tent-poles on the loads; weakly sheep tied
on donkeys’ backs, and weakly lambs carried in shepherds’
bosoms; handsome mares, each with her foal, running
loose or ridden by women with babies seated on the tops of loaded saddle-bags made of gay rugs; tribesmen on foot with long guns slung behind their shoulders, and big two-edged knives in their girdles; sheep bleating, dogs barking, mares neighing, men shouting and occasionally firing off their guns, the whole ravine choked up with the ascending tribal movement.

Half-way up the ascent there is a most striking view of mountain ranges cleft by the great chasm of the Karun. The descent is into the eastern part of the Ardal valley, over arid treeless hillsides partially ploughed, to the village of Dehnau, not yet deserted for the summer. Fattiallah Khan expected us, and rooms were prepared for me in the women's house, which I excused myself from occupying by saying that I cannot sleep under a roof. I managed also to escape partaking of a huge garlicky dinner which was being cooked for me.

The Khan's house or fort, built like all else of mud, has a somewhat imposing gateway, over which are the men's apartments. The roof is decorated with a number of ibex horns. Within is a rude courtyard with an uneven surface, on which servants and negro slaves were skinning sheep, winnowing wheat, clarifying butter, carding wool, cooking, and making cheese. The women's apartments are round the courtyard, and include the usual feature of these houses, an atrium, or room without a front, and a darkish room within. The floor of the atrium was covered with brown felts, and there was a mattress for me to sit upon. The ruling spirit of the haram is the Khan's mother, a comely matron of enormous size, who occasionally slapped her son's four young and comely wives when they were too "forward." She wore a short jacket, balloon-like trousers of violet silk, and a black coronet, to which was attached a black chadar which completely enveloped her.

The wives wore figured white chadars, print trousers,
and strings of coins. Children much afflicted with cutaneous maladies crawled on the floor. Heaps of servants, negro slaves, old hags, and young girls crowded behind and around, all talking at once and at the top of their voices, and at the open front the village people constantly assembled, to be driven away at intervals by a man with a stick. A bowl of cow's milk and some barley bread were given to me, and though a remarkably dirty negress kept the flies away by flapping the milk bowl with a dirty sleeve, I was very grateful for the meal, for I was really suffering from the heat and fatigue.

A visit to a harem is not productive of mutual elevation. The women seem exceedingly frivolous, and are almost exclusively interested in the adornment of their persons, the dress and ailments of their children, and in the frightful jealousies and intrigues inseparable from the system of polygamy, and which are fostered by the servants and discarded wives. The servile deference paid by the other women to the reigning favourite before her face, and the merciless persistency of the attempts made behind her back to oust her from her position, and the requests made on the one hand for charms or potions to win or bring back the love of a husband, and on the other for something which shall make the favourite hateful to him, are evidences of the misery of heart which underlies the outward frivolity.

The tone of Fattiallah Khan's harem was not higher than usual. The ladies took off my hat, untwisted my hair, felt my hands, and shrieked when they found that my gloves came off; laughed immoderately at my Bakhitiari shoes, which, it seems, are only worn by men; put their rings on my fingers, put my hat on their own heads, asked if I could give them better hair dyes than their own, and cosmetics to make their skins fair; paid
the usual compliments, told me to regard everything as *pishkash*, asked for medicines and charms, and regretted that I would not sleep in their house, because, as they said, they "never went anywhere or saw anything."

They have no occupation, except occasionally a little embroidery. They amuse themselves, they said, by watching the servants at work, and by having girls to dance before them. They find the winter, though spent in a warm climate, very long and wearisome, and after dark employ female professional story-tellers to entertain them with love stories. At night the elder lady sent three times for a charm which should give her daughter the love of her husband. She is married to another Khan, and I recalled her as the forlorn-looking girl without any jewels who excited my sympathies in his house.

Marriages are early among these people. They are arranged by the parents of both bride and bridegroom. The betrothal feast is a great formality. The "settlements" having been made by the bridegroom's father and mother, they distribute sweetmeats among the members of the bride's family, and some respectable men who are present tie a handkerchief round the head of the bride, and kiss the hands of her parents as a sign of the betrothal. The engagement must be fulfilled by the bride's parents under pain of severe penalties, from which the bridegroom's parents are usually exempt. But, should he prove faithless, he is a marked man. It appears that "breach of promise of marriage" is very rare. The betrothal may take place at the tenderest age, but the marriage is usually delayed till the bride is twelve years old, or even older, and the bridegroom is from fifteen to eighteen.

The "settlements" made at the betrothal are paid at the time of marriage, and consist of a sum of money or
cattle, mares, or sheep, according to the circumstances of the bridegroom's parents. It is essential among all classes that a number of costumes be presented to the bride. After the marriage is over her parents bestow a suit of clothes on her husband, but these are usually of an inferior, or, as my interpreter calls them, of a "trivial" description.

A Bakhtiari marriage is a very noisy performance. For three days or more, in fact as long as the festivities can be afforded, the relations and friends of both parties are assembled at the tents of the bride's parents, feasting and dancing (men and women on this occasion dancing together), performing feats of horsemanship, and shooting at a mark. The noise at this time is ceaseless. Drums, tom-toms, reeds, whistles, and a sort of bagpipe are all in requisition, and songs of love and war are chanted. At this time also is danced the national dance, the chapi, of which on no other occasion (except a burial) can a stranger procure a sight for love or money. It is said to resemble the arnaoutika of the modern Greeks; any number of men can join in it. The dancers form in a close row, holding each other by their kamarbands, and swinging along sidewise. They mark the time by alternately stamping the heel of the right and left foot. The dancers are led by a man who dances apart, waving a handkerchief rhythmically above his head, and either singing a war song or playing on a reed pipe. After the marriage feast the bride follows her husband to his father's tent, where she becomes subject to her mother-in-law.

The messenger, after looking round to see that there were no bystanders, very mysteriously produced from his girdle a black, flattish oval stone of very close texture, weighing about a pound, almost polished by long handling. He told me that it was believed that this stone, if
kept in one family for fifty years and steadily worn by father and son, would then not only turn to gold, but have the power of transmuting any metal laid beside it for five years, and he wanted to know what the wisdom of the Feringhis knew about it.

I went up to my camp above the village and tried to rest there, but the buzz of a crowd outside and the ceaseless lifting of curtains and kanats made this quite impossible. When I opened the tent I found the crowd seated in a semicircle five rows deep, waiting for medicines, chiefly eye-lotion, quinine, and cough mixtures. These daily assemblages of "patients" are most fatiguing. The satisfaction is that some "lame dogs" are "helped over stiles," and that some prejudice against Christians is removed.

After this Fattiallah Khan, with a number of retainers, paid a formal visit to the Agha, who kindly sent for me, as I do not receive any but lady visitors in my tent. The Khan is a very good-looking and well-dressed man of twenty-eight, very amusing, and ready to be amused. He was very anxious to be doctored, but looked the opposite of a sick man. He and Isfandyar Khan were in arms against the Ilkhani two years ago, and a few men were shot. He looked as if he were very sorry not to have killed him.

The Bakhtiariis have an enormous conceit of themselves and their country. It comes out in all ways and on all occasions, and their war stories and songs abound in legends of singular prowess, one Bakhtiari killing twenty Persians, and the like. They represent the power of the Shah over them as merely nominal, a convenient fiction for the time being, although it is apparent that Persia, which for years has been aiming at the extinction of the authority of the principal chiefs, has had at least a partial success.
At such interviews a private conversation is impossible. The manners are those of a feudal régime. Heaps of retainers crowd round, and even join in the conversation. A servant brought the Khan a handsome kalian to smoke three times. He also took tea. A great quantity of opium for exportation is grown about Dehnau, and the Khan said that the cultivation of it is always increasing.

From Dehnau the path I took leads over gravelly treeless hills, through many treeless gulches, to the top of a great gorge, through which the Sabzu passes as an impetuous torrent. The descent to a very primitive bridge is long and difficult, a succession of rocky zigzags. Picturesqueness is not a usual attribute of mud villages, but the view from every point of Chiraz, the village on the lofty cliffs on the other side of the stream, is strikingly so. They are irregularly covered with houses, partly built on them and partly excavated out of them, and behind is a cool mass of greenery, apricot orchards, magnificent walnut and mulberry trees, great standard hawthorns loaded with masses of blossom, wheat coming into ear, and clumps and banks of canary-yellow roses measuring three inches across their petals. Groups of women, in whose attire Turkey red predominated, were on the house roofs. Wild flowers abounded, and the sides of the craggy path by which I descended were crowded with leguminous and umbelliferous plants, with the white and pink dianthus, and with the thorny tussocks of the gum tragacanth, largely used for kindling, now in full bloom.

As I dragged my unwilling horse down the steep descent, his bridle was taken out of my hands, and I was welcomed by the brother of Fattiallah Khan, who, with a number of village men escorted me over the twig bridge, and up to an exquisite halting-place under a large mulberry tree, where the next two hours were spent in
receiving visitors. It is evident that these fine orchards must have been the pleasure-ground of some powerful ruler, and the immense yellow roses are such as grow in one or two places in Kashmir, where they are attributed to Jehangir.

The track from Chiraz for many miles follows up the right bank of the Sabzū at a great height, descends occasionally into deep gulches, crosses the spurs of mountains whose rifts give root-hold to contorted "pencil cedars," and winds among small ash trees and hawthorns, or among rich grass and young wheat, which is grown to a considerable extent on the irrigated slopes above the river. It is a great surprise to find so much land under cultivation, and so much labour spent on irrigation channels. Some of these canals are several miles in length, and the water always runs in them swiftly, and the right way, although the "savages" who make them have no levels or any tools but spades.

Mountains, much scored and canioned by streams, very grand in form, and with much snow still upon them, rise to a great height above the ranges which form the Sabzū valley. From Chaharta, an uninteresting camping-ground by the river, I proceeded by an elevated and rather illegible track in a easterly direction to the meeting of two streams, forded the Sabzū, and camped for two days on the green slope of Sabz Kuh, at a height of 8100 feet, close to a vigorous spring whose waters form many streamlets, fringed by an abundance of pink primulas, purple and white orchises, white tulips, and small fragrant blue irises.

Lahdaraz is in the very heart of mountain ranges, and as the Ilyats have not yet come up so high, there were no crowds round my tent for medicine, but one sick woman was carried thither eleven miles on the back of her husband, who seemed tenderly solicitous about her.
On Monday I spent most of the day 1000 feet higher, in most magnificent scenery on an imposing scale of grandeur. The guide took us from the camp through herbage, snow, and alpine flowers, up a valley with fine mountains on either side, terminating on the brink of a gigantic precipice, a cloven ledge between the Kuh-i-Kaller and a stupendous cliff or headland, Sultan Ibrahim, over 12,000 feet, which descends in shelving masses to an abyss of tremendous depth, where water thunders in a narrow rift. The Sabz Kuh, or "green mountain" range, famous for the pasturage of its higher slopes, terminates in Sultan Ibrahim, and unites at its eastern end with the Kuh-i-Kaller, a range somewhat higher. On the east side of this huge chasm rises another range of peaks, with green shelves, dark rifts, and red precipices, behind which rise another, and yet another, whose blue, snow-patched summits blended with the pure cool blue of the sky. In the far distance, in a blue veil, lies the green-tinted plain of Khana Mirza, set as an emerald in this savage scenery, with two ranges beyond, and above them the great mountain mass of the Riji, whose snowy peaks were painted faintly on a faint blue heaven.

That misty valley, irrigated and cultivated, with 100 villages of the Janiki tribe upon it, is the only fair spot in the savage landscape. Elsewhere only a few wild flowers and a gnarled juniper here and there relieve the fierce, blazing verdurelessness of these stupendous precipices. Never, not even among the Himalayas, have I seen anything so superlatively grand, though I have always imagined that such scenes must exist somewhere on the earth. A pair of wild sheep on a ledge, a serpent or two, and an eagle soaring sunwards represented animate nature, otherwise the tremendous heights above, the awful depths below, the snowy mountains, and the valley
with its smile, were given over to solitude and silence, except for the dull roar of the torrent hurrying down to vivify the Khana Mirza plain.

After leaving Lahdaraz the path followed the course of the Sabzu through grass and barley for a few miles. Then there is an abrupt and disagreeable change to yellow mud slopes and high mud mountains deeply fissured, the scanty herbage already eaten down by Ilyat flocks—a desolate land, without springs, streams, or even Ilyat tents. Then comes a precipice at an altitude of 7500 feet, through a cleft in which, the Tang-i-Wastagun, the road passes, and descends to the plain of Gandaman as something little better than a sheep track on a steep hillside above a stream. The heat was fierce. A pair of stout gardening gloves does not preserve the hands from blistering. Spectacles with wire gauze sides have to be abandoned as they threaten to roast the eyes. In this latitude, 32°, the heat of the sun at noon is tremendous. At the precipice top I crept into a hole at the base of a rock, for "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," till the caravan staggered up. It was difficult to brave the sun's direct rays. He looked like a ball of magnesium light, white and scintillating, in the unclouded sky.

On crossing the Tang-i-Wastagun we left behind the Bakhtiari country proper for a time, and re-entered the Chahar Mahals, with their mixed village population of Persians and Armenians. The descent from the Tang-i-Wastagun is upon a ruined Armenian village with a large graveyard. The tombstones are of great size, ten feet long by three feet broad and three feet high, sarcophagus-shaped, and on each stone are an Armenian epitaph and a finely-engraved cross. The plain of Gandaman or Wastagun is a very large one, over 7000 feet in altitude, and is surrounded mainly by high mountains still snow-patched, but to the north by low rocky hills. Much of it is
irrigated and under cultivation, and grows heavy crops of wheat and barley. The pasturage is fine and abundant, and the people breed cattle and horses. The uncultivated slopes are now covered with red tulips and a purple allium, and even the dry gravel added largely to the daily increasing botanical collection.

The camps were pitched on green turf near three springs, a quiet place, but there was little rest. We were hardly settled before there was a severe fight among the horses, my sour-tempered Screw being the aggressor. This was hardly quieted when there was a sharp “scrimmage” between the charvadars and the Agha’s three young savages, in which one of them, Ali Jan, was badly beaten, and came to me to have a bleeding face and head dressed. After that the people began to come in from the villages for eye-washes and medicines. They have no bottles, nor have I, and the better-off bring great copper jugs and basins for an ounce or two of lotion! A very poor old
woman much afflicted with ophthalmia said she had three sisters all blind, that she had nothing for lotion, nothing in the world but a copper cooking pot, and she cried piteously. I had nothing to give her, and eventually she returned with an egg-shell, with the top neatly chipped off. It is the custom to raise the hands to heaven and invoke blessings on the Hakīm's head, but I never received so many as from this poor creature.

The ride to the village of Gandaman, where we halted for two days, was an agreeable one. After being shut up among mountains and precipices, space and level ground to gallop over are an agreeable change, and in the early morning the heat was not excessive. The great plain was a truly pastoral scene. Wild-looking shepherds with long guns led great brown flocks to the hills; innumerable yokes of black oxen, ploughing with the usual iron-shod, pointed wooden share, turned over the rich black soil, making straight furrows, and crossing them diagonally; mares in herds fed with their foals; and shepherds busily separated the sheep from the goats.

Close to the filthy walled Armenian village of Kunak there is a conical hill with a large fort, in ruinous condition, upon it, and not far off are the remains of an Armenian village, enclosed by a square wall with a round tower at each corner. This must have been until recently a place of some local importance, as it is approached by a paved causeway, and had an aqueduct, now ruinous, carried over the river on three arches. Not only the plain but the hill-slopes up to a great height are cultivated, and though the latter have the precariousness of rain-lands, the crops already in ear promise well.

Crossing a spur which descends upon the north side of the plain, we reached Gandaman, a good-looking walled Moslem village of 196 houses, much planted,
chiefly with willows, and rejoicing in eight springs, close together, the overflow of which makes quite a piece of water. It has an imamzada on an eminence and is fairly prosperous, for besides pastoral wealth it weaves and exports carpets, and dyes cotton and woollen yarn with madder and other vegetable dyes. The mountain view to the south-west is very fine.

I was in my tent early, but there was little rest, for crowds of people with bad eyes and woful maladies besieged it until the evening. At noon a gay procession crossed the green camping-ground, four mares caparisoned in red trappings, each carrying two women in bright dresses, but shrouded in pure white sheets bound round their heads with silver chains. The ketchuda of the Armenian village of Libasgun, two miles off, accompanied them, and said that they came to invite me to their village, for they are Christians. Then they all made the sign of the Cross, which is welcome in this land as a bond of brotherhood.

Cleanly, comely, large-eyed, bright-cheeked, and wholesome they looked, in their pure white chadars, gay red dresses, and embroidered under-vests. They had massive silver girdles, weighing several pounds, worn there only by married women, red coronets, heavy tiaras of silver, huge necklaces of coins, and large filigree silver drops attached down the edges of their too open vests. Their heavy hair was plaited, but not fastened up. Each wore a stiff diamond-shaped piece of white cotton over her mouth and the tip of her nose. They said it was their custom to wear it, and they would not remove it even to eat English biscuits! They managed to drink tea by veiling their faces with their chadars and passing the cup underneath, but they turned their faces quite away as they did it. They had come for the day, and had brought large hanks of wool to wind, but the headman
had the tact to take them away after arranging for me to return the visit in the evening.

He seemed an intelligent man. Libasgun, with its 120 houses, is, according to his account, a prosperous village, paying its tax of 300 tumans (£100) a year to the Amin-ud-Daulat, and making a present only to the Ilkhani. It has 2000 sheep and goats, besides mares and cattle. It has an oil mill, and exports oil to Isfahan. The women weave carpets, and embroider beautifully on coarse cotton woven by themselves, and dyed indigo blue and madder red by their Gandaman neighbours. This man is proud of being a Christian. Among the Armenians Christianity is as much a national characteristic as pride of race and strict monogamy. He remarked that there are no sore eyes in Libasgun, and attributed it to the greater cleanliness of the people and to the cross signed in holy oil upon their brows in baptism!

I rode to this village in the late afternoon, and was received with much distinction in the balakhana of the ketchuda's house, where I was handed to the seat of honour, a bolster at the head of the handsomely-carpeted room. It soon filled with buxom women in red, with jackets displaying their figures, or want of figures, down to their waists. From the red velvet coronets on their heads hung two graduated rows of silver coins, and their muslin chadars were attached to their hair with large silver pins and chains. Magnificent necklaces of gold coins were also worn.

Forty women sat on the floor in rows against the wall. Each had rosy cheeks, big black eyes, and a diamond-shaped white cloth over her mouth. The uniformity was shocking. They stared, not at me, but at nothing. They looked listless and soulless, only fit to be what they are—the servants of their husbands. When they had asked me my age, and why I do not dye
my hair, the conversation flagged, for I could not get any information from them even on the simplest topics. Hotter and hotter grew the room, more stolid the vacancy of the eyes, more grotesque the rows of white diamonds over the mouths, when the happy thought occurred to me to ask to see the embroidered aprons, which every girl receives from her mother on her marriage. Two mountains of flesh obligingly rolled out of the room, and rolled in again bringing some beautiful specimens of needlework. This is really what is known as "Russian embroidery," cross stitch in artistic colours on coarse red or blue cotton. The stomachers are most beautifully
worked. The aprons cover the whole of the front and the sides of the dress. The mothers begin to embroider them when their daughters are ten. The diamond-shaped cloth is put on by girls at eight or nine. The women would not remove it for a moment even to oblige a guest. The perpetual wearing of it is one of their religious customs, only prevailing, however, in some localities. They say that when our Lord was born His mother in token of reverence took a cloth and covered her mouth, hence their habit.

When the ketchuda arrived he found the heat of the room unbearable and proposed an adjournment to the lower roof, which was speedily swept, watered, and carpeted.

An elaborate banquet had been prepared in the hope that the Agha would pay them a visit, and they were much mortified at his non-appearance. The great copper basins containing the food were heaped together in the middle of the carpets, and the guests, fifty in number, sat down, the men on one side, and the women on the other, the wives of the ketchuda and his brothers serving. There were several samovars with tea, but only three cups. A long bolster was the place of honour, and I occupied it alone till the village priests arrived,—reverend men with long beards, high black head-dresses, and full black cassocks with flowing sleeves. All the guests rose, and remained standing till they had been ceremoniously conducted to seats. I found them very agreeable and cultured men, acquainted with the varying “streams of tendency” in the Church of England, and very anxious to claim our Church as a sister of their own. This banquet was rather a gay scene, and on a higher roof fully one hundred women and children dressed in bright red stood watching the proceedings below.

I proposed to see the church, and with the priests,
most of the guests, and a considerable following of the onlookers, walked to it through filthy alleys. This ancient building, in a dirty and malodorous yard, differs externally from the mud houses which surround it only in having two bells on a beam. The interior consists of four domed vaults, and requires artificial light. A vault with a raised floor contains the altar and a badly-painted altar-piece representing the B. V.; a rail separates the men, who stand in front, from the women, who stand behind. A Liturgy and an illuminated medieval copy of the Gospels, of which they are very proud, are their only treasures. They have no needlework, and the altar cloth is only a piece of printed cotton. Nothing could well look poorer than this small, dark, vacant building, with a few tallow candles without candlesticks giving a smoky light.

They have two daily services lasting from one to two hours each, and Mass on Sunday is protracted to seven hours! The priests said that all the men, except two who watch the flocks, and nearly all the women are at both services on Sunday, and that many of the men and most of the women are at both daily services, one of which, as is usual, begins before daylight. There is no school. The fathers teach their boys to read and write, and the mothers instruct their girls in needlework.

After visits to the priests’ houses, a number of villagers on horseback escorted me back to Gandaman. The heat of those two days was very great for May, the mercury marking 83° in the shade at 10 A.M. One hundred and thirteen people came for medicines, and in their eagerness they swarmed round both ends of the tent, blocking out all air. The ailments were much more varied and serious than among the Bakhtiaris.

The last march was a hot and tedious one of eighteen miles, along an uninteresting open valley, much ploughed,
bounded by sloping herbage-covered hills, surmounted by parapets of perpendicular rock. After passing the large Moslem village of Baldiji, we re-entered the Bakhtiari country, ascended to the Bakhtiari village of Dastgird, descended to the plain of Chigakhor, skirted its southern margin, and on its western side, on two spurs of the great Kuh-i-Kaller range, with a ravine between them, the camps were pitched. In two days most of the tents were blown down, and were moved into two ravines with a hill between them, on which the Sahib on his arrival pitched his camp.

My ravine has a spring, with exactly space for my tent beside it, and a platform higher up with just room enough for the servants. A strong stream, rudely brawling, issuing from the spring, disturbs sleep. There is no possibility of changing one’s position by even a six-feet stroll, so rough and steep is the ground. Mirza bringing my meals from the cooking tent has a stick to steady himself. At first there was nothing to see but scorched mountains opposite, and the green plain on which the ravine opens, but the Hakim’s tent was soon discovered, and I have had 278 “patients”! Before I am up in the morning they are sitting in rows one behind another on the steep ground, their horses and asses grazing near them, and all day they come. One of the chiefs of the Janiki tribe came with several saddle and baggage horses and even a tent, to ask me to go with him to the great plain of Khana Mirza, three days’ march from here, to cure his wife’s eyes, and was grieved to the heart when I told him they were beyond my skill. He stayed while a great number of sick people got eye-lotions and medicines, and then asked me why I gave these medicines and took so much trouble. I replied that our Master and Lord not only commanded us to do good to all men as we have opportunity, but
Himself healed the sick. "You call Him Master and Lord," he said; "He was a great Prophet. Send a Hakim to us in His likeness."

I have heard so much of Chigakhor that I am disappointed with the reality. There are no trees, most of the snow has melted, the mountains are not very bold in their features, the plain has a sort of lowland look about it, and though its altitude is 7500 feet, the days and even nights are very hot. The interest of it lies in it being the summer resort of the Ilkhani and Ilbegi, a fact which makes it the great centre of Bakhtiar life. As many as 400 tents are pitched here in the height of the season, and the coming and going of Khans and headmen with tribute and on other business is ceaseless.

The plain, which is about seven miles long by three broad, is quite level. Near the south-east end is a shallow reedy mere, fringed by a fertile swampiness, which produces extraordinary crops of grass far out into the middle of the level.

Near the same end is a rocky eminence or island, on which is the fortress castle of the Ilkhani. The "season" begins in early June, when the tribes come up from the warm pastures of Dizful and Shuster, to which they return with their pastoral wealth in the autumn, after which the plain is flooded and frozen for the winter. At the north end are the villages of Dastgird and Aurugun, and a great deal of irrigated land producing wheat. Except at that end the plain is surrounded by mountains; on its southern side, where a part of the Sukhta range rises into the lofty peak of Challeh Kuh, with its snow-slashes and snow-fields, they attain an altitude of 12,000 or 13,000 feet.

It is not easy, perhaps not possible, to pass through the part of the Bakhtiar country for which we are bound,
without some sort of assistance from its feudal lords, a responsible man, for instance, who can obtain supplies from the people. Therefore we have been detained here for many days waiting for the expected arrival of the Ilkhani. A few days ago a rumour arrived, since unhappily confirmed, that things were in confusion below, owing to the discovery of a plot on the part of the Ilkhani to murder the Ilbegi. Stories are current of the number of persons "put out of the way" before he attained his present rank for the second time, and it is not "Bakhtiari custom" to be over-scrupulous about human life. No doubt his nephew, the Ilbegi, is a very dangerous rival, and that his retainers are bent on seeing him in a yet higher position than he now occupies.

A truce has been patched up, however, and yesterday the Ilkhani and Isfandyar Khan arrived together, with their great trains of armed horsemen, their *harams*, their splendid studs, their crowds of unmounted retainers, their strings of baggage mules and asses laden with firewood, and all the "rag, tag, and bobtail" in attendance on Oriental rulers. Following them in endless nocturnal procession come up the tribes, and day breaks on an ever-increasing number of brown flocks and herds, of mares, asses, dogs, black tents, and household goods. When we arrived there were only three tents, now the green bases of the mountains and all the platforms and ravines where there are springs are spotted with them, in rows or semi-circles, and at night the camp fires of the multitude look like the lights of a city. Each clan has a prescriptive right to its camping-ground and pasture (though both are a fruitful source of quarrels), and arrives with its *ketchuda* and complete social organisation, taking up its position like a division of an army.

When in the early morning or afternoon the tribe reaches the camping-ground, everything is done in the
most orderly way. The infants are put into their cradles, the men clear the ground if necessary, drive the pegs and put up the poles, and if there be wood—of which there is not a stick here—they make a fence of loose branches to contain the camp, but the women do the really hard work. Their lords, easily satisfied with their modicum of labour, soon retire to enjoy their pipes and the endless gossip of Bakhtiari life.

After the ground has been arranged the tents occupy invariably the same relative position, whether the camp is in a row, a semicircle, a circle, or streets, so that the cattle and flocks may easily find their owners' abodes without being driven. The tents, which are of black goats' hair cloth, are laid out and beaten, and the women spread them over the poles and arrange the rest, after which the inside is brushed to remove the soot. In a good tent, reed screens are put up to divide the space into two or more
portions, and some of the tribes fence round the whole camp with these screens, leaving one opening, and use the interior for a sheepfold. The small bushes are grubbed up for fuel. The women also draw the water, and the boys attend to the flocks. Many of the camps, however, have neither fences nor environing screens, and their inmates dwell without any attempt at privacy, and rely for the safety of their flocks on big and trustworthy dogs, of which every camp has a number.

When they move the bulk of the labour again falls on the women. They first make the baggage into neat small packages suited for the backs of oxen; then they take up the tent pegs, throw down the tents, and roll them up in the reed screens, all that the men undertake being to help in loading the oxen. It is only when a division halts for at least some days that this process is gone through. In fine weather, if a tribe is marching daily to its summer or winter camping-grounds, the families frequently sleep in the open.

The chief's tent is always recognisable by its size, and is occasionally white. I have seen a tent of a wealthy Khan fully sixty feet long. A row of poles not more than ten feet high supported the roof, which was of brown haircloth, the widths united by a coarse open stitch. On the windward side the roof was pinned down nearly to the top of a loosely-laid wall of stones about three feet high. The leeward side was quite open, and the roof, which could be lowered if necessary, was elevated and extended by poles six feet high. If the tent was sixty feet long, it was made by this arrangement twenty feet broad. At the lower end was a great fire-hole in the earth, and the floor of the upper end was covered with rugs, quilts, and pillows, the household stuff being arranged chiefly on and against the rude stone wall.

The process of encamping for a camp of seventy tents
takes about two hours, and many interruptions occur, especially the clamorous demands of unweaned infants of mature years. De-camping the same number of tents takes about an hour. A free, wild life these nomads lead, full of frays and plots, but probably happier than the average lot.

Below the castle is the great encampment of the chiefs, brown tents and white bell tents, among which the tall white pavilion of the Ilkani towers conspicuously. The Ilkhani and Ilbegi called on me, and as they sat outside my tent it was odd to look back two years to the time when they were fighting each other, and barely two weeks to the discovery of the plot of the dark-browed Ilkhani to murder his nephew. The Ilkhani's face had a very uncomfortable expression. Intrigues against him at Tehran and nearer home, the rumoured enmity of the Prime Minister, the turbulence of some of the tribes, the growing power of the adherents of Isfand- yar Khan, and his own baffled plot to destroy him must make things unpleasant. Several of the small Khans who have been to see me expect fighting here before the end of the summer. The Ilkhani had previously availed himself of the resources of my medicine chest, and with so much benefit that I was obliged to grant a request which deprived me of a whole bottle of "tabloids."

In the evening I visited the ladies who are in the castle leading the usual dull life of the haram, high above the bustle which centres round the Ilkhani's pavilion, with its crowds of tribesmen, mares and foals feeding, tethered saddle horses neighing, cows being milked, horsemen galloping here and there, firing at a mark, asses bearing wood and flour from Ardal being unloaded—a bustle masculine solely.

Isfandyar Khan, with whose look of capacity I am more and more impressed, and Lutf received us and led
us to the great pavilion, which is decorated very handsomely throughout with red and blue *appliqué* arabesques, and much resembles an Indian *durbar* tent. A brown felt carpet occupied the centre. The Ilkhani, who rose and shook hands, sat on one side and the Ilbegi on the other, and sons, Khans, and attendants to the number of 200, I daresay, stood around. We made some fine speeches, rendered finer, doubtless, by Mirza; repeated an offer to send a doctor to itinerate in the country for some months in 1891, took the inevitable tea, and while the escorts were being arranged for I went to the fort.

It is the fortress of the Haft Lang, one great division of the Bakhtiar Lurs, which supplies the ruling dynasty. The building is a parallelogram, flanked by four round towers, with large casemates and a keep on its southern side. It has two courtyards, surrounded by stables and barracks, but there is no water within the gates, and earthquakes and neglect have reduced much of it to a semi-ruinous condition. Over the gateway and along the front is a handsome suite of well-arranged balconied rooms, richly decorated in Persian style, the front and doors of the large reception-room being of fretwork filled in with amber and pale blue glass, and the roof and walls are covered with small mirrors set so as to resemble facets, with medallion pictures of beauties and of the chase let in at intervals. The effect of the mirrors is striking, and even beautiful. There were very handsome rugs on the floor, and divans covered with Kashan velvet; but rugs, divans, and squabs were heaped to the depth of some inches with rose petals which were being prepared for rose-water, and the principal wife rose out of a perfect bed of them.

These ladies have no conversation, and relapse into apathy after asking a few personal questions. Again
are properly elective, the office of Khan or chief is strictly hereditary, though it does not necessarily fall to the eldest son. This element of permanence gives the Khan almost supreme authority in his tribe, and when the Ilkhani is a weak man and a Khan is a strong one, he is practically independent, except in the matter of the tribute to the Shah.

It was in curbing the power of these Khans by steering a shrewd and even course among their feuds and conflicts, by justice and consideration in the collection of the revenues, and by rendering it a matter of self-interest for them to seek his protection and acknowledge his headship, that Sir A. H. Layard's friend, Mohammed Taki Khan, succeeded in reducing these wild tribes to something like order, and Hussein Kuli Khan, "the last real ruler of the Bakhtiaris," pursued the same methods with nearly equal success.

But things have changed, and a fresh era of broils and rivalries has set in, and in addition to tribal feuds and jealousies, the universally-erected line of partisanship between the adherents of the Ilkhani and Ilbegi produces anything but a pacific prospect. These broils, and the prospects of fighting, are the subjects discussed at my tent door in the evenings.

The Dastgird encampment that evening was the romance of camp life. On the velvety green grass there were four high black canopies, open at the front and sides, looking across the green flowery plain, on which the Ilkhani's castle stood out, a violet mass against the sunset gold, between the snow-streaked mountains. There were handsome carpets, mattresses, and bolsters; samovars steaming on big brass trays, an abundance of curds, milk, and whey, and at one end of the largest tent there were two very fine mares, untethered, with young foals, and children rolling about among their feet. I was placed,
as usual, on a bolster, and the tent filled with people, all shouting, and clamouring together, bringing rheumatism ("wind in the bones"), sore eyes, headaches ("wind in the head"), and old age to be cured. The Khan's wife, a handsome, pathetic-looking girl, had become an epileptic a fortnight ago. This malady is sadly common. Of the 278 people who have come for medicines here thirteen per cent have had epileptic fits. They call them "fainting," and have no horror of them. Eye diseases, including such severe forms as cataract and glaucoma, rheumatism, headaches, and dyspepsia are their most severe ailments. No people have been seen with chest complaints, bone diseases, or cancer.

In the largest tent there was a young mother with an infant less than twenty-four hours old, and already its eyebrows, or at all events the place where eyebrows will be, were deeply stained and curved. At seven or eight years old girls are tattooed on hands, arms, neck, and chest, and the face is decorated with stars on the forehead and chin.

Though children of both sexes are dearly loved among these people, it is only at the birth of a son that there is anything like festivity, and most of the people are too poor to do more even then than distribute sweetmeats among their friends and relations. The "wealthier" families celebrate the birth of a firstborn son with music, feasting, and dancing.

At the age of five or six days the child is named, by whispering the Divine name in its ear, along with that chosen by the parents.

After a long visit the people all kissed my hand, raising it to their foreheads afterwards, and the Khan made a mounting block of his back, and rode with me to the main path. It was all savage, but the intention was throughout courteous, according to their notions. It
became pitch dark, and I lost my way, and should have pulled Screw over a precipice but for his sagacious self-will. One of the finest sights I have seen was my own camp in a thunderstorm, with its white tents revealed by a flash of lightning, which lighted for a second the black darkness of the ravine.

The next morning the Khan of Dastgird’s servants brought fifteen bottles and pipkins for eye-lotions and medicines. In spite of the directions in Persian which Mirza put upon the bottles, I doubt not that some of the eye-lotions will be swallowed, and that some of the medicines will be put into the eyes!

June 8. — The last evening has come after a busy day. The difficulties in the way of getting ready for the start to-morrow have been great. The iron socket of my tent-pole broke, there was no smith in the valley, and when one arrived with the Ilkhani, the Ilkhani’s direct order had to be obtained before he would finish the work he had undertaken. I supplied the iron, but then there was no charcoal. I have been tentless for the whole day. Provisions for forty days have to be taken from Chigakhhor, and two cwt. of rice and flour have been promised over and over again, but have only partially arrived to-night. Hassan has bought a horse and a cow, and they have both strayed, and he has gone in search of them, and Mirza in search of him, and both have been away for hours.

Of the escorts promised by the Ilkhani not one man has arrived, though it was considered that the letter to him given me by the Amin-es-Sultan would have obviated any difficulty on this score. An armed sentry was to have slept in front of my tent, and a tufangchi was to have been my constant attendant, and I have nobody. Of the escort promised to the Agha not one man has appeared. In this case we are left to do what General
Schindler and others in Tihran and Isfahan declared to be impossible, viz. to get through the country without an escort and without the moral support of a retainer high in the Ilkhani’s service. Whether there have been crooked dealings; or whether the Ilkhani, in spite of his promises, regards the presence of travellers in his country with disfavour; or whether, apprehending a collision, both the Ilkhani and Ilbegi are unwilling to part with any of their horsemen, it is impossible to decide.

I. L. B.

END OF VOL. I