Persia

THE MODERN WORLD

A SURVEY OF HISTORICAL FORCES

Edited by Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, F.R.S.

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PERSIA

SIR ARNOLD T. WILSON

London
Ernest Benn Limited
1932

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

ERRATA

p. 95—

Period	Year	Amount
Twelve months ended 31st March	1913	
" "	1914	
" "	1915	
" "	1916	£1,326,000
" "	1917	
" "	1918	
" "	1919	
" "	1920	469,000
" "	1921	585,000
" "	1922	593,000
" "	1923	533,000
" "	1924	411,000
" "	1925	831,000
" "	1926	1,054,000
" "	1927	1,400,000
" "	1928	502,000
Nine months ended 31st December	1928	529,000
Year " "	1929	1,437,000
" " "	1930	1,288,000
		£10,958,000

p. 129—for Muzaffar ud Din read Nasr ud Din

p. 159—for Ithn Ja'fariya read Ja'fariya

p. 181 }
p. 350 } for Ja'fariya read 'Ashariya

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

It was a favourite maxim of Sir J. R. Seeley that historical studies should be scientific in method but practical in aim, that they should be directed less to gratify the reader's curiosity than to modify his view of the present, and his forecast of the future. The primary aim of this volume is to throw some light not on the history of Persia, nor on the characteristics of the country as it was twenty or even ten years ago, but as it is to-day. It is intended not for specialists, and there are many such, who find in the study of things Persian a source of abiding interest, and of inspiration in the intellectual pastures of their choice, but rather for the general reader who wishes to form his own judgement as to the present position of the Persian nation, the course that it is likely to pursue in the future, and the nature of its contributions to the common stock of human values. No attempt is made to deal critically with ephemeral situations, nor to portray the features of the leading figures on the political stage. Nor is any detailed description of the picturesque side of Persian life and travel, of attractive but vanishing customs, and outworn observances, within the scope of this series. On these, and cognate aspects of the Persian scene, there is no lack of literature in the principal languages of Europe, from the pen of sympathetic observers, whilst in the more formal histories, and in the massive scholarship embodied in the *Encyclopædia of Islam*

Whether I am likely to accomplish anything worthy of the labour, if I record the achievements of the Roman people from the foundation of the city, I do not really know, nor if I knew would I dare to avouch it; perceiving as I do that the theme is not only old but hackneyed, through the constant succession of new historians, who believe either that in their facts they can produce more authentic information, or that in their style they will prove better than the rude attempts of the ancients. Yet, however this shall be, it will be a satisfaction to have done myself as much as lies in me to commemorate the deeds of the foremost people of the world; and if in so vast a company of writers my own reputation should be obscure, my consolation would be the fame and greatness of those whose renown will throw mine into the shade. Moreover, my subject involves infinite labour, seeing that it must be traced back above seven hundred years, and that proceeding from slender beginnings it has so increased as now to be burdened by its own magnitude; and at the same time I doubt not that to most readers the earliest origins and the period immediately succeeding them will give little pleasure, for they will be in haste to reach these modern times, in which the might of a people which has long been very powerful is working its own undoing. I myself, on the contrary, shall seek in this an additional reward for my toil, that I may avert my gaze from the troubles which our age has been witnessing for so many years, so long at least as I am absorbed in the recollection of the brave days of old, free from every care which, even if it could not divert the historian's mind from the truth, might nevertheless cause it anxiety.

Livy, Book I, Preface
Translated by B. O. Foster.

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PERSIA

CHAPTER I

DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY

BETWEEN the valleys of the Tigris and the Indus lies a great plateau running, without a break, from the mountains of Asia Minor to the Himalayas, and from the Caucasus and Elburz Ranges southwards to the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. This plateau, covering over one million square miles, is a very ancient land surface, older by far than the alluvial plains of Hindustan and of 'Iraq, which were probably populated in far-off times by immigrants from the highlands. In the days of Darius it was under a single government; to-day not much more than half the plateau constitutes, together with the lowlands to the north and south, the kingdom of Persia, a compact area of 628,000 square miles, nearly three times as large as France.

More than half the plateau is desert land over which the sun has held unchallenged dominion since man became a social animal. Of the remainder nearly one half consists of almost treeless and uncultivable mountain ranges, where nomad flocks find ample pasture during the summer months, but cannot exist in winter. The northern face of the Elburz range is indeed clad in impenetrable forest,

reaching to the very shores of the Caspian. Here and there on the southern slopes of the Zagros range great forests of dwarf oak are to be found, but for the most part the villagers have to rely on irrigation channels and springs fed by the melting snows to bring their crops to maturity. The kindly clouds weep over them all too rarely; more often do thunderstorms and cruel hail assault the steep mountain slopes, bringing disaster to dwellers in the plains, who fall ready victims to sudden floods.

The rainfall on the Caspian shore averages over 50 inches a year: in Northern Persia from Tabriz to Meshed it may be as much as 30 inches, at Isfahan 5 inches, in Seistan less than 2 inches, at Bushire 10 inches, but further east, at Jask, on the Gulf of Oman, over 5 inches. All this falls between October and May, and most of it between December and March; it varies greatly from year to year, and from valley to valley. Heavy snowfalls are a common occurrence in winter over the whole plateau, and country over 6,000 feet is not uncommonly under snow for months at a time, rendering the roads impassable unless kept open by gangs of workmen. More than half the plateau drains not into the Caspian Sea or to the Persian Gulf, but into inland lakes and swamps, the largest of which is Lake Urmia. Of all the rivers, only one, the Karun, which enters the Shatt al Arab below Basra, is navigable, and even the Karun only permits shallow paddle-steamers to ascend a hundred miles to Ahwaz, where a rocky sill across the stream compels trans-shipment to even smaller boats which run another seventy or eighty miles by a tortuous channel to near Shushtar. The smaller streams are used to some extent to irrigate the plains in the lower courses, as, for instance, round the Urmia Lake, and at Isfahan. The Karun and the Karkheh

were once thus harnessed to the use of man, but now run untrammelled, the last named into a marsh west of Ahwaz.

The salvation of Persia is in its mountain ranges, where the heavy snowfall serves as a reservoir that can be drawn on when it is most needed, and where the grass is green when the plains are already brown. The Zagros range, west of the Urmia Lake, includes many peaks over 11,000 feet in height. The superb conical peak of Demavend, forty miles north of Tehran, the modern capital, rises to over 19,000 feet. The town of Ardebil is dominated by the cone of Savelan, nearly 16,000 feet high, and in South-eastern Persia are peaks little less lofty.

Plato, who lived in the flourishing times of the Achaemenid monarchy, described[1] the Persians as "originally a nation of shepherds and herdsmen, occupying a rude country, such as naturally fosters a hardy race of people, capable of supporting both cold and watching, and, when needful, of enduring the toils of war." Arrian adds that their laws and usages closely resembled the austerity of the Spartan discipline. The same is true of the inhabitants of the countries bordering on Persia. To the north-west lie the Caucasian tribes, who have only within the last century lost their treasured independence; to the north-east, the Turkmans of Central Asia, whose endurance and cruelty were for centuries a byword; to the west, the Osmanli Turks; to the south and south-west, the Arabs, who in the seventh century had converted Persia at the point of the sword to the cheerless faith of Islam; to the east, Afghans and Baluchis, whose preference for making war on India rather than on their western neighbours

[1] de Leg. iii. cap. ii.

is comparatively recent, and is to be ascribed less to fanaticism than to a conviction that the military forces of India are a less formidable obstacle than the deserts of East Persia.

Surrounded by such neighbours, without natural riches susceptible of easy development, such as gold, silver, copper or lead, without sufficient cultivable soil to support a great population, and cut off from neighbouring lands by great deserts or lofty mountains, the Persians nevertheless first appear in history as a nation, and for over six thousand years they have been a national entity, generally under a single sovereign, ruling sometimes on the Nile, sometimes on the Indus, often on the Tigris, but always over the area now known as Persia.

Hittite business documents, dating from about 2000 B.C., or even earlier, and discovered at Caesarea Mazaca, in the heart of Asia Minor, attest to extensive trading relations and routes between this people and other nations. It is still possible to trace with considerable confidence the main routes which served those international traders of several thousand years ago.

The earliest of such ancient highways of which we have any knowledge ran east and west through the heart of Asia Minor, and down through the uplands beyond the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, terminating at last at Susa, about 250 miles almost due east of the ancient city of Babylon. When the Persians overran Mesopotamia and Asia Minor in the sixth century B.C., they called this highway "The Royal Road," but the name was already applied to at least a portion of it before that time by Sennacherib.[1]

[1] See Olmsted's *History of Assyria*, and Vowles, *Quest for Power*, 1931, p. 75.

The climate and consequently the scenery of different parts of Persia vary so greatly that it is necessary to deal separately with the various zones into which the country has from the earliest times been divided by geographers.

The three provinces of Gilan, Mazanderan, and Asterabad (the old Tabaristan) occupy the narrow strip of country between the southern shores of the Caspian Sea and the Elburz Mountains. The surface near the coast, where not cultivated, consists of natural or artificial swamps, overgrown with forest trees and brambles of unmatched luxuriance. The whole coast is lined by a chain of sand-hills, rising sometimes twenty-five to thirty feet in height, and two hundred yards in breadth, behind which lies a morass of stagnant water from numerous mountain streams and rivers. Above the narrow strip of low-lying marsh tower the mountains, assuming the appearance of two ranges, the first being clothed with forests as dense as those below. South of this range rises in rocky grandeur the Elburz chain, its peaks even in September flecked with snow on the northern side. Long winding tracks lead through the low plain from village to village and upwards through the forest-clad foothills by ways so tortuous and intricate that no stranger can find his way from one place to another. In the midst of the swamps and forests are numerous villages and hamlets, surrounded by rice fields, yet hidden from the traveller unless he chances to see the smoke rising from the domestic fires, or to hear the bark of the dogs. Here and there are to be seen the remains of ancient causeways, some twenty feet wide, paved in the Roman fashion with large water-worn boulders, dating from the reign of that prince of road-makers, Shah Abbas; but wherever possible muleteers

follow a track along the coast, keeping a sharp look-out for quicksands and treacherous fords.

> "A dense hedge," writes Rabino, "a perfect wall of bramble, blackthorn, and thick boxwood, cemented with wild vines and other creeping plants, that run up and over-top the trees, often approaches within thirty yards of the water's edge. No one in his senses would be mad enough to attempt to penetrate it, but a guide will show you a thing like a rabbit-run, winding like a snake through the bushes, or you may have the choice of a precarious bridge of boughs. For variety, after a little space you may have to tread through artificial cuts, made for irrigation, which flood the whole vicinity so that you travel girth-deep."

The climate here is capricious: there is no day in the year in which the people can rely on dry weather. From December to April are the wettest and coldest months, but one year it may pour for a month on end, and in the same month in the next year it may be quite dry. Yet the inhabitants, though sallow-looking, are often remarkably sturdy and athletic.

The principal crop is rice, but other cereals and tea and tobacco are grown on the lower mountain slopes, and some cotton and flax in the lowlands especially of Gilan, where considerable areas have been reclaimed during the present century from the primeval forest, and are now under cultivation. There is abundance of fruit, and silk cocoons are largely exported. Iron ores are found, and several seepages of pitch and petroleum are known to exist. The mountains abound with wild beasts, including the panther, bear, wolf, goat and deer, and wild boars infest the swamps. The tiger, though rare, is still to be found. Pheasants, woodcock and wild duck are common everywhere.

Just across the Elburz range, not a hundred miles from the Caspian, and some 3,000 feet above sea-level, begins the great plateau of Persia. Nowhere in Asia is the contrast more sudden or more violent.

> "No product here the barren hills afford
> But man and steel, the soldier and the sword."

Villages cluster round the foothills, wherever water exists, or can be found, but are seldom less than five miles apart. Towns of importance are anything from one to two hundred miles distant from each other, oases of cultivation in the rolling steppe. Mountain ranges are never far distant; salt marshes, and a few large expanses of salt water, lie at their feet. Such wild vegetable and animal life as exists is that of the desert, though wherever man has settled the mulberry, walnut and other fruit trees thrive. The heat in summer is great, rising to 140° in the sun; in winter the thermometer may fall below zero, the cold being the more formidable because it is ushered in by freezing sand-storms, lashing tiny pebbles like hail into the traveller's face, thereby increasing his misery and that of his mount. But when the traveller is fortunate enough to be able to travel by caravan and not by car the desert has its compensations: in summer the long, cool night is the best part of travel. At dusk the sky is illumined with rainbow tints along the unbroken horizon: within an hour of sunset it is dark; the blue turns to lapis lazuli, till it merges into the deeper purple of the dark horizon, and the Milky Way appears overhead. The muleteers burst into song, shouting snatches from the classic poets of Persia in high-pitched, long-drawn notes, full of ripples, gurgles and trills. Above them rises the

clear voice of a boy, untrained but not unmusical. Midnight passes, heads nod over saddles, and on the packs of laden mules men sleep swinging as in a hammock. The muleteers sleep in turn on the back of the only donkey. Orion, limb by limb, drags himself clear of the horizon.

Then rises the morning star, and with it the false dawn. Gradually the East pales, and the hills stand out gaunt on the horizon. The sleepers, stiff with cold, stretch themselves and take to their feet. The pack animals, sighting the caravanserai or village, quicken their step. The sun rises through a dust-obscured horizon, and another day has begun.

"The great desert region of Persia," writes Le Strange, stretches right across the high plateau of Iran from north-west to south-east, and dividing the fertile provinces of the land into two groups, for the desert is continuous from the southern base of the Elburz Mountains, which to the north overlook the Caspian, to the arid ranges of Makran, which border the Persian Gulf. Thus it measures nearly eight hundred miles in length, but in breadth varies considerably, for in shape this immense area of drought is somewhat like an hour-glass, with a narrow neck measuring only some hundred miles across, dividing Kirman from Sistan, while both north and south of this the breadth expands and in places reaches to over two hundred miles."

The surface of the Kavir, as the great desert on the eastern side of Persia is called, is generally level, broken here and there by low ranges. Over great stretches it is impassable except where it has been hardened by the passage of caravans for several millennia. Elsewhere the desert surface is hard, and covered for a few weeks in spring with a delicate growth of green, so sparse as to be scarcely noticeable at close quarters. It is the home of the wild

ass, of which at least two distinct types are known, differing in size rather than in appearance.

The sea is as often a connecting link between countries as a cause of separation. It was such a link in the case of Greece and her city colonies, between Rome and her outlying possessions, also between France and her North African colonies. But, until modern times, deserts have proved more effective natural frontiers than oceans. The Gobi has protected China, the Arabian desert has separated Syria from the valley of the Euphrates. Egypt, protected on both sides by deserts, has retained a physical identity almost without parallel in history. All that part of Western Asia which was once exposed to Hellenic influences was for centuries cut off from India by the vast deserts of Persia and their northerly continuation with Turkistan. The great desert is not an economic asset to Persia, but it has been an integral and decisive factor in the history of the Persian nation.

Parts of this desolate waste of Kavir are no less than 6,000 feet above sea-level, and are as uninviting from the climatic point of view as in other respects. The average rainfall here is less than two inches; from May to September "the Wind of 120 Days" blows from a little west of north, without intermission, reaching a velocity of over seventy miles an hour.

Persian Baluchistan, the ancient Gedrosia, in the south-eastern corner, is almost one sixth of the whole area of the Persian Empire. Though not so completely arid as North-eastern Persia it possesses no single town of any size. It includes great belts of saline mud-hills, high, sharp-edged ridges of bluish clay, fairly regular in shape, the section of the main ridges being an acute-angled isosceles triangle. From the main ridge spring numerous spurs or

buttresses of the same construction as itself. The surface is intersected by veins of gypsum. Nothing ever grows on these hills. Amongst a maze of parallel ranges of alternate mud and stone, deep ravines run, the streams in them being sometimes sweet but more often salt, the boulders white with crusted salt and gypsum.

The ravines and river-beds afford scanty grazing, and occasional stunted vegetation, especially the tamarisk and *pish*, a fan-palm which fills the place taken in England by the oak, ash, bricks, slates, boots, matches and other materials. It grows in groves and, like other fan-palms, dies after flowering once. The fruit is edible though not succulent, but the leaves and trunk have, as stated, innumerable uses. The only transport animal of value is the camel; the only crops, and those precarious, barley, millet and dates.

The coastal strip is not less forbidding than the interior. Except for the telegraph wires that run a few miles inland from Karachi to Jask, it has changed so little in the last two thousand years or so that Nearchus, the pilot of Alexander, who took the fleet from the mouth of the Indus to Ahwaz in 326 B.C., would notice little if any difference were he to revisit the coast. Now, as then, fish is the staple food, by itself or pounded to a paste and eaten with barley; ribs of stranded whales go to make the walls of huts, and shark flesh is a delicacy. Life is hard in Asia, and nowhere harder than in Persian Baluchistan, but it does not seem to brutalize mankind; rather does it refine, by some obscure alchemy, the dross. Travellers of discrimination find a level of conduct, of kindness and of self-sacrifice, amongst the simple folk who wrest their living from the unfriendly soil or sea under the

burning sun, which would do credit to more prosperous regions. Anyone who knows both Egypt and Palestine and Syria on the one hand, and the Persian Gulf and Persia on the other, will agree that the national temperaments are made harsher, but not worsened, by the asperities of climate.

The province of Fars occupies the centre of Southern Persia from a point a few leagues south of Isfahan and Yezd to the sea coast, and from Behbehan on the west as far as, and including Lar. This region is the birthplace of the Persian Empire, and here is the tomb of Cyrus the Great, near the ruins of his capital, and here the glorious ruins of Persepolis, the handiwork of Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes.

The capital of the province is Shiraz, famous for its wine and honey, the home and the grave of the two most famous poets of Iran, Hafiz, the contemporary of Dante, and Sa'di. It has been laid in ruins more than once by earthquakes, but can still show noble mosques and fine bazaars. The city lies in the midst of a long plain, some twelve miles across, terminating towards the east in a salt lake, the home of countless waterfowl. In spring the plain is green with heavy crops of cereals, and of cotton and opium; the hillsides bright with the foliage of vines, grown for the raisin crop rather than for wine, which, though Persians are not all abstainers, is not as in France, a staple beverage. Black ramparts of cypresses behind mud walls shelter the fruit trees and rose gardens of Persian noblemen, lovers of beauty and of nature, whose joy it is to spend their leisure hours listening to the sound of running water and the plaint of the nightingale.

South of Shiraz extends a long series of great limestone ranges, between which lie fertile valleys,

descending in a series of steps to the sea coast. Locusts and drought are the great enemies of the farmer, and the nomad is poorer, but less dependent on weather and insect pests; he has only a murrain to fear, for if the grazing in one part of the province be bad he can generally transfer his flocks to a far off region, perhaps some three hundred miles away, which has not been stricken. The nomads are unruly neighbours, but they have their place in the economy of the country and have of récent years been brought under effective control.

As the traveller toils up the "ladder-way" of Diodorus Siculus, from coast to plateau, the very skeleton of the country is exposed to his enquiring eyes; the working of the titanic forces which moulded the world, the most intimate processes of nature's workshop, more often than not graciously veiled in Europe by a cloak of verdure and kindly soil, are here laid bare to the eye of the student. Almost every range is transected by a deep gorge revealing in its cavernous recesses the nethermost rocks of the young world.

The great rampart of the Zagros range, running from Ararat, where the territories of Turkey, Russia and Persia meet, till it loses shape in the long series of limestone folds north and south of Shiraz, is one of the most striking features of Western Asia. It reaches its greatest height in Kurdistan, north-west of Kermanshah, and again in the Bakhtiari country west-south-west of Isfahan. The torrential crags of Kurdistan hide the sources of the river Tigris, the third river of the Paradise of Genesis, and of its tributary the Diyala or Sirwan. Further south the majestic Karun, rising in the mountains a few leagues south-west of Isfahan, rolls her turbid, murmuring flood beneath the fortress of

Shushtar, past the ruins of the bridge built for Shapur by the luckless Roman Emperor Valerian, and thence onwards, beside the ancient walls of Askar Mukarram, past the ruined dam of Ahwaz, to the wider horizons, where the salt-encrusted wastes of her delta stretch out towards the Persian Gulf. On the banks of the Diz, a tributary of the Karun, the yellow bricks of "Shushan the palace" of the Book of Esther, litter the lonely plain between the Diz and the Karkheh, the ancient Choaspes. The fragrant thickets are the haunt still of the rare spotted deer, of wild pig and leopard and, until a few years ago, of the lion. In the gorges above, clear spring water gushes out into the milk-white stream, and great fish may be seen disporting themselves in the depths: only in the upper reaches may mankind follow their example, for in summer time sharks often swim up-stream beyond Shushtar, a distance of over 300 miles from the open sea, seeking whom they may devour.

In such places, and in a thousand other spots, the traveller will hear Persia plead for herself: when the new-caught *sabur* fish are shimmering upon the green bank of the river at Mohammerah; when the sun and rains beat upon the wind-ruffled grasses of the Miyanab, whilst the southern glow is warm upon the snowy peaks of the Shuturan Kuh, and where the sunset lights the rosy wings of the flamingoes, as they pass to their resting place in the marshes of Fallahiyeh. In the spring, in the plains of Khuzistan, great clouds of sand-grouse darken the sky as they wheel overhead, while a million little throats combine to utter a sound as sweet to the ear as any in Paradise.

No description of Persia would be complete (and limitations of space make it impossible to give here

more than a sketch of the salient features of the country) without some reference to the Persian Gulf, by which until recent years the great majority of travellers have entered Persia. At its entrance, on the Persian side, lies Bandar Abbas, named after the great king who was to Persia what his contemporary, Elizabeth, was to England. It has an evil reputation for heat and bad water, but to quote Lovat Fraser, "It has its compensations, and when its sleepless nights are forgotten, the vision of Hormuz across the water, incarnadined in the sunset and glowing like a jewel, lingers in the memory."

Hormuz, once an emporium comparable to modern Bombay, and repeatedly mentioned by Milton as the source of fabulous wealth, is now almost uninhabited. "It has no fresh water," wrote the incomparable Thomas Herbert, companion, in his last hours, of the martyred king, "save what the fruitful clouds weep over her, in sorrow of her desolation, late so populous," and its sole commerce to-day is red oxide and rock salt for local use.

But it was the scene of great adventures, when the British and the Portuguese fought in the sixteenth century for the mastery of the Eastern Seas. Here it was that the discoverer of Baffin Bay met his death. "Master Baffin went on shoare with his Geometricall Instruments," says Purchas, "for the taking the height and distance of the Castle wall, for the better leavelling of his Peece to make his shot: but as he was about the same, he received a small shot from the Castle into his belly, wherewith he gave three leapes, by report, and died immediately."

South of Hormuz, across the narrow strait of that name, which is the key of the Gulf, lies the unscalable mass of Musandam; within it, piercing its very

heart, are the wondrous fiords of Elphinstone and Malcolm Inlets, probably the hottest places on earth.

The strait is guarded by two rocky islands, Great and Little Quoin, on the smaller of which stands since 1912 a fine lighthouse, erected by the British-Indian Government for the benefit of shipping. Two other rocks there are, like Scylla and Charybdis, between which lies a deep channel and a tempting short cut; but through the gap runs a fierce current, so strong that not even a steamer can breast it without risk of being thrown against those terrible crags; all masters are warned against its use, but some must needs try their luck now and then. In the days of sailing ships the risk was even greater, for there is no anchorage.

West of Hormuz lies a barren almost waterless strip of land known to Arabs as The Long Island—but to Persians as Qishm. Leaving it to starboard, our course runs westward, on one side or the other of Great and Little Tanb Islands, "The Tombs" of the old charts. On the larger of the two is another lighthouse. It is a barren island, inhabited (except for a few months when cattle are brought from the Arab side to graze) only by snakes, sea-fowl, and in the spring by the ubiquitous swallows, sacred birds in all Islam, as they were to Sophocles who refers to them (*Elect V*. 149) as "Jove's little messengers." On these and other islands the stork is a frequent visitor: he, too, has no fear of mankind, for he is known to bring good luck to those on whose roof he rests. Local legend does not, as in Europe, associate him with child-birth, but his migrations have struck the fancy of the people, and he is known in Persia as "The Haji," for he visits Mecca in the course of his southern flight to the Cape of Good

Hope. He may be seen on every plain, stalking his quarry, walking always into the sun, lest a shadow betray his coming. On the wing he is no laggard, though he is a slow climber. To him broad deserts and narrow seas, nations and cities, count not at all. His high soaring flights caught the imagination of the ancients, and Homer mentions how "he flees from the coming of winter and sudden rain, and flies with clamour towards the streams of Oceanus, bearing slaughter and doom to the Pygmy men" (of Africa).

A few hours' steaming brings us to Qais Island, which, like Hormuz, was once a great emporium. It was at the height of its glory when visited by the Jew, Benjamin of Tudela, in the twelfth century. When it fell Hormuz rose. A tale, reminiscent of Dick Whittington and his cat, is told of this island. It is said that in the eleventh century, in the town of Siraf on the mainland, lived a destitute old woman who entrusted to a merchant her only possession, a cat, to sell abroad for her. When the merchant reached Qais, the plague of mice was such that the king and nobles were obliged to encase their beards in golden tubes, and to carry sticks with which to keep the mice from the food at meals. The cat was produced, and made short work of the mice. The king took the cat, giving in return a ship, finely equipped, and laden with cargo; this was delivered to the old woman, whose sons made such good use of their wealth that their descendants became kings of Qais.

If we are lucky, and the sea is fairly calm, there may be one of the displays of phosphorescence for which the Gulf is famous. The present writer has a vivid recollection of one unforgettable night. The sea glowed with pale blue light; the ripples

thrown out on either side became divergent streams of lambent flame: the crest of every wave glowed as though the sea was afire: round our bows porpoises played in a ghostly brilliance: our wake shone with a light that made the moon seem pale. Even more remarkable was the display observed by passengers in March, 1908, on the s.s. *Eden Hall*, near Hormuz Island. "It was dark, with a very glassy sea, when it suddenly appeared as if someone was turning flashlights on the ship. It turned out to be waves of light wheeling round the ship in the air, just over the sea, not actually on the surface."[1]

The morning after passing Tanb Islands, our ship calls at Bushire, anchoring as a rule six miles from shore. Bushire is virtually an island, separated from the mainland by nine miles of mud flats which at times are almost impassable. After a few hours we weigh anchor, and are soon out of sight of land. To the north of our tract lies Kharag; this island, too, has a history stretching back into the dim past; its rock-cut tombs are almost unique. Two of them are Christian catacombs of the third century. Twelve hours from Bushire lies the bar of the Shatt al Arab. Steaming slowly, and guided as we approach by the lightship, we anchor near the pilot vessel. The pilot, probably a Persian from Bandar Rig, for from this port or from Kharag pilots have been drawn for the passage across the bar from time immemorial, mounts the bridge and takes charge. Two hours later we pass Fao, the cable station on the right bank, whence stretches a belt of palm trees almost unbroken to Basra. The left, or Persian bank, which is lower, is less cultivated, but on the northern horizon on the other side of Abadan Island can be descried the palm groves on the

[1] *Geog. Jour.*, Jan. 1923, p. 66.

Baḥmishir channel, which runs parallel with the Shatt al Arab, here the frontier between 'Iraq and Persia.

Two hours' steaming up a succession of majestic reaches brings us to the great tank-farms and jetties at Bawarda, and a few minutes later to Abadan, a tangle of machinery and chimneys, a little bit of Lancashire or of Sheffield, set down in this sun-scorched land. Here is the terminus of the pipe-line from the oil fields in the Bakhtiari hills, a hundred and seventy miles distant.

> "And divine liquids come with odorous ooze
> Through the cold serpent-pipe refreshfully,"

as Keats wrote a century ago in *Isabella*. The channel is none too wide here, for tankers lie at anchor in mid-stream, tankers are tied up to the left bank, tankers, tugs and barges are at anchor on the right bank. The scene is for a short space comparable to that on the Mersey or the Thames, but not for long.

Abadan disappears from sight as we turn a sharp bend; only a few chimneys, a wireless mast and a smell still indicate its position. Less than an hour later we reach Mohammerah, but we see nothing of the town till we are right opposite the mouth of the Karun. Six miles beyond Mohammerah two boundary pillars mark the limit of Persian territory on the left bank; thereafter we are in 'Iraq.

In the foregoing pages an attempt has been made to give the reader not so much a description as an impression of the salient features of typical Persian landscapes, features which, so far as they are permanent and unalterable by man, are limiting factors in any estimate of future economic and other

developments. Little or no reference has been made to the cities and towns of Persia, which even more than in Europe monopolize the political and commercial life of the country. There are some fifty towns in all with a population of 10,000 or over; of these the capital, Tehran, has a population of 320,000 according to the latest census,[1] Tabriz runs it close with 240,000, followed by Meshed 152,000, Isfahan 127,000, Abadan, Resht, Shiraz, Kermanshah, Hamadan, Kashan, Kazvin and Yezd, in descending order of size with from 70,000 to 50,000 inhabitants. The total of town dwellers is about two and a half millions. The fifty largest towns between them account for rather over one and a half millions of the twelve millions which is the most recent reliable estimate of the total population. To add that this works out at nineteen to the square mile would be misleading, for at least nine-tenths of the total area is permanently uncultivable, and more than half unsuited even for light grazing on the basis of one sheep or goat to three acres.

The larger cities and towns vary greatly between themselves in the possession of modern amenities. Tehran has recently been drastically reconstructed: broad avenues, and a few asphalted roads, provided with tramways and onmibuses, have replaced narrow alleys, and great efforts have been made to improve the water supply and to maintain essential sanitary services. The streets and many private houses are lit by electricity, and a satisfactory telephone service has been installed. The municipalities of Isfahan and other large towns emulate that of Tehran in their zeal for western improvements.

[1] The population of "Greater Tehran" and including adjacent suburbs and villages is estimated at 450,000 to 500,000. See also footnote to Chapter XI.

Every town of importance, and many which have lost their former pride of place, have one or more mosques or public places of rare beauty, to which reference is made elsewhere. Nearly all manufactures (except carpet-making) are concentrated in the towns; they are seats of learning as well as of government, and of trade as well as of industry. The smallest towns can boast of an antiquity of which any town in England or Europe might be proud; they have waxed and waned with the vicissitudes of time. Isfahan, Shiraz and Kazvin have in turn been the capital of the country, or the seat of quasi-independent monarchies, but few if any have been completely deserted, for they are an integral part of the economic structure, and combine productive with distributive and cultural functions.

The streets of the older towns which have hitherto ecsaped modernization are, for the most part, narrow, as in the heart of the City of London to-day, designed for pack-animals rather than lorries, and as most loads are small there is little advantage in wide streets, whilst in summer the shade cast by the walls of houses on either side is very welcome. All construction is of brick, mostly unburnt, surfaced, when the owner can afford it, with finely cut-brick, pointed with gypsum mortar. The shopping quarters, of which in a large town there may be several, generally consist of long covered arcades known as bazaars, with booths on either side: cool in summer, and protected from the rigours of snow and rain in winter, they are perfectly suited to local needs. Traders in the same commodity—smiths, shoemakers, tailors, and butchers—tend to congregate in the same quarters, and the custom has great advantages especially in the case of noisy trades such as that of the coppersmiths. Slaughter-

houses, generally under municipal control, are placed beyond the city walls and the meat brought in on the backs of animals: offensive industries, such as tanning and dyeing, are relegated to the outskirts of the town, and here also are, generally speaking, the burial-places. There is, in fact, an element of traditional town-planning at work which has somehow not always taken root in the West.

The instinct of the Persian to adapt himself rapidly to his surroundings and to changing conditions is shown by the changes that have taken place in the last ten years, consequent on the advent of the motor-lorry. Nearly all large towns now have some streets thirty yards or more in width; municipal regulations require that all houses and shops facing the streets shall have a façade of dressed stone for the first two or three feet, and above it well-burnt brick; and steel and cement are being used extensively. New shops are being built in European style, and covered bazaars discouraged. Well-kept municipal gardens, often of some size, are common, and are crowded every evening.

The only visible sign of a house, in the older streets, is a low door, which is kept barred on the inside. It is constructed of thick timber, embossed with large iron knobs, and having an iron knocker suspended above the keyhole. No window or other aperture relieves the uniformity of the high mud-coloured wall. Entering by this door, a short passage called the *dihleez* leads into the *hayat* or court of the house, a space from thirty to a hundred feet square, the greater part of which is paved with slabs of stone. In the centre stands an oblong tank of water some five feet deep, constructed of stone. On either side of the tank stands a small plot of ground in which grow orange-trees, rose and jessa-

mine bushes, and other flowering plants. The Persians are lovers of gardens and masters of the art of making them, even in very confined spaces. They are a delightful feature of the country, and the cult shows no sign of failing before the onslaught of Western ways. Round the court the house is built one or two storeys high, the principal part of it being directly opposite the entrance. The greater part of the lower storey is occupied, in the case of middle and upper class houses, by the *divankhaneh*, or principal room, which is raised a few feet higher than the rest of the court. This apartment, which may be sixteen feet broad and from sixteen to sixty feet long, has, towards the court, a single large window of glass, often coloured, extending the whole length and height of the room. It is a kind of proscenium known as *urusi*, the upper part of which consists of open woodwork, carved, painted and gilded, filled with a number of minute panes of coloured glass, arranged with wonderful skill in geometrical patterns. From this upper half descend the sashes, sliding in grooved posts, each about seven feet high and reaching down to the floor. The whole room can thus be thrown open to the court, or completely closed, at will. Above the proscenium is fastened a curtain that can be lowered to keep out the glare and heat.

The other three sides of the room have a wainscot of smooth white plaster, often skilfully painted: above, the wall is worked into niches, perhaps profusely ornamented. The ceiling is in keeping with the rest of the apartment, being painted or even gilded in mosaic or arabesque patterns.

The floor is covered with a mat, over which is an ordinary carpet: round the sides are spread thick felts or cushions. Chairs and tables are now in

almost universal use in middle and upper class houses. In the centre, slightly projecting from the wall, is the stove. At the sides of the room are doors leading into small ante-chambers: beyond, again, are other rooms, for storage or for the use of servants.

Beyond and behind the main courtyard as described above is a second court—the *andarun* or family part of the house—somewhat similarly arranged. Upon the roof there are two or three chimney stacks, built of brick, three or four feet in height, and sometimes a platform on which beds are spread in the warm summer nights, shielded for privacy by a wall or wooden lattice.

This arrangement, which differs little from that of houses of the second millennium B.C., recently discovered at Ur of the Chaldees, is perfectly suited to the needs of the Persian climate and to the health of the occupants. It ensures ample light and air and adequate space, for the roof and courtyard are as much in use as the rest of the house for nearly half the year. Water supply and sewerage are the weak points, and they are not as a rule easy to remedy even at great cost. The streets appear mean, but, behind the bare walls, all but the poorest people have more floor and air space at their disposal than in Western cities. A city of 200,000 souls in Persia occupies as much space as one with five times as many inhabitants in the West.

In the larger towns, however, the type of house here described is giving way to more compact buildings, often of three stories, standing in the centre of a garden, without separate quarters for men and women—a practice never favoured by the common people in Persia, and now falling into desuetude even among the upper classes. The present Shah

has given a fresh impetus to mirror-work for internal decoration, etc., *khatem* inlay, and work in wood, on the walls, though the cost precludes its wide-spread adoption.

All houses, new or old, have large windows and large doors, giving ample access to fresh air: the proportion of window and door to wall-area being much the same as in Europe. There is a noticeable tendency to copy rather than to adapt Western methods and to disregard climatic differences; but in this, as in other matters, a reaction will doubtless set in.

Every new and old building is provided, wherever possible, with a cellar, known as a *sardab*, usually a few feet below ground-level, but sometimes, as in Dizful and Shushtar, hewn out of the rock thirty feet below ground. In the heat of summer these cellars are a delightful refuge, and do much to mitigate the discomforts of life for young and old. Ventilation is ensured by a shaft reaching to the roof of the house; light sufficient to read by penetrates sometimes directly down the vertical shaft, sometimes by reflection from the whitened walls of the staircase leading to the cellar.

Yet behind the endless unvarying street walls are courts of mosques and places on which generations of craftsmen have lavished their skill. "Seen from the inner parapet," writes Professor Arthur Upham Pope,[1] in a work which in the matters with which it deals deserves to rank with that of the late Professor E. G. Browne on Persian literature, "each mosque court is a pool of azure glory, sunk in the muddy sea of flat roofs and myriad little domes. . . . The long blank wall of the street may be broken by a lofty recessed portal of a mosque.

[1] *An Introduction to Persian Art*, London, 1930, p. 33.

Through this shadowed entrance one passes into comparative darkness only to emerge suddenly into a scene of bewildering glory that surpasses all anticipation and is difficult to recapture even in memory. Usually, one faces the sanctuary, with its vast cavernous arch surmounted by a huge dome of glowing turquoise or glistening gold. All about are the serried ranks of arched recesses, with a great arch at the centre of each side arch, invariably a blaze of cobalt and turquoise blue and green, with varied other colours for freshness and accent. All this is reflected in the shining pool. It is a scene of unearthly splendour. In many of the mosques the court is lined with trees, shrubs and flowers, and intersected with water channels. One hears the muttered mumble of prayer or the droning of the theological class under a vault, or the song of the birds intensified in the reverent quiet. The sense of exclusion of the squalid outer world, of merciful isolation from the din of the bazaars, the heat, the dust and the confusion of the streets, the utter perfection of all that is visible, are as thrilling as the peal of great music after silence."

Such mosques, dating from the fourteenth century or even earlier, and the adjacent palaces are, for the townspeople, what the great cathedrals of Europe were in the Middle Ages: places of assembly, where at critical moments the corporate memory of the race springs into fierce life. Nor are there lacking on the roads between the great towns, amid mountain and desert, a thousand historic memories, heroic shades of past rulers: Kaiyumars, Gudarz, Rustam, and Zal his father, reared from infancy by an eagle; Solomon and David of the Old Testament and many another—gracious legends that link up, as with a golden thread, to the past of a land whose

people still love to listen, under the stars, to the blind troubadours who tell, of these and other heroic figures, stories that were already old when Firdausi, a thousand years ago, recorded them in imperishable verse, fashioning, for us older children, fairy stories in whose beauty we may awake again the magic of the sleeping past, and weave a fairer hope into our dreams of what is to come.

That is why the legends of Persia allure us; at sea the love-sick shark of Procopius, following the pearl oyster round the Gulf only to see his darling raped at the last by the hand of man, and the porpoise busily diving to find Solomon's ring, serve to remind us that Persia has in the past been great by sea as well as by land; the frenzy of Farhad, in his hopeless love for Shirin, the anguish of Rustam as his son Sohrab expired in his arms, and the poignant tragedy of the death of Husain on the plain of Kufa, all serve to reveal to the stranger a depth of feeling and romanticism amongst Persians that even many years of residence amongst them might not disclose. In these matters, as in others, let us not be concerned to enquire too closely nor to distinguish nicely between delicious fancy and sober fact, because always, as indeed with life itself, "les légendes, comme les amours, gagnent à garder un peu de mystère."

One word of warning. Let no traveller who knows not Persia believe that here, more than in other lands, he shall escape his measure of woe. According to the season he will be grilled by the sun, or buffeted and frozen by the wind; he will be parched by the dust, tortured by the mosquitoes, harassed by sudden floods; he will experience occasional miseries inseparable from a sojourn among a people the

majority of whom are ignorant and careless of hygiene. But if he have an eye for Eastern landscape, and for the lines of memorial stones; if he care for classic beauty still perpetuated in living men, women, and children; if he love warmth and light, wide plains and high mountains, flocks and herds, deep valleys and perfumed uplands; if there be that in him which will respond to the spirit of romance beckoning to him at the top of every pass, at the edge of every horizon; he will find on his return that henceforth all these delights make up for him the magic of Persia; and that it is true of her charm, as was said four thousand years ago of her law, that it altereth not.

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CHAPTER II

THE PERSIAN PEOPLE

THE outstanding characteristic of the people of Persia is that they have contrived, to a degree unequalled perhaps and certainly not exceeded by any other nation, to maintain, from the days of Cyrus onwards, a genuine feeling of national unity which co-exists with and transcends profound differences of race and language.

Of common racial tradition there is not a trace in Persia. A typical Persian does not exist, because there are within the limits of the Empire many distinct types, easily recognized, though they originally represent geographical and climatic areas rather than different racial origins. Yet no other race, except perhaps the English, has such a mixture of blood in its veins. The original inhabitants of Persia, whose descendants are to be found comparatively unaltered in Gilan and Mazanderan, on the shores of the Caspian, in forest country, were replaced in some areas, and in others assimilated, by Aryan-speaking Nordic nomads from Eastern Russia, and by Turanian-speaking Mongolians from Western Siberia. This took place as early as 2000 B.C., and continued for many centuries.[1]

"Arabia," wrote the late Dr. Hogarth, "has been subjected, more uniformly than any area of like

[1] Worrall, W. H., *A Study of Races in the Ancient Near East*, 1927.

extent in the world, to three of the strongest forces which make for political unity—namely, common speech, common faith, and common racial tradition. . . . . Their community has resulted, in the main, from a similar uniformity of physical conditions." Of Persia precisely the opposite is true; six different languages are currently spoken, namely Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Luri, Brahui and Persian, each sub-divided into numerous widely-differing dialects, such as Ṣedehi, Simnani, and Luri. Yet improved communications, compulsory military service, State education and other factors, are tending to spread the use as well as the knowledge of Persian in every part of the kingdom. Persian has long been used for written communications, almost to the exclusion of other languages, and is steadily gaining ground, just as in these islands, English (of a sort) has tended to oust Welsh, Gaelic, and Erse. Actually Persian is the current tongue of above three-quarters of the whole population.

Though the great majority of the population follow the Shi'ah confession, there is a strong Sunni element in Kurdistan and Azerbaijan, as well as in Persian Baluchistan, totalling perhaps 800,000, and there are numerous and collectively important minorities of Christians and Parsees, whilst Sufism and Bahaism had at one time a strong hold upon the educated classes,[1] and exercised a greater influence than Islam, which has never played the same part in the national life of Persia as it did in Arabia. The Zoroastrian culture of Persia success-

[1] Sufism is a mystic and esoteric philosophy, rather than a religion. It had at one time a strong hold upon Persian thinkers and writers, but no longer exercises any appreciable influence.

Bahaism owed its strength to persecution—its strength lay in its rejection of Islamic dogma. It is no longer an important element in Persian intellectual life.

fully resisted assimilation by the Arab invaders in the seventh century. "It proved," wrote Hogarth, "so little a victory for pure Islam that wave after wave of Iranian influences, which the Prophet would have anathematized, washed back to the very cradle of the Faith." One reason may have been that the Arab armies were unaccompanied by their women; they married into the country and the children tended to follow maternal traditions. No doubt a new type was produced, unlike either conqueror or conquered, and no doubt the Arabic language introduced by the victorious armies tended to broaden the outlook of the upper classes; but the outlook on life of subsequent generations was but little affected.

"The Arabs," writes Sir E. Denison Ross, "were as primitive in their methods of warfare and almost as destitute of culture as the Eastern nomads. They belonged to no recognised State, and they had no tradition behind them. . . . We must not picture them as possessing the crusader's spirit for, in the first place, Muhammad had given no instructions for proselytization outside Arabia and, secondly, we do not find any attempt at wholesale conversion of the people whose country the Arabs occupied. It is true that all were invited to become Muslims, and, thereby to enjoy certain privileges, but force was seldom resorted to, and Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians were all at liberty to practise their own religions, on payment of a prescribed poll-tax. It was not until Islam began to split up into factions, and this was not long in coming about, that proselytization began. The new religion," he adds, "quickly gained to its side the vast majority of the population."[1]

The Persians had better brains and more enterprise and energy than their conquerors, and

[1] *The Persians*, 1930. This admirable little book gives in a small compass by far the best summary of Persian history that has yet appeared.

when in the eighth century a new line of Caliphs, known as the Abbasids, arose, with Baghdad as their seat of government, Persians rapidly rose to power and held, as at Damascus half a century earlier, the higher positions of State in an empire which extended from Spain to the Oxus.

In the thirteenth century there was a fresh invasion, that of the Mongols under Chengiz Khan, who destroyed the ancient city of Rayy, the site of which lies a few miles south of Tehran. The Caliphs of Baghdad invited the Mongols to invade Persia, which, under Khwarazm Shah, was trying to cast off its allegiance. The destruction of Baghdad by Hulagu half a century later was an act of retribution conceived by a Persian, Khwajah Nasir of Tus, who was tutor and later Prime Minister to Hulagu. Chengiz Khan's grandson, Hulagu, in 1258 made a shambles and a dust-heap of Baghdad, and put to death the last of the Caliphs. He was followed by Timur the Lame, known to history as Tamerlane, less than a century later.

"This dreadful succession," writes Mr. Arthur Upham Pope, "swept over the country like a bloody foam, leaving the fairest cities a wilderness of rubbish and rotting corpses. Their speed, their fury and their mastery of every branch of warfare, made resistance not only futile but impossible. Their mark was a series of massacres and devastations, which not only destroyed every kind of public monument with invaluable contents, works of art and books, but blotted out whole cities. The destruction of human life was equally appalling; the accumulated knowledge and traditions of ages were obliterated."

Yet even the first Moguls spared the artisans, and later conquerors became eager patrons of the arts, summoning the finest craftsmen from every land to

court, thus ushering in the period of comprehensive and decisive Chinese influence in Persian decorative arts.

These shepherd kings, too, once the lust for blood of their followers was fully slaked, employed Persian officials as of yore; the customary law of Persia suffered little change, the revenue system, as has been shown by Mustafa Khan Fateh, persisted almost unaltered.

Two centuries later we find Persia, under the Safavid dynasty, once more a kingdom united, though loosely, by common bonds of patriotism under a monarch of pure Persian descent, Shah Ismail, of the family of a famous saint of Ardebil. When quite a boy he attracted a large following, and in 1502 defeated the ruling Turkmans. Making Tabriz his capital, he brought the whole of Persia under his sway, and did not rest till he ruled from Samarqand to Shiraz and from Karbala to Kandahar. He died young, but he bequeathed to his successors a united country, free from foreign rule, and the greater material achievements of his descendants must not blind us to the magnitude of his achievement. The Safavids, monarchs whose rule continued to the middle of the eighteenth century, were a great dynasty, of whom, perhaps, the most famous was Shah Abbas the First (1587–1629). The predominance of the Persian as contrasted with the Turkish elements in the country during this period was complete; the arts flourished, and successive monarchs, especially the great Abbas, not merely permitted, but actively encouraged, European merchants to establish themselves in Persia, granting them every desired immunity and privilege. An Englishman, Robert Sherley, was engaged to modernize the Persian army with a view to operations

against Turkey: Robert's brother, Sir Anthony, was sent as Ambassador for Persia to Europe.

The abundant contemporary narratives of the period show that there was little racial or religious prejudice against Europeans as such. The Persians had indeed suffered at the hands of the Portuguese at Hormuz and elsewhere, but they enlisted the help of the British to defeat them. They received Western merchants with courtesy, and foreign envoys with honour. The star of Russia had not yet risen above the horizon. Public order was fairly well maintained, but throughout this period, as in previous ages, there was a steady infiltration of successful bandits and soldiers of fortune into Persia from all sides, sometimes as enemies, but often as mercenaries of the ruling monarch, who was wont to reward the chiefs of border tribes who had done good service by grants of land in places distant many hundreds of miles from their home lands. It was a reward, but it was sometimes also a precaution against an undue growth of influence of a particular man or family. Whatever the cause, the results of this practice were to be found in every province: some of the leading tribes in Luristan and Fars are of Arab origin; Kurdish tribes will be found in Luristan, in Fars, and Khurasan; Turkish tribes in Luristan, and Fars. Afghan families have taken root in Kermanshah, Isfahan and Kerman, and on the border of Baluchistan. The present monarch has followed the example of his predecessors, and groups of tribesmen from Luristan and Azerbaijan have been transported as far east as Khurasan.

Though African slaves have never entered Persia in large numbers, there are thousands of families between Kermanshah and Kerman whose pro-

genitors were *Kaka siah*—"black brothers"—first the slaves and later the trusted retainers of local chiefs. They have left their mark on the Gulf population of every degree, though the number of female slaves imported is negligible.

Finally, the very widespread practice of giving brides in settlement of blood feuds, or with a view to ensuring friendly relations between tribes, often of different races, is in effect a species of exogamy which, practised principally by leading families in every part of Persia, has undoubtedly had the effect of maintaining a high standard of intelligence among the nation's leaders. The practice is, indeed, of high antiquity. Even the rulers of the Safavid dynasty, who were of typically Persian descent, brought to the nuptial bed damsels of Turkish and Arab as well as of Persian race. There was, in fact, no sort of prejudice against mixed marriages.

It is clear, therefore, that the Persian is, from the racial point of view, highly composite, and it is probably on this account that Persians, more perhaps than any other Asiatic race, and certainly more than most European races, respond so readily to a change of environment. The average Persian abroad is notably a man of the world; Persian students in the universities of Europe and the U.S.A. do not tend, as do many Orientals, to keep to themselves; still less do they fraternize with other students from the East. Whether they come to Europe as children, youths or adults, they mingle with local society far more effectively than do the majority of Europeans from foreign countries. This is, perhaps, the outstanding characteristic of the race, and it is not confined to the upper classes or to social qualities. In the refineries and workshops of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in South-West

Persia, on the oil fields and pipe lines, Persians, especially the nomadic Bakhtiaris, have found themselves capable (notably more so than Arabs), after training, of handling machinery and generally of adapting themselves to the exigencies of European industry in its most modern guise. Persians have the gift of leadership; it was prominent in the centuries following the Islamic conquest; it was a feature of the 'Iraq Levies and Police in early years; it is to be discerned to-day in the ranks of higher officials in Indian Muslim States and in Afghanistan. Several of the leading chiefs of Native States in India are of Persian origin. Nor is this aspect of Persian culture of recent growth. Herodotus, remarks Mahaffy, evidently liked and admired Persians: to him a Persian grandee was fully as cultured a man as, and in many respects a more thorough gentleman than, the best of the Greeks. The account he gives of Persian education and Persian manners especially confirms this.

Sir Denison Ross (*The Persians*, 1930) writes from personal experience:

> "All who have come into contact with this people have felt that the Persian is a specially gifted member of the Nordic race. He is exceedingly quick to observe and to learn, so this quickness displays itself at a very early age. His mental activities, however, incline to carry him into fields of philosophic speculation rather than into the dull activities of practical life. He has perfect manners, and loves conversation for its own sake. He has a stock of apposite quotations from the poets and a rich fund of anecdote. He has a sense of humour and delights in persiflage. He is a fatalist, with no sense of time or danger. He enjoys comfort but ignores discomfort. . . ."

Blind men often take to reciting poetry and telling stories for a living. Their ability to memorize

vast quantities of poetry is astonishing. One such man I well remember meeting on a lofty plateau where caravans halted on the road from Ahwaz to Isfahan. He had made the spot his centre for that season, and he regaled the muleteers after the evening meal round the camp fire with recitations from Sa'di and Firdausi and from religious history, with a mastery of histrionic art which left on me an indelible impression. Seated in pitch darkness, relying solely on his subject and on the modulations of his voice, he told the tragedy of Sohrab and Rustam, of Laili and Shirin, and, after an interval, of the fatal field of Karbala, with a pathos which brought tears to my eyes no less than to those of his co-religionists. Thanks to such men and to a system of elementary education, which, though not under State direction until recently, is far more widespread than is generally known, the population, though unlettered, is not unlearned, and has a better knowledge of the Persian classics than the average European has of the masterpieces of his own race.

To these traits must be added, as outstanding characteristics, a sense of humour which is distinctively European in its manifestation, and a gift of wit which leavens every discussion. "There is nothing," says Goethe, "in which people more completely betray their character than in what they find to laugh at."[1] The Persian has none of the Arab's disinclination to laugh, whether the joke be against himself or his companion, and Persians have, moreover, an exceptional fondness for general-

[1] The curious may compare this opinion with that of Abu Hayyan Tauhidi (379 A.H.), viz., that the Persians excel in administration and in the formulation of rules and ordinances; the Greeks in science and philosophy; the Indians in subtlety and sorcery; the Turks in courage; Arabs in fidelity, generosity, and eloquence. But Abu Hayyan was an Arab.

izations and show unusual aptitude in the discussion of abstract questions. This trait is no doubt of great antiquity, for, from the earliest times of which we have any record, it is typical alike of the national religion and of their literature. A good example is to be found in the First Book of Esdras, chap. iii and iv., where three Persian guards argue at length before King Darius as to what is the greatest thing in the world. "Wine," says the first, "for it maketh every heart rich, so that a man remembereth neither king nor governor." "The King," says the second. "Woman," says the third. "Have not all men more desire unto her than unto silver or gold, or any goodly thing whatsoever?"—yet woman is not the greatest thing—"Wine is wicked, the king is wicked, women are wicked, . . . but as for truth it endureth, . . . and all the people shouted, 'Great is Truth and mighty above all things'" (*magna est veritas, prævalet super omnia*).

Such masterly generalizations are common currency to-day amongst unlettered men wherever they congregate, on the roads and in the tents, in the ante-rooms of nobles and in caravansarais.

Sir Richard Burton, speaking of Arabs, says somewhere,

> "Rely on their honour, and you will be safe; rely on their honesty, and they will steal the hair off your head."

Allowing for an element of exaggeration, and for the greater sophistication of the Persian nation than of the Arab race, experience justifies the generalization that whilst double dealing and verbal quibbling are regarded with complacency, and deceit and dissimulation in State affairs are regarded as legitimate weapons, when the honour of the tribe

or the individual, be he gentle or simple, is recognized to be at stake, considerations of expediency or personal gain carry little weight.

Amongst Persians, as amongst Arabs, hospitality is a primary virtue and a distinguishing trait in every walk of life. The poorest recognize the obligation to share their crusts with wayfarers as poor as themselves; the upper classes dispense a hospitality, as delicate as it is generous, with a genial courtesy to which every European resident in Persia must bear grateful tribute. In a country where hotels scarcely existed until a few years ago, and where wayfarers must perforce travel light, this custom not only sweetens life but is an essential part of the social fabric.

The good manners of the poor, no less than of the rich, are another pleasant feature of the ancient and cultured race and an outstanding characteristic. Perhaps the Persians owe something to the fact that they are great travellers. Few villages are without at least half a dozen men who have made the great tour to Meshed and Qum in Persia; Karbala, Najaf and Samarra in 'Iraq; and at least one who has been to Mecca and Medina. On their pilgrimages, generally on foot, or with one mule or donkey for two or three persons, they meet and exchange views with Persians from every corner of the Empire, as well as with other nationalities, and the general level of interest in and understanding of the outside world is in consequence remarkably high, notably more so than in India.

In common with other Islamic nations in the Middle East, Persians are wholly free from caste distinctions, as we should term them in India, or class-consciousness, to adopt the jargon of followers of Marx. The only exception to the social equality

which Islam grants to all men is the widespread respect in which the priesthood and the descendants of Muhammad are still held—a respect which the Safavid dynasty turned to good account. The idea of social equality was, however, deeply rooted in Persia before the Arabs overran the country, and it is tempered everywhere with a willingness to accept a leader of signal power, whether he springs from the lower ranks of life, or is of ancient lineage. The descent of leaders, be they tribal chiefs or kings, is of little consequence in the minds of a people who accept the personification of power as the embodiment of the right to rule. Indeed, the fame of a leader is in inverse proportion to the lowliness of his origin.

Kawah, the legendary blacksmith who headed a revolt against the monstrously cruel usurper Zuhaq, used his leather apron as a banner, and after slaying Zuhaq placed Faridun of the Pishdadian dynasty on the throne that he might himself have occupied. This blacksmith's apron was for ages the royal standard of Persia. Yaqub bin Lais Suffari, "the coppersmith," made his way to the throne in the ninth century by force of character, and remained a popular hero to the last. In the tenth century Sabuktagin rose from soldier to sovereign, as did a simple trooper of the Afshar tribe, Nadir Quli, in the eighteenth century, and Riza Khan, the present occupant of the throne, in our days.

Another characteristic of the Persian to which reference must be made is readiness to endure the vicissitudes of fate—a quality which we in Europe are apt to stigmatize as "fatalism" because Persians themselves are apt to describe events as *kismat* and *taqdir* ("ordained" and "pre-determined"). Whether this philosophy is related to the European conception

of predestination, as opposed to the doctrine of free-will, is perhaps a moot point; that it constitutes a better working hypothesis for the conduct of life than the rampant egotism of the apostles of free-will and "progress" is at least arguable.

"The present," once said a Persian to me, "does not exist outside our imaginations. It is an immeasurably small moment of time, which has taken its place in the past before our senses are aware of its happening. The past and the future alone exist, and the future events are continuous with and contingent on past doings."

The Persian accepts heat and cold, hunger and thirst, pain, sickness and death as a necessary part of life, not things to fear or to avoid contact with in others, but things to face with patience, stoically and even light-heartedly, as the common lot of man.

I have seen villages that had been spoiled by Russians and looted by Turks, so ravaged by famine that dead and dying men and women were lying in every street. When the British forces at last arrived, and commenced to distribute flour and seed-grain, the officers charged with distribution found little difficulty in dealing with the starving crowds. They had not lost dignity in their extremity, and twelve months later I found communal life re-established, and the traditional hierarchy of the village restored in a way that would be impossible in Europe. This power of endurance is, it is true, inevitably accompanied by a certain callousness to suffering alike in man and beast; but of deliberate cruelty, of pleasure in causing pain, there is, I believe, less in Persia than in most countries. This quality of endurance, the ability to suffer with patience, has often deceived invaders, for it is accompanied with a sub-conscious determination to recover lost ground when the time

comes—*Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt* "They let the legions thunder past," but are ready to entrap the scattered remnant on their return.

Akin to the Persian's love of poetry is his love of things beautiful, whether natural or made by hand. It is a distinctive characteristic, not noticeable amongst Turks, Arabs or Afghans in anything like the same degree; it is not confined to the educated minority, but is instinctive in townspeople and nomads alike, and especially in craftsmen. Persians are capable of deriving the utmost happiness possible from the simplest pleasures. A tiny stream of water, a few trees, some flowers, music and song,—bread, cucumbers and curds are sufficient, when combined with good conversation and unfailing sunshine, to make a Persian fiesta. The art of Persia is of another convention than ours, but flowing in a stream side by side—both streams from the same source; they are a divine gift to humanity—the love and perception of the beautiful. Of Eastern art, that of Persia, whether in the design of carpets or in the painting of miniatures, is better known and more highly appreciated than that of any other nation if we except the pottery of China, but even in this branch of art Persia has undisputed pre-eminence in the Middle East.

Of Persian military capacity and courage I have written at some length elsewhere. It is as a martial race that the Persians are first known to us in the pages of history.

Herodotus (I., 136) speaks of the bravery of the Persians at Plataea in the highest terms; Xenophon ("Cyropædia," VII, 5, 67) refers to ancient Persian bravery as proverbial, as also does every succeeding writer of importance—notably Albuquerque, Pietro della Valle, Olearius, Chardin, Hanway, and a long

succession of later writers, including Sir John Malcolm, Morier and Sir Henry Rawlinson. Indeed the list might be indefinitely prolonged. We in Europe are apt only to remember the classic gibe of Haji Baba, and to refer it to the Persian nation as a whole. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is no more striking observation in the final volnme of the late Professor Browne's *History of Persian Literature* than his observation that what arrested Ottoman conquest in Europe was Persian pressure from the East. Professor Browne would seem in that observation to have furnished the key to a great historical problem. "What was it that arrested and ultimately turned back the Ottoman flood, which after engulfing South-East Europe threatened to swallow the whole of the continent? What averted it was the fact that the Ottoman had to fight on two fronts, one of them the Persian front, and this gave Europe a breathing space."[1] Historical parallels are not always a safe guide, but Persia's geographical position has not altered, and Persians may yet have an analogous part to play in the policies of Europe and Asia.

Fuad Ammun (*La Syrie Criminelle*, 1930) states that the prison population in Syria on January 1st, 1928, was 5,877, or over two per thousand: the corresponding figure for 'Iraq on the same date was 2,955, or a little over one per thousand, and there is reason to believe that the proportion in Persia is lower still; public tranquillity and social order do not appear to suffer thereby. The population is indeed notably law-abiding: offences against the person, theft, and robbery with violence are almost certainly less common than in most European countries.

[1] Margoliouth, *The Place of Persia in the History of Islam*, 1925.

It is commonly observed by writers on Eastern topics that Asiatic nations have contrived to combine the possession of democratic instincts with the maintenance of a genuine belief in and respect for an aristocratic system of government. It is undoubtedly the case that, throughout Persia, the aristocratic manner is to be found in cases where there is no question of class ascendency. It arises from a confidence in the sense of real values. The essential secret, as remarked by Mr. L. T. Hobhouse,[1] is not that of a class but of a standard held with conviction, the sort of single-mindedness that is the backbone of inspiration, and that gives dignity and repose to skilled craftsmen all over the world.

This aristocratic ideal may, in the West, be some day overwhelmed by unqualified materialism and the mistaken sense of values which is a product of our educational and social system; it is more likely to endure in the Islamic East, where it is deep-rooted in the national spirit.

Considerations of space forbid that I should write at length of the personalities that abound in every part of Persia and in every walk of life, men and leaders of men—tribal chiefs in their mountain fastnesses, lean, bronzed, hawk-eyed, with sons like unto themselves; contemplative grey-beards in the villages, patriarchs whose word carries more weight than the law of the land; and, perhaps, the high priests in the towns. One such I shall always remember—the embodiment of gentleness, prudence and kindness. Tall, erect, and of fine presence, with clear bright eyes, his aquiline nose, aristocratic and commanding, belied the gentle voice. A diplomat and a leader, but, above all, a priest, who never forgot his double responsibility.

[1] "Aristocracy," *Encyclopædia of Social Services*, 1931.

Nor can I forget my humbler acquaintances—the patient, gentle-mannered peasants who, under the oaks at the foot of the passes, dispense tea to travellers, eked out with acorn bread; the untiring but ever-cheerful muleteer, the drudge of all the world, but honest and enduring to a point which few reach in other walks of life; the tent-pitcher and the serving men, loquacious, cheerful, often lazy, sometimes pert, always merry, but at their best when things are bad; the tribal guards, talking in sentences that follow each other like gusts of wind, hardy, undisciplined, bursting with spirits, boastful as children, and as easily vexed, yet as lovable withal. Amongst such people the primitive passions run free, hardly deflected by moral or cultural conventions. And, lastly, those who have lived on the road will remember in their reveries the blacksmith and the carpenter, the weaver and the potter in the villages and towns on their way. To quote again from the Apocrypha (Ecclus. xxxviii):

> "Without these cannot a city be inhabited: and they shall not dwell where they will, nor go up and down:
>
> "They shall not be sought for in publick counsel nor sit high in the congregation, they shall not sit on the judges' seat, nor understand the sentence of judgment; they cannot declare justice and judgment; and they shall not be found where parables are spoken.
>
> "But they will maintain the state of the world, and all their desire is in the work of tneir craft."

Yet it is not the country folk, stable as their own countryside and patient as their own beasts of burden, who have played in the past or are now playing a decisive part in the moulding of their country's future. Political influence is for practical

purposes the prerogative in Persia, as elsewhere, of a small but growing minority of educated men in the large towns. This group comprises members both of the middle and upper classes. The upper class comprises families of royal descent, big landowners, and a few tribal chiefs. It merges imperceptibly into the middle class, which includes merchants, civil servants, military officers, and tradesmen. Each class is recruited from below, and the natural tendency for members of each class to sink in successive generations into a lower category is accelerated by the operation of Islamic law regulating the division of property amongst heirs, which is unfavourable to the inheritance by individuals of large estates. The middle class, though numerically small, is to-day predominant in every walk of life. Its members form an oligarchy which controls elections, manages all public affairs, and in the last resort, by constitutional or other methods, exercises a decisive influence on national policy. They are not easily led, nor naturally submissive to their rulers, but they are patriotic, and imbued with strongly nationalistic instincts. The constitutional machine is in their hands; hitherto they have acted with restraint and with a wisdom which is almost unique in Asiatic States.

Yet the stream of political life in Persia as elsewhere is broadening, at the expense perhaps of depth. The educated minority tends to lose rather than gain influence. Compulsory military service is a powerful element in national education, for every conscript is taught something of his relation to the State and his duty to his neighbour. The number of intelligent voters is increasing, not sufficiently fast, perhaps, to be a factor of importance at election times, but enough to exercise a

salutary moral influence over the small middle class referred to above. The last word is still, as always, with the people at large, and they have more effective means of making themselves heard than those of the ballot box and the parliamentary machine.

This middle class merits the most careful study by foreigners whom business or pleasure may draw to Persia: their confidence is less easily won than that of the peasant or labouring class, for they are apt to be suspicious of and even hostile to Europeans, though their natural courtesy prevents them from displaying their feelings. This hostility is of comparatively recent growth. It does not arise from bigotry, for Islam sits lightly on their shoulders, and they tend to follow Western rather than Eastern codes of outward conduct. Nor does it spring from deep-seated racial, almost biological, differences, such as those which distinguish the autochthonous Hindu from the immigrant Muslim of the Punjab. The reverse is the case for, as has been remarked elsewhere, the Persian enters readily into every walk of European life. The fact that, for the most part, Persian ladies remain in comparative seclusion and do not mix with foreigners of either sex is a transient phenomenon, which has little or no effect on the social relations existing between Persians and Europeans. In no Eastern country is language so little a bar to interchange of ideas, for French or English, or both, are spoken with remarkable facility and accuracy by a large proportion of the official and mercantile classes. The causes are partly political and partly economic. On the political plane, Persians have never ceased to resent the attitude of their northern neighbours, whether under the Czarist or Soviet régime. They feel that they have never been treated fairly, whether in commerce

or in politics: their communications and trade with the West via Russia or the Black Sea have been at the mercy of the statesmen first of St. Petersburg and later of Moscow.

The first decade of the twentieth century, which witnessed one of the periodical burgeonings of intellectual and social activity in Persia, witnessed also a great development of expansionist ideas in Russian political and diplomatic circles. Russian statesmen gave active support to Persian monarchs who were far from deserving well of their country: British policy was favourable to democratic and constitutional aims, but failed to counterbalance Russian activity, and became the object of suspicions which the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 could not fail to confirm. The frame of mind shaped during that period hardened during the years succeeding the failure of the Anglo-Persian Convention. Our inability in 1921, as earlier in the century, to offer effective support against Russia, strengthened the convictions of Persians that national salvation was to be sought only by their own efforts. Like the Jews in the days before Cyrus (1 Esdras v. 70), they said, "It is not for us and you to build together an house. . . . We ourselves alone[1] will build." They have begun well.

The outlook of Persians in their economic relations with foreigners deserves careful study and is dealt with more fully elsewhere in this book. The prejudice against foreign merchants, engineers, and officials is certainly not greater than that displayed, in the crudest form, by the Turkish Government, by a political party in Germany towards Jews, or by the people of South and East Africa towards Indians. It was at one time strengthened by the

[1] The translation of these words in Erse is "Sinn Fein."

extra-territorial privileges enjoyed in Persia by foreigners, but was in no way affected when these privileges were abrogated (see Chapter IX). It is manifested by a prudent disinclination of the Persian Government to borrow abroad, by legislation prohibiting the acquisition of land by foreigners, and by other enactments which press more heavily on foreign than on Persian firms.

It has not prevented Persia from making, within the last ten years, full use of foreign advisers, drawn with catholic judgement from Europe, the U.S.A. and Japan, though it has served to restrain the Government from granting (except in the special case of Dr. Millspaugh) executive powers to such officials. It is not universal in its application; Mustafa Khan Fateh, for example, offers no apology for recommending European immigration in the interests of Persia.[1] "Such a plan," he writes, "would bring about the dissemination of knowledge, the propagation of modern methods of living, and the introduction of European civilization into the life of the people—a thing which is more practical for present-day Persia than education."

The prejudice against foreigners is probably a matter of instinct and sentiment rather than of economic stress, fostered, unfortunately, by the tendency of Europeans who write books on Persia to emphasize the picturesque, the squalid and, to their eyes, bizarre aspects of indigenous life, to patronize rather than to sympathize, and to lecture rather than to understand. These books include, in Lord Curzon's words, "some of the most worthless rubbish that ever blundered into print," written by travellers (of both sexes) "whose critical equilibrium has not yet been proof against the romantic atmos-

[1] *The Economic Position of Persia*, P. S. King, 1926.

phere of the East, which has swept them away on gusts of sentiment, displayed in a turgid pomposity of style that is alternatively exasperating and ludicrous." The quick-witted, sensitive Persian, who has graduated abroad, and lived on equal terms in good society in Europe, cannot read such works with the philosophic indifference or amused contempt that they merit. He dislikes ridicule, but he loathes rhapsodical gush lavished on things and institutions which he would fain see disappear from the scene.

It is true to-day that one out of every seven men of working age in the United Kingdom dies of tuberculosis, and about the same number from cancer. It is a fact that only one out of every twenty men examined for the police, and one out of five for the army were found medically fit; that a million children in this country are mentally defective, five million unsound in body and mind, and half a million adults definitely of unsound mind.[1] Yet to state such facts without due regard to the more hopeful aspects of our civilization would be properly regarded as the mark of an ill-balanced mind. Observations of this type, seasoned with descriptions of ancient ruins, desert scenery, and tribal costumes and customs, are too frequent in the abundant literature on the subject of Persia to leave a native of that country entirely unmoved.

In concluding this chapter, some reference is necessary to the philosophical and religious outlook of the Persian middle class. They sometimes describe themselves as free-thinkers, but not in the sense in which this phrase is used by Dean Swift, who stigmatized the sect in his days as "atheists, libertines, and despisers of religion." Islam does not hold them in bonds, and it is indeed doubtful if they

[1] C. W. Armstrong, *The Survival of the Unfittest*, 2nd Edn., 1931.

ever paid more than lip-service to the official creed of their country, except so far as was necessary to distinguish them from Turks, Arabs, and other neighbours of the "lesser breeds without the Law." Yet Persia was the home of Mithraism, and of Sufism, and many men now living saw the birth of that remarkable sect, the Bahais, whose adherents are still to be found all over the world. Men of this persuasion, drawn largely from the middle classes, endured bitter persecution, public ignominy, and private reprobation with a fortitude which commands both respect and admiration. Men capable of such lofty ideals, and of such self-abnegation in maintaining them, are capable, when rightly inspired, of serving their country nobly; and such are not hard to find in modern Persia.

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CHAPTER III

THE AGRICULTURAL AND PASTORAL INDUSTRIES

In commencing this chapter it is necessary once more to remind the reader that the scope of this work precludes any detailed disquisition on particular topics, the treatment of which must of necessity be incidental only to the main theme, the position of Persia in relation to its neighbours and the world.

Some reference has already been made (*vide* Chapter I) to the climate of Persia, which varies from tropical to sub-arctic. The agricultural products of the country are correspondingly varied, ranging from tea, cultivated on a small scale on the shores of the Caspian, to the vine, extensively grown in many provinces, and from valuable timber grown in the humid Caspian provinces to plants from which dyes are extracted, which thrive only a little below the snow line.

Wheat and barley, millet and maize are grown throughout Persia, and although in good years a small surplus is available, the cost of transport precludes competition in foreign markets, so that over a period of years imports of cereals exceed exports. Carriage by road, even by motor-lorry, is expensive. "On account of transportation difficulties," wrote Millspaugh in 1924, "surplus wheat and barley

may be rotting in the fields in one part of Persia while six hundred miles away the population may be suffering from a bread famine." Such a famine compelled the Persian Government in 1918 to establish in parts of the country a monopoly of grain, and to arrange for its transport and its conversion into bread. This system, frequently modified, and in its later stages restricted to the handling of grain received by the State from landowners in lieu of cash, was not altogether satisfactory, though immense pains were taken from 1925 onwards by the American Financial Mission to ensure its success, but it worked far more efficiently than might have been expected; bread was maintained at a reasonable price, and famine was averted. The great increase in the number and the improvement of the condition of the roads fit for motor traffic in Northern and Central Persia during the last five years makes it unlikely that such conditions will again recur in a form so acute as in 1918–1921. The following account of an eye-witness will give the reader some idea of what famine in Persia during those years involved:

"When I went up the road from Khanaqin in April, 1918, I saw a sight I hope I may never again witness—a whole people perishing for want of food. In the bazaar of Kermanshah sat the traders, sad-eyed but imperturbable, behind their stalls, on which were displayed dates, bread, and food-grains. A few yards away lay some poor Lazarus; flies swarmed about his head, filling nose and mouth; from his mouth oozed a black liquid—yet he was not dead. (It was thus that hundreds of British soldiers had died, just two years before, whilst 'the honoured guests of the Turkish Government,' to use Enver Pasha's own words.) Near by sat a woman, nearly naked, having sold for food even the veil of Eastern convention. Her dark brown skin was

drawn tightly over her sharp bones, and her breasts hung like pieces of parchment down to her waist. Close by her lay three children huddled stark naked on a mat—their limbs wasted—every bone showing through the transparent skin. I saw similar sights in every town and every village that still existed on either side of the road. I was filled with horror at the spectacle and with misery at our inability to alleviate immediate needs. I knew the Khanaqin-Hamadan road well; I had several times traversed it before the War, and had enjoyed the hospitality of gentle and simple alike in many of the towns and villages. Now it was my part to see the buildings in ruins, and my hosts of five years ago scattered, dead, or dying. We were terribly short of transport, and such grain as we could spare from Mesopotamia was being absorbed by the scarcely less urgent requirements of the Khanaqin liwa, which had been reduced to terrible straits by the cruel ebb and flow of war. When I hear, from time to time, Persians and others lamenting the good old days when there were no roads, and when pack animals were the only means of transport throughout the country, I remember the terrors of those days and the abundant traditional and written records of no less poignant miseries of earlier famines, such as that of 1872; and I view with thankfulness the motor-lorries and good roads of the present day."[1]

Wheat and barley are more exposed than any other crops to the ravages of locusts and grasshoppers—to which reference is made elsewhere in this book. The other enemies are rust and drought. In Southern Persia these cereals are sown after the ground, hard baked by the powerful summer sun, is sufficiently softened by the first rain, which may be as early as the first week in November, or as late as the first week in January. In the case of barley reaping will not be later than the 15th to 20th of April, while wheat is harvested

[1] Wilson, *Mesopotamia, 1917–20.* 1931.

from the end of April to the first days of May, roughly one month earlier than in Upper Fars, and two and a half months earlier than harvesting in the altitudes above 6,000 feet. In Northern and Central Persia spring wheat is extensively sown. A full ploughing season is reckoned by the peasants as forty days. The all-important factor, in the dry cultivation as distinct from the irrigated crop, is a succession of regular and soaking rainfalls between February 15th and April 1st, particularly about March 21st. If such timely rains occur (even if sowing should have been delayed till late December or early January), a yield of twenty times the quantity of seed sown is common, as compared with up to twelve-fold in the trans-montane districts of Fars. On the other hand, excellent rains during November to January are often followed by a hold-off of rain in late February and March, the result of which is a meagre harvest hardly returning the seed sown. Harvest records in the Persian Gulf zone may be summarized over cycles of eleven years as one good year, two or three medium, four poor and two or three extremely bad.

Thanks, in part, to the lack of transport facilities there is generally at least twelve months' supply of grain for the whole country in storage at the larger centres of population, in government granaries and in the hands of merchants, and serious scarcity is not general unless two very bad years occur in succession.

The nomads of the Zagros range from Baneh and Saqqiz in Kurdistan to Shiraz, have from the earliest times supplemented their meagre stores of cereals with bread made from acorns, which are ground or rather pounded to pulp with the aid of a boulder rolled over a flat rock; the meal thus

obtained is soaked in running water for several days, dried and made into flat cakes. It is not appetizing, but it keeps well, and judging from the physical condition of whole families which have lived with no other cereals and no other food except the produce of their herds, it does not lack vitamins. The wheat is, generally speaking, of a "strong" type, small of grain and short in the stalk: when obtainable free from barley it commands a good price on the European market. Bread is usually made with a mixture of wheat and barley flour, and is as sweet and nutritious as the rye bread of Cumberland and Germany. Oats and rye are not grown.

The only other staple cereal is rice, which is largely grown on the Caspian littoral and to some extent in every other province of Persia, wherever sufficient water is available. Before the war the value of rice annually exported to Russia was about £500,000; it stands at about the same figure to-day, the actual quantity exported in 1930 being about 50,000 tons. A considerable quantity is on the other hand imported into South and East Persia from India.

The outstanding feature of Persian agriculture, industry and finance, is the fact that one of the staple crops of the country is opium. There are various reasons for this: the poppy is immune from attacks by locusts; the product is compact, and so valuable that it can bear the cost of pack-transportation over great distances to the frontier; it is readily saleable, and of recent years has steadily increased in price.

The drug has its devotees in Persia; on the other hand, more dangerous drugs such as morphine and cocaine are unknown. Addicts are less numerous than formerly, thanks to energetic action by the

Persian Government, which in 1929 constituted its purchase, sale, and transport a Government monopoly. The habit once acquired is not easy to break without skilled medical treatment: the consequence of failure of an addict to obtain a supply varies from the initial uneasiness and weakness to a state of severe shock, from which a feeble person may not recover. So powerful is the drug that Persians assert that animals which live in the room of an opium smoker become addicts themselves, nor is there anything improbable in the belief.[1]

The important part played by opium in the financial system of Persia may be gathered from the fact that, excluding petroleum, it comes first in the list of exports, the declared value amounting in 1930 to more than half of the total. It is grown in eighteen of the twenty-six provinces, and provides the means of livelihood of a larger number of the population than any other commodity except wheat.

Persia has always played an intelligent part in international affairs and in commissions summoned to deal with special problems, and her attitude towards the opium question has been and is consistent with her general policy in such matters. In 1910 the Persian Parliament, known as the Majlis, passed a law to prohibit, as from 1917, the use of opium for other than medical purposes: she took part in a series of international conferences at The Hague, and signed the Opium Convention of 1912, subject to one important reservation, viz., she declined to assent to Article 3 (*a*) whereby the signatories undertook "to prevent the export of raw opium to countries which shall have prohibited its entry." In September, 1923, at a meeting of the

[1] See Neligan, p. 80.

Assembly of the League of Nations, the Persian delegate declared that his Government would withdraw this reservation as soon as a practicable scheme for replacing opium by other industries or crops had been drawn up. A Commission was duly despatched to this end, half the cost being very properly borne by the American Bureau of Social Hygiene, with orders to report "whether the agricultural and economic possibilities of Persia will permit the Persian Government to limit by law the present production of opium."

The conclusion unanimously reached, after a visit to Persia was that "while difficult of accomplishment, it is possible and practically feasible, and to the economic interest of Persia, to adopt a programme for the gradual diminution of the cultivation of the opium poppy."

The Commission recommended:

(1) Substitution of food and other crops in place of the poppy;

(2) The development of other products, especially cotton, wool, silk and sugar;

(3) A gradual reduction of the area under poppy, synchronizing with development of roads, railways, irrigation schemes, and factories (to be protected by a tariff).

The cost was to be met partly by taxing opium, partly by reducing military and other expenditure —in fact, the whole economic system of Persia was to be fundamentally modified in order to make a reduction of opium exports possible without financial disaster

The Persian Government's observations were brief and pointed. They observed that the proposals for crop substitution and for the encouragement of industries depended on the provision of better communications involving, with the other proposals, heavy expenditure, which the Commission had not attempted to forecast. They remarked that the Majlis would not pass restrictive laws unless deputies could be assured that their constituencies would not suffer. "The Persian people and the Persian Government intend to suppress the excess production of opium with or without foreign assistance, and they desire no foreign loan for the eventual completion of this programme. Tariff autonomy," they declared, "was the absolutely necessary condition," and they asked whether, in view of the sacrifices demanded from Persia, other countries would not be prepared to reduce import duties on Persian goods.

This shot was, of course, aimed at the United States of America, where tariffs on Persian carpets and other exports had been, and have more recently been still further, increased.

Throughout the discussion the Persian Government emphasized that the extent to which they would feel able to act would depend upon the action taken by other producing and manufacturing countries to curtail the production of the raw product, and the manufacture and distribution of habit-forming drugs. They had, in other words, no intention of allowing themselves, like the Government of India, to be cajoled and brow-beaten into depriving their nationals of a lucrative trade, only to see others take their place. Here the matter rests, and is likely to remain.

The declared value of opium exported during

1930 was about £1,150,000, the great bulk of which was destined for the Far East. The rigid operation of the close mesh of regulations enforced against the transhipment in Indian ports of opium from Persia prevents free movement of this commodity, which has never been in greater demand, or more widely grown in China. A large proportion is sent by the Trans-Siberian Railway consigned nominally to Vladivostok: in reality it never reaches that port. Were facilities for the transport of this opium to be withheld, Persia would, at a single stroke, lose a market for a large proportion of her total crop, and nearly 10 per cent. of her customs revenue. She is in consequence being forced by the pious vigilance of Great Britain in all that concerns the opium traffic to depend upon the goodwill of Soviet Russia in a matter vital to her financial stability.

The use of opium is as unlikely to be abandoned, or seriously restricted, in Asia as is that of alcohol, tobacco, and other narcotics such as tea and coffee in other parts of the world. It was familiar to the Sumerians and Babylonians, it was known to Theophrastus and Dioscorides, throughout the ages in Persia its use has been widespread, and its abuse is rarer at the present day than at any time in the past fifty years. As in India, it is the soldier's emergency ration, the muleteer's tonic and the starveling's solace; it is daily used to ease the pain of thousands of sick and injured men who cannot hope to obtain skilled medical assistance. Physically and mentally the Persian nation as a whole need not be afraid to challenge comparison with the polyglot communities of the New World, for whose sake it is apparently desired to impoverish and to circumvent the liberties of Eastern races who can,

for the most part, use without abusing stimulants. The existence in Western countries of a few weak-minded drug addicts is a poor excuse for under-mining by harassing legislation the sturdy individualism that is one of the most enduring assets of the Persian race.

Persian opium is of high quality, and is in steady demand for the manufacture of morphia and allied products in Europe, where it is replacing the Indian variety. So far from the area under cultivation being reduced in the future, it is likely to increase, and for so far ahead as it is possible to foresee, it is likely to remain the principal export of Persia and the mainstay of its inhabitants and of the national revenues.

Next in importance to cereals and opium in the agricultural economy of rural Persia come tobacco, cotton, silk and fruit, including raisins. Efforts are being made to add sugar to the list, for in the early Middle Ages the sugar cane was a staple crop in Khuzistan, and was exported thence to every part of Persia and even to Egypt. It grows well on the Caspian littoral and elsewhere, and the beetroot flourishes wherever planted. The annual imports of sugar into Persia are so large, being second in value only to cotton piece-goods, with a declared value of nearly £2,000,000, that consideration has naturally been given to the possibility of manufacturing on the spot at least a proportion of the country's needs. But transport difficulties, though greatly lessened in the last four years, preclude the removal of raw beet to the factory for more than a few miles. No single area at present available offers a sufficient acreage of irrigated land to feed a refinery: artificial fertil-izers are unobtainable. The attempt to produce sugar in North Persia must, in the long run, fail, if

only for the lack of cheap fuel.[1] It recalls the words of the French economist Bastiat, who in 1845 wrote:

"Monopoly, taking refuge behind restrictions—gets painfully produced in the North what is produced with facility in the South, . . . creates precarious branches of industry, substitutes for the gratuitous forces of nature the onerous fatigues of labour; cherishes establishments which can sustain no rivalry, and invokes against competitors the employment of force, provoking international jealousies and flattering patriotic arrogance."

It might indeed be possible to produce sugar in South-West Persia, should the Karun be harnessed for purposes of irrigation (see Chapter VIII), but nowhere else does it seem possible to devote a sufficiently large area to sugar cultivation in Persia without displacing essential cereals.

Persian tobacco is of good quality, and is very extensively consumed throughout Persia, both in pipes and in the form of cigarettes. It is a bulky crop however, and in consequence does not compete successfully in international markets, though a substantial quantity of tobacco, known as *tombac*, is exported to Egypt, and smaller amounts to neighbouring countries. The mild cigarette tobacco produced on the Caspian littoral is of really fine quality and deserves to be better known. It is doubtful, however, whether a large export business can be developed, for tobacco is a staple crop in all the neighbouring countries.

[1] Nevertheless, one beet sugar refinery has already commenced operations in the province of Tehran, and a second one will be opened during the current year, the capacity being 300 and 500 tons a day. Their existence depends, of course, upon the maintenance of the State trade monopoly in sugar.

The soil and climate of Persia are favourable to cotton growing, and before 1914 the production reached almost 30,000 tons, in spite of poor seed and crude methods, and occasional ravages by swarms of locusts. In 1930 exports of raw cotton totalled some 13,000 tons, and probably at least as great a quantity was manufactured locally[1] into textiles of various kinds. American cotton-seed is sown extensively, with satisfactory results, and the area under cotton is steadily increasing. Soviet Russia has hitherto been the destination of almost all the cotton exported, and Persia's dependence on this market is not likely to diminish in future. Efforts are being made to stimulate the production and use of locally made cotton fabrics, which Persia imported in 1930 to the value of over £2,000,000, of which almost half was of Russian origin and a nearly equal, but diminishing quantity, from the British Empire, of which the mills of Bombay are taking every year a larger share. Persians display so much skill, and have undoubtedly such hereditary aptitude in the manufacture of textiles, that there should be a real future for the textile industry in Persia, whether in silk, wool, or cotton: indeed, the fabrics already produced by primitive methods are of high quality. It should be possible for Persia, in this direction, eventually to be self-supporting, nor do the considerations urged by Bastiat and his modern disciples apply to this industry. Persia is, at present, unduly dependent on agriculture, and the manufacture of textiles for local consumption is calculated to broaden the basis of national economy and to promote financial stability.

[1] Modern cotton spinning factories exist at Tabriz, Tehran, Aliabad (Mazanderan), Samnan, Meshed, and are under construction at Kerman, Kermanshah. Woollen mills have been erected at Kazvin and Isfahan.

The same considerations apply to the production of silk, which before 1914 was the basis of a prosperous industry and was, in the Middle Ages, the principal export to Europe. In the early years of the nineteenth century exports of raw silk from Persia attained the high figure of 2,000,000 lbs. by weight. Disease appeared in 1864, twenty years later cocoons were imported from Japan, and later from Turkey and Russia: by 1914 exports were 1,200,000 lbs., mostly from Gilan, but now stand, after a catastrophic decline during the war, at nearly 1,750,000, lbs. of which three-quarters go to Italy, and nearly all the rest to Soviet Russia.

There is a ready market for raw silk, and its production is a valuable subsidiary village industry, in which women and children play the principal part. Transport difficulties do not seriously hamper its development, nor need the locust be feared. It is an industry with a future, and if the importation of eggs is controlled by experts, and methods of production improved, it should play an important part in the rural life of Persia.

The same is true of the dried fruit industry. "The fruits of Europe and Asia," wrote Lord Curzon, "meet and fraternize upon Persian soil." It would be more accurate to say that in all probability the principal fruits of Europe were originally introduced into Europe from the Persian highlands, where their wild prototypes are to be found.[1] The climate of

[1] Neolithic man appears to have come to Europe from the East, bringing with him more diversified ways of living and evidence of greater control over his environment. The design of some of his flaked implements was introduced from the East; and, of his earlier domesticated animals, sheep were certainly not European, while the nearest living relatives to his goats are found in Asia. There is evidence that domestication of the

Persia is, generally speaking, very favourable to the production of fruit: the cold winter, the comparative absence of pests, and the hot sun, which makes it possible to dry the fruit without recourse to artificial methods, are all in favour of the industry. There are no finer melons than those of Persia, and the local grape vine is capable not only of producing a fine quality of sherry, but raisins of supreme quality. Nowhere are the pomegranates sweeter, or oranges (especially of the kind from which marmalade is made) larger. The *pista* or pistachio of commerce is extensively cultivated, and, together with almonds, has a good reputation on the European market. No serious attempt has been made to export dried figs or apricots in large quantity except to Russia, and the dried cherry, than which there is nothing better of its kind, is almost unknown outside Persia; but production of dried fruit is steadily increasing, and now stands at about £800,000. It is, like the silk industry, a subsidiary occupation both for cultivators and townsfolk, and though transport costs are a serious hindrance, there can be little doubt that it is capable of great development. A real effort is now being made to prepare dried fruit for export on factory lines; machinery is being imported for the purpose, and a factory for tinned fruit is already installed at Meshed.

The foregoing observations will have sufficed to indicate to the reader that whilst agriculture in

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horse also came from the East; the Kassite peoples probably having introduced the horse into Mesopotamia from the Persian plateau. Again, he cultivated wheat. Now this cereal, previously unknown to Europe, grows wild in Syria; which also points to an Eastern origin for these newcomers who brought with them such novel ways of living. See Vowles, *Quest for Power*, 1931, p. 19.

Persia is not capable, in the writer's opinion, of unlimited expansion, it is, broadly speaking, in a healthy condition. The production of food is generally adequate for the country's needs: it is not affected by export demands and therefore upon world-prices. There is, however, plenty of water and land available for the production of crops other than food-stuffs, such as flax and hemp, which can be used within Persia to replace imports.

Whether it will pay to introduce agricultural machinery on a large scale is a question on which it is not safe to dogmatize. In Persia, as in India, deep ploughing is not always desirable, where the crop depends on rain, for it exposes too great a depth to evaporation, and may turn up soil of no nutritive value. Draught animals can live on the country, while tractors depend on fuel and lubricants which have to be brought by road over great distances. Machinery, too, requires spare parts which have to be imported and held in reserve at great cost, whereas animals reproduce their kind, and the Persians have, in their mountain country, great areas suited for raising farm stock and for no other purpose. Remembering how little agricultural machinery is used in Europe on the one hand, and in India on the other, it is premature to assume that Persia will find it to her advantage to follow the example of Soviet Russia, the U.S.A. and Canada. The last thing that Persians would desire would be an increase in the number of landless peasantry, whose lot is harder by far than that of the nomads. Among minor industries must be mentioned tanning, modern tanneries having been installed at Tabriz and Meshed; cigarette-making at Isfahan, jute-milling and soap-

making. Electric-light plants are to be found in most large towns, and workshops capable of executing running repairs to cars and lorries and much other useful mechanical work, are increasingly common.

Unemployment amongst the agricultural population, which looms large on the horizon of Soviet Russia,[1] is not a matter which need cause Persian statesmen any apprehension. There is no likelihood of any great export trade in agricultural products, but geographical and climatic conditions are favourable to an increased output of raw silk, nuts and dried fruit, as also of vegetable gums, used for "size" in Manchester and elsewhere, and of dates, which might be grown to a far greater extent than at present in Khuzistan and in certain other favoured localities along the Persian Gulf littoral. Persia could, as stated elsewhere, maintain a much larger population than at present by an expansion of the present well-balanced proportion between town and country, though reform of the system of land tenure is an essential preliminary to any considerable change in this respect. The standard of living is not indeed likely to be raised thereby, but this is, contrary to the conception of most writers on the subject, a matter not only of the amount and kind

[1] Haensel (*The Economic Policy of Soviet Russia*, 1930), on the strength of official figures, annotated and definite, states that "the Five-Year Plan provides that the number of workmen in the census industry (viz., in industry coming under the census, or all industrial undertakings having more than fifteen labourers) will rise from 2,602,000 in 1927–28 to 3,250,000 in 1932–33 or by 648,000 persons only." These figures are of profound significance, raising, as they do, the question of destiny of the vast surplus rural population of Russia, progressively unemployed as a result of collectivization, but increasing at the rate of three and a half to four millions a year. The rulers of Soviet Russia have hitherto ignored this aspect of their policy, but it is unlikely to have escaped the attention of Persian statesmen, whose conservative instincts, in the matter of agricultural development and land reform, are in the truest interests of their country.

of goods and services consumed, but of the kind and amount of labour and other sacrifice involved in their production. The cost of a given standard of consumption includes not only the labour given to the requisite production, but the potential cost of lost leisure. The Persian peasantry and nomads prize their leisure; it has, to them, a biological value akin to that of sleep. Those who seek, like the late Mr. Edwin Montagu, to arouse a peasantry from their pathetic contentment, ignore the fact that both ethics and economics are, in the last resort, in the jargon of the schoolmen, branches of æsthetics. Following J. A. Hobson[1] we may assume that the object of a society is to develop and serve individuals on lines and in a manner suited to their environment; a review of Persian society, as at present organized, leads the writer to conclude that it serves this purpose better than does, within its own sphere, the more complex system of Europe. The social system in Persia has withstood, during several millennia, the rudest shocks; it is capable of developing in the future, as in the past, a higher standard of intellectual and communal life, and some increase of material comfort in keeping with local environment. It is not inconsistent with the spread of education in the Miltonian sense, as something "which fits a man to perform, boldly, skilfully and magnanimously, all the offices, both private and public, of peace and of war." Progress lies in the changes of structure in the social organization which entail or make possible such consequences. A belief in the possibility of progress is not the least important contribution of Christian thought to the world; and this belief Persians share with Europeans more wholeheartedly, perhaps, than any Eastern race, and with more

[1] *Wealth and Life: A Study in Values*, Macmillan.

discrimination than most. Whether rich or poor, they have hitherto retained their freedom of that burden of endless personal wants which we call comfort, and that lust for the possession of chattels which oppresses us of the West. Their reputation and their sense of personal dignity are independent of material circumstances; that is the most important lesson we may learn from them.

The Qajar dynasty and its predecessors attached great importance to the prosperity of the nomad tribes, whom they held to be, as indeed they were, the best defence of the country against foreign invaders on the western border, and to some extent on the north-eastern and eastern frontier. They grew in influence and became progressively more difficult to control, and to the bold action of the chiefs of one great nomad tribe—the Bakhtiaris—Persia owes, in a way, its constitutional liberties, for the agitation in 1909 which resulted in the dethronement of Muhammad Ali Shah, and the rehabilitation of a parliamentary régime, was due mainly to their intervention. Physically, the nomad is in every way superior to the sedentary agriculturist: he has no superior in Asia, and except in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and the Caucasus and Northern Turkey, no equals. Mentally, he is more alert, more intelligent, and more courageous than the villagers or townsmen, and until the beginning of the nineteenth century it was from nomad tribes that the Persian army was recruited. They probably account for nearly one-quarter of the total population of the country: and produce more than their share of its total wealth.

No recent estimate of their numbers is available, nor have any statistics been published as to their flocks and herds. The nomads of Azerbaijan speak

Turkish, and those of Kurdistan speak in their several dialects; the nomads of Luristan speak a tongue which shows traces of the ancient Pahlawi tongue of pre-Islamic Persia. Some of the tribes of Fars speak Turkish, others a dialect in which Arabic is predominant. The Turkmans of Khurasan speak Turki, and those of Baluchistan Brahui. Yet all are stamped ineffaceably with a single nationality, and their frequent clashes with the authority of the Central Government does not connote any desire on their part to dissociate themselves from the destinies of the amorphous Empire of which they have so long formed part. Some are immigrants from Arabia, others from Turkistan; a few are Caucasian in origin, others are from Turkish territory, but the majority are in all probability autochthonous.

The immigrant elements are the outcome of four great nomadic movements during the past fourteen centuries.[1] The first was that of Arabs in the seventh century, the second that of the Turks who in the eighth century began to move westwards from Mongolia. The third was a similar movement of the Seljuks in the eleventh century, the fourth and greatest was that of the Mongolians under Chengiz Khan and his heirs in the thirteenth century. These movements were succeeded from time to time by minor incursions, or by slow infiltrations. It is probable, for example, that the extensive colonization of Southern Fars and Khuzistan by Arab tribes was subsequent to and independent of the original invasion of Persia by Arabs in the sixth century. It is certain that during the past ten centuries the Baluch element has increased its westerly extension

[1] Ross, Sir E. Denison, *Nomadic Movements in Asia*, Royal Soc. Arts, 1929.

in the south-east corner of Persia. There appears to have been a moderately peaceful penetration of the mountains of South-West Persia by Arabs from time to time in the fifteenth and subsequent centuries, and the ebb and flow of Kurds from what is now Turkish territory and of Turks into Azerbaijan from the mountainous region west of the Zagros watershed is a matter of history.

Lt.-Colonel Lorimer's description of the Bakhtiari tribesmen and their ways is of general application to nomadic communities in general.

"In winter," he writes, "they are found scattered among the low hills and undulating valleys fringing the plains, but with the arrival of the Vernal Equinox they begin to turn their faces northwards, and then gradually make their way to the lofty central ranges and the high-lying hill-girt plains beyond, which border on and shelve down to the central Iranian plateau.

"Autumn, again, sees them retracing their arduous steps along unmade tracks over the intervening ranges to their winter haunts.

"Though nomads, whose principal interests centre in their flocks and herds, they are not a pastoral people in the strictest sense, for they also practise agriculture. Indeed, many tribes cultivate two sets of crops, sowing wheat, barley, and other cereals in the uplands (*yailaq*) in autumn, which they reap on their return in the following summer, and again sowing wheat and barley in the garmsir (hot country) in winter, which some of their number remain behind to reap and harvest when the general exodus takes place in spring.

"The ordinary tribesmen are destitute of any bookish education or knowledge of the outer world, though they may visit the neighbouring towns as foreigners for commerce or barter, but the exigencies of their active, roving life, ever confronting them with the unmitigated dangers

of rugged mountains and swift rivers, and exposing them to the vicissitudes of climate and weather, keep their wits in a state of intelligent activity.

"Pastoral peoples are not usually fools, as the humble necessary cultivator often is, and the nomad grazier should be a combination of Rob Roy and the Lowland Scottish shepherd. The Bakhtiari has more of Rob Roy perhaps than of the shepherd in him, and his natural pastimes, when left to pursue his own courses, are rather raiding and robbery than poetic reflection or philosophic meditation.

"Considering his surroundings and his neighbours, it is not altogether surprising if he is a man of violence and not unacquainted with sin. If under the discipline of relatively powerful chiefs his quick temper may find satisfaction in belabouring a quarrelsome or sulky wife or hurling himself on an annoying brother, rather than in the excitement and danger of an attack on a neighbouring tribe, and if petty thieving and pilfering often take the place of robbery under arms and other high emprise, it is by no means always so. At least, the manliness of the race has not as yet been assailed by the debasing influences of Law Courts with their chicane and false swearing to another's hurt."

To this description the writer would add, also from personal experience, that the average Persian tribesman is physically as fine a type as is to be found in any country, capable of extraordinary feats of endurance, wayward as a child and as lovable withal, a loyal friend and a good workman.

Persia is not a paradise for sportsmen. The lion, so common fifty years ago, is now extinct.[1] The leopard and bear survive, but are rare except in the Bakhtiari and Kuhgalu country. The mountain goat

[1] On this subject I must differ from Mr. Edward Thompson vide "*The Times*," 11th May, 1931.

(ibex) and mountain sheep are commoner, but are restricted for the most part to the most waterless and least attractive areas. The francolin is met with in fair numbers in South-West Persia, but it affords but little sport, as it is apt to refuse to rise. The inhabitants, hardy mountaineers, and not infrequently with ample leisure, are for ever scouring the hills in search of anything that will give an excuse for a shot in season and out of season. Males, females and young—in fact, whatever has life is hunted down and shot. Stalked from every side, and not recognizing the demarcation laid down by man, a wounded bird is frequently the cause of a hunters' quarrel, the commencement perhaps of a tribal feud.

The women of the Bakhtiari tribe weave coarse woollen carpets from the wool produced by their own flocks, the warp of which is usually of five-strand cotton. The wool also is of similar yarn. The wool is dyed at home by the women with natural dyes, which are all, with the exception of the indigo-blue and violet, obtained by them locally from the various plants and coloured earths.

Besides carpets, the women weave a coarse woollen fabric on the outer side of which a nap of about half an inch long is left, which is used chiefly for sewing up into sacks for the transport of grain, etc. This fabric is usually woven in lengths of about 9 feet 6 inches by 3 feet broad, which, in the finished form, are known as *khur*. The black goat-hair cloth, used exclusively in the construction of their tents, is 20 feet by 3 feet. This is the "sack-cloth" of the Old Testament.

Crafts found among the tribes are few and of the most primitive character, the most common being

those of smith and carpenter; and here and there an armourer may be found.

Islam sits lightly on the tribes, many of whose observances date from the pre-Islamic period. I myself have seen the eternal fire burning in the hills of Luristan. I have seen the women making their bows and saying their prayers to the high places, lofty peaks such as those that were sacred when Baal was all-powerful. I have seen great rocks in distant valleys red with the blood of recent sacrifice, and it is probable that the beliefs underlying these practices still linger on.

Of folk-lore among the tribesmen much might be written.[1] Like all hillmen, they are fond of stories of animals, some of them of a religious tinge, but nearly all with a humorous touch. They have many stories about bears especially, whom they believe to be endowed with an intelligence far superior to that of other animals, and to have almost human feelings and habits. They claim that a bear will sometimes kill a man simply to possess himself of fire-arms. This is because bears were once human beings, being, in fact, the progeny of a miserly inhospitable man who, seeing a stranger coming and thinking to shirk the duties of hospitality, hid himself under a heap of freshly-sheared wool, and desired his wife to tell the traveller that her husband had gone to the mountains and that, being a woman and alone, she could not receive a guest. She did so, but the stranger, who was none other than Hazrat Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet, knew that her man had hidden himself. "Arise! O bear," he exclaimed, "and dwell henceforth in the woods." The wool adhered to the inhospitable Lur, he lost his speech, fled to the mountains, and became the first bear,

[1] See Lorimer, *Persian Tales*.

being joined, we may suppose, by his wife at some subsequent date.

Of the leopard they tell another story—that it will always scratch a man's face, but will never touch a woman, the reason being as follows: A woman once went to Hazrat Ali saying, "Sir, I have no husband. Find me a husband." "Certainly," said Ali, and found her one. A month later she came back. "O Ali," she said, "I cannot live with such a man; though young, he is cruel in act, hard in speech, unkind in demeanour, and ever brutal in his love. Find me another and older husband." The Saint complied. A month later she was at his tent-door again. "O Ali, I cannot live with such a man. He is no man at all. Whatever I ask for he gives me; whatever I say, however unreasonable, he accepts. He has nothing for me but embraces and affection. He is not the sort of man that I can admire or live with and he is old." "Woman," said Ali, "you are hard to please, but I will give you one more chance," and a third husband was found. A month later she reappeared. "O Ali," she said, "I cannot live with such a youth. He is so calm and just, so reasonable and dull, so free from the desires proper to his age that I would sooner have my first husband back, for he was indeed a man." "Woman," said Ali, "you are incorrigible. Become a leopard." And ever since then, whenever a leopard sees a woman it passes her by, but when it sees a man it scratches his face.

Of the cock and the hen, who are unable to fly, they tell the story that there was once a time when the Almighty was giving wings to all the birds. It was late in the day when the turn of the cock and hen and of certain others came, and it was too late to try their wings. Most of the birds said,

"Very well; *Insha Allah* (God willing), we will fly to-morrow." The cock and the hen did not say "God willing." They just said, "We will fly to-morrow," and, in revenge for their presumption, the Almighty deprived them of the power of flight, and that is why every Persian prefaces an expression of intention with the magic words *Insha Allah*.

And they have stories of frogs, to whom the Prophet gave orders that they should sing the praises of the Almighty at night when all other animals were silent. Of the camels too, who were originally a race of shaikhs, so proud that instead of saying "There is no God but God," they said, "There is no God." In spite of warnings they persisted, and were turned into camels and became beasts of burden. That is why they grumble when they are loaded and look so proud and supercilious as they pass down the street; and that must be why there is not and never has been any such thing as a wild camel, although all other domestic beasts have their counterpart in the wild state.

I once witnessed in the Bakhtiari country a mourning ceremony for a warrior who had fallen some two years previously. The men and women in their best clothes each formed two groups. Two large black tents or tabernacles stood side by side, one for the women and one for the men, and at each outer flank stood a group of women and men respectively swinging their arms and bodies to the rhythm of a melodious but sad dirge.[1] The other groups were some two hundred yards off, and soon began a slow march towards the tents, the women making straight for the women standing near their tent, and the men for the group of men near theirs.

[1] For photographs of such a ceremony, see Cooper, *Grass*, 1925.

As they came near each other, all the participants uttered cries of grief and woe, but not discordantly, beating their breasts with clenched hands. On the groups closing, they disappeared into their respective tents, and renewed the doleful dirge. The whole ceremony was quickly and systematically performed without confusion. The proceedings, though perhaps more ceremonious than heart-felt, were realistic, and the women, in their nearly black clothes, unveiled as are all Bakhtiari women, standing and marching shoulder to shoulder in an orderly group, made a grave and impressive sight.

The nomadic tribes of Persia play an important and indispensable part in the national economy, as is reflected in the customs returns. Not only do they weave carpets, and manufacture their own tents and camp equipment and much of their own clothing, but they are purveyors of meat and butter for the towns and wool for the carpet factories; they collect gum tragacanth for export (to the value in 1930 of over £250,000) as well as oakgalls and oak bark for the local tanning industry. They are responsible for the greater part of the export of raw and dressed skins, both of domestic and wild animals, totalling £500,000 in 1930. They breed mules and horses, as well as camels, of a high average standard of excellence, and in an emergency are a valuable reservoir of labour for public works. They gather most of the dyes required for the carpets made by their households. Moreover, they probably bear, directly or indirectly, more than their fair share of taxation.

From a military point of view they are potential "Chasseurs Alpins" and light cavalry of the highest quality, of which any nation might well be proud.

This subject is dealt with in greater detail elsewhere, but sufficient has here been said to indicate that the Persian nomad is an important element in the national life. Yet Persian governments have not always looked upon the tribes and their leaders with favour or affection. The tribes have the defects of their qualities: they are apt to be lawless and predatory. Until recently it has been a point of honour with their chiefs not to pay revenue if by any means it could be avoided, and most of the main trade routes were, until 1925, frequently rendered impossible by robberies or by heavy and illegal tolls. These troubles are to-day matters of history, but are liable to recur, should the control of the Central Government be relaxed, or if, as has sometimes happened, the tribes are goaded into revolt by the impositions of local governors and tax-collectors. The happy mean is, as British Governors all over the world have good reason to know, hard to maintain; but, in the opinion of those best able to judge, the present Shah is well qualified to act wisely in this as in other matters.

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CHAPTER IV

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY[1]

THE most striking feature of the commerce of Persia with foreign countries is the great increase in volume and value which has occurred during the past thirty years, although the population is almost certainly not appreciably greater than in 1910, owing to the ravages of influenza and famine, superimposed upon a naturally low rate of normal increase. In 1897 it was estimated that the value of imports from and exports to Great Britain was £3,250,000, and Russia £3,500,000. In 1901, detailed statistics were published for the first time. Total imports then stood at £5,500,000, exports at £2,750,000. By 1907 the figures rose to £8,000,000 and £6,500,000, a total of £14,500,000—of which Great Britain's share was a little over £3,000,000, and that of Russia £8,250,000—an increase of 137 per cent. In 1928-9 the total trade was £45,500,000, the excess of exports over imports being £11,000,000. The British share of imports in that year was about 20 per cent. as against nearly 40 per cent. from Russia, which

[1] In writing this Chapter, the Reports published by the Department of Overseas Trade on Economic Conditions in Persia and in the Persian Gulf, compiled respectively by Mr. E. R. Lingeman and Lieut.-Commander Forester, have been drawn on with a freedom which can be justified only by the fact that they are both accurate and authoritative and are virtually the sole source of general information on many of the subjects dealt with. For a fuller discussion of the financial aspect, see Chapters X and XI.

suggests a reversion to the state of things in 1907 and subsequent years. As stated by Mr. Lingeman:

"It is only natural that Russia, if only on account of her geographical position, should gradually reassume the dominating commercial position she held in Persia before the War. For reasons of her own she has hastened the process by the simple method of undercutting her competitors with but little regard for landed costs."

The great increase in the volume and value of imports is the more remarkable because it has been caused less by increased consumption of staple commodities, such as tea and sugar, than by the creation of fresh needs. Motor cars and accessories, petrol and lubricating oil, for example, total nearly £2,000,000 in 1928–9; they have been paid for by an increase in Persian exports, in the teeth of acute world competition in a period of rapidly falling prices, and of improved methods of transport and preparation and packing adopted by other countries, but not to any extent by Persia. There are, however, indications that the long continued buoyancy of Persian trade will break down owing to heavy purchases of railway material, and the accumulation of reserve funds abroad, in circumstances explained below.

Persian currency has hitherto been based on the value of silver, unsupported by gold. The currency has of recent years been much improved by the re-minting of defective coin, which has been readily shipped in payment of international balances, whenever the price of silver made it profitable to do so. During the War the kran stood, at one time, at 20 to the pound sterling, then it remained steady at 40 to 45 till 1928, and in January 1930 fell to 70

and later to 90, being quoted on a restricted open market at about 120. In February 1930 the Persian Government sought to check the flight from the kran, and constituted a monopoly of all dealings in foreign exchanges. It also decided to put the currency on a gold standard, as from March, 1932, using for the purpose a large reserve fund which had been allowed to accumulate in London, Europe and the U.S.A. to a total of nearly £4,000,000 sterling of which £2,500,000 was in England. The Persian Government have reason to regret this decision: and it is unlikely that effect will now be given thereto for some years to come, if at all. The immobilization of these large sums, at a time of financial difficulty, placed a heavy strain on the stability of the national finances, a strain which would not have been intolerable but for the sudden and unforeseen fall in the price of silver. On this subject the views expressed by the Persian Chamber of Commerce in its Official Journal for June, 1931, are so cogent and so clearly expressed as to merit quotation in full:

"With many countries in South America and Asia having silver as the basis of their currency, it is essential, in order to remedy the present trade depression, to regulate and stabilise the price of silver in the world market by some international agreement. We believe that only when such a step is taken can there be a solufion of the present world economic crises, and it is for this reason that we welcome the resolution recently passed by the Congress of the International Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C., urging the countries interested to summon as soon as possible an international conference.

"In the interests of economic stability and world prosperity, we would urge the speedy enactment of the recommendations of the Gold Delegation of the League of Nations

and the Congress of the International Chamber of Commerce concerning the Gold and Silver problems, the logical consequence of which would be the framing of an international policy concerning these two metals.

"The danger lies in apathy, and in the international influence of that type of statistician who believes everything in economic life to be predestined by cyclic movements represented by mathematical curves. This superstition, which is an Occidental revival of ancient Oriental fatalism, naturally militates against any endeavour towards conscious control. According to these mathematical fatalists, they have, in a situation such as the present, only to sit down and examine these curves in order to find out when an upward movement is predestined to take place. We cannot conceive how in this era, when as a result of the progress of science, humanity is increasing its domination over nature, such passivity can be entertained by intelligent men."

Within twelve months of the decision to control exchange the Persian Government decided to assume control of foreign commerce and, in February, 1931, a law was passed making the export and import of all natural and industrial products a government monopoly. As at present operated, the government does not itself buy and sell, but requires merchants to obtain special import licenses, conditional on the export of an equivalent value of Persian produce. It was hoped by this means to restrict the import of luxury articles and of goods which competed with indigenous manufactures,[1] and to ensure the stability of the new currency to be introduced under the gold standard.

[1] When in 1928 Persia obtained freedom to fix her own tariffs without the consent of her neighbours, a law was passed fixing minimum and maximum rates, and authority given to the government to conclude treaties with foreign countries on the basis of the minimum tariff for not more than eight years. The minimum rate proved too low to check the flow of luxuries and of articles competing with home-made goods.

The importation of certain articles was strictly rationed; the importation of gramophones, for example, was allowed up to £3,300, as against £40,000 in the previous year; of touring cars up to £18,000, as against £180,000. The import of matches, which are a government monopoly, and of rice, was totally prohibited, as competing with local produce. This system has pressed most hardly on the inhabitants of southern provinces, who have always imported rice from India by sea, and have now to purchase rice brought overland from the Caspian littoral at, of course, vastly advanced prices. The same consideration applies to matches, which are made only at Tabriz and Hamadan.

It is hoped, in this way, to reduce imports into Persia by over a million pounds sterling without serious detriment to the export trade. It is a bold, but perilous experiment which, it may be assumed, the Persian Government will not be slow to discontinue if the results do not justify expectations. It is, incidentally, a breach of the spirit, if not of the letter, of existing commercial treaties, other than that with Soviet Russia, from which in fact the present course of the Persian Government is a natural reaction.

The shadow of Russia has at all times loomed large on the commercial horizon of Persia. Imperial Russia recognized at a very early date the importance of the Persian market, and even in 1822, under Alexander I, who made great efforts to develop Trans-Caucasian trade, a trade agreement—the first of its kind—was concluded with Persia.

This was followed by a long series of agreements, increasingly one-sided, concluded with the avowed object of bringing as much as possible of Persia within the commercial orbit of her northern neighbour.

"In the Treaty of Turkoman Chai," writes Millspaugh, "of February 22, 1828, following the Russo-Persian War, a reciprocal 5 per cent. *ad valorem* tariff on imports and exports was established between the two countries. No period for this agreement was stated in the treaty, and, consequently, up to the World War, Persia was unable without the consent of the Russian Government to change any tariff rate affecting Russia. Treatment equivalent to that accorded Russia was in the course of time demanded by and granted other nations. In these treaties, however, the 5 per cent. rate was applied only to imports into and exports from Persia, and was not accorded on imports of Persian goods into other countries, which received instead the benefit of the most-favoured-nation clause. In 1901 the Shah, being in need of a foreign loan, was obliged to negotiate with Russia for a revision of the tariff. The resulting tariff, which became effective in February, 1903, was placed on a specific basis, export duties were largely eliminated, and low rates were placed on commodities of interest to Russia. An agreement was entered into simultaneously with Great Britain by which certain rates were modified in the interest of British trade. The epitomized result was that the commodities of interest to Russia bore an average tax of 4·75 per cent., while commodities of interest to Great Britain paid an average of 26·77 per cent. This tariff was deeply resented by the Persian merchants, but their protests were without result."

It was, in fact, grossly unfair to Persia, as well as to every European country whose goods had to reach Persia by way of the Persian Gulf.

One of the first results of the unratified Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919 was a new tariff, concluded in 1920, the principal British negotiators being Sir Percy Cox and Sir Hubert Llewellyn Smith. It represented an honest attempt to give elasticity to the customs revenue; it included provisions for joint revisions of the tariff in future, and to equalize

the incidence of duties on goods whether imported from Russia or Europe. Nevertheless, the average rate on the principal commodities of interest to Russia was, according to Millspaugh, 13.07 per cent. as against 14.88 per cent. on those of interest to European countries and to the British Empire. The agreement remained in force for less than two years, for though the Soviet Government denounced all Czarist Treaties, it insisted—pending a separate agreement—on a return to the tariff of 1903, with a resultant loss to Persia from customs revenue of over £200,000 a year.

The insistence of the Soviet Government on an admittedly unfair and grossly preferential tariff effectively neutralized, in the eyes of the Persian Government, the dramatic cancellation in 1919 of all concessions and former treaties, and gave just cause of complaint to foreign and to Persian merchants, who were, in practice, unable to trade. For them the door opened only one way.

The next move was the sudden prohibition on February 1st, 1926, of all Persian imports into Russia except cotton. This step was taken primarily to reduce Russia's trade balance and to protect the "chervonetz." Its effect was disastrous to Persian merchants, and was only partially mitigated by the Russo-Persian Agreement of October 1st, 1927, which regularized the system introduced some years before, whereby Persian exports to Russia must be bartered against Russian goods, except for a small percentage paid in foreign exchange which is only increased when the Soviet agents find it necessary to buy abnormally large quantities of Persian cotton and wool. One natural consequence of this system has been that Russian goods have tended to displace such competing articles as British Indian or Italian

cottons. More important still is the marked tendency of Soviet trade organization to force on Persian merchants a variety of goods, often totally unsuitable, while retaining for their own organizations in Persia an increasing share of sugar and other primary commodities which find an immediate sale. Another common complaint of Persian merchants is that Russian trade agencies doing business on their own account often dump on the market the same class of goods that they have been forced to accept, at prices which render trade on imports of such commodities from other countries unremunerative.

The Soviet trade organizations have deliberately and systematically under-valued Persian goods which they have received in exchange for goods of Russian manufacture, which latter they have at the same time over-valued. They have in this way prevented the Trade Agreement of 1927 from achieving the desired effect, namely to establish approximate equality in the value of imports from and exports to Russia. For instance, in 1928–9 Russian exports were valued for Persian Customs purposes at about £6,000,000, but Persian exports at less than £3,500,000.

To these difficulties must be added the system of monopolies now in force in Persia, which involve heavy taxation and higher prices, and a restriction of the trading activities of small merchants, a class not less important from an economic standpoint in Persia than in European countries. Smuggling has in consequence increased; business has become concentrated in fewer hands; and Tehran has tended to oust the older centres as the commercial metropolis.

The system of monopolies under which individual merchants are allowed special permits for import

and export has resulted in a fictitious increase in the declared value of imports, and has favoured the exploitation of the masses by rich merchants, against whose wiles the Customs officials are almost powerless. Jewellery, for example, and even postage stamps have been exported and smuggled back, and the process repeated indefinitely. Nor has limitation of imports been more successful—the volume of luxury imports has never been large, and its cessation has merely enabled merchants to sell their accumulated stocks at absurdly large profits. The staple imports—sugar, piece goods, tea, etc.—continue, but prices have doubled, to the benefit of the large merchant, owing to the virtual monopoly conferred on the privileged holder of import passes. Home industries have flourished, it is true, but at the expense of the consumer whose loss far exceeds the gains, considerable though they have been, of the newly created capitalists who have secured backing in high places.

In May, 1928, a new tariff was applied to all imports and exports other than those from or to Soviet Russia, to which it was applied at a later date. In it, maximum and minimum rates were provided, the latter being reserved for countries having treaty relations with Persia; and, by a separate agreement, British goods were to be admitted at the existing minimum rates for a period of eight years. In more favourable circumstances, trade between Persia and Europe might have been stimulated by this and other measures that have been taken, but Soviet Russia retains, even more firmly than in Czarist days, a hold on trade across its borders; the Persian Government has intervened so drastically in the finance and general direction of international trade that Persian merchants, even of

old standing and high repute, find it increasingly difficult to do business. The salutary doctrine of *laisser faire*, under which Persian trade has increased more rapidly than that of any other Eastern country has been abandoned, with results that can only dimly be foreseen.[1] Present omens are not favourable, but the Persian Government has so often, in the past, drastically modified a policy when confronted with its unexpected results, that there is ground for hoping that there will be a reaction, in the near future, in favour of greater individual liberty. In justice to the Persian Government it must be pointed out that, however mistaken in its own interests its commercial policy may appear, it has only applied, with notable intelligence, and with comparative success, nostrums which have been widely applied in Europe. In this, as in other matters, they are likely to follow the West, though a definite reversion to individual freedom to buy and sell, to lower tariffs, and to reliance on the operation of supply and demand, can scarcely be expected so long as Russia, Persia's principal customer, conducts her trade on collectivist principles. For this reason, if for no other, the trend of events in Persia deserves to be carefully and sympathetically watched by European economists. Persia is engaged in an unequal struggle for her commercial existence: a country of twelve million inhabitants, wedded to individualism, is pitted against one of one hundred and twenty millions, organized on collectivist lines. The issue is in doubt, and will so remain for some years to come: this much is certain, that Persia, if unsupported diplomatically and commercially against Soviet Russia, cannot continue to exist as an independent sovereign state.

[1] For a fuller discussion see Chapters VI and XI.

The discovery of petroleum has not always benefited, though it has enriched, the undeveloped and sparsely inhabited countries, in which (the U.S.A. always excepted) it generally occurs. The rapid but one-sided growth of the oil industry in Mexico has proved a menace to the social structure, and the people have paid dearly for the sudden access of wealth and of employment at high rates of pay which followed on the exploitation of petroliferous areas. Many of these have since ceased to produce, and thousands of men, drawn originally from agriculture, or bred in the petroleum industry, found themselves deprived of the only form of labour they understood—largely skilled and well-paid employment from which it was not easy to return to the fields and to honourable penury.

Even the robuster civilization of the United States of America was, and still is on occasions, menaced by the lawlessness prevalent in the mushroom settlements that arose on the oil fields. Baku arose scarcely less suddenly from an obscure town on the Caspian to one of the great oil centres of the world. It was peopled by undisciplined crowds of labourers alien to the neighbourhood, spending their too easily earned wealth in ways demoralizing to themselves and to all with whom they came in contact.[1]

It was not therefore without some reason that certain Persian statesmen viewed with anxiety the grant by Muzaffar ud Din Shah, in 1901, to a British subject, Mr. W. K. D'Arcy, born in New Zealand, of a concession for oil which covered the whole of the southern provinces and a great part of Central Persia. The existence of surface indications of oil at many parts in South-West Persia was of course

[1] For a vivid, if grossly overdrawn, description, see *Blood and Oil in the Orient*, 1931.

known to Persians and to many European travellers and scholars, and primitive refining had long been carried on. The oil-springs near Dizful and Shushtar are referred to by the classical authors; they have been described by travellers (such as Sir Henry Layard, who visited Masjid Sulaiman, Persia's principal oil field to-day) and had been reported on by distinguished scientists such as M. Jacques de Morgan. But the possibility that the torrid plains and desolate foothills of South-West Persia might conceal mineral wealth on a great scale was never seriously contemplated, nor was any thought given to the possible results of such discoveries, either by the British or Russian Legations.[1] The concession was granted, after lengthy negotiations, on terms which do credit to the bargaining abilities of the Grand Vizier of the day, for, as will be shown elsewhere, the conditions, which include a royalty of 16 per cent. on the net profits, compare from the point of view of Persia very favourably with those imposed by other governments twenty years later, when the importance of petroleum was fully appreciated.

Long years passed before the pioneering efforts of Mr. D'Arcy and his associates were crowned with success. The first borings were made at Chiah Surkh, north of Khanaqin on the Baghdad-Kermanshah road in a region which was always debatable ground and was, just before the War, transferred to Turkey by Persia as part of an attempt to negotiate a comprehensive boundary settlement. These borings were unsuccessful, and a second attempt was made at Mamatain, sixty miles east of Ahwaz. In this

[1] See Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East*, 1930. It must, however, be stated here that his detailed recollections are not borne out by such documentary evidence as is available.

place also the engineers and geologists had no luck, and a fresh and final attempt was made at Masjid Sulaiman, some sixty miles north of Ahwaz, in hilly country very difficult of access. Here, at the eleventh hour, on 26th May, 1908, when the considerable funds that had been devoted to the search for oil in Persia were well-nigh exhausted, oil was struck, and in quantities which made it reasonably certain that an oil-field had at last been discovered.

From that time onwards, the history of petroleum development in Persia has been one of continuous progress, broken only for a short time in 1915 when the Turks invaded Persia and cut the pipe-line between the oil-fields and the terminus of the pipe-line at Abadan on the Shatt al Arab.

In 1909 the Anglo-Persian Oil Co. Ltd. was registered in London to acquire and to work the original D'Arcy Concession. Four years later further capital was needed: the existing British shareholders were unwilling to provide it, and it seemed possible that control would pass into foreign hands. For some time previously Lord Fisher, as First Sea Lord at the Admiralty, had been actively urging the conversion of the Grand Fleet to oil: a Royal Commission had sat to consider the subject and had reported in favour of the proposal, provided that adequate supplies of fuel under British financial control could be secured, in order to prevent the establishment of a monopoly by companies controlling oil production in other parts of the world. The British Government decided to provide the additional capital required by the Company, on a scale sufficient to enable it to acquire, from a purely financial point of view, "control" of the Company. At the same time they formally undertook not to intervene in any way in questions relating to com-

mercial management. To obtain Parliamentary sanction to this investment of the taxpayers' money an Act of Parliament was necessary. It was drafted on the lines of the Suez Canal (Acquisition of Shares) Bill of 1876, and was attacked in the House of Commons on similar grounds, viz.—

(1) That the investment, (£4,000,000 in the case of the Suez Canal, £2,000,000 in the case of the A.P.O.C.), was risky;
(2) That so long as we retained command of the seas the investment was unnecessary—if we lost command it would be valueless;
(3) That complications with the (Egyptian) Persian, and foreign governments would result;
(4) That the purchase was due to the intrigues of secret financial interests;
(5) That the investment would involve us in fresh capital liabilities.

Disraeli's reply to his opponents to the Suez Canal Bill, in 1876, is worth recalling, for it underlay Mr. Winston Churchill's defence of the A.P.O.C. (Acquisition of Shares) Bill, 1914. Disraeli pointed out the fallacy which ran through all the observations of the opponents of the measure, viz., that an institution could not be both political and commercial—the National Debt, for instance, he contended, had that double character. The purchase was made for a high political purpose, namely, to secure for British shipping the right of access to this new world highway; but, once made, the government was bound to take every precaution that it should be commercially successful; the country looked upon it as a political and patriotic act, and whenever challenged he could appeal to it with confidence.

Mr. Winston Churchill, as First Lord of the

Admiralty, declared, in a prophetic moment, that the development of the field "would make the Persian Government strong, and the tribesmen tame." "How else," he asked, "is the country to progress except by the development of its resources and the gradual civilization of distant provinces—at any rate, it is a perfectly healthy, legitimate and moral process." The process had, indeed, already begun, and this corner of South-western Persia was soon enjoying a peace to which its inhabitants had long been strangers. Several thousand Persian subjects, mostly cultivators and shepherds, were, for the first time in their lives, receiving regular wages once a week all the year round; a pipe-line had already been constructed from the main oil-field to Abadan; motor cars had made their first appearance; and together with them an aeroplane, brought to Ahwaz by an enterprising engineer, the late Mr. Charles Ritchie, to assist him to inspect the pipe-line, which he was engaged in constructing, had been out, and had been seen in the air, if only for a few moments. A new spirit was abroad; men who had never tended anything but a date tree, or used any tool but a spade or a sickle, were becoming proficient as pumpmen, or rivetters. Shepherds from the high Zagros and from Azerbaijan were erecting drilling rigs and handling heavy machinery over the roads, the like of which had not been since Sasanian days.

Then came the Great War. Abadan was only three hours distant by water from the Turkish port of Basra, and was an obvious target. Shipments of petroleum had already begun, and, on strategical grounds, it was clearly necessary to prevent any interruption. From a political point of view, it was even more necessary to prevent the Central Powers which, by the end of October 1914, included Turkey among

their number, from forcing Arabia and Persia, and finally Afghanistan, to join them in declaring war against the Allies. The Muslim *bloc* that might thus have been formed would have been a source of real embarrassment to Great Britain in India and Egypt, and to the French in North Africa. An Expeditionary Force, sent from India, occupied Basra a few days after the outbreak of war, but its strength was insufficient to prevent the Turks from seeking to do battle on Persian soil. They sent a force of all arms from Amara eastwards to Ahwaz, and cut the pipe-line. A small British force was sent to repel them, but could do no more than hold them in check till the main Turkish army was defeated in April, 1915, outside Basra.

Thereafter confidence was rapidly restored in Khuzistan and the pipe repaired; no further disturbances occurred, though as a precautionary measure a small detachment of British troops, in the absence of any local military force, was retained at Ahwaz until the end of the war.

The necessities of the war, the insistent demands of the Expeditionary Force in Mesopotamia, of the Royal Navy and of the Indian Railways, resulted in a rapid increase of output at Abadan.[1] The Armis-

[1] PERSIAN PRODUCTION

Year ended March 31st	Tons	Year ended March 31st	Tons
1912 (7 months)	43,084	1922	2,327,221
1913	80,800	1923	2,959,028
1914	273,635	1924	3,714,216
1915	375,977	1925	4,333,933
1916	449,394	1926	4,556,157
1917	644,074	1927	4,831,800
1918	897,402	1928	5,357,800
		Year ending Dec. 31st	
		1928 (9 months)	4,290,000
1919	1,106,415	1929	5,460,000
1920	1,385,301	1930	5,940,000
1921	1,743,557	1931	5,750,000

tice was the signal for a much increased production: essential machinery could at last be obtained, and additional tanks and tank steamers purchased. The output of oil was doubled within three years. Additional capital was obtained in 1917, and again in 1918, 1919 and 1921, 1922 and 1923, and now stands at £13,425,000 Ordinary and £10,500,000 Preference Shares, all fully paid.

Payments made by way of royalty constitute a major source of revenue to the Persian Government. The actual figures are as follows:

Year ending 31st March	Royalties £
1913	
1914	
1915	
1916	1,325,552
1917	
1918	
1919	
1920	
1921	468,718
1922	585,289
1923	624,200
1924	566,744
1925	327,523
1926	728,778
12 months ending 31st Mar. 1927	1,412,000
12 " " " " 1928	503,000
9 " " 31st Dec. 1928	509,000
12 " " " " 1929	1,341,000
12 " " " " 1930	1,288,000

The Anglo-Persian Oil Company's cash expenditure in Persia on account of wages, local material, etc.,

amounted to 75 million krans (£1,580,000) in the year 1928 and 84 million krans (£1,430,000) in 1929. On the other hand, quite apart from large dutiable imports of furniture, foodstuffs, wines and spirits, etc., for its staff, the company's undutiable imports were valued at £1,220,000 in 1928 and £1,660,000 in 1929.

In order to understand the full significance of these figures it should be borne in mind that the total revenue of the Persian Government in 1928–29 was estimated at a little over £8,000,000, while the country's import trade in the same year was valued at £17,000,000.

Yet the financial aspect is not, in reality, the most important contribution that the petroleum industry has made to Persia. So far from suffering from the ills which have afflicted other countries in which petroleum has been discovered in large quantities, Persia has found in the development of the industry a valuable intellectual and moral stimulus to all classes, in many branches of national life. The writer hesitates, in view of his long official and personal connection with the growth in Persia of this remarkable enterprise, to estimate its effect upon the life of the Persian nation.[1] But he may be permitted to quote the considered opinion of a competent and impartial Afghan traveller, Sirdar Iqbal Ali Shah, with which in general he concurs:

"The Bakhtiaris, wise in their generation, made the best of both worlds: they supplied labour to the engineers, and at the same time provided guards for the protection of the fields against all comers, but mainly against themselves, receiving, in addition to individual salaries, a fixed share in the profits of the exploitation of the oil-fields in the area

[1] For an admirable description, both general and technical, see Williamson, *In a Persian Oilfield*, London, 1928.

under their control. The system, itself the product of intelligent opportunism on both sides, stood the test of the War, and of the state of anarchy scarcely distinguishable therefrom which prevailed in Persia from 1909 onwards.

"To mould to the exigencies of modern industry such refractory material as is presented by these gaunt, fierce, undisciplined men, was the task to which the Company set itself from the first. The process was slow, but gained strength from year to year and *vires acquirit eundo*; to begin with, few men would work for more than six months at a time, after which they returned to their flocks, to invest their earnings and lose their acquired skill. Gradually a community began to settle on the spot and problems of health and housing came to the fore; carpenters from Isfahan and iron-workers from Dizful and Shushtar, finding employment regular, commenced to settle, their sons grew up and were employed at the paternal trade, but with a difference; they were caught young and trained in the use of modern tools, and put through an elementary apprenticeship in the use of lathes and simple machine tools. To-day the great majority of the elaborate machinery both at Abadan and at Masjid Sulaiman and Ahwaz is worked by these men, as well as by tribesmen, for, truth to tell, the nomad has shown a greater willingness and aptitude to take to machinery than has the townsman.

"Problems of health were more difficult: at first the tendency was, as already stated, for men to come for six months and then return, the nomad to his flocks, the townsman to his city. This was partly due to the climate: few, if any, nomads had ever remained in the sultry foothills during the summer months. They went with the flocks to the highlands in quest of grass at the first breath of the hot summer winds, and there remained till the autumn.

"From a medical point of view the turnover of labour which this custom involved was deplorable: the health of the majority of tribesmen was perhaps the better for the change, but the townsmen were apt to return re-infected with the diseases for which they had been treated with success six months previously; affections of the eye were,

in particular, numerous and distressing, and effective treatment was jeopardized by long periods of absence. From another point of view, and that a very narrow one, it was advantageous; the labour staff were bachelors, with a bachelor's standard of comfort, and content with a bunk in a communal sleeping apartment in winter, and with a couch on the grass in summer. When men began to settle down, they brought their wives and families; housing became necessary, and with it sanitary regulations: a proper water supply had to be provided, and a reasonably clean bazaar, where food could be bought. Women and children, who at first were a small minority of the population, increased, till the population both at Fields and at Abadan was composed of approximately the normal proportion of males, females and adolescents. To restrict medical attention to the Company's employées, even had it been expedient, would have undone much of the good effect that was wrought by the slow process of education in matters of elementary hygiene. The company, whose administration, and in particular the medical branch, guided by that distinguished and revered figure, Dr. M. Y. Young, C.I.E., was from the first guided by motives of genuine goodwill towards the people among whom they were working, not only gave free medical treatment to the families of their staff, but also to all and sundry who applied for it. The policy was not without its risks, for in the early days, so unfamiliar were the patients and their relations with European medical practice, and such were the terrors of hospital treatment and operations under chloroform, that if a patient died in the hands of the doctors it was apt to be the occasion for a hostile demonstration, and there was always a real danger that a patient, well on the way to recovery, might be removed prematurely, to recover, or perhaps to die, quite unnecessarily, in the unsanitary bosom of his affectionate family. Prejudices such as these can be overcome, and have been conquered in South-West Persia in a measure which is astonishing to those who, like myself, have some knowledge of the depths of ignorance and crass superstition in which the populations of many

great Indian cities are sunk—cities that have for a century or more been in close touch with the best European practice, adopted and interpreted by medical men drawn from every caste and creed. The outcome, in Persia, has been gratifying alike to the population, the Central Government, and to the Company, for it has served to break down the prejudice—long detrimental to Persia—of the populace against innovations as such. They have seen better things and they approve of them.

"Nor has education been neglected: a beginning was made by subsidizing the C.M.S. College at Isfahan, a residential institution, situated in a healthy part of Persia in the heart of the ancient capital, near enough to the virile tribal population to be able to attract the sons of the well-to-do families. Here Persian youths, Muslims for the most part, receive a thorough grounding in Persian, as well as in English, and in elementary science, much on the lines of a well-managed secondary school in England. Simultaneously a certain number of Persian youths, some of whom had graduated at Isfahan, and some in the corresponding American Mission College in Tehran, were provided with scholarships to enable them to pursue specific courses of science in England, thus supplementing the generous provision already made by the Persian Government for the education in the principal European countries of the most promising youths. Primary education, too, came in for its share of attention; schools were opened in Abadan and Ahwaz, as well as at Masjid Sulaiman, in suitable buildings, for boys from the age of eight upwards, to learn the three R's. The teachers are Persians, and the boys learn in their mother tongue. It is, of course, possible to exaggerate both the extent and the value of these activities: they are important rather as an indication of the spirit in which are being attacked the problems arising from the sudden growth of a community of some twenty thousand wage-earners, in the midst of and indeed drawn from an agricultural community which does not number more than 350,000 within a radius (excluding 'Iraq) of fifty miles of Abadan, Ahwaz and Masjid Sulaiman. Remembering that on the average

four persons are dependent on each wage earner, it is an astonishing fact that nearly one person in four in the province of Khuzistan look solely for their daily bread to the oil industry, and probably as many more are indirectly dependent thereon, apart from those Persians in Government employ whose salaries, if they knew it, depend on the oil royalties."

The oil industry, then, has left a beneficial mark on the recent history of Persia. It is permissible to prophesy that its future influence will be not less advantageous to the country. Persians are being brought, year by year, into positions of greater responsibility in the industry; prices of petrol throughout Persia have been lowered, and motor transport made possible from one end of the country to another; many men are being trained to be good mechanics; many more are learning to be mechanically minded. The existence of ample supplies of oil fuel in south-west Persia alone makes the projected railway from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian practicable.

It has been demonstrated that in Persia, at all events, it is possible to build up a great industry without detriment to the greater interests of the nation as a whole, without damage to the agricultural and pastoral community, and without danger to the health or the morale of the labour forces. It is, perhaps, the only example in the Middle East of conscious planning, on a great scale, of industrial development on lines consistent with the social progress of the national unit of which it is a part.

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CHAPTER V

COMMUNICATIONS
MOTOR, AND OTHER ROADS

THE Persians were probably the first nation to build roads for wheeled traffic. This is not mere surmise, but is based on the belief of archæologists, which appears well founded, that wheeled vehicles originated in Persia, and the fact that axle hubs and bronze chariot and horse fittings, the date of which is placed at anything from 1000 to 1700 B.C. have been found at Harsin near Kermanshah and elsewhere. The location of Achæmenian remains presupposes the existence of roads fit for wheeled traffic, which is known to have been in common use at that period, though few certain traces of such remain. Sasanian roads, however, are to be found in every part of Persia. No map has ever been compiled showing the portions that still survive, but long stretches are to be found in every part of the Zagros range from latitude 36° to Bandar Abbas and beyond, and in Gilan, Mazanderan and the Elburz range. Almost every important valley and gorge in the Luristan, Bakhtiari and Kuhgalu hills and in Fars has its Sasanian road, heavily paved with water-worn boulders, winding up the hill-sides at a steady gradient. The footings of bridges can be seen, indubitably of Sasanian date, for alongside them stand the remains of nobler structures, dating

from the Arab conquest, which fell into ruin only after the collapse of the Safavid dynasty.

Some of the bridges, of the seventh to ninth centuries, are as notable as any Roman remains in Europe. The masonry is finely worked, the lime mortar so tenacious that it has resisted the weather better than the stone itself, the scale of construction generous, the approaches broad and flat, as if in anticipation of heavy traffic. Examples may be seen in the Kashgan[1] gorge where it leaves the Khurramabad plain, and again near its confluence with the Saimarreh River, across the Diz River, at Dizful, and near Behbehan adjacent to the ruins of the ancient city of Arrajan.

In the spacious days of Shah Abbas, though wheeled traffic seemed to have fallen completely into disfavour, great activity was shown by the State in maintaining roads fit for pack animals, and in erecting "caravansarais," or rest houses, at distances of a day's march along all the main and many subsidiary routes. The number of such public buildings ascribed to Shah Abbas and clearly of about that date is astonishing. They vary in size, but are generally uniform in plan, consisting of a fine entrance, with rooms above for privileged travellers, a great courtyard, surrounded by small arched recesses through which access is obtained to tiny rooms, just sufficient for a party of two or three persons. Behind these rooms again, often running round three sides of the square, is ample accommodation for mules and horses in long, dark stables, solidly roofed with brick arches or with a series of domes, resting on pillars. There is always water

[1] There is another bridge intermediate between these two, which is probably Sasanian and may be older. The site is inconvenient and is obviously chosen to facilitate a timber construction, at a time when the technique of bridge building was in its infancy.

close by, and the building is generally in charge of a contractor who keeps on the spot a supply of food for man and beast. Nearby may sometimes be seen the ruins of a smaller and earlier *sarai*, more roughly built, but following the same general plan. Some of these earlier structures appear to be of the seventh to ninth centuries, but a few are almost certainly Sasanian. Certain it is that every Persian dynasty down to the Safavids has attached primary importance to the improvement of communications, and has spent money liberally to this end.

After the decay of the Safavid power, little was done in this direction; under the Qajars, roads and caravansarais were allowed to decay, and when, in the later part of the nineteenth century, trade began to increase, Persia found herself almost unprovided with even tolerably good mule tracks from the Persian Gulf across the Zagros, or from the Caspian littoral over the Elburz to the plateau. A concession was given to a Russian company to make a cart road from Resht via Kazvin to Tehran, and from Kazvin to Hamadan, with the right to charge tolls. A British company undertook, on behalf of the Bakhtiari Khans, to construct a mule track from Ahwaz to Isfahan, the cost being recoverable in instalments from the Khans. Two steel suspension bridges had to be built across the Karun, which runs for some three hundred miles in a deep and tortuous gorge: the work was well done, and was of real service to Persian as well as to British trade, but the road never had the success it deserved. The cost of fodder on the road was, for various reasons, high; the distance—from Ahwaz to Isfahan, about two hundred and seventy-five miles without a single considerable town *en route*—placed it at a disadvantage with the older Bushire-Shiraz-Qumisheh-Isfahan route. The

mountain ranges to be crossed were so lofty that the road was closed by snow for five months in the year, and it was never really suited to camels. It was, in fact, built along an unsuitable alignment, for "political" reasons. The older route ran via Shushtar, north of the Karun, to Qal'eh Bazuft and over the Charri pass. This route ran well inside the tribal country of the Bakhtiari Khans. In selecting a more southerly alignment adjoining the habitat of the Kuhgalu tribes, the Khans were influenced by a desire to use the road as a means of over-awing their disorderly neighbours. The same company also held a concession direct from the Persian Government for the construction of a toll cart-road from Ahwaz to Dizful and thus to Burujird and Sultanabad, from Sultanabad to Qum, and from Isfahan to Kashan, Qum and Tehran. Tribal disorders prevented the construction of the Dizful-Sultanabad sections: the other sections were constructed and worked, though with little if any profit, until taken over by the Persian Government.

Apart from these activities, and from roads made in south-west Persia by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company for its own needs, little was done in the years preceding the war to extend the construction of roads fit for wheels or to improve existing tracks. The motor car was still virtually unknown in Persia; and horse-drawn carts occupied a very subordinate part in the system of internal transport. Mules, pack-horses, camels and donkeys carried at least nine-tenths of the imported, and an even larger proportion of local merchandise. A man was employed with every three or four animals; the latter were bred in the country, lived entirely on the country, and used equipment made in the country,

while the caravansarais yielded a valuable supply of manure for the fields.

The outbreak of the Great War made little difference at first to the transport system: the Russians in the north and, at a later date, the Turks in their incursions via Kermanshah, used no motor transport. Sir Percy Sykes' mixed force of Indian troops and Persian gendarmerie had, indeed, a few cars, but did not rely on them for transport.

Early in 1918 there was a sudden change. The British Expeditionary Force in 'Iraq had greatly extended the use of motor transport, and had made roads fit for Ford cars radiating from Baghdad in every direction. When the Russians, consequent on the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, quitted the field of battle, they gave the representatives of the Central Powers in Persia an opportunity on the right flank of the British force in 'Iraq which they would have been quick to utilize to our disadvantage. It became necessary to send a British force from Baghdad to Baku, and to create a line of communication between the two places, via Kermanshah, Hamadan and Kazvin. The Royal Engineers attached to General Marshall's armies commenced to lay out and construct a wide, carefully-graded metalled road from Khanaqin to Kermanshah, and to improve the existing cart track thence to Hamadan, where the cart road of the old Russian company only needed maintenance to serve the purposes of the force. At about the same time the British forces in Southern Persia were occupied in constructing a railway from Bushire to Borazjan, and a motor road up the succession of steep mountain sides which constituted the old Sasanian track. The work was triumphantly accomplished, and Ford cars pushed their way, with the willing aid of the inhabitants, from Shiraz to

almost every town of importance within a hundred miles radius. The road to Isfahan was made passable for light cars, and thence to Yezd and Kerman.

The moral effect on the Persian people and on the Persian Government of this ocular demonstration of the utility of mechanical transport was very great. There was no longer reluctance to adopt new methods; no clinging to old ways. Persians took readily to driving cars and, less readily, to repairing them: merchants hastened to invest money in what was, for a time, a lucrative luxury trade, and later purchased lorries for the transport of merchandise from port or railhead.

The Persian Government placed on the provincial governments the responsibility for keeping the roads and bridges "carrossable," an ancient obligation that had long fallen into desuetude. The Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919 envisaged the employment of several British engineers by the Ministry of Public Works, to carry out a large scheme of road construction. When this agreement failed to materialize the Ministry utilized the services of Russian refugees, many of them competent engineers, to direct operations and to instruct Persians in the art of road-making. They proved apt pupils, and when Dr. Millspaugh's Mission arrived in Persia, in 1922, the American Director General of Roads, Mr. Mitchell, and his successor, Colonel A. F. Morris, found that the shortage of competent personnel for maintenance and essential repairs was not so great an obstacle as the absence of funds.

Early in 1925 the Economic Commission of the Majlis formulated a programme of highway construction, to be financed by fresh taxes. This programme became law in February, 1926, whereby the various tolls hitherto levied on merchandise

were abolished and replaced by a compounded road-tax leviable at the frontier, and estimated to produce about £200,000 a year. At the end of 1930, about 2,195 kilometres of metalled road (first class) were in existence; about 9,556 kilometres surfaced with stone and gravel (second class); and about 2,199 kilometres passable for cars all the year round, though sometimes with difficulty, but unmetalled (third class). A sum of £240,000 was allocated annually for new construction, and £200,000 for road maintenance. For the next few years progress in road making was uninterrupted; the Dizful-Khurramabad-Burujird road was opened by the Shah in October, 1928, and by the end of 1929 the Bandar Abbas-Saidabad-Kerman road was passable, and cars could thus pass freely from Bandar Abbas via Kerman eastwards to Seistan and British India, or westwards to Yezd and Isfahan, and to Shiraz. The car has now become the normal method of transport for passengers and goods alike, and imports of motor cars and lorries (including buses), which in 1924 were 529 and 103 respectively, had reached 1,369 and 1,783 respectively in 1928.

The increase in the mileage of roads open to mechanical transport has perhaps been too rapid: on the one hand the relatively great capital sums invested in pack animals has been drastically depreciated; on the other, private individuals have invested too freely in motor cars, omnibuses and lorries, regardless of the effect on the balance of trade. The distance of the Persian oil-fields from the Persian plateau, as compared with Baku, and the high cost of transport of petrol and kerosene over the rugged Zagros, has prevented Persian oil from ousting the products of Baku, and each additional car has involved a fresh demand for foreign exchange.

The situation, in fact, had something in common with the state of affairs in Great Britain and later in the U.S.A., where the capital value of railways was menaced by the sudden growth of road transport, and by the expenditure of great sums of money, by the nation, on roads which served to help motor lorries and cars to compete with the older, privately-owned means of transport and locomotion.

Aviation in Persia has progressed no less rapidly during the past five years than has mechanical transport. Here, too, the stimulus of things seen and experienced during the Great War has had a powerful influence on events. During 1918 detachments of the British Air Force were stationed at Hamadan and Kazvin, and at Bushire. Their assistance was frequently invoked by the Persian Government for punitive operations against recalcitrant tribes. In February, 1927, a German company, the Junkers Air Service, commenced a regular weekly passenger service between Baku and Tehran, and before long this was extended to Isfahan and finally to Bushire. In 1928 it commenced to run planes between Baghdad, Kermanshah, Hamadan and Tehran, and has since continued to Meshed and into Afghan territory, the services usually being twice weekly. Persians have proved as "air-minded" as any European race. The climatic conditions are, generally speaking, very favourable to flying; fog, the great enemy of aviation, is seldom encountered: high winds are exceptional on the plateau. Good aerodromes are not far to seek. The distance between large towns is often from 200 to 300 miles, the only competitor being the motor car, over roads which do not make travel a luxury, and it is a remarkable fact that no fatal accidents have as yet marred the history of civil aviation in Persia. Early in 1932

the Junkers Company discontinued their services in Persia owing to financial stringency, but it is reasonable to suppose that they will eventually be restored in some form. Military aviation has by no means been neglected, and a number of competent pilots from the Military College at Tehran have been trained as aviators, and, occasion requiring, are used for punitive purposes.

To most Persians these various mechanical developments spell progress in the Western sense of the word, because they are typical of the contemporary life of Europe as seen from outside. They have helped to strengthen the authority of the Central Government, and of the official class; they have tended to reduce the cost of imported merchandise, and to prevent the recurrence of famine. Persians are beginning to acquire something of the restlessness of the European, of the desire to move rapidly from place to place, and "not to waste time" on journeys—regardless, like ourselves, of the manner in which they spend the time thus saved.

But there is a debit side to the account, not less real because invisible.

Disraeli, in *Tancred*, writing of Europeans, remarks: "In vain they baptise their tumult by the name of progress. The whisper of a demon is always asking them, 'Progress—from whence and to where?' The European talks of progress because, by an ingenious application of semi-scientific acquirements, he has established a society which has mistaken comfort for civilization." The aeroplane and the car—and in days to come the railway—are already forcing Persians to abandon a way of life which was well suited to the country and the climate, and to their own disposition and temperament, for another way which will lead them into paths as yet untried,

and must ultimately result in profound changes in the national philosophy and outlook.

The achievement of Persian culture is so great that it will not soon be displaced, and so long as it persists it will remain superior to that of any nation in Asia, for it has a background of philosophical and spiritual belief which enables Persians to rise superior to the thought of remoter calamities. It is being undermined by modern inventions which, like other peoples, Persians could not refuse to adopt, even if they so desired.

Yet the Persians have a strong race consciousness. They have always recognized that unchanging political theories or institutions are no more possible than unchanging species. They have adjusted their civilization to new phenomena in the past, and can do so again. A nation which has so often absorbed its conquerors may well be expected to make even internal combustion engines subserve national needs.

"If," wrote Lord Curzon in 1889, "the correspondence [on the subject of Railways in Persia] that has passed from the various Legations in Tehran to the great capitals of Europe, and more especially to St. Petersburg and London, were collected, it would provide a bonfire that would blaze for a week." Had Lord Curzon written forty years later he would have been justified in ascribing a longer life to the beneficent fire of his imagination. From his detailed summary of earlier projects it will be seen that half a dozen nations were actively engaged in endeavouring to obtain concessions, but that nothing came of them, partly owing to Russian hostility to railway ventures, partly owing to justifiable reluctance on the part of Persian monarchs to place themselves in the hands of concessionaires in a matter of such vital importance, and partly

owing to doubts as to whether any of the projected railways would ever be commercially profitable.

From 1889 onwards railway projects in Persia were a favourite topic of diplomatic discussion; by 1911 the practical issues were limited to two projects, both well backed and sponsored by responsible governments. The first was the construction of a trans-Persian railway by an international group under Russian auspices, the length of line being about 1,600 miles and the cost about £21,000,000. The company was to have its chief office in London or Brussels. The line was to follow the shortest route from Calais to Calcutta, using existing lines and going through Persia; English and Russian interests were to be equal, but the participation of French, German, Persian and other groups was to be welcomed. Subsidiary Russo-German negotiations included an undertaking by Russia to build an eventual line from Tehran to Khanaqin, Germany undertaking not to build lines to the north of Khanaqin and to do her best to prevent Turkey from adopting an aggressive policy on the Persian border.

The second project was the formation of the Persian Railway Syndicate with leave to survey, and with some sort of option to construct (subject to the consent of the Persian Government), a line from Mohammerah northwards through Khurramabad to Hamadan and eventually to Tehran. This syndicate submitted a scheme to the Persian Government for the construction of a net-work of railways in Southern Persia:

(*a*) from Mohammerah or Khor Musa to Dizful, Khurramabad and Burujird;
(*b*) from Bandar Abbas to Kerman;
(*c*) from Bandar Abbas to Shiraz; and
(*d*) from Bandar Abbas to Mohammerah.

This far-reaching scheme for a monopoly of railway construction in Southern Persia included the right to develop ports where necessary. It also involved the issue by the Persian Government of bonds secured on the railways and their earnings and on other sources of revenue.

The first trans-Persian project never reached the stage of practical politics, though possible alignments for the eastern section, terminating in India, were studied in some detail by experts deputed by the Government of India. It was killed by the war, but it could scarcely have survived detailed examination. It would have had little attraction for Persians, who were concerned rather to secure an easier outlet for their products, and cheaper rates of freight for seaborne goods from Europe, than to facilitate railway traffic between Europe and India.[1] The second project, or group of projects, had a much more substantial foundation, for it comprised every alignment which had at any time been seriously favoured by the Persian Government themselves, not with any idea of constructing all of them, but in order to secure the right to construct whichever of them should prove after investigation to offer the best commercial prospect. The Syndicate actually made a survey of the Mohammerah-Dizful section in 1913 and was prevented only by tribal difficulties from completing during 1914 a detailed reconnaissance as far as Burujird.

The Great War prevented further development on these lines, and the completion in 1919 of a railway

[1] According, however, to information received in Riga in January, 1932, the Soviet Government has approved an agreement recently signed by representatives of Russia, Persia, and Afghanistan, and Japanese financiers for the purpose of building a railway across Afghanistan from the Russian to the Indian borders. This line is later to be extended northwards to connect with the Turkish-Siberian Railway, and a junction will be made with a line from Bandar Abbas, on the Persian Gulf.

on metre gauge between Baghdad and Basra naturally focussed attention on the possibility of linking up Tehran with Baghdad via Khanaqin, Kermanshah, Hamadan and Kazvin. The Persian Government took the initiative by inviting the Persian Railway Syndicate to survey a line of metre gauge between these cities. It was agreed that upon the completion of the surveys the Persian Government would have the right to call on the group to construct the railway line or lines either as a Persian State Railway or as a private enterprise, failing which the Persian Government undertook to reimburse the cost of survey which, it is understood, amounted to about £120,000.[1]

This scheme had, at first sight, great advantages: it would follow an existing trade route and would make use of an existing railway line. It would secure the considerable pilgrim traffic between Persia and the shrines of Karbala, Najaf, Kadhimain and Samarra. It crossed the Zagros range at its lowest point for many hundreds of miles in either direction, where the population within fifty miles of this alignment was greater, in proportion to its length, than that of any other route. The cost per mile compared very favourably with that of any other alignment that had been discussed, and fuel was available from the oilfields in the neighbourhood of Khanaqin. There was, moreover, the possibility that Baghdad would some day be connected by rail with the Mediterranean, thus giving Persia overland access to European markets by a route which was neither in Russian nor in British hands.

For some time the Persian Government seemed inclined to view this scheme with favour, but her

[1] The bill awaits (1932) settlement.

expert advisers, and some Persian statesmen, held very different views. They pointed out that access to European markets could be secured more effectively and at far less cost by a line from Tabriz to some Turkish port on the Black Sea, such as Trebizond. They added, moreover, that both schemes had, from the point of view of Persia, one fatal defect—they placed Persian trade, and Persia's investment in railways, at the mercy of a neighbouring foreign power. Persian relations with Turkey were not good (Turkey's relations with her neighbours have never long been free from strain). Persia objected to the British Mandate on principle, yet had no confidence in the stability of 'Iraq as an independent State. No railway project would, in the eyes of these advisers, be satisfactory that did not terminate, at each end, in a port on Persian soil, and wholly within the control of the Persian Government.

This view eventually prevailed, and one of the first acts of the present monarch, on his accession to the throne, was to take preliminary steps for the construction of a line from the Caspian to the Persian Gulf. He had the whole Persian littoral of the Caspian to choose from at one end, and the Persian Gulf littoral at the other. Enzeli (renamed Pahlevi) and Resht, at the western corner of the Caspian were rejected as being already adequately served by a motor road into the interior, and to duplicate by a line of railway would be wasteful. The choice eventually fell on Bandar Gaz, a small port in the south-eastern corner of the Caspian, near Asterabad, in the bay of Ashuradeh, at the edge of the sandy Turkman steppe. It is surrounded by marshes, and the water so shallow that a wooden jetty more than a mile long had to be built so that ships could come

alongside; but conditions are just as difficult along the whole Caspian shore.[1]

The choice of a port on the Persian Gulf was more difficult. There were four possible termini—Bandar Abbas, Bushire, Mohammerah, and Khor Musa.[2]

Bandar Abbas, or Abbasi, as the Persians themselves call it, is a roadstead only partially protected from prevailing winds, and could not be made into a tolerably good harbour except at very great cost. Vessels at present anchor under one and a half to two miles from the shore. The nature of the hinterland does not preclude the construction of railways in a north-easterly direction to Kerman, and north-west via Lar and Jahrum to Shiraz, a distance in each case of about 350 miles by an alignment on an average grade of 1 in 100. Thence the distance by rail from Shiraz to Isfahan would be about 300 miles.

There were those who favoured such an alignment, which appeared to be cheaper per mile of line than any other trunk line, and had the advantage of being a central line from which feeder lines might radiate in various directions. It would tap a larger population than any other alignment, except that of Khanaqin-Hamadan-Tehran, and would pass through many fertile areas: it would shorten the ocean journey between India and Port Said by several hundred miles, as compared with Khor Musa or Mohammerah, and it had certain strategical attractions.

[1] A dredger was purchased in 1929 to excavate a channel to the piers at Pahlawi.

[2] Charbar is undoubtedly a better harbour than any of these: it is well sheltered and affords good anchorage in deep water, but its position so far east in relation to the rest of Persia, and the difficult country to the north, sufficed to exclude it from consideration.

Bushire[1] was another possible terminus, but here, too, landing facilities are inadequate. Ships have to anchor three to five miles out, in an open roadstead, and goods are brought ashore in sailing dhows. It has nevertheless an annual trade totalling about four million pounds sterling in value. The town with its suburb Reshire (Rishahr), is situated on an island, twelve miles long by four wide, connected with the mainland by nine miles of mud flats, which are impassable after heavy rain. The motor road thence to Shiraz, 180 miles distant, over which nearly all the trade flows, is at present (1932) one of the least satisfactory in the kingdom, the portion over the mud flats being particularly bad. A railway alignment at a grade of 1 in 100 would probably run via Firuzabad, and would be from 280 to 300 miles long—thus offering little economy as compared with mechanical transport. It would have to compete, too, with transport by air from Shiraz, which is being increasingly used for valuable freight such as opium. In this connection it should be mentioned that current rates of freight from Persian ports northwards are from 9*d*. to 1*s*. per ton mile for animal transport: 1*s*. 6*d*. per ton mile for motor transport, and about 15 per cent. extra for goods carried by air. These figures should be compared with rates of ½*d*. to 1*d*. per ton mile on the Basra-Baghdad railway, and 1*d*. to 7½*d*. per ton mile on the Baghdad-Kirkuk line—rates admittedly barely remunerative, though the line is over flat country, and little or no provision is made for repayment of capital cost.

Moving westwards, we come to Khor Musa, an

[1] Bushire and Reshire (Rishahr) are corruptions respectively of the names Bokht Ardashir and Ram Ardashir, both being founded by the King Ardashir Papakan. For the current form Abu Shahr, a mixture of Persian and Arabic, there is no etymological justification at all. (See Hadi Hasan, *A History of Persian Navigation*, 1928).

arm of the sea, running nearly thirty miles inland and northwards from the open sea between mud flats. The very full levels taken by Major W. R. Morton, R.E., of the P.W.D. India, in 1902–6, indicate the probability that in very early times the Khor Musa was the mouth of the Karun, which must have reached it through the gap in the hills five miles east of Ahwaz and thence down the great depression now drained by the Malih stream. When, at a much later date, the Karun took to its present bed, it continued to enter the Khor Musa, turning south-east at Marid, and passing Qubban, now a salt swamp, until in 1766 it abandoned this bed and followed a boat channel which had been dug from near Mohammerah to Marid (hence the name Haffar or "excavated" for the reach from Khumbeh above Mohammerah to Marid).

At this period the Shatt al Arab had two mouths, one reaching the sea as at present at Fao, the other being the Bahmishir channel which was of about equal size and importance. The word Bahmishir is a corruption of Bahman Ardashir, a town anciently situated on the banks of one of the two mouths of the Shatt al Arab, and referred to by Hamza of Isfahan in A.D. 961. The little port of Buziyeh, near Fallahiyeh, on a branch of the Khor Musa, is so named not from an eponymous goat, but from the old Persian word *buzi*, a ship.[1]

Khor Musa was already a well-known anchorage when Nearchus arrived in 326 B.C. It is referred to by Pliny (vi. 26), in A.D. 23–79, as the port of Muza, and elsewhere as Mesene.[2] It is referred to in the travels of Nasir i Khusrawi in the thirteenth century as the creek of Dauraqistan and also by Yaqut and

[1] Ibid. p. 79.
[2] For references see Wilson, *The Persian Gulf*, 1928, p. 49–50.

Qazvini,[1] in which ships coming from India cast anchor. It was the scene of sanguinary fighting between British and Indian sailors and Arab pirates of the Ch'ab (K'ab) tribes in 1766.

When Anglo-Russian relations were a subject of considerable anxiety at the beginning of the present century, the Russian Government having made no secret of their desire for a outlet in Persian territory at the head of the Gulf, the Khor Musa was reconnoitred, in 1903, under the orders of the Home Government,[2] by Commander Somerville, R.N., (who was accompanied by Commander Kemp, R.N.,) of H.M.S. *Sphinx*, the Senior Naval Officer, Persian Gulf Division. The information contained in his report was supplemented by a series of further reports by officers of the Royal Indian Marine and by Consular Officers at Bushire and Mohammerah. The Khannaq branch of the Dauraqistan creek to within a few miles of Qubban, and the Zangi tract which adjoins the northern bank of Khor Ma'shur above the mouth of the Dauraqistan creek leading to Buziyeh were all carefully mapped. For obvious reasons, the charts then made were not published at the time, but the seventh edition of the Persian Gulf Pilot (1924) gives at page 231–2, under the incorrect spelling Hor Musa,[3] a fairly full and accurate description of the channel and its surroundings, and states that the minimum depth on the bar is two and a half fathoms.

A full and most interesting account of his exploration of Khor Musa was given by Commander Somerville in *Blackwood's Magazine* for June and July, 1920, under the title "A Secret Survey."

[1] Ibid., p. 69.

[2] See para. II. p. 365, *British Documents on the Origin of the War* Vol. IV, 1929, *et seq.*

[3] *Hor*, a shallow fresh or brackish marsh; *Khor*, an arm of the sea.

"I felt," he writes, "that the importance of the discovery of this wonderful deep-water anchorage, far inland, entirely protected from attack from seaward, and having an abundant fresh water supply, easily available, by pipe-line or otherwise, fully warranted the expenditure of time I had given it."

Naval enquiries definitely established that the Khor Musa bar carried three fathoms of low water springs, but it was added that a complete survey might reveal a deeper channel than any then known: it was also remarked that successive surveys carried out over a period of nearly twenty years had indicated that the soundings in this region were little liable to variation, due no doubt to the fact that practically no silt was at any time deposited. Such silt as there is was doubtless originally brought down by the Bahmishir, which channel is shown, however, by successive surveys, to have been steadily shrinking for the past century. Within the bar, the depth steadily increases, and after passing Daira there is no bottom at nine fathoms, a condition which is maintained the whole way from this place to the head of the main creek, where the channel is still ten fathoms deep and not less than half a mile broad, and even greater depth is found in the Khor Abu Khadhayar.

The islands lying between the various creeks are a favourite resort of seagulls and other birds during the breeding season, their nests being quite unapproachable for the most part owing to the soft mud: and in the summer large quantities of salt are produced by evaporation. One little ruined mud fort, on one of the smaller khors, is known as the Kut, or fort, of Mister Zubaid al Farangi. Who this individual was, and what he did, history does not relate, but he deserves to be immortalized like

the dead pilot, whose tomb, Qabr an Nakhuda, was till recently the only landmark in the khor.

Commander Somerville's reports bore fruit in due course, and when, in 1909, the Persian Railway Syndicate obtained from the Persian Government an option to build a line northwards from the Persian Gulf, the terminus was specified as Mohammerah, or alternatively, Khor Musa, the potentialities of which had been fully explained to the authorities in Tehran, if, indeed, they were not already aware of them. But in point of fact, at a much earlier date (in 1906) the possibilities of Khor Musa as a terminus of the Baghdad Railway had been raised by Lord Ellenborough in the House of Lords, the idea being that the physical disadvantages of Basra and the political objections to Kuwait as a terminus might be avoided, with benefit to Persia, by placing the terminus in Persian territory on the Khor Musa. This solution would have had, in certain circumstances, the further advantage to Persia—in the event of the construction by Russia of a north-south railway—of avoiding the possibility of control of the port and terminus at Khor Musa by any nation other than Persia. In June, 1910, a further survey was made, and the courses of the khors Silaik Bahri, Silaik Barri and Kuwairin mapped on the one inch to one mile scale by a young officer of the Indian Army, who nearly met his death in the process. The position of the island of Daira wa Bunnah (*Kataderbis* of Nearchus) was fixed by the navigator of H.M.S. *Redbreast* (Lieut. Spreckley, R.N.) in September, 1910, his party narrowly escaping a watery grave in the rising tide. In 1924 an aerial survey of the mud flats between the Karun and Khor Musa was made, and the land connections ascertained.

Khor Musa has, unquestionably, the makings of a

good harbour, but not necessarily of a good port. There is no good supply of fresh water near by: the ground, moreover, for many miles round is impregnated with salt, and it would be a disagreeable place of residence for porters, stevedores, and shore staff. The upkeep of steel work and of port buildings would always be costly.

Let us turn now to the alternative port of Mohammerah at the confluence of the Shatt al Arab and the Karun. Compared with Khor Musa it is a paradise. The majestic Shatt rolls past, a deep broad stream, the bar of which has been dredged to allow steamers drawing thirty feet to pass at high tide. The water is sweet, and soon cleanses the foul bottoms of ocean going steamers that have been long at sea. Just below Mohammerah, the shore of the Island of Abadan (known locally as Jazirat al Khidhr, from a famous shrine on the island) shelves so steeply that fully-laden vessels can stand in to within a few yards of the bank. From Mohammerah to Ahwaz the distance by rail, following the existing pipe-lines, would not exceed eighty-five miles, and would encounter no difficulties. At Mohammerah and at Abadan is a large resident population, whence labour of every class could be drawn with a minimum of expense. There is easy connection by river with Basra for transshipment cargo, and ample anchorage for barges and subsidiary craft in the mouth of the Karun, opposite the town of Mohammerah. There is ample space on clean, fresh ground, free from salt, for port and railway sheds, and sidings, and for the development of a prosperous new town. "Every prospect pleases," yet Khor Musa (renamed Bandar Shapur) has been chosen by the Persian Government in preference to Mohammerah, a jetty built, and a

railway constructed thence to Ahwaz, after crossing the Karun to Dizful, a distance of nearly one hundred miles.

We may safely assume that neither the Persian Government nor their advisers were blind to the relative merits of the two sites; what, then, were the considerations that led them to decide in favour of Khor Musa? The answer is to be found in the chequered history of Turco-Persian relations.

A long period of intermittent but chronic warfare between Turkey and Persia was brought to a close by the Treaty of Erzerum in 1823, confirmed and amplified by the Treaty of 1847. These treaties, which dealt among other matters with the frontier between the two countries, declared that this question should be regulated by a Treaty of 1746 which in its turn confirmed a Treaty of 1639, of which apparently no copy now exists. All these treaties must be regarded, in international law, to be in full force so far as they have not been specifically abrogated, and 'Iraq, as a Succession State, must be regarded, to some extent, to be bound by them. The Treaty of 1847 dealt, however, specifically with the frontier in the Shatt al Arab, in the following clauses:

"Le Gouvernement Ottoman s'engage formellement à ce que la ville et l'échelle de Mohammara, l'île de Khizr, le lieu d'ancrage, et aussi les terrains de la rive orientale, c'est-à-dire, de la rive gauche du Schatt ul Arab, qui sont en la possession des tribus reconnus comme relevant de la Perse, soient dans la possession du Gouvernement Persan en pleine souveraineté.

"Outre cela, les navires Persans auront le droit de naviguer en pleine liberté sur le Schatt ul Arab, depuis l'endroit où ce fleuve se jette dans la mer jusqu'au point de contact des frontières des deux parties."

It was further agreed that the frontier should be fixed by Commissioners. They were duly appointed, but failed to agree, and the mediation of Great Britain and Russia was invoked. These powers, in turn, appointed Commissioners to assist the limitrophe powers to reach an agreement; success did not however attend their deliberations, for reasons into which it is not necessary to enter, and it was not until 1912 that a protocol was finally signed by Turkish and Persian plenipotentiaries at Constantinople, which defined the whole frontier line from Fao to Ararat, and provided for its demarcation by Turkish and Persian Commissioners with the assistance of British and Russian arbitrators. This time the task was completed: the final protocol was signed on October 27th, 1914; two days later Turkey declared war on Russia. A week later Great Britain declared war on Turkey, and less than a month later Basra was in the hands of an Indian Expeditionary Force.

The protocol of 1912, based on the Treaty of 1847, provided that the whole of the main stream of the Shatt al Arab should be included in the territory of Turkey, except at Mohammerah, where "the anchorage" mentioned in the treaty was left to Persia. At this point the boundary between the two countries, as defined by the Commissioners in 1914, followed for five miles up stream and about a mile down stream, the middle line of the main-stream.

The Military Administration of Mesopotamia found itself obliged in 1918, owing to the immense increase in the number of steamers visiting Basra, to take steps to regulate pilotage, to provide lights and buoys and navigational marks, both in the river and on the bar, and to undertake dredging opera-

tions. Time did not admit of diplomatic discussion, and full jurisdiction over the Shatt al Arab waterway was, by unilateral act, forthwith assumed.

This step put an end to a *modus vivendi*, which had existed between Turkish and Persian authorities on the spot since steamships began to visit the Shatt al Arab, and probably much earlier, whereby jurisdiction of all kinds on the Shatt (up to the point where both banks were in possession of Turkey) was jointly shared, the *medium filum aquae* being regarded as the boundary, notwithstanding the Treaty of 1847.

The governments of Turkey and Persia, and their local representatives, did not, before the war, take a meticulously bureaucratic or legalistic view of the text of treaties. As a matter of principle, they preferred to allow matters to drift, to maintain, and develop as need arose, a non-committal *modus vivendi* which would work, rather than to hammer out a rigid diplomatic instrument which might raise more questions than it solved.

This point of view, which should by no means be dismissed as the fruit of indolence or ineptitude, may be illustrated by a conversation which, as one of the Mediating Commissioners, I held with the Turkish representative on the Frontier Commission of 1914. We had discussed, for hours, a knotty point, where our instructions left room for a legitimate difference of opinion.

"Tranchons la question," said I. "Let us give a clear decision, even if it is unfavourable to one side." "Non, non cherchons une formule," said the Turkish Commissioner; "let us find a form of words which will evade the real issue, whilst appearing to settle it." I expressed dissent and surprise: "Telles questions ne se tranchent pas par des phrases et des

bouts de papier. Les actes diplomatiques sont trop facilement bouleversés par les évènements, et par les faits et gestes des deux partis." A decision definitely unfavourable to one side, he explained, would be a source of renewed friction. If, on the other hand, we could, by juggling with words, keep the peace for ten years, we should do all and more than our predecessors had done. Events have shown that he was right—the question is still undecided: the ambiguous formula still holds the field, and events have deprived the issue, for the time being, of importance. It will doubtless exercise the ingenuity of a future generation of diplomats and frontier officials.

To return, however, to the point at issue, the Persian Government, and their expert advisers, including a distinguished U.S. citizen, Mr. Poland, were undoubtedly impressed by the strength of the arguments in favour of a terminus on the Shatt al Arab. But its advantages were outweighed, in the eyes of the Persian Cabinet, by its proximity to the 'Iraq frontier, and by the territorial rights and unilateral administration of the 'Iraq governments in the Shatt al Arab. The relations of the two countries have not hitherto been particularly friendly—they are divided by differences of temperament and of race as well as of tongue, and by numerous minor causes of friction. A more accommodating spirit on both sides, and a more agile diplomacy, might have enabled Persia to decide in favour of Mohammerah. Such a decision would have reacted favourably on 'Iraq, for it would have increased, indirectly, the traffic of Basra. *Amour propre*, however, on both sides, proved too strong, and Khor Musa was finally chosen as the site for the terminus.

A temporary jetty has been built at Bandar

Shapur, over which railway material can be landed, and a line, on standard gauge, has been laid thence to Ahwaz. There it crosses the Karun by an imposing steel bridge over a thousand yards long[1] and runs up the right bank of the Diz River to Dizful. Over this section two trains a week were running in each direction in 1931, and the line is being continued beyond Dizful to the foot of the wall of mountains which it has to traverse on its way to Burujird. Beyond that point detailed surveys up the Diz gorges have not yet been completed, but it is known that very heavy expenditure will be involved, including tunnelling and rock-cuttings on a large scale, in constructing the next 140 miles to Burujird. Beyond that town there is a choice of two routes, either through Daulatabad, Hamadan and Kazvin to Tehran, some 374 miles in all, or by a more direct route, saving 55 miles, but missing Hamadan and Kazvin.

At the Caspian end, the line has been laid from Bandar Gaz to Aliabad, through Sari, a distance of some miles, and is in operative condition. Work is now commencing on the next section, over the shoulder of the Elburz by way of the Firuzkuh Pass (7,380 feet). Of the three hundred miles to Tehran, nearly a hundred are across high mountains, involving twenty-five miles of tunnels.

It is understood that the cost of railway construction to date is about three million pounds sterling, all of which has been met from a special tax on sugar and tea (which have been constituted a monopoly) which brings in about one million pounds sterling a year—a very heavy drain on the finances of the country. The total cost of this trunk line, if and when completed, is estimated very roughly

[1] This bridge, made in Great Britain, is so designed as to form part of an irrigation dam, if need arise.

at twenty-four million pounds, but may be half as much again, if to the capital cost is added the interest and deficit on operating expenses before completion of the great undertaking.

It is superfluous to add that that the net revenues to be derived from the line are most unlikely to suffice to meet interest and amortization charges on the original cost. The most that can be expected—the most, in fact, that the Persian Government hope—is that it will be possible to meet working expenses plus a reserve for maintenance, from the traffic receipts. The primary object of the line is to make Persia independent of its neighbours in all that concerns the movement of international trade; and the Shah, and his ministers, consider that no sacrifice is too great to encompass so important an aim.

An existing line from Julfa on the Russian frontier to Tabriz, a distance of some eighty miles, with a branch to Sufian on the Urmia Lake, thirty miles distant, might have been extended to Kazvin and Tehran. A line (laid by the Government of India during the war) from the Indo-Persian frontier at Nushki to Duzdab might have been extended[1] to Nasratabad, the chief town of the province of Seistan, and thence to Kerman or Meshed. The Government of India, indeed, offered to undertake the construction, on terms to be arranged, but the offer was not entertained. The Shah, in fact, was not disposed to adopt such half measures—the line of his dreams was to be "all red": its termini under Persian control, its ownership, management and maintenance Persian, its finances untainted by foreign loans.' We may doubt the wisdom of his policy: but we cannot withhold our admiration

[1] The cost of a standard gauge line from Duzdab to Nasratabad (135 miles) was estimated at £600,000.

from the originator of the grandiose scheme. The question cannot be looked at solely from an economic standpoint. To-day, at any rate, patriotic sentiment overshadows other considerations.

Yet this phase will pass and the projected line from Baghdad to Tehran may (see p. 113) be restored to favour. But it would be of no value unless it led to a Mediterranean port. Surveys for such a line have indeed been made, between Baghdad and Haifa, but the prospect of construction is remote. The cost on standard gauge, uniform with that of the main railway systems of Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Turkey, would not be less than eight million pounds, the distance not less than six hundred miles, the traffic insufficient to pay working expenses. An alignment via Tikrit and Homs, giving access to the fertile and climatically attractive highlands of Syria would be shorter and cheaper and might eventually assist the administrative union of Syria and 'Iraq, but it is at the moment for political reasons anathema in Baghdad. The real argument in favour of either alignment is that it would make possible the agricultural and pastoral development of the Syrian desert plateau. Experimental borings by the French authorities in Syria, and in connection with the oil pipe-line from Kirkuk to Haifa, have shown that water can be obtained, in great quantities, at depths of from 150 to 400 feet. With cheap oil available from the pipe-line, and with vast areas of fertile soil ready to hand, this discovery opens up vistas of developments which may prove to be of the highest importance to the Middle East, for the winter rains in the desert are as heavy as in most parts of the Persian plateau: it is only in summer and autumn that there is a shortage of water.

CHAPTER VI

THE FOREIGN RELATIONS OF PERSIA

"We desire above all things that Persia shall not only be prosperous but strong—strong in her resources, strong in her preparations, strong in her alliances,—in order that she may pursue the peaceful path on which she has entered, in security and tranquility."—LORD SALISBURY.

(Speech on the occasion of the visit of H.I.M. Muzaffar ud Din Shah to England in 1873; quoted by Mrs. Bishop, *Journeys in Persia*, 1891, p. 259).

THIS volume is in no sense a history of Persia, but it is impossible to deal with modern tendencies without some prefatory reference to the past.

When expressing thus emphatically to the Ruler of a friendly State the cordial wishes of His Majesty's Government for its future strength, as well as for its material prosperity, Lord Salisbury had in mind the great importance which a strong and independent Persia possessed for Great Britain as a friendly buffer State on the western frontier of her Indian Empire. For generations past the rivalries and conflicting policies of Great Britain and Russia in Asia had been a chronic source of anxiety and often of danger; indeed more than once diplomatic relations had become so acutely strained as to bring the two Powers to the very brink of war.

In 1904, however, the conclusion of the *Entente Cordiale* with France, though on the one hand tending to bring into relief the extremely unsatisfactory relations prevailing between this country and her ally Russia, provided, on the other hand, a détente in which, if the parties were so inclined, an improvement in those relations might be sought. Russia, moreover, was still suffering from the shock of her disastrous war with Japan, and appeared much less inclined than of yore to pursue an aggressive military policy in Central Asia. The juncture therefore seemed an ideal one for a frank exchange of views whereby existing differences, and suspicion of each other's aims, might haply be dispelled or adjusted.

Such a rapprochement would obviously be an appropriate corollary to our Agreement with France, while, incidentally, Great Britain might expect to secure from it immunity from the contingency of a further advance on the part of Russia towards India or the Persian Gulf, and consequent relief from the severe financial burden so long imposed upon the Government of India in maintaining the safety of her frontiers against that ever present menace.

Such an exchange of views, to be complete, must cover our interests and relations at all points of contact in Asia—Tibet, Afghanistan, and Persia. With the two former regions we are not here concerned. As regards Persia, the main features of British policy which should, it was considered, form the basis of any negotiations, were substantially the same as those formulated in Lord Curzon's celebrated despatch of 1899, written in his capacity of Governor-General in Council and Viceroy of India, in which he stated with conviction that it

was impossible for the Government of India to allow "any European Power, and more especially Russia, to overrun Central and Southern Persia and so to reach the Gulf, or to acquire naval facilities in the latter, even without such territorial connections."

Russia, on being approached, proving favourable to the idea, negotiations were in due course initiated and resulted in the Anglo-Russian Convention of August, 1907. Its main provisions in regard to Persia were, briefly: That all existing concessions enjoyed by either party in any part of the country were to be respected; but that for the future their interests and activities were to be confined to distinct and well-defined spheres, viz., RUSSIA, to the region lying north of a line passing from Qasr i Shirin on the Turco-Persian frontier on the west, to Kakhk, the point where the Russian, Persian, and Afghan frontiers meet on the east; and GREAT BRITAIN, to the territory south of a line running from Qazik, on the Perso-Afghan frontier, through Birjand and Kerman to Bandar Abbas on the Persian Gulf. Each of the high-contracting parties undertook not to seek commercial or political concessions in the sphere of the other, while the tract intervening between the two spheres above indicated was to be regarded as neutral ground in which neither party might obtain concessions.

With the Convention was published a letter from His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to his Russian colleague, stating that the Persian Gulf lay outside the scope of the convention, but that Russia recognized the special interests of Great Britain in the Gulf, which would be maintained by the latter as heretofore.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the substance of the policy advocated by Lord Curzon was embodied in the terms of the convention, and this notwithstanding that there was at all times a strong party in Russia bitterly opposed to any agreement with England, and rather in favour of an alliance with Germany.

How strong this party was, and how deeply it felt that Russian interests in Persia had been prejudiced, may be seen from the following extracts from a secret memorandum presented to the Czar Nicholas II in February, 1914, by R. N. Durnovo, Minister of Interior in the Witte Cabinet:

"In Persia, also, our position has been no better since the conclusion of this 1907 agreement. Everyone recalls our predominant influence in that country under Shah Nasr ud Din, that is, exactly at a time when our relations with England were most strained. From the moment of our accord with the latter, we have found ourselves drawn into a number of strange attempts to impose upon the Persian people an entirely needless constitution, with the result that we ourselves contributed to the overthrow, for the benefit of our inveterate enemies, of a monarch who was devoted to Russia. That is, not only have we gained nothing, but we have suffered a loss all along the line. . . . There can be no doubt (in the event of a European War) as to an outburst of hatred for us in Persia, and a probable unrest amongst the Moslems of the Caucasus and Turkistan; it is possible that Afghanistan, as a result of that unrest, may act against us. . . . The vital interests of Russia and Germany do not conflict. . . . Those territorial economic acquisitions which might really prove useful to us are available only in places (such as Persia) where our ambitions may meet opposition from England, but by no means from Germany."[1]

[1] The Century Historical Series: *Documentary Russian History*. Golder, 1928.

The same note was struck in a speech in the Duma by N. E. Markov in May, 1914.

> "What is happening in Persia? In Persia we are being pushed out. We are being pushed out of there from every side, and who is it that is driving us out? It is England."

News of the conclusion of the Convention unfortunately caused suspicion and alarm in Persia, notwithstanding every sort of assurance from the British Minister repudiating emphatically the slightest aggressive design on the part of Great Britain, or desire on her part to interfere in Persia's affairs, and again declaring her sincere intention to respect the independence and integrity of the Shah's dominions. The Persian public, however, put little faith in these assurances, and the convention may be said to have become a turning-point in the history of Anglo-Persian relations. Persians apparently felt that their interests had been bartered by Great Britain for a promise of Russian support in the event of a European War. A cartoon published in *Punch* at the time depicted a Persian cat sitting uneasily between a Russian bear and a British lion. "I will pat its head," says the bear to the lion, "and you shall stroke its tail." "I have not been consulted," pleads the cat. The cartoon accurately represented the Persian point of view. It was reprinted in Persia and distributed to every corner of the country. Nothing could have more perfectly depicted the national feeling.

During the Great War the fact that practically the whole of the intervening neutral zone between the two spheres of interests prescribed in the convention became practically merged in the area in

which the British Expeditionary Force in Mesopotamia had to operate, necessitated its being treated, for the time being at any rate, as part of the British sphere of interest, and to this course Russia made no objection. So far as the British Government were concerned there was never the least desire on her part in this connection to diverge from her time-honoured policy of respect for Persia's independence and integrity, but judging from the attitude of Russia's representatives during the war there can be little doubt that had she remained with her victorious allies to the end, she would have placed her own interpretation on the "liberty of action" which she now claimed in her own sphere of interest. However, the question was set at rest by the lapse of the Convention in 1917 on the advent of the Bolshevik régime.

But the fact remained that if the continuance of Persia as an independent State was to be ensured a good deal more was clearly needed than the mere repetition of the announcement of Lord Salisbury's days, and those of Sir John Malcolm a century before him, that its maintenance was "an integral part of British policy."

The Turks and Russians had made Persia a battlefield in 1915–6. When the Russian forces ebbed away from Northern Persia after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the Turko-Russian Armistice of December, 1917, they left the Turks in undisputed possession of the field, with free access for their German allies and themselves to every part of Persia, and with liberty to obtain petroleum from Baku and manganese from the Caucasus, and grain and cotton from the countries bordering on the Caspian Sea, such commodities being urgently needed by the Central Powers.

The terms of the Armistice provided for the withdrawal from Persia of the troops of both Russia and Turkey, but this deceived no one. One hundred and ten thousand German and Austrian prisoners were interned in Russian Turkistan, and half as many more in Siberia. It was thought that they might be utilized by Germany for an invasion of Afghanistan; it was not till later that it was ascertained that only 30,000 of the prisoners had survived the ravages of typhus.

British troops were thrown into Persia to prevent such developments, and at the same time to penetrate to Tiflis and Baku, in order to deny the products of these regions to the Central Powers. There were, moreover, still important elements in Russia which in no way acknowledged Bolshevik authority, and disclaimed any intention of making peace with the Central Powers: it was decided to support these as the best means of keeping employed enemy troops who would otherwise be available for use against us in Palestine, Mesopotamia and Persia. It was not against Bolsheviks that our efforts were directed, but against the Central Powers, for the sound of the bugles which proclaimed in Europe the Armistice of November 11th, 1918, did not penetrate to Northern Persia. Nuri Pasha was in possession of Baku. He was, it is true, in accordance with the terms of the Armistice concluded with Turkey on October 31st, 1918, compelled to evacuate by General Thomson, accompanied by representatives of France and the U.S.A. and Colonel Bicherakov. But elsewhere, in the Caucasus, Turks were actively engaged in creating a Great Azerbaijan, on lines foreshadowed by Enver Pasha, embracing parts of Turkey, Persia and the Caucasus. The integrity of North-West Persia was gravely threatened by these

manœuvres and by somewhat similar intrigues amongst the Turkmans in North-East Persia.

There was every reason to think that these movements had for their object the dismemberment of Persia, whereas it was more than ever important, from the point of view of British interests, that the kingdom should continue to exist, in full independence and integrity, as a friendly neighbour on the flanks not only of India, but now also of 'Iraq. If Persia was to be maintained securely in that position, a fundamental feature of British policy must clearly be the establishment of her own position and influence with the Shah's government on a firm and definite basis, and for such a step the portents, at the capital at any rate, seemed distinctly favourable. We had emerged victorious from the Great War, and those in high places who had backed the wrong horse were anxious enough to manifest their change of heart. With the automatic lapse of the hated Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 the reflected unpopularity which Great Britain had incurred by lending herself to it seemed to have died a natural death, while at the same juncture she was the only source from which the country could look for any form of prompt assistance in the not unlikely contingency of Bolshevik aggression. It should be borne in mind, too, that such military dispositions as existed in Persian territory at the moment of the Armistice were being continued for the time being in order to give Persia an opportunity of organizing arrangements of her own. A British force established at Kazvin was acting in concert with a British flotilla on the Caspian, whereby the approaches to the capital were covered; while to the north-west the Persian frontier was safeguarded by a cordon of British troops running from Batum through Tiflis

to Baku. In the south order had been established by the South Persian Rifles, which under British direction had become an efficient force, though it had now come to be regarded by the Central Government with some suspicion.

Thus, for the time being at any rate, Persia was free from the danger of aggression from the north, or tribal unrest in the south, while apart from these comforting conditions in the provinces, the central administration at Tehran was being assisted in meeting its current expenditure by a system of advances from the British exchequer. By such expedients only had it been possible to keep the administrative machine in reasonable working order. It was well understood, however, that these arrangements were relics of war-time exigency and might be suspended at any moment. Before that happened, and the government became submerged in an abyss of bankruptcy, her national interests clearly rendered it urgent that the foundations of her relations with Great Britain, disturbed as they had inevitably been by the repercussions of the war, should be re-established on a clear and sympathetic basis. In such circumstances it was but natural that the Persian Government of the day should invite Great Britain to concert with her constructive plans to that end, to be formulated in a definite Agreement. The idea was, of course, welcomed by the British Government, and at the beginning of 1919 negotiations were initiated between His Majesty's Minister, under instructions from London, and the Persian Prime Minister and two members of his Cabinet. The discussions continued throughout the summer, and the task of the British representative was not rendered the easier by the fact that a delegation from Persia, headed by the Foreign Minister,

Mushavar ul Mamalik, had appeared at the Peace Conference in Paris and had demanded a hearing, as a neutral power which had suffered much at the hands both of Turkey and Russia and was entitled, amongst other things, as an act of justice, to a slice of Turkish territory. They were refused a hearing, on the ground that they were not belligerents, and therefore not parties to the Conference, and that to permit them officially to present their claims would be to create a precedent which would involve an indefinite prolongation of negotiations. Persia was, however, invited to become a Member of the League, and is (1932) the only independent Muslim State in the League; she has had a seat on the Council, and has been active in general support of the League.

The delegates made public their demands, which are summarized by Mr. H. W. V. Temperley, the accomplished historian of the Peace Conference, as follows:

(*a*) *Political.*—Abrogation of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. They further demanded the abolition of Consular Courts and withdrawal of consular escorts.

(*b*) *Economic Independence.*—Persia demanded reparation for the devastation of areas and destruction of property by the various armies which had entered Persia during the war. She also claimed freedom from concessions and a control of her own economic destinies.

(*c*) *Territorial.*—This last demand was reminiscent of the old days of Persia's glory. Oblivious of the present she demanded the Oxus for her boundary, thereby claiming Transcaspia, Merv, and Khiva. In the western and north-westerly directions she actually claimed Asia Minor to the Euphrates, *i.e.*, Kurdistan, Diarbekir, and Mosul.

All these demands, be it noted, were made at a time when the government were entirely unable to organize, administer, or control the kingdom of Persia within its pre-War boundaries.

But though hampered in some measure by the above episode, the negotiations in Tehran progressed satisfactorily, and resulted in the signature on August 9th, 1919, of the Anglo-Persian Agreement, the terms of which were as follows:

"Preamble: In virtue of the close ties of friendship which have existed between the two Governments in the past, and in the conviction that it is in the essential and mutual interests of both in future that these ties should be cemented, and that the progress and prosperity of Persia should be promoted tc the utmost, it is hereby agreed between the Persian Government on the one hand, and His Britannic Majesty's Minister, acting on behalf of his Government, on the other, as follows:

"1. The British Government reiterate, in the most categorical manner, the undertakings which they have repeatedly given in the past to respect absolutely the independence and integrity of Persia.

"2. The British Government will supply, at the cost of the Persian Government, the services of whatever expert advisers may, after consultation between the two Governments, be considered necessary for the several departments of the Persian Administration. These advisers shall be engaged on contracts and endowed with adequate powers, the nature of which shall be the matter of agreement between the Persian Government and the advisers.

"3. The British Government will supply, at the cost of the Persian Government, such officers and such munitions and equipment of modern type as may be adjudged necessary by a joint commission of military experts, British and Persian, which shall assemble forthwith for the purpose of estimating the needs of Persia in respect of the formation

of a uniform force which the Persian Government proposes to create for the establishment and preservation of order in the country and on its frontiers.

"4. For the purpose of financing the reforms indicated in Clauses 2 and 3 of this agreement, the British Government offer to provide or arrange a substantial loan for the Persian Government, for which adequate security shall be sought by the two Governments in consultation in the revenues of the customs or other sources of income at the disposal of the Persian Government. Pending the completion of negotiations for such a loan the British Government will supply on account of it such funds as may be necessary for initiating the said reforms.[1]

"5. The British Government fully recognising the urgent need which exists for the improvement of communications in Persia, with a view both to the extension of trade and the prevention of famine, are prepared to co-operate with the Persian Government for the encouragement of Anglo-Persian enterprise in this direction both by means of railway construction and other forms of transport; subject always to the examination of the problems by experts and to agreements between the two Governments as to the particular projects which may be most necessary, practicable and profitable.

"6. The two Governments agree to the appointment forthwith of a committee of experts for the examination and revision of the existing customs tariff with a view to its reconstruction on a basis calculated to accord with the legitimate interests of the country and to promote its prosperity.

"Signed at Teheran, August 9th, 1920."

At the same time the Persian Government was informed, in reply to the demands submitted to the Peace Conference, that Great Britain consented to co-operate in the revision of treaties, to agree to the rectification of the frontier at certain points,

[1] By a separate agreement Persia was to contract for a British loan of £2,000,000 at 7 per cent.

and to support Persia's claim to compensation for damage suffered at the hands of other belligerents.

As far as the text of the document was concerned—and it was innocent of any secret clauses whatever—it represented a reasonable and straightforward scheme for the rehabilitation of the Persian administration which the chaotic conditions resulting from widespread repercussions of the Great War during the past four years had completely deranged.

On its signature steps were forthwith taken to put it into execution. A distinguished official of H.M.'s Board of Trade was deputed to Tehran, and presided over a joint Committee for the revision of the existing customs tariff in the interests of Persia. An expert from the British Treasury was appointed with the necessary staff to overhaul and re-organize Persian finances, and a military expert to initiate the measures contemplated under Article 3 of the agreement. All these functionaries quickly started work, and received ready co-operation from their Persian colleagues. His Majesty Ahmad Shah Qajar, who had never expressed other than approval for the agreement, proceeded shortly after its conclusion on a long-planned visit to Europe, and while in England made more than one appreciative public reference to the measure. Up to this point therefore, as far as Persia was concerned, the portents for the future of the agreement seemed, on the surface at any rate, promising enough. Its reception abroad, however, proved much less favourable. Foreign critics, in the first place, complained of the secrecy with which the transaction had been negotiated. Allied governments evidently felt injured that Great Britain had not taken them into her confidence. As a matter of fact, however, to have subjected the

details of such an instrument to public discussion and international criticism while in course of negotiation would surely have been, in effect, to kill it unborn; but in this case, as our own statesman Viscount Grey, then Ambassador in Washington, pointed out at the time, a mistake was undoubtedly made in not submitting the Agreement for the approval of the League, before publication.

Had the Majlis been summoned at once, it might conceivably have ratified the arrangement, for there were those in Tehran who saw in it the seeds of national rebirth, and felt it in any case to be a lesser danger than a régime of Bolshevism; but the responsible ministers evidently shrank from staking their reputations on an appeal to that body, and a new factor, Bolshevik activity in the Caucasus, had now to be taken into account. The government did indeed continue to act as if the agreement were in operation, the British advisers above referred to being allowed to proceed uninterruptedly with their respective tasks; but all the time a public opinion hostile to the arrangement was gathering force, and now a variety of extraneous happenings seemed to combine to hasten its demise. Thus the British force on the Baghdad-Kazvin line was withdrawn; a change of incumbents, in the course of Foreign Office routine, occurred in His Majesty's Legation; the young Shah returned from his sojourn in Europe, and his arrival was soon followed by the resignation of Vossugh ud Dowleh's Cabinet, which had been responsible for the agreement. They were succeeded in office by one of a very different colour which decided that action on the terms of the agreement must proceed no further pending the submission of the instrument to an assembled Majlis for ratification.

The measure remained thus, in a state of suspended animation until its final repudiation after the *coup d'état* of February, 1921.

. . . . .

Looking back dispassionately on the episode of the Agreement after the passage of twelve years, it is fair to remind the reader that the document was framed at a juncture when Persia was in an extremely critical condition; ruled by an effete and discredited dynasty and with a governmental régime which seemed to have no chance of regaining equilibrium without friendly and prompt assistance from outside. Such assistance as was needed, Great Britain was in the best position to afford, and in the clear interest of both countries she was prepared to afford it; but in the framing of the document, concluded with that object in view, two phenomena, ultimately accountable for its abrogation, were not foreseen: firstly, the extraordinary stimulus imparted to nationalistic sentiments in all Muhammadan countries, already aroused by the events of the war, by the gradual realization of the portent of President Wilson's famous "Fourteen Points;" and secondly, the sudden passage across the Persian firmament of a meteor in the person of Riza Khan Sartip, who, as His Majesty Riza Khan Pahlevi, has rehabilitated his country to such an astonishing extent during the past decade. Such luminaries are creations of the moment and give no warning of their coming; but, notwithstanding that this phenomenon portended the doom of the Anglo-Persian Agreement, we can now, with all sincerity, congratulate the Persian nation on the success already achieved and on the prospect of a more august future under His Majesty's vigorous ægis, than it could have

hoped to achieve under an Anglo-Persian Convention, however honestly interpreted by the parties to it.

It was necessary for Persia to make her peace with the Soviet Government and to do so at once: the process was not too difficult for them. As early as January, 1918, Trotsky, as Commissar for Foreign Affairs, had informed the Persian Government that they no longer regarded the treaties of 1907 as binding, and were prepared to annul all special privileges granted to previous Russian Governments by Persia, including the Treaty of Turkomanchai, whereunder Russian subjects in Persia enjoyed a measure of extra-territoriality.

In June, 1919, this announcement was amplified by a note, delivered to the Persian Government by the Soviet representative in Persia, Kolomietzev, declaring that—

(1) All Persian debts to the Czarist Government were annulled.

(2) Russian interference in the internal affairs of Persia was at an end, especially in questions relating to Customs, Posts and Telegraphs.

(3) All Russian official and private concessions were void except (it is understood) the Fisheries Concession with headquarters in Gilan.

(4) The Russian Bank in Persia was declared the property of the Persian people (its assets were "frozen," its liabilities considerable!)[1]

(5) All roads, railway lines, etc., in Persia, became the property of the Persian nation.

(6) Russia abandoned all claim to extra-territorial privileges for its nationals.

[1] The Bank is still paying, in instalments, some of its creditors.

This unilateral statement of intention was calculated less to benefit the Persian Government than to embarrass Great Britain.

Not only were the corresponding British assets twenty or thirty times as great as those of Russia, but to make a present of them to the Persian nation was clearly a gesture of which only a Communist Government was capable: they were in fact, giving away assets which were for the most part not theirs to give.

A few months later, in October, negotiations began in Moscow for a Russo-Persian Treaty, which was concluded in February, 1921. The treaty declared that the Soviet condemned the aggressive policy of the Czarist régime, and promised to refrain from interference in the internal affairs of Persia. Provision was made for the temporary occupation of Persia by Russian troops in the event of other powers using Persia as a base for an attack on Soviet Russia. The declarations in the note of June, 1919, were repeated, with the reserve that the concessions so abandoned should not be given to a third power without the consent of the Soviet Government. Free use of the Caspian Sea was also granted to Persia.

By this treaty, Russo-Persian relations were placed on a firm basis, not more one-sided in practice than was to be expected having regard to the relative strength of the parties. Yet factors tending to complicate and cloud Russo-Persian affairs were still at work. Soviet troops occupied Gilan; the valuable Caspian Fisheries, based on Persian territory, were a source of friction, and in the decision to withdraw all British troops from Persia the Bolsheviks saw an occasion for spreading their gospel. "Lenin," writes Fischer (i. 428), "weighed the plan

for Sovietizing Khorasan, other Communists urged military penetration into Persia, using Gilan as a base." He adds that Lenin was quickly dissuaded: that, however, is not the impression created on the spot in those days. To quote Pindar (*Pyth X.*):

> "Various the aims that various bosoms fire.
> Then let the man whose present bliss is sure,
> Seize with keen zest his won desire,
> None may a twelvemonth's safe success ensure."

From April, 1920, onwards a Red Army under Raskolnikov was entrenched in the Persian port of Enzeli, in the province of Gilan, from which the British troops had retired in order to avoid an unequal conflict, and a so-called Soviet Republic of Gilan was established, and continued till October, 1921. Its existence compelled Persians to reconsider their attitude towards the Anglo-Persian Agreement.

The Qajar Shah, if we are to believe Rothstein, the Soviet Ambassador at Tehran (quoted by Fischer, i. 288), declared that he felt a new man when he heard the guns of the Red Fleet bombarding Enzeli and Resht—a pretty example of diplomatic caution, for no monarch owed more to Great Britain, or deserved less of his people than did the portly Sultan Ahmad Shah.

The official view of the Soviet Government was that the Caucasian comrades had got out of hand: indeed in June, 1921, in concert with prominent Georgians, they commenced to march on Tehran, and Moscow had no little difficulty in inducing them to desist. Had they persisted, the Russo-Persian Treaty of February, 1921, would have been torn up, one or more Soviet Republics would have been

established in Northern Persia, and the Persian Government would have transferred its capital to Isfahan where, supported by the powerful tribal elements of the south, and by British forces, it would have doubtless entrenched itself successfully.

The partition of Persia would have become an accomplished fact, and a new and disastrous era would have opened for Persia, and for British strategic interests. Fortunately for the peace of the world other counsels prevailed.

"Some Communists in Baku and Moscow," writes Fischer, "still urged the 'Sovietization' of Persia. But the Soviet Government was in possession of information from Persia which would have prevented it from supporting the cause of Red revolution in the Shah's Kingdom. Moreover, as Rothstein once wrote: 'You may rest assured that any attempt on our part to start a revolution in any part of Persia would immediately throw it into the hands of the British, who would be received as the saviours of the Fatherland.'"

Faced with the certainty that a Soviet move in the north of Persia would be followed by similar and not less decisive action by the British Government in the south, Moscow decided to support the Persian Government in combating fissiparous movements in North Persia; Great Britain, for somewhat similar reasons, followed a similar policy in the south. It is a commonplace in the mouths of critics of foreign policies that action provokes reaction: it is not less true that action may be neutralized by action. The post-war policy of Great Britain has been violently criticised. *Exitus acta probat:* the fact that Persia's boundaries remained unaltered by the Great War, and that Soviet Russia, in the first flush of revolutionary ardour, decided not to attempt

to Sovietize Persia, is due solely to the policy pursued by Great Britain in those years, for there was at that period no indigenous force in Persia which could have opposed any effective resistance.

The outstanding feature of the next ten years is the diplomatic and administrative skill of the Persian Government in taking advantage of the fortunate conjunction of external circumstances outlined above. A combination of circumstances, to which Persia herself had made no contribution, led to the withdrawal of occupying troops. Public sentiment throughout the world was favourable to the emancipation from old conventions and shackles, real or imagined, of smaller Powers. Persia's hour had struck, and the man was found to lead the nation in the new paths now open to her. She had shown in previous epochs, as will have been seen from the brief historical references made elsewhere in this work, a remarkable capacity for throwing off a foreign yoke, however imposed; she was to prove that her abilities in this direction were by no means exhausted by efflux of time but were merely in abeyance. The means adopted were not always wholly to her credit but, as Mr. Bertram Thomas remarks in his *Arabia Felix*, statesmen in such circumstances are actuated by "the stern necessities of the moment, not by any principles of morality." It is an observation which applies to Europe not less than to Asia, and one that believers in the League of Nations, whilst retaining their high ideals, will do well to bear in mind.

As in Turkey, the reconstruction was the work of one man—a soldier—and the principal agency was the Army. Riza Khan, a scion of a respectable middle-class family of landowners, a native of the

Caspian province of Mazanderan, the last citadel of Persian independence after the fall of the Sasanian dynasty, had served[1] in the Persian Cossack Division under Russian officers of the old régime. When the course of events in 1920 compelled the Russian officers of the division to resign their commissions, Riza Khan found his opportunity. He led the force of Persian Cossacks which marched from Kazvin to Tehran in February, 1921, to make the *coup d'état*. He became Commander-in-Chief and Minister of War under the new Government, and in October, 1923, combined that office with that of Prime Minister, till, as related elsewhere, he ascended the throne.

Riza Khan was a born soldier, but he was not slow to acquire the technique of a statesman. He was a passionate Nationalist, but was so far from hostile to Western ideas that, like Mustafa Kamal, he risked popularity in his zeal to apply the methods of Europe to the problems of Persia. Wiser than the President of the Turkish Republic, he compelled the obedience, but did not court the hostility, of the priesthood; and the private life of Riza Khan was not marked by those excesses of conduct which have too often characterized Oriental sovereigns and the presidents of Oriental republics in the twentieth century. Unlike all his predecessors since Abbas the Great, he realized that army reform would be of little value unless accompanied by far-reaching changes in the national finances and in civil administration.

His first care was for the Army: it must be made an effective instrument, and it must be outside the clash of politics. The Russian officers of the Cossack

[1] He enlisted as a private, but very soon rose from the ranks, and before the *coup d'état* was a Brigade Commander.

Divisions had left; before long he terminated the contracts of the Swedish officers of the Tehran police. The South Persia Rifles were, with the concurrence of the British Government, disbanded and reorganized, without their British officers, as units of the Persian Army. The army, then about 40,000 strong, was well clothed and well armed, largely with weapons originally supplied by the British Indian Government to the South Persia Rifles, and later supplemented from other sources. It was paid, better and more regularly than any other indigenous service, as had been its predecessors, the Cossack Division and the South Persia Rifles. It was essential that this should continue, and that other branches of the administration should be financed.

The rejection of the Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919 had involved the return to England of the Financial Mission under Mr. (later Sir Sydney) Armitage-Smith. With the cordial concurrence of the British Government an American Financial Mission under Dr. A. C. Millspaugh took their place in the summer of 1922, not as officials lent by the U.S. Government, but on private contracts.

Riza Khan had not long been in the saddle as Commander-in-Chief before the reigning monarch, Sultan Ahmad Shah, decided to pay another visit to Europe. His departure in November, 1923, for the Riviera, where he had already spent long periods in comfortable seclusion, was regretted by no section of the Persian people. As in Turkey, so in Persia, the army, together with the gendarmerie under Swedish officers, commanded some of the best brains in the country, and was in a position to enforce obedience. The leading officers were politically-minded, the rank and file had been well trained under British and

Russian auspices respectively, for the service of their country. They were content to obey.

Riza Khan might at this moment have become first President of the Persian Republic. In the words of Hilaire Belloc, "The press was squared, the middle class was quite prepared," but not the priesthood, who were alarmed at the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate and the expropriation of religious endowments. Popular opinion was definitely unfavourable to a republic, and three days before the meeting of the Majlis which was to make the change, public hostility was made unmistakably manifest. Riza Khan abruptly changed his ground and announced, after ostentatious consultations with the leading priests, that the establishment of a republic in Persia would be contrary to religion. He forbade further reference to the subject in the Press or elsewhere.

Eighteen months later he found his reward. On December 12th, 1925, a duly constituted assembly ordained such modifications of the constitution as were necessary to exclude the Qajar dynasty and to confer the crown on Riza Khan Pahlevi and his heirs, subject to the assurance that the crown should pass only to the descendants of the founder of the line, who were born of Persian mothers. Never was a change of sovereign effected more peacefully and with greater public goodwill; never was the solid good sense of the Persian people seen to better advantage.

The steps taken by the Persian Government during the years 1921–1926 to restore national order in Persia do not come within the scope of this book. They are set forth in sufficient detail by Mr. Toynbee in the *Survey of International Affairs* for 1925. By the end of 1925 the process of restoration was

substantially complete. The last detachment of British-Indian forces had left Persian soil and in no part of Persia was the Persian Army unrepresented.

Concurrently with the restoration of order in Persia the American Financial Mission under Dr. A. C. Millspaugh had been busy. It was not the first of its kind. From the beginning of the twentieth century it had been the established practice of the Persians to employ Europeans in positions of responsibility, both executive and administrative. Belgians had been in control of the customs administration since 1903: a Belgian Financial Adviser had both preceded and succeeded Mr. Morgan Shuster, who, as we know, had held the same post for a short time in 1911. Swedish officers had been placed in charge of the gendarmerie in 1912; Frenchmen had been at work in the Ministry of Justice and of Education; and doctors of half a dozen nationalities had been appointed in various capacities.

At no time, however, have Persians been willing to give full executive as well as administrative responsibility to foreigners so employed: they have always held themselves free to accept or to refuse advice, and to vary the action recommended. Dr. Millspaugh insisted that his contract should confer on him full executive power: the vigour with which he used his power brought him into constant conflict with important interests, both departmental and private. In the last resort he could not always look for effective support from the Persian Minister concerned, for he had sometimes carried things so far as to make a diplomatic solution difficult of attainment; nor did he always realize that unilateral action on his part against an individual or an institution might have far wider repercussions than appeared on the surface, though in this respect he

was wiser than his compatriot, Mr. Shuster. He was happier, too, than Mr. Shuster in his relations with the diplomatic corps, as well as with Riza Khan, who generally co-operated actively with the Ministry of Finance in enforcing the collection of taxes, etc. More important still, Riza Khan helped him to introduce and to insist on the maintenance of a proper system of accounting for sums received, provided always that the Budget of the Ministry of War was left untouched, and that military systems of finance were not subject to the elaborate scrutiny deemed necessary in the case of other departments.

Dr. Millspaugh's work and that of his American colleagues was of a high order, and he has testified in his book[1] to the loyalty of the Persian staff, on whom inevitably fell much of the heat and their full share of the burden of the day. But both the Shah and his Ministers found his claims to plenary powers, and his manner of exercising them, irksome, and in this view they had, generally speaking, the support of public opinion. Persian *amour propre* was wounded, both in Tehran and in the provinces, by the idea of tutelage and by the existence of this *imperium in imperio*. When his contract was about to expire, the Persian Government insisted that his powers should, in any fresh contract, be restricted, and that he should be subordinate to the Ministry of Finance. Dr. Millspaugh on his part insisted on the maintenance of his former powers.

The Persian Government held that any difference of view between him and the Minister of Finance should be referred either to the Council of Ministers or to the Majlis, at their option. Dr. Millspaugh insisted that he should, in the ultimate resort, be responsible to the Majlis alone. His view was not

[1] *The American Task in Persia*, 1926.

acceptable to the Shah, and Dr. Millspaugh left Tehran forthwith. He was followed by almost the whole staff of American advisers and experts. The Majlis thereupon authorized the engagement of four financial advisers in Europe, two of German, and two of Swiss nationality. In November, 1927, a German banker, Dr. Botzke, visited Tehran to report on the financial situation. He was joined six months later by Dr. Lindenblatt, also of Berlin. In September, 1928, a National Bank was inaugurated. With the exception of technical experts[1] and the old established corps of Belgian administrators of Customs, there are now no foreign experts in the employ of the Persian Government in advisory capacities outside the Ministry of Finance. This movement has been hailed in some quarters as a throwing off of the shackles of European influence and domination. This view, however, exaggerates the influence exercised in public affairs by foreign advisers before the war. No advisers, other than Mr. Shuster and Dr. Millspaugh, had ever been invested with executive powers in other than purely financial transactions, though they had been, since 1903 and in some cases much earlier, employed as administrators and advisers, and had, in that capacity, done very useful work. Had the American advisers been willing, or temperamentally able, to work less theatrically, and to encompass their ends more diplomatically, they might have retained much of the reality, without the semblance, of authority.

The relations of Persia with her immediate neighbours from 1926 to 1928 are dealt with by

[1] French wireless engineers, French professors in schools and colleges, a French savant in the Department of Antiquities, German experts in the Department of Agriculture, and a number of foreign engineers in connection with railways.

Mr. Toynbee with his customary lucidity in the relative volumes of the *Survey of International Affairs*, and with a wealth of detail which would be out of place in this work. The outstanding feature of the diplomatic activity of the Persian Government during the period was the completion of a series of treaties with the U.S.S.R., with Turkey, and with Afghanistan, forming part of a network of treaties between the four parties. They provided for perpetual peace and benevolent neutrality between the signatories; for the friendly settlement of tribal incidents, and for further negotiations relative to subsidiary matters such as posts, telegraphs and extradition. They were to remain in force for a limited period of years, subject to annual renewal after that time. The conclusion of these treaties, and the slower process of concluding conventions on particular matters, has had important results in the diplomatic sphere. In the first place, the possibility, hitherto not always remote, of serious trouble, or even war, breaking out between the parties was reduced to a minimum. In the second place, they were evidence of a tendency on the part of Persia to assume a greater degree of independence of Russia than formerly in the sphere of foreign relations. Finally, they demonstrated the greater reliance placed by Persia on such paper safeguards, and of her increasing belief in the utility of international agreements as instruments of public policy.

Difficulties have since arisen between Turkey and Persia, from the steady pressure brought to bear by the former on her Kurdish population, who naturally resent a tyranny as bitter as any independent race has ever been called upon to bear. Accustomed for centuries to a penurious indepen-

dence and to freedom to wander with their flocks on either side of the range of mountains which marks the frontier between Turkey and Persia, they were prone to take refuge in Persia from their Turkish oppressors. Complaints followed, and Turkish troops pursued their quarry into Persian territory, naturally arousing much resentment. But for the existence of these treaties, war between the two parties might well have broken out: in the event, though a final solution has yet to be reached, the matter has proved susceptible of diplomatic treatment, and it has not been made an occasion, as in earlier years, for Russian intervention.

Somewhat similar incidents have taken place on the Perso-Russian frontier, where refugees, seeking asylum in Persia, have been pursued across the frontier by Soviet troops: such incidents have hitherto been settled by expressions of regret and offers of suitable reparation.

It is clear that from a purely political point of view the Persian Government has less to fear from Soviet policy in Persia in 1932 than from Czarist policy in 1912, and that notwithstanding its own weakness—in a military, commercial, and demographic sense—it is slowly building up a diplomatic fabric of treaties and understandings which if honourably observed will tend to remove causes of friction, and enable the attention of the government to be devoted to its internal problems. Yet it must be admitted that concurrently with a "liberal" policy in purely political affairs, Soviet Russia is strangling Persia by economic means in a way which Czarist Russia never attempted.

Whether these treaties will stand the onslaughts of time and of economic pressure remains to be seen. The record of the past is not encouraging,

and no such changes have occurred as to justify the belief that things will be different in the future. The line of policy which Persia is following in diplomatic, as in other matters, is based on current Western practice. It may not succeed, but it is a course that commends itself to the ruling classes, and the success that has hitherto attended it is an encouragement to further efforts on the same lines.

When, immediately after the War, the Persian Government of the day was negotiating the abortive Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919, it was tacitly assumed on both sides that, under the mandatory system, effective British control would be maintained in 'Iraq for a period of years, and that adequate military forces for the defence of Persia from external aggression could be summoned from Baghdad in case of need. When, in 1921, the agreement was denounced, the new Persian Government had no longer any interest in the retention by Great Britain of a strategic centre on the borders of South-West Persia; what might in other circumstances have been a source of strength to Persia now became, in their eyes, a menace. It might have been supposed, therefore, that the rapid reduction in British armed forces in 'Iraq, that followed on the inauguration of the Arab Government and the installation of Amir Faisal as King of 'Iraq, would have been followed by an immediate *détente*, and an improvement in Perso-'Iraqi relations. In practice, however, diplomatic relations between the two countries became, in the succeeding years, more rather than less difficult. Frontier incidents, some serious and far-reaching, some petty, but all difficult of solution, followed fast one upon another.

Southern Kurdistan, considered as a racial area,

is divided into almost equal parts by the 'Iraqi-Persian frontier: Sulaimani itself has been sometimes in Persian, sometimes in Turkish hands. Important tribes had for centuries spent the winter in 'Iraq and the summer in Persia. The movement in favour of Kurdish autonomy, which almost secured international recognition in the unratified Treaty of Sèvres, grew in strength when the Arab Government began to take shape, and when the Kurds realized that they were in future destined to be ruled by a race whom they had in the past despised and disliked as heartily as did the Turks. The self-constituted leader of the Kurdish independence movement, Shaikh Mahmud, found support on both sides of the Zagros and took refuge across the frontier when pressed by the forces of order of either power. Another Kurdish leader, Ismail Beg Shakkak, better known as Simko, having been defeated by Persian forces, took refuge in 'Iraq territory. Even had the 'Iraq Government been able to capture him, they were unwilling to hand him over to Persia, as he claimed, with some justice, that his acts of banditry were incidental to the prosecution of his larger political aims, which were directed to the establishment of some sort of Kurdish autonomous state, in which he hoped, like Shaikh Mahmud, to play a leading part. He was eventually induced to give himself up, and was executed forthwith by the Persians. In 1926 an uncle of the late Shah, Salar ud Dauleh, made his way from Beirut across 'Iraq into Persian Kurdistan, and endeavoured, not for the first time, to raise a force of tribesmen who should place him on the throne of his forefathers. The Persian Government, not without some reason, complained that the 'Iraq Government showed negligence in

failing to arrest the pretender, of whose intentions they had been made aware.

Other frontier incidents arose and, though settlements were arrived at in course of time, fresh occasions of stumbling constantly arose. The efforts of the Persian Government to assert their authority in every corner of South-West Persia resulted in the flight of many tribal leaders into 'Iraq; amongst them was the aged Wali of Pusht i Kuh—a long strip of mountains extending for nearly 300 miles southwards from Khanaqin to a point north-east of Amara. He had maintained towards the British authorities in 'Iraq during the war an attitude of suspicious and hostile neutrality, but this did not save him from eviction and deprivation of his paternal authority by the Persian Government. He, too, sought refuge in 'Iraq, and the sympathy extended to him by the *Ulama* of the Shi'ah shrines at Karbala and Najaf did not make things easier for the 'Iraq Government.

The Ulama, or Shi'ah priesthood of these towns, and of Kadhimain near Baghdad, were, indeed, responsible for much of the tension which existed between Persia and 'Iraq from 1922 till 1926. The tenets of the Ithn Ja'fariya or the Ithn Ashariya, the branch of the Islamic faith to which the vast majority of the Persian people belong, not only involve (in common with all forms of Islam) a theocratic basis of government, but also postulate a theocracy incorporated in a priesthood. In this they differ from the Sunnis, who refer to the Persians, followers of the Muslim saints Ali, Hasan and Husain, as Shi'ahs, or sectaries, though on historical grounds they are entitled to be regarded not as a sect but as a branch of Islam on the same footing as the followers of Sunni orthodoxy.

Under the Safavid dynasty in the sixteenth century the highest officers of Church and State had been united; since the fall of that dynasty the priesthood had been in theoretical and often in practical opposition to all forms of established civil authority in Persia, though the Qajar monarchs who succeeded Nadir Shah professed the Shi'ah faith and paid every mark of respect to the chiefs of the priestly hierarchy.

During the years that followed the occupation of Mesopotamia, the clergy were, with notable exceptions, frankly hostile to organized secular government of any kind.

They had been a thorn in the flesh of the Turks; they were a constant source of embarrassment to the military administration; they proved almost equally obstructive when King Faisal ascended the throne under the British mandate. They opposed the Anglo-'Iraqi treaty of 1922, threatening its supporters with excommunication, and with other spiritual penalties those who participated in elections for the Constituent Assembly. The leaders were deported, nine of their principal colleagues left Najaf for Persia, where they initiated an agitation which could not leave the Persian Government, itself suspect of indifference to the claims of religion, wholly unmoved. The agitation finally died down, but it left a scar which is not yet wholly healed, and it encouraged the Persian Government to take measures to deter pilgrims from wasting their substance in a foreign land. The pilgrim traffic has never since regained its former proportions, and the loss to 'Iraq has been great, for the holy cities were as dependent on Persian pilgrims as is Paris on visitors from the Americas, though there are not lacking in 'Iraq, as in France, those who regard

the annual influx of foreigners as entailing disadvantages disproportionate to the financial return.

Nor were these matters the only obstacles to a Perso-'Iraqi understanding. Allusion has been made elsewhere to the difficulties of the frontier in the Shatt al Arab, and, in a later chapter, to the amenability of Persians to the ordinary courts of law in 'Iraq. An even more delicate problem or series of problems arose from the action taken by the Persian Government to extend the sphere of direct administration to the province of Khuzistan. The population, partly settled, and partly nomadic and tribal, had long been under Persian sovereignty, and had no desire to change their allegiance, but they felt themselves to be between two fires. On the one hand the Government of Persia, on the other of 'Iraq, were increasing taxation, requiring military service, and extending the sphere of petty officialdom in every direction. The Persian Government, requiring Arabs to abandon the dignified and practical headdress of immemorial antiquity for a headdress which was neither useful nor comfortable, did violence to their religious habits, in that the new hat could not be worn on the head during prayer, owing to the brim, which prevented the forehead touching the ground. The Government of 'Iraq, composed almost exclusively of Syrian Arabs, as much foreigners in 'Iraq as Americans in Canada, were pursuing a centralizing policy and bestowing but few well-paid posts on the notables of Basra or their sons. A further complication arose from the fact that many Arabs domiciled in Persia owned land in 'Iraq, and *vice versa*, and that seasonal trans-frontier migrations for harvesting the wheat and barley crops in Persia and the date crop in 'Iraq were old established customs. Questions of nation-

ality arose, and of passports, of family estates and of unpaid taxes. It speaks well for the patience displayed by both parties that these questions are to-day all in process of solution, and that no violent clash of arms occurred. It is less certain, however, that the two governments have strengthened their hold on the hearts of their Arab subjects in this region. Though the cultivators and tribes are no longer as well-armed as in former days, they are still strong enough collectively to embarrass any government, and there is little doubt that the departure of the Royal Air Force from the vicinity of Basra and of the Persian military detachments from Khuzistan would have immediate repercussions.

In 1929 Persia formally accorded diplomatic recognition to 'Iraq, and diplomatic envoys were exchanged. 'Iraq agreed[1] to adhere to a portion of the Barcelona Convention on freedom of transit, and gave facilities for the Junkers Air Service in Persia to land at Baghdad and to run a regular mail service between Baghdad and Tehran, but only after Persia had given corresponding facilities to Imperial Airways Ltd.[2] Persia on her part has agreed not to oppose the entry of 'Iraq into the League of Nations. The road to peaceful co-operation between the two countries is now open and, if wisely pursued, may lead to a new outlook on both sides of a frontier which, with brief intervals, has from the dawn of history been a dividing line between races as between governments. But this goal is still distant, as the obstacles are many.

[1] After the Mohammerah-Khurramabad-Tehran motor road was opened and it became clear that failure to adhere would entail the loss of the whole of her transit trade.

[2] For further details see page 243.

CHAPTER VII

LITERATURE

"Ancient without Modern is a stumbling-block. Modern without Ancient is foolishness, utter and irremediable."—GEORGE SAINTSBURY. *History of Modern Criticism.*

THE general tendency of the best Persian literature of the past decade may well be indicated by the following translation[1] of a leading article with which Saiyid Hasan Taqizada (later Persian Minister in London) inaugurated the new *Kawa*, a Persian monthly review printed in Berlin:

"Above all else, our object will be to promote European civilization in Persia, to combat fanaticism, to help to preserve the national feeling and unity of Persia, to endeavour to purify and safeguard the Persian language and literature from the disorders and dangers which threaten them, and, so far as possible, to support internal and external freedom. . . . In the opinion of the writer of these lines, that which is to-day in the highest degree necessary for Persia, which all patriotic Persians should exert themselves to promote, literally, with all their strength, and should place before everything else, is threefold.

"First, the adoption and promotion, without condition or reservation, of European civilization, absolute submission to Europe, and the assimilation of the culture, customs, practices, organization, sciences, arts, life, and the whole

[1] Browne, E. G., *A History of Persian Literature in Modern Times*, 1924.

attitude of Europe, without any exception save language; and the putting aside of every kind of self-satisfaction, and such senseless objections as arise from a mistaken, or, as we prefer to call it, a false patriotism.

"Secondly, a sedulous attention to the preservation of the Persian language and literature, and the development, extension, and popularization thereof.

"Thirdly, the diffusion of European sciences, and a general advance in founding colleges, promoting public instruction, and utilizing all the sources of material and spiritual power . . . in this way. . . .

"Such is the belief of the writer of these lines as to the way to serve Persia, and likewise the opinion of those who, by virtue of much cultural and political experience, share his belief.

"Outwardly and inwardly, in body and in spirit, Persia must become Europeanized.

"In concluding this explanation of fundamental beliefs, I must add that my conviction is that perhaps the greatest and most effective service of this sort which one could render would be the publication in Persia of translations of a whole series of the most important European books in plain and simple language."

The attitude of Persians towards Europe generally is indicated in the following extract from another literary and scientific review, the *Iran-shahr*, also published in Berlin, in which the writer argues that Persian students should go to England or Germany rather than France, for the following reasons:

"We Persians (with the exception of the people of Adharbaijan, whose nature and character agree better with those of the Anglo-Saxons), in respect to character, nature, capacity and mental tendencies, more closely resemble and approach the French, that is to say, the Latin races, since quick and piercing intelligence, self-confidence, versatility

of thought, wit and acuteness of perception, sociability and amiability in intercourse on the one hand, and inconstancy, fickleness of character, quickly-developed weariness and want of preseverance, recklessness, and lack of moderation in action on the other, are characteristic of the nature and disposition both of ourselves and of the French."

Another writer, Dr. Ali Akbar Siassi, Persian Counsellor of the French Legation in Persia,[1] takes not unnaturally a similar view:

"L'esprit Persan, au temoignage de ses arts et de sa litterature, étant particulièrement raffiné et caracterisé, comme nous l'avons signalé plus haut, par une empreinte de mysticisme et de sentimentalité, ne saurait supporter la culture anglo-saxonne. Car il ne faut pas oublier que par celle-ci c'est surtout la culture americaine que l'on entend, en Perse. Or cette culture, trop pragmatique, ne conviendrait nullement a l'esprit Persan; elle le fausserait, le brûlerait, comme un fumier trop fort brûle une plante délicate. Bon nombre de Persans pourraient servir d'illustration à ce que nous venons d'avancer; mais nous préférons citer comme exemple le cas de ces généraux chinois qui ont reçu une éducation americaine et aux cerveaux detraqués desquels sont assurément dus les désordres et la crise sanglant que traverse leur pays.

"Les critiques addressées en Perse aux methodes françaises d'education sont d'ailleurs en grande partie injustifiées et dues le plus souvent a une ignorance du sujet, quand elles ne le sont pas à des motifs interessés. Il y a, encore aujourd'hui, des gens dont les appréciations sur l'Enseignement français sont basées sur les programmes de 1902; ils semblent ignorer les modifications qui y ont été apportées depuis.

"Quant aux bienfaits de la culture française, on ne saurait les nier. Tous les progrès réalisés dans le domaine intellectuel par les Persans lui sont dus. Ces derniers n'ont

[1] *La Perse au Contact de l'Occident*, 1931.

pas cessé de le reconnaître hautement, puisque, en dépit de la campagne malveillante menée contre elle, ils continuent à lui donner la préférence en confiant a la France la formation intellectuelle et morale de leurs jeunes gens."

The outstanding feature of literary output in the Persian language in the past six years is the increasing number of European and especially of English classics translated into Persian, notably by Khan Bahadur Mirza Muhammad, of Basra; and the growing taste for scholarly editions in good print of standard Persian works.

Almost all Molière's plays have been translated into Persian, while there is hardly a newspaper published in Persia which does not devote several columns to translations from foreign and especially French works, which constitute nine-tenths of the total.[1] The effect of these translations on contemporary Perisan thought has been considerable, and can be detected in current prose and poetry.

Three distinct and opposing trends of thought are at the moment discernible in modern Persian literature.

There is a negative tendency towards a breach with Islamic tradition, combined with a positive tendency to encourage and emphasize the importance of purely Persian literature and Persian history. A few idealists would cleanse the Persian language of Arabic words and revert to the style of the

[1] The list of European authors recently translated includes the following:

French—The Dumas (father and son), Daudet, Balzac, Anatole France, Loti, de Kobra, Sue, Voltaire, Jules Verne, Leroux, Maupassant, de Vigny, de Musset, Rousseau, Victor Hugo, Fenelon, Lamartine, Zola.

English—Byron, Carlyle, Chaucer, Conan Doyle, Shakespeare, Scott, Tennyson.

German—Goethe, Heine, Schiller.

Russian—Dostoevsky, Gorky, Lermator, Tolstoy.

Sasanians. A larger number would accept the present relations between the Persian and Arabic tongues, and continue to borrow new words from Cairo rather than from Europe, to favour Arabic metres and to retain the Arabic script.

This tendency is opposed by an influential group of writers, who exhort their fellow-countrymen to westernize themselves as rapidly as possible. To quote Dr. Ali Akbar again:

"Tout retard engendrerait de graves dangers pour la Perse qui doit sortir, au plus tôt, de la periode de transition actuelle, pleine de confusion et d'instabilité. Pour le moment tout semble perdre son caractère de solidité et de serieux dans ce pays. En effet, si d'un côté le système de lois dont il est actuellement muni, avec les sanctions qu'elles prevoient, met un frein à certaines irregularitiés visibles, il ne faut pas oublier que, d'un autre côté, le sentiment de 'la responsabilité spirituelle pure' semble deserter peu à peu les esprits, puisqu'elle 'a pour condition la présence dans le champ de la conscience, d'un système de choses sacrées, de valeurs morales, avec lesquelles le moi qui veut entre en contact' et que ces choses sacrées, ces valeurs morales, en partie constituées par les traditions nationales et religieuses, sont a present soumises aux coups d'un radicalisme integral. Nous pensons bien que la Perse doit s'occidentaliser, mais nous voulons insister sur le danger d'une adaptation inintelligente ou incomplete. En un mot nous voulons conclure a ceci: puisqu'il est impossible de rester 'un bon vieux Persan', il faut se hâter de devenir intellectuellement et moralement un veritable Européen. Il faut un tout, un ensemble homogène et non pas des lambeaux qui n'arrivent pas à se joindre."

The adoption of the Latin alphabet by Turkey in 1928 has not as yet been followed by similar action in Persia. The conditions in the two countries are

very dissimilar. The Arabic script is ill-suited to the Turkish tongue: it is better suited, though not perfectly adapted, to Persian,[1] of which Arabic words and phrases are as integral a part as are words, in the English tongue, of Norman origin. Just as with us multi-syllabic words of Norman-Latin origin predominate in the literary, and short words of Anglo-Saxon parentage in the spoken tongue, so, in literary Persian, Arabic plays a more important part than in the colloquial language of the market place. Persia, moreover, has a literary heritage of a quality, variety and extent to which no other Eastern country can lay claim. The splendid labours of the late Professor E. G. Browne[2] show that of Persia, undeterred by the persecutions of some princes, fostered by the patronage of others, growing in strength and in worth through the ages, whilst Professor Nicholson's *Tales of Mystic Meaning* in which he gives no fewer than fifty-one stories from the celebrated *Masnavi* of Jalal ud Din Rumi, show conclusively that when Islam was at its height the literature of vanquished Persia was at its best. The tradition has been maintained, though not always in full vigour: it has been comparatively weak for the last fifty years, but the literary standard maintained by the leading Persian newspapers is notably higher than that of their Turkish and Arabic contemporaries.

Yet the change from Arabic to Roman script may come, opening a little wider to Persia the portals of the West, removing one obstacle to youthful studies, whilst severing one of the most solid of bonds

[1] There are several letters in Persian which have no equivalent in Arabic, e.g., ch, j, g, p, and certain sounds in Arabic which do not exist in colloquial Persian.

[2] See his *History of Persian Literature*, 4 vols.

that link the upper and middle classes to a past of which they, more than any other nation in the Middle East, have a right to be proud. The adoption of Western script would greatly facilitate the progress of individual Persians in the arts and sciences, and would make easier the successive steps that must be taken if Persia is to march abreast of Europe in judicial and commercial matters. The instincts of the intellectual minority, whose opinion in such matters is at present decisive, lead them, as they led Mustafa Kamal and his associates, to follow if not actually to imitate Europe. Whether or not this policy is desirable is, at the moment, not an open question. The alternative, they will reply, is to follow Soviet Russia, or enter into some shadowy, fissiparous covenant with the old Islamic States on their borders—Afghanistan, Turkey, 'Iraq and, in a few years, perhaps, an autonomous Muslim Kingdom, or group of kingdoms, running from Karachi to Delhi—the Succession States of the former Indian Empire.

From such speculations the Persian, his head in the air, but his feet firmly on the ground, turn with decision. The boundary between East and West is, to him, the Hindu Kush range—the present Indian frontier—a boundary line which is as old as the mountains that compose it, for it is a frontier both in geological time and in zoology.

Prose has in general received more attention in Persia since 1906 than poetry, and modern prose aims at developing simple, almost colloquial forms suited to the expression of contemporary ideas. There is a notable tendency towards specialization, as may be seen from the following table of leading writers:—

Social and Political

His Highness Taimurtash
Prince Malkam Khan
Prince Firuz Mirza
Ali Dashti
Saiyid Zia ud Din Tabatabai
Dehkhuda
Taliboff

Translators

Khan Bahadur Mirza Muhammad
'Farrukhi
Itisam ul Mulk
Nasrullah Falsufi
Saiyid Muhammad Khan Sa'idi
Abdul Hussain Meikadeh

Literary Prose

Jamal Zadah
Sa'id Na'isi
Farajullah Khan Bahrami

Novelists

Mir Muhammad Hijazi
Shaikh Musa Nasri
Muhammad Baqir Mirza Khusrawi
Shaikh Ibrahim Zanjani

Scholastic

Taqi Zadah
Mirza Muhammad Qasvini
Abbas Iqbal Ashtiani
Saiyid Ahmad Kasravi
Pour Daud
Mirza Muhammad Ali Khan Tarbiyat
Kazim Zadah Iranshahr
Dr. Riza Zadah Shafaq

The poetical tradition of Persia in modern times, though comparatively weak, owing to lack of patronage and to the decay of thought and manners which is the immediate, though not we may hope the ultimate, result of improved communications, is by no means dead.

Professor Browne regarded Qa'ani, who survived into the second half of the nineteenth century, as the greatest of the modern poets. The melody of his song is incomparable, and since it is here rather than in the beauty or loftiness of his ideas that his excellence lies' (for he was primarily a Court poet, and therefore not overburdened with scruples or consistency) it is very difficult to do justice to him in translation.

A poem by Qa'ani, unique in its subject, contains a dialogue between an old man and a child, both of whom stutter. The child thinks that the old man, who speaks first, is imitating his infirmity,

and is very angry and abusive until the old man explains that his stammering is natural, not assumed, whereupon the two are reconciled, the child concluding with a verse which may be paraphrased as follows:

> "Said the child, 'Ga-ga-God be tha-thanked and pa-praised!
> I'm sa-saved from the sha-ame and fi-filled with ga-glee;
> For I stut-ut-ut-ter and stammer like you,
> While you stat-at-ammer and stutter like me!'"

Some very fine modern poetry of a much more lofty order has been produced by the Babis and Bahais. Of a very different sort are the political lampoons which began to appear after the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–6, and the *tasnif*, or ballad, modern patriotic poetry and religious poetry, simple and touching, recited in commemoration of the sufferings of the Imams in the month of Muharram.

Mention must also be made of a remarkable apocalyptic poem, published in London in 1882 by Mirza Muhammad Baqir of Bawanat. It includes a foreshadowing of the Anglo-Russian Entente (which was never farther from realization than in 1882) in verses which were translated as follows by Professor Browne:

> "I gave thee India, that thou mightest thank and praise me:
> Thy thanks were sheer ingratitude and thy praise folly.
>
> I bade thee not to join thyself as a bride to Russia,
> For the Children of the Bear are their father's heirs.

Mine it was to speak, and thine not greatly to listen:
Alack and alas! speech was in vain!

I gave thee the East that thou mightest win to my Light:
Thou didst see my Light and prefer Darkness.

. . . . .

A Bear appeared from the side of a mountain,
And with desire of him my Darling [the Lion] swooned.

With all her heart and soul she approached the Bear,
Saying, 'Behold my Beloved and chosen Friend!'

Oh, what grace and movement and beauty!
Worthy of such a throat is so fat a morsel.

'I', said she, 'am the Sugar of India, and my Friend the Milk of Samarqand:
The union of us two will be like sugar in milk.'

This brave creature is the Lion of the South, and that the Bear of the North:
Who is able to withstand the Bear and the Lion?

Under the signet-ring of this one are the East and the West:
In the pocket of that one are the West and the East.

Wherever the Bear is, there is the abode of fear and savagery:
Wherever the Lion is, there is spinal paralysis!"[1]

[1] The reference is of course to the charge laid, with some justification, at the door of the British Government, that its efforts to promote peace, prosperity and even-handed justice have tended to emasculate certain Eastern nations dwelling under the shadow of the *Pax Britannica*. Protected by foreign armies and fleets, their finances buttressed by the British treasury and thus saved from some of the consequences of folly, the normal working of natural laws is impeded, to the advantage of one generation, but at the expense of posterity. As Herbert Spencer wrote: "The ultimate effect of shielding men from the results of folly is to fill the world with fools."

Men of letters are now concerned to please the public rather than the Court, to amend the "sorry scheme of things" around them rather than to speculate on ultimate issues: Among the best-known poets of the post-1906 period are Mirza Sadiq Khan Farahani (Adib ul Mamalik), whose poetry is a criticism, in simple language, of the social conditions of his day.[1] Next to him must be named Mirza Muhammad Taqi Bahar (Malik ash Shu'ara), a poet, prose writer, politician and journalist,[2] and Iraj Mirza (Jalal ul Mamalik) who, on his death in 1927, was in his prime, and enjoyed the greatest public esteem.[3] Arif and Ashraf, also mentioned by Browne[4] devoted themselves respectively to poetry for popular songs, and lyrics in dialect. Both are (1932) still living. The older convention, however, is being kept alive by certain writers of poetry, whose work, though not popular, is highly esteemed. These include Adibi (Saiyid Ahmad), who died in 1931. He came to Persia from Peshawar as a small child and wrote poems modelled on Firdausi and Khaqani; others are Fasih ul Mulk, Adibi (Mirza Abdul Jarad) of Nishapur, Farukh (Saiyid Mahmud), Rashid Yasami (Ghulam Riza Khan) and Parvin Itisami, all young, and the last named a girl. Finally reference should be made to two poets who have devoted themselves to humorous and satirical verse—Bihruz (Zabiullah Khan) and Ruhani (Ghulam Riza Khan): they, too, are popular, and are not without their influence on current opinions.

As this work deals primarily with Persia in the modern world, I have referred to contemporary

[1] For a specimen of his poetry see Browne, *The Prose and Poetry of Modern Persia*, p. 300–2.
[2] ibid., p. 260–289.
[3] ibid., on the dedicatory page.
[4] ibid., p. 345.

literature before touching upon the better known classical literature of Persia. For most of us there is always a certain interest in tracing the headwaters of a river, whether it be the natural artery of a country's activities or the deeper and more latent stream of tendency which is no less the avenue of all the highest energies of national life. The power of enjoyment by foreigners of the Persian scene or of the society of its inhabitants, is immensely heightened by due appreciation of the greatest of their literary achievements, which have made both famous, far beyond the limits of Asia.

When on the field of Qadisiya the forces of the Khusraus were shattered by the apostolic army of Islam, and the fairest kingdoms of hither Asia lay open to the Arabian sword, it was not merely a mighty empire that fell. The faith of the Muhammadan conqueror would not suffer anything to live that openly favoured idolatry; and though he could not entirely extinguish the language of Mazdaism, he banished or punished its professors, and carried repression of its written lore to the most rigorous extreme. Even the Tahirids of Khurasan, the half-independent viceroys of the Abbasid Khalifate, while they favoured and furthered Persia's national growth, hated her tongue.

The first of them, Abdallah bin Tahir, had the old Pahlawi poem which sang the story of Wamiq and Azra flung to the flames, declaring, "We have the Quran and the Hadiths (i.e. commentaries): this is a book of the Magians, and therefore accursed."

It was not until the Samanid Empire of Bukhara that Persia fairly shook off the fetters of the vernacular and became a lettered speech. But when the life began to stir once more within the *disjecta membra*, it was practically a new language

that emerged. The bones and sinews were Iranian, but the flesh and blood were Arabic; and it is precisely his heroic attempt to reverse this natural evolution which makes Firdausi's great poem so notable. The same process had taken place as that undergone by our Saxon-English during the Norman and Plantagenet period. The more mercurial foreign element had, without expelling the native principle, transfused and rendered it more ductile and capable of development. And the parallel is rendered closer by the fact that the time required for the conversion was almost exactly the same in both cases. In Persia, with the exception of one isolated note, the silence was unbroken for more than two hundred years, and almost another age was still to pass before the full ascendance of that morning star of song—who occupies in her literature the place of Chaucer in ours—Faridu'd-din Rudagi of Samarqand.

From the scanty and scattered data that have come down to us of this period from the seventh century onwards till Firdausi's day[1] it is not easy to appraise the real worth and significance of what is, in fact, a perished literature. Yet in the words of Darmesteter, at this period "convention, though already powerful, has not had time to freeze everything . . . so that ever and anon the throes of of thought, the sorrow of the world, find utterance in cries quite modern in their tone, sure to awake an echo in the hearts of to-day; and from the whole horizon of our modern song rise voices in response to those far-off masters of the Amu Darya and the Hari Rud."

The reign of the House of Saman, which owed the original basis of its power to the generosity of

[1] A good summary is contained in an article by C. J. Pickering in the *National Review*, 1890, upon which I have here drawn extensively.

Al Mamun, the foster-father of national life and character in Persia, synchronized with one of the most brilliant periods in Iranic culture. It witnessed the perfection of a vernacular which had been slowly and painfully evolved from the débris of an ancient and copious language, crushed and shattered by the superincumbent mass of the still more fully developed but utterly alien tongue of Islam. It presided, if not over the birth, at least over the early growth of an indigenous school of letters and learning. And without reservation it may be said that the Samani Shahs, whose united reigns cover the whole of the tenth century, were the most uniformly and aboundingly munificent patrons of genius that Asia has ever known. The familiar picture of "Master" Rudagi with his two hundred white and black slaves, and his four hundred camels laden with personal effects, is but a typical example of that quality of bounty unstrained which so marked this famous dynasty. The "family of Saman" (as the line is generally called by historians) presided over the cradle, not only of art and letters, but of thought and science in Persia. To Mansur bin Nuh, the grandson of Rudagi's benefactor Abu Nasr and the patron of Kisa'i, is owing the inception of the *Tarikh i Tabari*, at once the earliest historical work and the first prose composition of mediæval Iran.

After-time, neglectful of the gracious products of Persia's early days, has preserved in their entirety only the works of later singers, leaving us to gather as we may, from scattered and obscure sources, what poor remains love or curiosity has spared of the offspring of the dawn of thought and imagination in Iran. The very latest years of the Bukhara dynasty were gladdened by a burst of genuine song, some fragments of which have come down to us.

Of the poetry of those days, space permits of only one quotation. An epigram, satirizing the "offensive measures against old age" which were as common in those days as they have been since, was the means of eliciting two characteristic answers; one from Rudagi, at whom, indeed, the original shaft was aimed; and another, some years after, by Kisa'i, when, as his biographers tell us, it was objected to him by some that he continued in age a practice only excusable in youth. Says Abu Tahir:

> "Full well and oftentime I marvel at old men,
> That they their grizzling beards with darkening tincture dye;
> They will not with their dye deliver them from death,
> But only put themselves to pain and misery."

Whereto rejoins Rudagi:

> "If I my hair disguise in tinct of sable hue,
> 'Tis not that with new youth I may old sins renew,
> But as in mourning days black garments men indue,
> I make my white hairs mourn in black the ills they rue."

Kisa'i's answer is less fanciful and more modest:

> "Blame ye because my hair is stained and sable-hued?
> Taste then your grudge this once, and let your grudging be:
> 'Tis not I aim at youth, but for I fear men should
> An old man's wisdom seek, and find it not in me."

At the beginning of the eleventh century the house of Saman came to an end and, with it, a purely Persian Empire became a thing of the past. But the poetic instinct of the race was not long submerged.

"From its majestic breadth and range," says Wilkinson, "from the sonorous sweep of its language, from its significance as the embodiment of the whole national legend of an ancient and imaginative race, the *Shah-Namah* of Firdausi ranks unquestionably among the great epics of the world. It is inspired by a deep sense of the greatness of Providence and the impermanence of mortal things. The real theme, indeed, is the unending conflict, behind the scenes of fighting and feasting, knight-errantry and romance, between the powers of Good and Evil, a conflict which is emphasized by the habitual use of the language of the old Zoroastrian faith, rather than that of orthodox Islam. Elevation of theme, the dramatic interest and pathos of the stories, the weird glimpses of strange and terrible things, the author's love of beauty and valour and strength—these are a few only of the qualities in the *Shah-Namah* that account for its extraordinary popularity among Persians for nine hundred years—a popularity that has not faded yet—and for the almost unanimous admiration of the West."

It is of immense length—some 60,000 couplets, but each page is a store-house of ancient folk-lore, and the beat of the patriotic heart of the author gives strength to the metre. Only one episode is familiar to English readers, that of Sohrab and Rustam, which was the subject of Matthew Arnold's most famous poem. Yet it has been admirably translated of recent years by A. G. and E. Warner, who have succeeded in reproducing more adequately and uniformly than any of their predecessors the spirit of the original. The scope of this series precludes more than two brief quotations. The first anticipates, by over nine hundred years, the use of armoured cars, driven by oil:

"Then the Shah
Assembled all the master-smiths of Rum,
Of Misr, and Pars, twelve hundred men in sum,
Who made a horse, with saddle and with rider
Complete, of iron, fastening the joints
With bolts and rivets. Horse and man were furbished.
They charged it with black naphtha, and then ran it
On wheels before the troops. At sight thereof
Sikandar was well pleased for, being wise,
He felt the gain thereof, and bade to make
A thousand such and more: whoe'er beheld
On chargers dappled, chestnut, black, and grey
An iron host? The matter took the month,
And then the workmen rested from their labours.
Thus led they forth on wheels an iron host
That of all things resembled horsemen most.

. . . . .

Now when Sikandar was approaching Fur,
And from afar one host beheld the other,
On both sides rose the shout and dust of battle,
And eager for the fray the warriors
Advanced. They lit the naphtha in the steeds:
Fur's troops were in dismay. The naphtha blazed:
Fur's troops recoiled because those steeds were iron.
Whereat the elephants, when their own trunks
Were scorched, fled likewise, and their drivers marvelled.
Thus all the Indian host and all those huge,
High-crested elephants were put to flight."

The poem concludes with the following lines, in which the author, like others after him, expressed the conviction that his work would live.

"When this, my famous tale, was done at last
O'er all the realm my reputation past.
All men of prudence, rede, and Faith will give
Applause to me when I have ceased to live,
Yet live I shall; the seed of words have I
Flung broadcast and henceforth I shall not die."

Firdausi,[1] or, to give him his real name, Abu'l Qasim Mansur, was born about A.D. 935 near Tus in North-East Persia; his ancestors were small landed proprietors, then, as now, the chief repositories of the traditions of the past, and still the mainstay of the modern Persia; annals had existed from very early days, and before the Arabian invasion of Persia a selection from the accumulated materials, written in the old language of Persia—Pahlawi—had been made by one Danishvar. In the second half of the tenth century a fellow townsman of Firdausi commenced to make an epic from Danishvar's prose and from other available sources; he perished by an assassin's dagger. Firdausi assumed the mantle of the dead bard, and for twenty-five years laboured at his task. In A.D. 999 the epic was completed, and dedicated to one Ahmad bin Muhammad of Khalanjan, doubtless a patron, who has thus secured a vicarious immortality.

At that moment a fresh star appeared on the stormy horizon of the East. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna ascended the throne in A.D. 998. "It was a period," says Carra de Vaux, "of undisciplined and stormy feudality, where, under an enervated and disorganized central authority, a crowd of vassal powers spring up one after another, dominate a part of the empire and are then eclipsed. Races and creeds come into conflict, advancing or retreating according to the fortunes of the political adventurers who represent them. In general, the Arab spirit is in decline; the old Persian spirit awakes from time to time, but never quite succeeds in freeing itself completely from the chaos, hindered as it is by outbursts of barbarism due chiefly to the Turkish

[1] For a fascinating account of his life see *The Shah-Namah of Firdausi*, Wilkinson, 1931.

element. Nevertheless, science pursues its destinies, in the shelter of the ephemeral protection afforded it here and there by a few princely personages."

Mahmud, like other great Eastern monarchs, was an earnest patron of learning: he spared no pains to gather round him men of distinction and especially poets, for he himself had ambitions in that direction. Firdausi gained the Sultan's interest and his patronage, and for several years laboured at the second edition of his epic *Shah-Namah* in a room adorned, it is said, by the Sultan with inspiring battle scenes.

In the early part of the fourteenth century was born, at Shiraz, Khwajah Shams ud Din Muhammad Hafiz, one of the greatest of Persia's mystical and lyrical Sufi poets. He lived to a ripe old age, and died in the last decade of the same century, leaving a reputation amongst his countrymen equalled only by that of his fellow townsman and predecessor Sa'di. Hafiz has been called the Anacreon of Persia, and in the world of letters has been unanimously placed in the first and highest rank. Of his private life little is known, but it is safe to assume from the internal evidence of his writings that he was married, and not childless, and that he travelled but little beyond the neighbourhood of his beloved city. Tradition has it that he was given in his youth to conviviality, but that, in his later years, he voluntarily embraced, under the tutorship of Shaikh Muhammad Attar, the leader of an order of dervishes, a life of austerity and poverty, lecturing in a college founded for him by his friend and patron Haji Qawám ud Din.

In common with most of his compatroits, he was a follower of the Ithn Ja'fariya; but he was not only a Shi'ah—he was also a Sufi, a sect the tenets

of which are reflected in his writings. He cared little for outward observances. He looked below the surface in religious matters, reading a spiritual meaning into all Nature, seeing God everywhere revealed, and teaching that the worship of the heart was a truer form of adoration than the observance of ritual or repetition of prayers.

His teaching is the voice of the prophets throughout the ages.[1]

He constantly inveighed against ritualism, and his odes are full of fierce invective against the Islamic divines of his day, who merely followed and taught outward forms and ceremonies and could see no deeper.

Hafiz believed in the one Eternal God. His philosophy taught him that every soul was a part of God, which had, until incarnation, union with God, and could never again know true happiness until it had been released from the prison house of the flesh: only those who were seekers after God, travelling heavenward along the allegorical Path, delighting in the allegorical Wine, and loving the True Beloved, would ever enjoy that union. He did not fear death, for he regarded life and death as incidents in an endless existence and when, to use his own phrase, death seized him by the collar, his lack of orthodoxy induced the clergy of Shiraz to refuse to bury him with the customary rites. His admirers protested and, if tradition be true, it was agreed to leave the decision to chance, and to Hafiz

[1] Cf. *Psalm xl*, 8–10:

"Sacrifice, and meat-offering, thou wouldest not: but mine ears hast thou opened.
Burnt offerings, and sacrifice for sin, hast thou not required: then said I, Lo, I come,
In the volume of the book it is written of me, that I should fulfil thy will, O my God: I am content to do it, yea, thy law is within my heart."

himself. A verse was chosen at random—it read, "Withdraw not thy foot from the bier of Hafiz, for, though immersed in sin, he goeth to Paradise." The clergy accepted the omen, the prayers were duly read over his tomb, a simple building surrounded by a pleasant garden, some two miles north-east of Shiraz. He was clearly a religious enthusiast, with a profound belief in prayer—

"Hafiz! thy daily task is to pray, and only that:
Do not worry as to whether He hears or not." (Ode 143).
"From all sides I have sped the arrows of prayer;
Perchance one, from amongst them all, will be efficacious."
(Ode 147.)
"The midnight prayer will repel a hundred ills." (Ode 166.)

The tenets of the Sufis, of whom Sa'di and Hafiz are the best known, and of whose doctrines Jalal ud Din Rumi (died A.D. 1273) was the most authoritative exponent, are well known in the English-speaking world, and there is no lack of literature on the subject;[1] indeed, a *Sufi Quarterly* is published at Geneva. The following verses, by my cousin, the late Miss Rose Sidgwick, who probably never came in contact with the writings of Sa'di or Hafiz or the Sufi philosophy, seem to embody, as well as anything yet written in this form, the essentials of Sufism:

"O Life supreme, in whom we move and see,
Without, within, man's mind discovers thee.

The slack sails of his being swell and fill:
He knows that wind, a will beyond his will.

[1] See especially *Selections from the Rubaiyat of Hafiz*, London, Watkins, 1920.

In seed-time, and in winter's seeming death,
The Life of life his heart enlighteneth:

In splendour of the sun and summer day,
And in the searching riddle of decay.

By every road man sees thy sacred sign:
All lasting and all growing things are thine."

The Sufis in Persia are no longer an intellectual force: the present tendency amongst educated Persians is towards a somewhat unenlightened materialism. They have thrown off the shackles of Islam and have as yet found nothing to take its place; a rigid determinism underlies much of the popular expressions of thought. The emancipation from the world of sense, which is the most remarkable feature of Western philosophical thought in the twentieth century, has not reached Persia from Europe. A prophet is not without honour save in his own country, and the Sufis have exercised a greater influence over the West than over the country which gave them birth.

Shaikh Muslih ud Din Sa'di, whose renown is second to that of no Persian poet, was born A.D. 1184, like Hafiz, at Shiraz. He began his studies at Baghdad, and studied the mysticism of the Sufis under Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani, whose tomb at Baghdad is famous throughout the Islamic world, and with Shihab ud Din Suhrawardi. During a long life (102 lunar years) he made the pilgrimage to Mecca fourteen times; he tells us that he spent thirty years in study, thirty years in travel and in the making of poetry, thirty in seclusion and in the completion of his poems, and the last twelve years in works of piety and discourses on mysticism. Both in Asia Minor and India he fought against the

infidels—miscreants, to use the word in its original sense—and was once a prisoner of the Franks in Tripoli. He seems to have visited Central Asia, India, Syria, Egypt and Arabia and to have travelled by sea as well as by land, but in this matter the student of his poems must not be at pains to distinguish between poetical fancy and sober fact.

Even among a quick-witted people he was famous for his wit, which Sydney Smith defines as the art of "discovering real connections that are not apparent." His principal works are the *Bustan*, written in 1257, the *Gulistan*, written the following year, and the *Diwan*. The last-named is more widely read in Persia than the *Bustan* and *Gulistan*, by which however he is best known in the West; there are but few Persians of education unable to quote extensively from all three, and every Persian knows at least a few of his verses.

Sa'di's influence in India and Turkey has been great. No foreign writer has been more frequently printed or reprinted in India, with and without commentaries, and even translated, and none follows more closely the well-known literary form of Indian tales—a prose story followed, as in the *Gulistan*, by a short poem. His influence in Turkey, where his works have been frequently translated (he has generally been regarded as a Sunni), is second only to the repute that his works have earned in India.

"As a moralist," says J. H. Kramers,[1] "Sa'di gained much profit from the vicissitudes of life through which he had passed. His knowledge of the world gives to his ideas and opinions a cosmopolitan character, reached by no other Persian poet. It is due probably to this fact, together

[1] *Encyclopædia of Islam.*

with the elegance of his style, that he has earned his great popularity in his own country and abroad, so that he has been compared with Horace, Rabelais and Lafontaine. Sa'di looks upon the world with sympathetic humour and is seldom satirical; and he can never enough exhort his readers to follow his moral counsels. Now these moral precepts, chiefly to be found in the *Gulistan*, *Bustan* and *Pand-Nama*, are far from being uniform. For common mortals the author cites in the *Pand-nama* a number of virtues and vices; as the chief virtue he seems to regard "goodness" (*niki*), great sympathy for our fellow-creatures without any egoistic view. He that obtains the qualification of good is really immortal. On the other hand Sa'di's social morals are sometimes quite different: here revengefulness, insincerity instead of veracity. Man is admonished to guard by all means his independence from other people. Especially for princes several Machiavellian precepts are given (the 2nd part of the 6th risala is a short treatise on politics), and for dervishes again other moral norms exist.

"The different aspects of Sa'di's morality make it difficult to believe in his sincerity, the more so as his morality is considerably compromised by the obscenities uttered in some chapters of the *Gulistan* and in the *Khabithat*, though, in an introduction to this collection, he tries to excuse himself in saying that he could not withrdaw from an order given to him to compose these poems. However, with a Persian poet it is often difficult to separate what belongs to himself and what must be regarded as a concession to the taste of his patrons and of the public. The favour he has met with all through the eastern world should always be taken into serious consideration before judging too severely his character. In any case he has shown himself in all his humanity, and he has amply satisfied the predilection for moralizing in literary form, which the Persians have had since pre-Islamic times.

"Moreover, his elegant style, his ease of expression, the way in which he knows how to make attractive the most tedious moral maxims, in short his art, would have been enough to gain him the admiration of his countrymen."

There is to-day no people in the world to whose lips poetry rises so readily as to those of the Persians, and no people in whose hearts the national poets have a surer place. The muleteer on the road, the shepherd on the mountains and, as I have myself heard, the *mughanni*, or digger of subterranean passages for water, at his task, love to sing or recite classical poetry as well as popular ballads. To the Persian, his national poetry is what the Psalms were to Europe in the Middle Ages—an incentive to action, a consolation in trouble. Of the Psalms Hooker wrote:[1]

"What is there necessary for man to know, which the Psalms are not able to teach? They are to beginners an easy and familiar introduction: a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge in such as are entered before, a strong confirmation to the most perfect amongst others. Heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience . . . all good necessarily to be either known or done or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth. Let there be any grief or disease incident to the soul of man, any wound or sickness named, for which there is not in this treasure-house a present comfortable remedy."

When Jeremy Taylor comes to the practical aids of holy life and death it is on the Psalms that he almost exclusively relies. "I believe," he says, "that there would be no affliction great enough to spend so great a stock of comfort as was laid up in the treasury of the Psalter."

These quotations apply with singular exactness to the place the great Persian poets hold in the life of the nation.

[1] Bk. V, Ch. 27, Section 2.

A Babi martyr, Mirza Qurban Ali, recited the following verse when the executioner, missing his neck, hurled his turban to the ground:

> "Khusha an ashiq-i-sar-mast ki dar pa-yi-Habib
> Sar u dastar na-danad ki kudam andazad."

> ("Happy he whom love's intoxication
> So hath overcome that scarce he knows
> Whether at the feet of the Beloved
> It be head or turban which he throws.")

Another Babi martyr, Sulaiman Khan, one of those who suffered death in 1852, was led to the scaffold with burning wicks inserted in his body. "Why do you not dance?" cried his tormentors, mocking his agonies. "Not for fear of death and not for lack of joy," he replied, and began to recite a well-known ode by the great mystic Shams i Tabriz, in which occurs the verse:

> "Yak dast jam-i-bada, wa yak dast zulf-i-yar
> Raqsi chunin mayana-i-maydan-am arzust."

> ("Clasping in one hand the wine-cup, in one hand the Loved One's hair,
> Thus my doom would I envisage, dancing through the market-square.")

Two other instances belong to the history of the recent revolution, and were communicated to Professor Browne by Persian friends. The great orator of the Constitutionalists, Malik ul Mutakallimin, just before he was strangled by order of the ex-Shah in the Bagh i Shah on June 24th, 1908, recited the following verse:

"Kash gushuda na-bud chashm-i-man u gush-i-man,
K'afat-i-jan-i-man-ast'aql-i-man u hush-i-man!"

("O would that the eyes and the ears could unopened remain,
For reason and sense of my life proved the curse and the bane!")

A year later, in July, 1909, the tide had turned, the Constitutionalists were victorious, and their principal opponent, Mujtahid Shaikh Fazlullah, was condemned to die on the gallows. Just before the noose was placed round his neck he made a short speech, concluding with the following verse:

"Agar bar-i-giran budim, raftim,
Wa gar na-mihraban budim, raftim."

("Though heavy burdens on you we did bind, we're going;
Though we were harsh, ungentle and unkind, we're going.")

In grammar and construction the Persian language is one of the simplest in the world, and certainly the easiest of Asiatic tongues; but to appreciate fully the literature, and especially the poetry of Persia, requires much more than a knowledge of the structure of the language and an adequate vocabulary. Just as, until very recent times, the widespread knowledge of the Old and New Testament in the Christian world united men who in character, time and place, race and language were widely separated, so every educated Muslim was, until the beginning of the last century, so familiar with the Quran that one word cited from a verse would suffice not only to recall the context but all the circumstances connected with the revelation of that passage. One

well-known example, cited by Professor Browne, must suffice to illustrate this side of Persian life.

The poet Firdausi, incensed against Sultan Mahmud at the inadequacy of the reward given to him for his great epic poem, the *Shah-Namah*, or *Book of Kings*, on which he had spent the best years of his life, revenged himself by writing a most scathing satire on his niggardly patron, and this he left with one of his friends to be delivered to the monarch after a certain lapse of time when he should be clear of his jurisdiction. He then fled to Tabaristan, a province bordering on the Caspian Sea, and placed himself under the protection of its ruler. When Sultan Mahmud read the satire he was furious, and sent a message to the prince bidding him surrender the poet to his messengers, failing which he would come with his elephants of war, destroy him and his capital, and transport the very dust of his palace to Ghazna, his own capital. The Prince of Tabaristan, with equal courage and wit, simply wrote on the back of the letter the three letters "A.L.M.," and sent it back. The allusion which was instantly appreciated by Sultan Mahmud's courtiers, if not by himself, was to the *Suratu'l-Fil*, or "Chapter of the Elephant" (Sura cv. of the Quran), which begins with these three letters in the words "A-lam tara kayfa fa'ala Rabbuka bi-As-habi'l-Fil?" ("Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the people of the Elephant?") The circumstances, singularly appropriate to the occasion, to which reference is made in this passage of the Quran, are familiar to every educated Muslim, but how many Europeans who have not specially devoted themselves to these studies know the story of the disastrous attempt made by the Abyssinians in the time of the Prophet's grandfather to destroy Mecca

and the sacred shrine of the Arabs, or have ever heard of Abraha al Ashram and the mysterious birds called *ababil* who served on that occasion as the messengers of God's vengeance? To one who lacks this knowledge the allusion would be incomprehensible.

Nor is a knowledge of the Quran and the Muhammadan traditions sufficient. The student of Persian literature must also be familiar with the old Persian legends about Jamshid; Zahhak or Azhi-dahaka, the Snake-King; Firidun the Blessed; Nariman; Sam; "Golden" Zal, whose life was saved, by the great mysterious bird called the Simurgh, from his unnatural father; Rustam; Sohrab, and a host of other mythical or semi-mythical kings and heroes of old Iran. Moreover, he must be conversant with the scientific conceptions of the mediæval Persians, the philosophy and medicine of Avicenna, the natural history of Damiri and Qazvini, the Ptolemaic system of Cosmogony (with the details of which, in my experience, our modern mathematicians and astronomers are strangely unfamiliar), the mysticism of the Sufis, the lives of the saints, and the theories prevalent in the mediæval East as to the influences of the stars, the genesis of minerals and precious stones, and the theories underlying the art of magic. Some portion of this knowledge is contained in such Arabic books as the *Adabu'l-Katib*, or Secretary's Manual, of Ibn Qutayba, which aim at giving in small compass a summary of those things which every educated Muhammadan writer ought to know; but nothing less than a pretty extensive reading in all branches of Muhammadan science will enable the student fully to understand and appreciate the writings of some of the philosophical and mystical poets, and even some of the panegyrists.[1]

[1]Browne, E.G., *The Literature of Persia*. 1912.

Nothing is more remarkable than the divergence of judgment between Europe and Asia as to the merit and value of certain poets. Poets like Anwari (described in a well-known Persian verse as one of the three "Prophets of Poetry"), and Zahir of Faryab (whose poems, according to another celebrated verse, should be stolen even from the Ka'ba, the Holy of Holies of Islam), though highly esteemed in Persia as masters of the craft, are little known and little appreciated in Europe; while Umar Khayyam, who is probably now better known and more admired in England and America than any other Persian poet, is, in his own country, placed on a much lower level, and is esteemed more as an astronomer and a mathematician than as a poet. Doubtless, this is largely due to the fact that he had the good fortune to be translated by FitzGerald, himself a poet, but even FitzGerald's genius would not have sufficed to popularize Anwari and Zahir in Europe. These were poets by profession, artificers in words and sounds, literary craftsmen of consummate skill and ingenuity, and for this very reason they will not bear translation because their beauty is a beauty of words rather than of thoughts. They were professional poets, earning their livelihood by an appeal, not to public taste, but to the desire of the rich and powerful for praise or their fear of satire. Anwari, the greatest of them all, is wonderfully frank about this. Driven by poverty and impressed by the sight of a Court-poet, splendidly arrayed and mounted on a beautiful horse, he abandoned the life of study towards which his natural inclination lay, for the profession of poetry. "Henceforth," he says, "I will put a check on my natural disposition, if I see the door of popularity and success open before me; and if no gift is vouchsafed

to me, I will, after essaying praise, destroy with words of satire the head of such a patron." Yet he despises the profession he has chosen and the sycophancy it entails, "for," as he says, "the whole business of courtiers comes to this: to receive blows and to give abuse." "Poetry," he says in another place, "is not bad in itself: my complaint is at the meanness of the poets." Yet even Anwari, when, moved by strong emotion or indignation, he writes naturally and earnestly, produces verse of which the substance, if not the form, can be finely rendered into English. Of his great poem on the devastations wrought by the savage Ghuzz in Khurasan in A.D. 1154, there exist two spirited metrical translations into English, one by Captain William Kirkpatrick, published in 1785, in which the poem first received the title of *The Tears of Khurasan*, by which it is now generally known, and the second by the late Professor E. H. Palmer, published in his *Song of the Reed*, in 1877.

Let us now turn to the celebrated quatrains of Umar Khayyam, which are rated by most of us so far above, and by most Persians so much below, the poems of Anwari. Their beauty, peculiar as it is, depends far more on the thought expressed than on the form of expression, and hence, given a skilful translator, is not impaired by translation. Such a translator was FitzGerald: being a poet he was imbued with the spirit and admirably reproduced the form of the original, a form sufficiently simple to lend itself to rendering in English; and though he took liberties in the way of selection and arrangement and, above all, in making what is really a series of quite unconnected epigrams look like a continuous and connected poem, he did not, as is sometimes asserted, substitute his own ideas for

those of the poet. In form, then, the translation equalled the original if it did not excel it, while the pessimism, hedonism and scepticism by which most of the quatrains are inspired strongly appeal to Europeans of the present generation, who, like Umar Khayyam—one of the greatest scientists of his age—have in so many cases discarded religion for science only to find that science is unable to answer any of those great questions concerning the significance of life and the destinies of man which we seek to know.

It is in no spirit of sentimentalism, or of philosophic detachment from the needs of life, that many students believe that, in her classic poets, Persia has a source of national inspiration and a bond of national unity which cannot be ignored by the rising generation without loss, and which, rightly interpreted, may do more to maintain and enhance the distinctive qualities of the race than material things such as roads, railways and factories can ever achieve.

The torch of truth has passed, thanks to the great poets of Persia, from hand to hand, across the centuries, ever pointing the way through the darkness. Their sway has been so general in Persia as to be universal; their teaching, their warning, their encouragement and their consolation has affected the lives of countless men and women whose careers were obscure and unknown.

No Eastern race, save only the Hindus, have a greater, no Western race a longer and more valuable literary heritage. There are signs that it is for the moment being neglected in favour of more superficial studies, but it will assuredly come into its own again when the present wave of materialism has spent its force, for, like Persian art and Persian architecture, it is truly and completely Persian in

origin and feeling, and is the greatest single contribution that Persia has yet made to human progress.

This chapter may be fitly concluded with a few renderings of shorter poems, exemplifying the wit and wisdom of Iran. There are from the pen of Sir Denison Ross, whose modest little pamphlet[1] on the subject of "Eastern Art and Literature" is by far the best introduction that has yet appeared to the study of this fascinating subject.

The world, my brother, doth abide with none,
Upon its Maker set thy heart alone!
Put not thy trust in kingdoms of this world
Which many like thyself have nursed and killed;
What matter when with thy soul's flight thou diest
Whether on throne, or on bare ground thou liest?

The wonders of the vasty deep
Are numerous and rare;
But if it's safety that you seek
You will not find it there.

Until a man has spoken who can say
Whether he's full of virtue or of sin?
Do not imagine every thicket safe,
Perchance a sleeping tiger hides within.

The harpist is like a nurse who bears
A child in her arms asleep.
She wakes the child with the touch of her hands,
And the child begins to weep.

If you should ask me where resides
The maiden fair whom I adore,
I'll tell you; she lives in my heart,
But where my heart is, I ignore.

[1] Benn's Sixpenny Series, No. 3.

To-day my boon companions all have gone,
  And for this loss there's naught that can atone,
I'm sober, not because I have no wine,
  For wine I have; but can I drink alone?

I had said I would tell thee the grief of my heart
  If thou camest to me once again,
But what shall I say, for with thee at my side
  I am free from all grief and all pain.

A rich man's lust for gold will last
  Till his day of reckoning be,
As a thirsty man will awake athirst
  Though he dream he has swallowed the sea.

CHAPTER VIII

IRRIGATION—MINERAL WEALTH

SOME reference has already been made, in Chapter V, to certain public works of outstanding importance which have recently been undertaken by the Persian Government in pursuit of their ambitious policy of railway, port and road construction. Not many public buildings of importance have been erected outside the capital, though much has been done for the repair and maintenance of the magnificent structures of earlier ages, and many creditable administrative offices, barracks and the like are being built.

The possibilities of irrigation are still under investigation: such schemes fall for practical purposes into two classes—major projects, involving large capital expenditure over a period of years, and comparatively inexpensive minor projects which, given a suitable revenue system, would not only be self-supporting but would repay within a few years the capital sums originally spent. To these should perhaps be added a third class comprising existing irrigation systems, the effectiveness and extent of which could be greatly extended by a more economical distribution of the available water.

Of the major projects, the most important group involves the harnessing of the five rivers of Khuzistan—the Karkheh, Diz, Karun, Jarrahi and

Hindian. Each of these rivers traverses great tracts of exceedingly fertile land, eminently suited for agriculture, almost level, and yet so disposed as to facilitate a solution of the drainage problem, neglect of which has been perhaps the greatest, as it has been the commonest, defect alike of ancient and modern systems of irrigation. Of these rivers, the waters of the Karkheh and Jarrahi are extensively used for the cultivation respectively of rice and dates, and to a small extent of other cereals; the Diz and Hindian are used for cereals to some small extent near Susa and in the Zaidan plain respectively; the waters of the Karun, the largest of the five, are scarcely utilized at all, except to feed a few canals which water the Aqili plain north of Shushtar, and the Miyanab, south of that town.

But it was not always so. We know, from Nearchus's description of the country, that in the fourth century B.C. it was both populous and fertile south of Ahwaz, and that there was a bridge at that town. It is fairly certain that the bridge was also a dam; for without it the country would have been in his day, as now, almost a desert. How long it had been built before Alexander arrived (325 B.C.) we cannot say,[1] but its massive construction and large stones suggest that it is coeval with Nimrud's dam[2] on the Tigris above Baghdad, which may have been constructed as late as the second millennium B.C., though the construction of canals by Eannadu, Babylonian monarch of the fourth millennium B.C., is referred to in a tablet in the British Museum.

[1] Darius constructed a very ambitious irrigation system in the plain of Herat and may well have undertaken similar projects elsewhere in his dominions. The construction of masonry dams was practised by the Sabaeans in Arabia at least a thousand years before Christ.

[2] Lane, W. H., *Babylonian Problems*, 1923. Willcocks, Sir. W., the *Irrigation of Mesopotamia*, 1911. Jones, Captain Felix, *Researches, Bombay Selections*, XLIII, 1857. See also Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*.

On this dam depended a great canal system, covering a large area on both banks of the Karun. The dam itself was built of large blocks of locally quarried sandstone, some of which may still be seen *in situ*, upon the outcrop of the same material which stretches across the Karun at this point, forming rapids. Sluice gates were provided, the positions of some of which can be seen to-day, and water mills were doubtless installed. The canal system on the right bank was extended westwards till it reached the area watered by that of the Karkheh. On the left bank it extended half-way to Fallahiyeh, the Malih depression being used to keep the irrigated area drained.

We know from Strabo (BK. XVI. I. a) that below Ahwaz the course of the river was obstructed by masses of stone of the nature of dams, forming "cataracts." Alexander appears to have imagined that these weirs had been built to bar the passage of his fleet, but this was clearly a misapprehension; the site of at least six such dams can be identified, some of which were in more or less continuous use to the eighteenth century, but they were always provided with a by-pass to admit of the passage of small craft. One such by-pass still exists at the Island of Dha, opposite Marid, where a dam was built in comparatively modern times to keep the Karun to its old bed, past Qubban, to the Khor Musa. Another dam existed ten miles upstream at Salmaneh—so called after Shaikh Salman of the Ch'ab, who in the early part of the eighteenth century re-excavated a canal at this point. A third dam, remains of which could be seen above water, at the commencement of the twentieth century, and are still occasionally at low water a source of danger to river craft, existed at Samaini (Ismailiyeh):

others existed between Samaini and Ahwaz. The dams themselves have now completely disappeared, but the canals are clearly marked by long mounds, impregnated with salts. These mounds, in the low-lying parts of the desert on either side of the Karun and Shatt al Arab, do not represent the line of banks, but the actual beds of the old canals which have received accretions of blown sand which remain moist by capillary attraction. They can best be seen and mapped from the air.

From Band i Qir to Mohammerah the silt deposited annually in flood time has formed a ridge, along the top of which the Karun runs: for the whole of this distance, some 120 miles in a straight line, the drainage on either bank is away from the river. This circumstance facilitated in Khuzistan as in 'Iraq the design of the original canal system, but, as the process has continued for three or four thousand years since the first canals were made, and is still in progress, and as the rapids at Ahwaz have undoubtedly been eroded and the bed of the river and the level of the plain raised by many feet since the dam was first built, it must not be assumed that a new irrigation system could successfully be initiated on the old alignments. From Ahwaz northwards to Band i Qir there are remains of numerous canals on the left bank, which must have been dependent on dams, all traces of which have disappeared: the right bank was irrigated, it would seem, by canals from the Shaur.

The Karkheh was not less extensively used than the Karun for irrigation purposes in early days. A network of small canals took off some fifteen miles north-north-west of Susa, and served to irrigate the strip of country between the Karkheh and the Diz,

north of Susa; two minor streams, Balad Rud and Shaur (the latter rises from springs some ten miles north-north-west of Susa), were also utilized respectively north and south of Shush. But the principal irrigation system dependent on the Karkheh, in early days, lay west of Ahwaz. As will be seen from the map the old bed of the Karkheh ran some fifteen miles south of and parallel to its present course. From the old bed a series of canals was made, running due south to irrigate an area limited in extent only by the available water, little if any of which could in those days have been allowed to run into the marshes except at times of high flood. These canals can be traced to within thirty miles of the Shatt al Arab at Basra, and may well have extended even further, for, on the left bank of the Shatt al Arab from Qurna to Di'aiji, and extending inland for some ten miles, can be seen (especially from the air) a very extensive symmetrical arrangement of canals which, if the present levels are any guide, must have depended on the Karkheh, and were certainly administered by the sovereign power in Khuzistan. It is thus clear that the irrigation systems of the Karkheh, the Karun and the Shatt al Arab between them covered a large proportion of this vast area.

An interesting feature of the desert thirty miles south of Hawizeh, and elsewhere west of the Karun, is that careful observation shows, here and there, strips, a metre or so in breadth, of great regularity, distinguishable only by a change or increase of the scanty vegetation, or after rain by a difference in the colour of the soil. These strips are not marked by the slightest irregularity of the ground surface, and radiate systematically, following the general slope of the ground. They appear to indicate the

position of the ancient minor distributaries which carried the water from the larger canals to the rice fields, and in some cases they appear to be of even greater antiquity than the tenth or twelfth century canals, which cut across them arbitrarily.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, according to Loftus,[1] one Hashim dug a canal which took off from the Karkheh at the point where it makes a right-angled turn. The ground proved soft and yielding, and soon required a dam (the remains of which can still be seen) to restrain the possible overflowing of the Karkheh into the canal; this eventually happened in 1832, or, according to Layard in 1837; the old bed was completely deserted, leaving Hawizeh without water: the inhabitants abandoned their settlements and commenced to grow rice in the great swamps between Khafajiyeh and Bisaitin which resulted from the change of bed. It was not until 1851 that an attempt was made by the then Governor of Khuzistan, Khanler Mirza, to make a dam at Kut Nahr Hashim, five miles upstream of the old dam mentioned above, for the purpose of restoring the river Karkheh to the ancient channel past the town of Hawizeh. The project was a complete failure, a large portion being carried away by a sudden rise of the river.[2] The canal alone remains to testify to the attempt.

Of the utilization in early times of the waters of the Diz, Jarrahi and Hindian rivers, little or nothing can be stated with certainty: that the Diz waters must have been used seems certain, but its bed is so shallow that no dam would be required: the ancient bridge at Dizful served the purpose of a weir which

[1] Loftus, W. K., *Chaldea and Susiana*, 1857, p. 430.
[2] Op. cit. p. 361.

fed some canals on both banks just below Dizful; these canals can no longer be used, as the central span of the bridge, with its foundations, has been undermined and carried away by the river. The Jarrahi must have been canalized as at present round Ram Hormuz, in Sasanian times, if not earlier, as Sasanian ruins of some size existed there, and the name of the town itself dates from this epoch. South of the town at the point where the river debouches from gravel hills, a continuation of the Ahwaz range, can be seen on either bank the remains of two canals of considerable size, probably of Sasanian date. The Hindian, south of Deh Mullah, flows in a plain so flat and a bed so deep that it seems here never to have been used for irrigation, but above Deh Mullah it must have been so used, as at present, from very early times.

It remains to mention briefly, five smaller streams which run from the mountain ranges of Pusht i Kuh into the Mesopotamian plain—namely, from south to north, the Dawairij, Tib, Changulak (at Badrai), Ganjir (at Mandali) and the Alwand (at Khanaqin). The first named has recently changed its bed, and is now no longer utilized; that the second was formerly canalized is clear from the remains of canals where it leaves the Jabal Hamrin: the remainder are utilized to the full on both sides of the frontier, and the rights of the Persian and 'Iraqi cultivators respectively to a fair share of the available supply of water, especially in the case of the Ganjir, are a fruitful source of friction.[1] These streams are, however, of little importance to Persia, and need not be referred to in greater detail.

[1] See *Report on 'Iraq to League of Nations* for 1926. Colonial No. 29 (1927).

Irrigation schemes affecting the Karun first came into the sphere of practical politics in 1904, when M. Naus, the Administrator-General of Persian Customs at Tehran, in connection with a loan of £300,000 which was sought from the British Government, suggested that two-thirds of the proceeds should be devoted to irrigation schemes which the Persian Government themselves desired to undertake. He proposed that the revenues accruing from these works and the domains fertilized by them might be pledged as subsidiary security for the additional advance. This proposal was the outcome of a report prepared for the Persian Government by M. Van Roggen, a Dutch subject, who had been appointed in 1903 as technical adviser to the Minister of Public Works. Nothing came of the proposal, though in 1906 M. Van Roggen and his assistants visited Ahwaz and made further investigations; the scheme, as eventually elaborated by them, involved an expenditure of some £2,250,000 on the irrigation of 85,000 acres, and was based upon most optimistic crop estimates. Though in the opinion of experts of the Indian Irrigation Department the scheme was technically unsound, and in any case vitiated by incomplete and inaccurate surveys, Lord Curzon, then Viceroy of India, expressed himself as anxious to assist the Persian Government to proceed with the scheme, and it is not without interest to-day to recollect that he, with his usual foresight, pointed out that if as a result of the scheme the Karun ceased to be navigable, a new route might be opened to the plains of Khuzistan by a railway starting from Khor Musa. Major W. R. Morton, R.E., an expert deputed by the Government of India in 1904, spent several seasons in making detailed surveys of the country on both banks of the Karun, and of

the barrage site at Ahwaz, and in preparing a preliminary scheme. His chief conclusions may be very briefly summarized as follows:—

(1) 150,000 acres could be irrigated on the left bank and 100,000 acres on the right bank by means of a barrage across the rapids at Ahwaz.

(2) the maintenance of navigation on the Lower Karun would conflict seriously with the success of an irrigation scheme; the Karun is at its lowest when water is most needed for summer crops such as cotton, sugar-cane and indigo.

(3) the cost of the scheme as prepared by him, at then current prices of material and labour, would be about £450,000. The annual revenue would be 8 per cent, out of which sinking fund charges and interest on capital would have to be met.

(4) the population required to till the lands brought into cultivation would be about 15,000 families, say 75,000 souls, an addition of about 50 per cent of the present local population.

It is unnecessary to enter into the subsequent diplomatic history of the scheme: it is sufficient to note that it was actively pressed by a Dutch syndicate, and that the Persian Government actually gave the Dutch Minister, in 1909, a two years' option for a concession, details of which were to be settled subsequently. Nothing further, however, was done, though Sir William Willcocks, whose opinions on the possibilities of the Karkheh are referred to below, visited Ahwaz in 1909 and was favourably impressed with the scheme put forward by Major Morton.

The prospects of the scheme being remunerative are more remote to-day than when it was first mooted: money, labour and imported materials are alike dearer, but the price of agricultural

produce has not risen in proportion; indigo is no longer a paying crop, sugar, though heavily taxed, could scarcely compete against the imported article; experience in Mesopotamia suggests that the heat in summer is here too great for the highest grades of cotton, and the vast surplus of grain from the Punjab and the considerable surplus in good years from 'Iraq tend to keep prices low.

Further there is no local surplus population who would be attracted by the prospect offered by such a scheme, if completed. On the contrary, considerable areas have recently gone out of cultivation owing partly to the shortage of labour, and partly to the fact that 'Iraqis resident in the date groves on the right bank of the Shatt al Arab no longer, as in past times, go to the Karun to sow wheat and barley in the autumn, returning thither in early summer to reap the harvest.

It must also be borne in mind that the Karun in spring is very heavily burdened with silt, the clearance of which from canals would involve heavy expense. It is estimated that the annual amount of silt brought down by the Karun alone amounts to a million cubic yards yearly: all the other rivers of South-West Persia are likewise laden in proportion to their volume.[1] The only practicable way of disposing of this silt would seem to be to convert the Aqili plain into a reservoir by a dam in the Fidalak gorge above Shushtar: such a reservoir would make it possible to provide adequate water supply in the summer and autumn when it is most needed, but, nevertheless, a scheme of this magnitude is

[1] See Wilson, A. T. *The Delta of the Shatt al Arab*, *Geog. Jour.* March, 1925, and *The Persian Gulf*, 1928, by the same author; also Willcocks, *The Irrigation of Mesopotamia*, 1911, and in *Geog. Jour.*, January, 1910.

probably beyond the horizon of the present generation.

The Miyanab Scheme.—During 1918–1920 a preliminary investigation was made of the possibility of rebuilding the bridge at Shushtar, which, like the one at Dizful, also served as a dam, thereby restoring the ancient irrigation system of the Miyanab, which in former times was fed by a canal dependent on this bridge, reputed to have been built for Shapur by the Emperor Valerian. Simultaneously, the possibilities of generating electric power at Shushtar from the Bulaiti dam at the head of the Gargar river was subject to expert investigation. For both purposes it appeared that the scheme was practicable: the hydro-electric scheme would obviously depend for its success on the creation of a demand, at the time non-existent, for electric power; but of the financial merits of the other scheme, which would involve an expenditure of not more than £100,000, there seemed no doubt; furthermore the lands to be irrigated are fertile and accessible, and the population available.

Local opinion had always held that the Karkheh offered better prospects for irrigation than any other river in South-West Persia. This view was confirmed by Sir W. Willcocks who made an unofficial reconnaissance of the site and area in 1909, as the result of which he was of opinion that 100,000 acres could be irrigated at a cost of £75,000 by means of a barrage at Sinn ul Abbas, west-north-west of Ahwaz. The principal difficulty would be to reconcile the tribesmen of the Bani Turuf to any scheme which threatened to deprive their rice-fields of water.

The reconstruction of the bridge at Dizful, including the dam or Shahdurwan at its base, was undoubtedly practicable, and would enable a large

area to be irrigated on both banks. The capital cost involved would be in the neighbourhood of £50,000. No technical difficulties were involved, and the project would appear certainly remunerative, especially as it lay on the route of the future Khor Musa-Tehran railway. The climate is also more favourable than that of any other area in Khuzistan, both to crops and cultivators, who could probably be obtained from the semi-sedentary Lur population of the neighbouring foothills, such as the Faili and Sagwand tribes, and with less difficulty than in areas further south.

It seems improbable that any scheme can be usefully developed on the Jarrahi river. Practically the whole available water supply is already used either at Ram Hormuz or for the date groves of Fallahiyeh, and whilst it is probable that the area under cultivation could, by careful management and under a wise system of revenue remissions, be considerably extended, it is unlikely that any capital expenditure could be usefully undertaken by the Persian Government.

The island of Abadan, and the country lying on both banks of the Bahmishir and the Karun as far upstream as Marid, offer special facilities for date cultivation, which has been more effectively developed on the right bank of the Shatt al Arab. The levels are suitable, the land is as good as or better than in 'Iraq, and the population is available. The only thing hitherto lacking is a carefully considered system of land settlement which will encourage settlers themselves to dig, or to pay others to dig, the requisite canals and to plant date trees. The preliminary work involved would be very heavy, and it is six years before the trees begin to bear. The contrast between the comparative

bareness of the Persian shore and the highly cultivated groves on the opposite bank, running two or three miles inland, is due primarily to the fact that in 'Iraq the land for the most part is in the hands of large owners, who systematically develop and maintain their estates under elaborate agreements with the cultivating classes, who have certain vested interests secured to them by law as tenants.

The development of schemes of irrigation dependent on bridge-dams at Dizful and Shushtar respectively is thus possible in the immediate future: in each case the population to cultivate the lands is available on the spot, and skilled labour for construction work would not be a difficulty, masons and bricklayers in particular being available in both towns. To a more distant future must be relegated the Karkheh scheme, which involves delicate problems, such as the transfer of population from the rice-fields of the Bani Turuf of the Hawizeh district to the newly irrigated lands: the scheme moreover offers engineering problems of some difficulty, and calls for extensive preliminary surveys, as no ancient canal system exists, which can be enlarged or elaborated, as at Dizful and Shushtar. Of the Karun it can be said with certainty that the Dutch scheme is impracticable; whether a workable and financially profitable scheme could be elaborated can be demonstrated only by most careful enquiries by experts not only in the engineering side of the question, but in estimating the possibilities of crop returns and revenue receipts.

In one direction, however, immediate progress is possible without any intervention by the Central Government and without financial assistance other than a reasonable period of credit. Irrigation by means of pumps has made great strides in the

past decade in 'Iraq, and several thousand pumps are now in use: they are nearly all worked by internal combustion engines of from 50 to 150 h.p. burning oil fuel or kerosene. This type of irrigation is thoroughly suited to local conditions: overhead charges are reduced to a minimum, the owner and his cultivators themselves tending the engine and bringing the fuel by water from the nearest depôt up river. The levels on the river banks are such that the water flows naturally away from the river for an indefinite distance, making it possible for one pump to command a large area, of which a portion can be economically fallowed each year. If the course of the river changes and the pump is thrown out of action, it is possible to move it without prohibitive expense: ownership is vested in individuals, and is an opportunity for personal savings, a great advantage in a country where government intervention, however well intentioned, is viewed with suspicion. In South-West Persia, as in 'Iraq, petroleum is cheaper than in any other country in Europe or Asia: and the Karun and its tributaries provide, in conjunction with the Khor Musa-Ahwaz railway, a ready channel for the export of produce.

But here again the first requisite is security of tenure in land, and immunity of newly irrigated lands from additional taxation for a period of years, so that small merchants and tribal leaders may be encouraged to invest money in pumps. These essential safeguards now exist, and it is reasonable to suppose that before long there will be a substantial increase in the area under irrigation by this means in South-West Persia.

Other large schemes now under examination by experts for the Persian Government involve the

utilization of the waters of the Gurgan and Atrek rivers in the province of Asterabad in North-East Persia, of the Aras river in the north-west, and the diversion of the head waters of the Karun into the Zaindeh Rud, which waters the Isfahan plain.

The Gurgan and Atrek rivers would have been largely used for irrigation by oil pumps some years ago but for political obstacles, which have not yet been removed. The waters of the Aras river, on the border between Persia and Soviet Russia, could with advantage be used to irrigate the fertile Mughan plain, as has been done by the Russians on its northern bank. The third, or Karkunan scheme, which involves tunnelling on a considerable scale, is more speculative.

"This ambitious but sensible project," writes Curzon, (*Persia*, Vol. II, p. 316) "appears to have been initiated in the sixteenth century by Shah Tahmasp, who began to excavate a tunnel, but is said to have been repelled by the noxious vapours. Abbas the Great, abandoning the tunnel scheme, for which the appliances of that age were hardly adequate, commenced a cutting, upon which, according to Herbert, he employed 40,000 and sometimes 100,000 men. He was vanquished by the snows and by the cold in winter. Abbas II tried the simultaneous experiment of damming the river, so as to raise its level, and of mining the rock, under the direction of M. Genest, a French engineer. Both schemes were failures; and there the matter has rested till the present time. Stack visited the unfinished cutting in 1881, and reported it to be a huge cleft, sawn right across the crest of the hill, 300 yards in length, 15 yards in breadth, and 50 feet deep (measurements which, I believe, are not correct). The quarried rocks are still symmetrically piled in heaps, and the ruins of the stone huts, built for the workmen, are visible. Major Sawyer estimated that less than one-twentieth of the entire work was completed. Nevertheless, the experiment was a perfectly rational one, the

levels being favourable, and the obstacles not insurmountable. Modern engineering science would accomplish the purpose without difficulty by dams and tunnelling. Nor is it likely, looking to the volume of water in the Karun, and the numerous tributaries by which it is subsequently fed, that the river level would be lowered one inch thereby at Shushtar. The question rather is, whether the diverted water, turned into the flat shingly bed of the Zaindeh Rud, would not be scattered long before it had reached Isfahan."

Before leaving the question of irrigation, mention must be made of the system of *qanats*—channels dug for many miles to bring underground water to fields on alluvial soil at the foot of the hills with the least possible loss by evaporation. The system is of extreme antiquity—it may well be contemporaneous with the earliest civilizations of Persia[1]: it involves a high standard of judgment in locating springs, and exceptional qualities of skill, endurance and patience in execution.[2] Lands so irrigated probably exceed in extent those irrigated directly from running streams. There is some reason to think that many subterranean sources await discovery or re-discovery, and could be profitably connected by *qanat* to fertile lands nearby, but schemes of this kind require capital, as well as skill, and will not be undertaken without security of tenure and immunity from onerous revenue assessments. The revenue system of India, under which the population has trebled in a little over a hundred years, might well be adapted to Persian needs to-day, and the more easily because it is in its essentials a

[1] See Polybius. X. 28 and Morier, *Second Journey*, 1818, pages 163-4. For a discussion of the method in other lands see Brunhes, *La géographie humaine* 3rd edn., Paris, 1925, Vol. II, page 599.

[2] Construction is largely in the hands of craftsmen known as *mughanni*, drawn mostly from Yezd, who have handed down their knowledge from father to son.

system introduced into India by the Mogul Emperors. Other irrigation schemes, not within the personal knowledge of the writer, but known to be of potential value, relate to the great marshes of the Helmund in Seistan where elaborate irrigation systems existed in very early times. The headwaters and main stream are in Afghanistan, but this fact need not impede development any more than in the case of the Nile, the headwaters and potential reservoirs of which are in part controlled by Abyssinia and utilized in part by the Sudan before they reach Egypt. In fact, the same difficulty may arise on the Euphrates, and will doubtless be surmounted when the time comes.[1]

Almost all the rivers of the Persian plateau might with advantage be harnessed more fully than at present. There is scope for schemes of this nature in the Isfahan region, and the tributaries of Lake Urmia await a master: the Qara Su, as the Karkheh is called in its upper reaches, flows in a deep channel through the plain of Kermanshah—under the curse of Yazdijird according to legend. This view might bring fertility to broad acres now dependent on rainfall. The mountain streams of the Elburz range only perform at present a tithe of their duty, and their surplus waters run to waste in trackless marshes, instead of spreading themselves over broad acres of cereals and other crops. In this, as in many other matters, progress must of necessity be slow, but this should not blind us to the fact that agriculture in Persia is capable of substantial development, not in one area only, but in almost every province.

It remains to refer, however briefly, to one aspect of the quest for 'power' which has perhaps not received

[1] On the general question see H. A. Smith, *The Economic Uses of International Rivers*, London, 1931.

the attention it deserves in Persia, where, especially in the south-west and south-east, a steady wind blows for at least one hundred and twenty days without intermission, at a time when water is most needed for irrigation. The windmill, like the water wheel, was probably introduced into Europe from Persia,[1] for irrigation in pre-Roman times was by no means confined to Egypt and Mesopotamia. Windmills were known in Persia by the tenth century, and according to one account as early as the seventh century. The geographers of the tenth century, Mas'udi, Ibn Hawqal, and Istakhri, all mention the existence of windmills in Seistan, where examples of a primitive but effective type are still to be seen, notably at Neh. They are designed to rotate on a vertical axis and to take the wind from one quarter, whence it blows for at least 200 days in the year. It is reasonable to suppose that the more modern form of windmill extensively used in Europe might serve a useful purpose in many parts of Persia, particularly if provided with storage facilities.

The actual mineral output of Persia is probably somewhat larger, the potential production perhaps smaller, than is generally believed, though minerals have not been as yet the object of systematic scientific search. The best, and indeed the only recent, authority on the subject is the veteran German geologist A. F. Stahl,[2] on whose work I have drawn freely for the purposes of this chapter.

In pre-Islamic times copper, lead, silver and gold were undoubtedly worked at many spots widely distant from each other. Gold is found in many

[1] The chain of pots over a wheel for raising water was known to the Romans and is described by Vitruvius; but Professor Myres is inclined to believe that wheels of this type, as used in Egypt and on the Euphrates to-day, were probably derived from Persia.

[2] *Handbuch der regionalen Geologie, Persien*, Vol. V, 1911.

localities,[1] both as alluvial deposits and associated with quartz.

A silver mine exists on the Karun at Du o dah—so called, according to local legend, because it took ten tomans' worth of labour to produce two tomans' worth of the metal. Brittle sulphurous silver ore has been found in the Sahand mountains, and the lead ores, which are of common occurrence in many parts, are often rich in silver.

Lead is found in almost every province, and was formerly regularly worked. The most accessible surface deposits have been exhausted, but there is no reason to think that great quantities do not exist at lower levels. The chief obstacle to successful mining of lead, as of other metals, is the scarcity of water and of suitable fuel. Stahl mentions some twenty different lead mines, adding that these are only the best known. It is associated in some places with zinc blende.

Copper occurrences are exceptionally numerous, notably in the Qara Dagh district, north-east of Tabriz, near Kuh Rud on the Kashan-Isfahan road, in the Anarak, Kerman, Shahrud-Sabzawar districts, in Kurdistan, near Birjand, and at many points in the Elburz district.

[1] (*a*) 90 to 100 km. south of Damghan.
(*b*) Near Bosmishk, between Nishapur and Meshed, associated with copper.
(*c*) Near Turkobeh, between Nishapur and Meshed in quartz veins associated with mica schists.
(*d*) In quartz reefs 2–3 km. west of Meshed.
(*e*) Near Kawend, 4 m. west of Zenjan, associated with iron ochre.
(*f*) In quartz veins in the Turan Mts. in the district of Kerwen west of Isfahan.
(*g*) In the Alwand Mts. south of Hamadan.
(*h*) Near Geligah in the Ashraf district of Mazanderan.
(*i*) Near Shah Abdul Azim, south-east of Tehran, with lead and copper ores.
(*j*) North-west of the ruins of Takht i Sulaiman, west of Zenjan.
(*k*) In the Tokhraje Mts. of Kuh Banan.

Zinc is often associated with the lead ores of Persia; tin is known to occur near Kuh Banan and in Qara Dagh, but like other inconspicuous ores may often have been overlooked. Mercury is found west of Zenjan, cobalt and nickel in half a dozen different localities, but not in large ore-bodies; the same is true of orpiment, realgar, chrome, antimony and manganese.

There is no lack of potentially valuable iron ore deposits in Persia, notably in the form of hæmatite near Ardahe, forty-five miles west of Tehran, fifteen miles north of the main road between Kazvin and Tehran, also in the Dushan Tepe hills, eight miles east of Tehran. It is of common occurrence in Mazanderan, near Kashan and Kuh Rud, north of Nayin and east of Yezd. Without coal all these deposits are, and must remain, unutilized, but coal giving up to 80 per cent. coke is available to the north-west, north and north-east of Tehran, and in the lower Jurassic beds of the Elburz, whilst coal of good quality is found in Central Persia near Nehavend, Kerman and Isfahan, and in places in the Ashraf district near Geligah, and at Tabriz.

Surface seepages of mineral oil occur in the provinces of Talish, Gilan, Mazanderan and Asterabad, in the mountain belt in Qara Dagh, and near Zenjan, and at Samnan. It has not been found in Central Persia, but has been found in many places in South-West Persia.

Of non-metallic mineral products the commonest is rock-salt, which is found in almost every province. Potash occurs as carnalite in the vicinity of Miyaneh, and potash salts may possibly exist in the Miocene salt deposits elsewhere in North-West Persia.

Alum is not uncommon, borax occurs near Shahr i Babak, and is extensively worked. Gypsum is of

almost universal occurrence. Sulphur is known in many places in South Persia, and is collected in small quantities from Kuh i Taftan near Kerman, and from Demavend, north of Tehran—from the craters of these almost extinct volcanoes.

Precious and semi-precious stones are represented by the famous turquoises of Nishapur, and the less reputed products of the mines of Shahr i Babak. A Russian geologist, Melgunov, has reported that rubies and emeralds are found in the Asterabad region and in the vicinity of Meshed, but his statement has not been confirmed. Asbestos, but not of commercial quality, has been found in the hills north of Jask, and in Kuh Banan.

This concludes the record of known occurrences of minerals, but it must not be assumed either that it is in any way complete, or that the deposits mentioned are of commercial value. Only when a geological survey has been made covering the whole of Persia will it be possible for the Persian Government to assess its potential wealth in minerals and lay its plans accordingly.

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CHAPTER IX

THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM OF PERSIA

UNTIL 1906, and indeed in practice for some time after, no clear division existed between judicial and executive functions of the Persian State; there were indeed, as in other Islamic States, two separate systems of law—the religious (*Qanun i Shari*) and the common law (*Qanun i 'Urf*).

The *shari'a* is "the road to the watering place," the canon law of Islam. The word in its technical sense goes back to some passages in the Quran: "Then we gave them a *shari'a* in religion; follow it, and not the wishes of those who have no knowledge. . . ." "To every one of you we have given a *shari'a* (a path to be followed) and a *minhaj* (a clear path)." The *shari'a* provides, according to the orthodox view, the basis for the judgment of actions as good or bad, which judgment accordingly has a divine origin. It has no relation to the inner consciousness of the subject, or his intentions, or conscience. It demands, and is only concerned with, prescribed outward forms. The legal judgments based on it are only concerned with external circumstances, and the religious-minded of all ages have reminded their hearers that it is no more than the starting point or basis of a good life.

Various systems of case-law have developed from the *shari'a* and are recorded in the *fikh* books: these

however, are beyond the grasp of the laity, who have to accept on such matters the *fatwa* of the *mufti*. It comprises as an infallible doctrine of ethics the whole religious, political, social, domestic and private life of those who profess Islam. It is not "law" in the modern sense of the term, for it is based upon something elevated high above human wisdom, bound by no principles, for the will of Allah knows no such limitations, yet possessed of an inner meaning, accessible only to the finest minds amongst those who seek after truth.

In the early centuries of Islam the pious, in the words of Joseph Schacht,[1]

"After many fruitless attempts to regain power, became resigned and concluded a kind of truce with the temporal powers, a truce which is not laid down in any document, but which was observed by both sides under the pressure of circumstances, retaining full liberty to censure theoretically. Thus we find everywhere laments about 'the present age' and warnings against 'the princes of the world'. The latter in their turn recognized the law in theory, and did not claim for themselves the right of legislation in the field of *shari'a*, but, when they thought fit, put the latter practically out of action by regulation (*'urf*) in a contrary sense. This did not prevent them, when they wished to be considered particularly pious, from sometimes—usually at some one else's expense—enforcing one or another regulation of the *shari'a*, especially penal laws, but without themselves fulfilling the demands of the *shari'a* or being able to do so. One must not imagine too sharp a line drawn between the influence of the schools and the power of the State. This is particularly evident in the office of *qazi*, the religious judge who is at the same time a State official.

"Finally there was only left to him public worship, the law of marriage, family and inheritance, vows, in part also

[1] *Encyclopædia of Islam*, on which I have drawn freely in writing this chapter.

pious foundations (*wakf*), all fields which in the popular mind are more or less closely connected with religion, and in which the *shari'a* always prevailed. So far as circumstances permitted, sins in the proper sense did not so much come under his consideration as, for example, invalidity of contracts, though the religious character of the separate sections of the *shari'a* was variously emphasised from the first. In the field of commercial law, practice therefore went its course unencumbered; and the *shari'a* never really prevailed. Constitutional and criminal law, law relating to war and taxation, and all the more important suits regarding property, were more and more appropriated by the temporal power, and cases were settled by a mixture of arbitrariness, local custom, and a feeling of equity, and latterly also according to laws on the European model. Thus everywhere in Islam, quite independent of Western influence, a twofold legal practice has grown up, which may be called the religious and the temporal."

An attempt is now being made virtually to abolish the *shari'a* as a legal instrument in spheres hitherto reserved to it, and in Persia, as in other Islamic countries, European codes have been adopted wholesale, often with little reference to the real needs of the country, as embodied in the *'urf*. Nevertheless, the *shari'a*, essentially academic in character, is a considerable educational force, and is still studied in the law school and theological schools.[1] It contained much that was good, and in conjunction with the *'urf* constituted a jurisprudence which was practical and acceptable. Yet, while lamenting the

[1] The Ministry of Education in 1927 required missionary schools in Persia *inter alia* to give instruction in the *Shari'yyat*. This they refused to do, and the point was not pressed, as this form of teaching is being discontinued to some extent even in the government schools. This decision, or rather attitude of mind, is to be regretted, for it is possible to select from the *Shari'yyat* a body of sound principles which derive from the same stock of traditional wisdom as books of the Old Testament such as Proverbs, the Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom.

passing of the *shari'a*, it must be recognized that the rigidity of the system made its disappearance inevitable. The *shari'a* jurists are still opponents of all progress, and still emphasize prescriptions that can have no practical significance for Muslims of the present day, laying weight on ritual to the exclusion of conduct. Yet there is throughout the whole Muslim world a perceptible striving to perform some at least of the main obligations as closely as possible, especially where they serve to distinguish Muslims from members of other creeds.

For the rest, in Persia, as in other Islamic lands, jurists have to take into consideration the *'ada* or *'urf* prescriptive and customary law current in juridical cases not closely connected with religious ordinances. The practical validity of this body of customary law, which is often in conflict with the *shari'a*, involves the concurrent existence of two forms of law and two sets of tribunals—as is still the case, for example, in England.[1] The *'ada* or *'urf* have never been collected or published in any form in Persia, but, like English common law, are well understood, and are in consequence not difficult to administer. This body of customary law regulated until quite recently some of the most important matters of daily occurrence—the division of water for purposes of irrigation, the rights of landlord and hind, of sheepmaster and shepherd, of contracts and of inheritance (the last named sometimes in a manner opposed to the *shari'a*). As in England, however, it is only valid so far as it is not inconsistent with or specifically overridden by Statute Law (*qanun*). The development of the Muslim Empire brought it into contact with peoples of very different types, who had elaborate systems of law already codified,

[1] Cf. The Hauxton case recently under enquiry by a Committee.

and with commerce on a scale which the Arabs had never experienced. The earliest Muslim rulers realised that the *shari'a* could not be applied to every activity, and, by secular enactment, brought into being a series of edicts called *qanun*. Their example is being followed to-day, and under this heading are grouped all the laws passed by the Persian Majlis, and royal edicts having by parliamentary enactment the force of law. Even the *shari'a* courts are now regulated by the Minister of Justice who nominates the members.

During the past five years the work of codification has proceeded very rapidly, and the *shari'a* courts are virtually restricted to matrimonial causes, and to the functions of a Court of Wards. Even in such cases the judgment of the *shari'a* courts cannot be executed without the intervention of a secular court, to which the decision of the *shari'a* judge is transmitted, in what is substantially an advisory form.

By virtue of a law of 1912, entitled "The Principles of the Organization of Justice," a system of justice was established, in conformity with Articles 71–89 of the Supplementary Fundamental Law of 1907,[1] which comprised the following:

The courts were classified as general and special. The first heard all sorts of claims except those reserved for special courts; the second was concerned with special questions such as Commercial Courts, Military Courts, etc.

The general courts of the lowest grade were district courts, presided over by a Justice of the Peace and dealing with claims up to 400 tomans (say, £50). Above them were Courts of First Instance, with jurisdiction over several districts,

[1] See Browne, *The Persian Revolution*.

and above them again the Court of Appeal and a Supreme Court or Court of Cassation, in Tehran.

Excepting the courts presided over by the Justices of the Peace, all other courts[1] were composed of three or four judges.

The districts having Courts of First Instance or Courts of Appeal had also a Parquet presided over by the Attorney-General, under whom came his assistant and interrogators.

To these courts have been added a system of Circuit Courts, and a special section of the Court of Cassation to deal with complaints against judges.

Another law was passed in the same year called "The Principles of Civil Procedure," which laid down the procedure for hearing cases by the Tribunals. This enactment laid down the cases which were to be heard by *shari'a* courts, viz:

1. All matters for which provision is made in Islamic Law.
2. Disputes in regard to marriage and divorce.
3. Disputes referring to penniless persons.
4. When hearing of a case is dependent on vow, oath or witness.
5. Claims concerning pious foundations.
6. Where nomination of a trustee or guardian becomes necessary.

In 1914 a law was enacted for the organization of Commercial Courts, and in 1922 one for the Voluntary Registration of Properties and Documents.

Every endeavour was made to enforce the Penal Code during the years 1918–1924, but the clergy opposed this, claiming that Islamic laws answered

[1] Courts of First Instance were in 1928 limited to a single judge.

the need; but notwithstanding this opposition both the Penal and Commercial Codes were enforced in 1925.

Soon after the accession of Riza Shah in 1925 it was decided to overhaul the whole system of Justice, enact the necessary laws, and prepare the way for the abolition of Capitulations. The influence of the clergy had diminished, and the government recognised the immediate need for modernising its laws, and since then has spared no pains to elaborate and modernise the framework of the judicial system. The work has admittedly been done hastily, but is frequently revised when defects are discovered in practice.

On the administrative side of the Ministry of Justice there is an Inspection Department, in which foreign legal advisers were employed until 1926, and a Translation Department which is charged with the duty of translating foreign Codes into Persian, and Persian Codes into European tongues, whilst a Standing Commission is responsible for codification. The Persian Civil Law has thus been systematized, and is now in force.

Apart from these activities, much has been done during the last few years to bring the law of Persia into conformity with current needs: it is not the product of a modern passion for reform, for as early as 1875, Nasr ud Din Shah, on his return from Europe, introduced Councils of Administration to strengthen the hands of local authorities and to check injustice or corruption on their part or that of the clergy. Again, on his return from a second visit to Europe, Nasr ud Din ordered the abolition of the right of sanctuary, and endeavoured to establish courts of justice. He was before his time, and nothing came of these reforms, but he

persevered and, in May 1888, issued the following Royal Proclamation to all provincial governors—

"Forasmuch as Almighty God has endowed our blessed nature with the attributes of justice and benignity and ordained us the manifestor of His ordinances and power, and has especially committed to our all-sufficient guardianship the lives and property of the subjects of the divinely-guarded Empire of Iran; in gratitude for this great gift, we consider it incumbent on us, in discharge of the duties it imposes on us, to relax nothing in ensuring to the people of this kingdom the enjoyment of their rights and the preservation of their lives and property from molestation by oppressors, and to spare no efforts to the end that the people, secure in their persons and property, shall, in perfect ease and tranquillity, employ themselves in affairs conducive to the spread of civilisation and stability.

"Therefore, for the information and re-assurance of all the subjects and people of this kingdom generally we do proclaim that all our subjects are free and independent as regards their persons and property; it is our will and pleasure that they should, without fear or doubt, employ their capital in whatever manner they please, and engage in any enterprises, such as combination of funds, formation of companies for the construction of factories and roads, or in any measures for the promotion of civilisation and security. The care of that is taken on ourselves and no one has the right or power to interfere with, or lay hands on, the property of Persian subjects, nor molest their persons or property, nor to punish Persian subjects except in giving effect to decrees of the civil or religious law."

This proclamation was accompanied by an order to the provincial governors enjoining strict observance under heavy penalties of this edict, which was to be read in every mosque and circulated to every village and camp. The seed fell on barren ground, but the fact that copies were officially sent

to the foreign Legations, and that the Shah himself had made it clear that he was not averse from hearing, through them, of any gross injustices committed in his name unquestionably had a good effect. He followed up the proclamation by assigning to the Council of State the task of elaborating a new body of law for the regulation of Justice. But nothing was actually done; the Shah was ahead, not of his time, but of the Court and of the existing high officials, and nearly twenty years passed before any real progress in the judicial system was made possible.

Since 1926 the following important measures have passed into law, and have been enforced.

1.*Registration of Properties and Documents.*—This law which was formerly voluntary has now beenmade compulsory, and a great effort is being made to register with this department of the government all immovable property. Security of tenure, and the confidence which has resulted from this has been of great benefit; and it is hoped that once the law has been enforced all over the country (which may take twenty-five years to accomplish) litigation in regard to immoveable property will practically close. By virtue of this law the title-deed of each owner is carefully scrutinised, three months' respite is given in each case to any who may have a claim to the property to lodge that claim, and later a State Certificate is issued recognising the rightful owner. In future all transactions in regard to registered properties have to be registered, and no loopholes are allowed to anyone to contest the owner's rights.

Registration of Documents (work of the Notary) is another function of this department which it carries out successfully.

2. *Revision of Old Laws.*—All the previous judicial laws have been revised to suit modern conditions.

3. *Civil Code.*—This has been codified and enforced.

4. *Functions of Religious Courts.*—All the functions of the Religious Courts provided in previous laws have been taken away from them and the only duty now left for these Courts is the hearing of cases pertaining to the nature of Muhammadan divorce and marriage, and the appointment of guardians for minors. In both instances Religious Courts act as experts expressing views to other ordinary Civil Courts, on whom devolved the duty of giving judgment.

5. *Number of Courts.*—The number of Courts has been increased considerably during the past few years. In places where Courts of First Instance are not at hand, District Courts are now permitted to hear cases up to 1,000 tomans.

6. *Other Reforms.*—The salaries of Judges have been increased so that their pay is now more than that of Civil Servants.

A great deal has been done to employ better judges and the School of Law in Tehran, where for the most part the teaching is by French professors, is a great help in this direction. A real effort has in fact been also made to expedite the earlier completion of cases.

It is necessary here to turn aside for a space to deal with events, closely connected with the judicial system, which led to the abolition of the extra-territorial status which most foreigners and all Europeans resident in Persia had long enjoyed. In dealing, in some detail, with what is now accomplished fact, I do not wish to be misconstrued as

favouring a reversion to a system which is obsolete and was of necessity transitional. My intention is rather to show that the system grew naturally out of conditions which had no relation to "unequal treaties," and flourished, during many centuries, in a world in which race was everything and nationality nothing, and racial customs and religious views were respected more scrupulously than in later ages. The body of customary law and treaty rights affecting the status of foreigners in Persia was popularly and even officially referred to as "The Capitulations" on the analogy of Turkey, in which country this general term had long been in use. It was a misnomer which has doubtless prejudiced dispassionate discussion, for the term was not intended to connote and is in no way connected with the current use of the word as synonymous with "surrender," viz. the submission of unbelievers to the Muslim Caliph in order to obtain peace, still less the unwilling surrender by Muslim nations to stronger European Powers of privileges for their subjects. The term is derived from the Italian *capitulazione*, meaning nothing more than a convention or an agreement expressing in orderly form the various stipulations agreed on. It must be admitted that the Capitulations in Turkey, which differed profoundly from those in force in Persia, constituted a frequent source of embarrassment to the Turkish Government, owing to the occasional abuse of the system by the Diplomatic and Consular representatives and subjects of the smaller European Powers and even of certain of the great Powers, for foreign subjects resided in large numbers within the Turkish Empire, and the Turkish judicial system was, until quite recent years, wholly unsuited and not capable of adaptation to the complicated needs of Western

nationals. The system broke down by its own weight because it was widely regarded by Turks as (and was, in fact) an obstacle to the exercise of sovereign rights.

The position in Persia was always entirely different. It is true that, as remarked by a recent Persian writer,[1] the abolition of extra-territoriality was welcomed in Persia as the disappearance of an ancient servitude. Yet perhaps the best evidence of the almost complete absence in Persia of serious friction or source of embarrassment from the extra-territorial status of foreigners is that, as far as can be ascertained, Dr. Ahmad Khan's recent work is the only one in existence dealing with the subject so far as concerns Persia; and of the hundred or more books referring to the Capitulations in Turkey and elsewhere, only two or three make any reference to the working of extra-territoriality in Persia, except incidentally. Indeed the privileged status formerly enjoyed by foreigners in Persia might be rightly regarded, not as a derogation of sovereign rights, but as a concession much to the credit of the Persian Government. Instead of regarding immunities of jurisdiction as exceptions to international law, and hence as affronts to Persian sovereignty, they were more properly to be regarded as evidence of an enlightened and more liberal interpretation of the Law of Nations than had been the case in Europe, the place of its origin though not of its exclusive development or application.

Such immunities existed from the earliest historical times. King Amasis (597–526 B.C.), according

[1] *La Suppression des Capitulations en Perse*, by Dr. Ahmad Khan, Matine-Daftary, with Preface by H. E. Husain Khan Ala, Persian Ambassador to France. Paris, 1930.

to Herodotus, [1] allowed Greek merchants to establish themselves at Naucratis, and permitted them to be judged by their own magistrates according to their own laws and customs. Similar immunities were granted by the Athenians,[2] Romans,[3] the Visigoths under Theodoric.[4] Justinian allowed Armenians in Constantinople to settle questions of marriage, inheritance, etc., according to their own laws,[5] and the Caliph Omar granted to the Greek monks in Palestine about A.D. 636 special exemption from local jurisdiction.[6] Arabs at Canton in China were allowed to be judged and ruled by their own qadhis in the ninth century;[7] the Turks enjoyed extra-territorial rights in Constantinople under the Byzantine Emperors; and Cosmas tells us that, in Ceylon, Arabs enjoyed extra-territorial privileges in the reign of Justinian as early as A.D. 535.[8]

The Caliph Harun-al-Raschid gave special guarantees and privileges to French merchants in the ninth century,[9] as also did the Emperors of Byzantium in the tenth century to the Varangians (Warings).[10] Nestor gives the text of this treaty, which is the earliest documentary evidence of the granting of immunity of jurisdiction to foreigners. The only difference between this document and the Capitulations in force in Turkey a thousand years later is that the earlier privileges were reciprocal while the later appeared, at first sight, to be one-sided.

[1] Herodotus, II, 178–179.
[2] Miltitz, I, p. 11.
[3] ibid., pp. 14 and 15.
[4] ibid., p. 161.
[5] Edwin Pears, *Fall of Constantinople*, p. 144.
[6] G. Pelissie du Rausas, *Le Régime des Capitulations dans l'Empire Ottoman*, p. 9.
[7] Wilhelm Heyd, *Histoire de Commerce de l'Orient*, II, p. 296.
[8] Cosmas, *The Christian Topography*, C. 547.
[9] Du Rausas, op. cit.
[10] Louis Paris, *Chronique de Nestor*, Paris, 1834–5.

The practice of conceding to foreign merchants the right to carry with them the jurisdiction of their own laws outside their own territory became quite general with the gradual extension of commerce. It was the rule in Constantinople in the tenth century, and is still the practice in several Eastern countries. "The notion of a territorial law is European and modern,"[1] the idea of personal law is far older, and it may well be far more equitable and better suited to conditions in certain countries in which small minorities, with different standards of life and forms of personal law, reside temporarily for purposes of commerce.

At various times from the thirteenth to the present century immunities and special privileges were granted to foreigners in Persia both by unilateral documents such as Royal Rescripts (*farmans*) and by bilateral arrangements (treaties). The oldest of these documents relates not to British subjects in particular, but to all Christian merchants, and forms part of the credentials which were given by the great Shah Abbas to the British knight, Sir Anthony Sherley. This grant is so important as to deserve quotation in full. It runs as follows:

"Our absolute commaundement, will, and pleasure, is, that our cuntries and dominions shall be, from this day, open to all Christian people, and to their religion; and in such sort, that none of ours, of any condition, shall presume to giue them any euil word. And because of the amitie now ioyned with the princes that professe Christ, I do giue this pattent for all Christian marchants, to repaire and trafique, in and through our dominions, without disturbances or molestations of any duke, prince, gouernour, or captaine, or any, of whatsoeuer office or qualitie of ours; but that all merchandize that they shall bring, shall be so

[1] T. E. Holland, *Elements of Jurisprudence*, p. 402 (10th edn.)

priuiledged, that none of any dignitie or authoritie, shall haue power to looke unto it; neyther to make inquisition after, or stay, for any use or person, the value of one asper. Neyther shall our religious men, of whatsoeuer sort they be, dare disturbe them, or speake in matters of faith. Neyther shall any of our justices haue power ouer their persons or goodes, for any cause or act whatsoeuer."[1]

Then follows a paragraph regarding the disposal of the property of a merchant in the event of his death.

"And those within our Kingdomes and prouinces, hauing power ouer our tolles and customes, shall receiue nothing, or dare to speake for any receipt from any Christian merchant.

"And if any such Christian shall giue credite to any of our subjects (of any condition whatsoeuer), he shall, by this pattent of ours, haue authoritie to require any caddie, or gouernor, to do him justice, and thereupon, at the instant of his demaunde, shall cause him to be satisfied.

"Neither shall any gouernor, or justice, of what quality so euer he be, dare take any reward of him, which shall be to his expense: for our will and pleasure is, that they shall be used, in all our dominions, to their own full content, and that our kingdomes and cuntries shall be free unto them.

"That none shall presume to aske them for what occasion they are here.

"And although it hath bin a continuall and unchaungeable use in our dominions euery yeere to renue all pattents, this pattent, notwithstanding, shall be of full effect and force for euer, without reneuing, for me and my successors not to be chaunged."

A further farman was granted to Richard Steele, "a young man of Bristol," who had crossed Persia in 1614 in pursuit of a debtor and, making his way

[1] *Report of Sir Anthony Sherley's Journey*. London, 1600.

to Surat, had given such a glowing account of the opportunities of trade in Persia that he was despatched with another factor, John Crowther, to Isfahan to procure further information and to solicit a farman "for the fair and peaceable entertainment of our men, ships and goods in all such ports as they shall arrive at." Their mission proved eminently successful for, in 1616, a farman was obtained from Shah Abbas, by the terms of which his subjects, of "whatsoever degree," were enjoined "to kindly receive and entertain the English Frankes or Nation who might present themselves." The full text of this farman translated from the Persian may be found in Purchas, *Pilgrims*, Vol. I, page 524.

In 1617, Edward Connock, "an adventurous person," was despatched to Persia by the East India Company and obtained a highly satisfactory "grant of privileges" from the Shah. The text of this farman does not appear to be extant, but its substance is embodied in a later farman of Shah Safi 1629.[1] It provided among other matters for the perpetual residence of an English Ambassador at the Persian Court, and for the despatch, should circumstances make it desirable, of a Persian Ambassador to England; the right of buying and selling freely in the Persian dominion; protection in the exercise of their religion; authorization to possess arms and to use them, if necessary, in self-defence; in criminal cases Englishmen to be punished by their own ambassador, etc. This was followed, in 1618, by further concessions of a minor character, the effect of which was to establish the English in a preferential position in these matters in Persia.

[1] *Letters Received by the East India Company*, Vol. VI, p. 293.

In 1629 Shah Abbas died, but a new farman was procured from Shah Safi and confirmed in 1632, in spite of active opposition on the part of the Dutch and later of the French. No further farmans were issued so far as known until 1736, when Nadir Shah renewed by *ragam* (Royal Rescript) all former privileges of the English in Persia, except the right of receiving 1,000 tomans a year from the customs of Bandar Abbas. For the latter he substituted a right to one-third of the customs on goods imported in English ships, and made a promise that English merchants there should be civilly and justly treated.[1]

No fresh developments took place in the legal position of British or other nationals in Persia until the conclusion of the Treaty of Turkomanchai, in 1828, between Russia and Persia, which, apart from granting certain rights which would be granted as a matter of course in any Western State to foreigners, provided that litigation between Russian subjects should be dealt with by Russian Consuls, and that disputes between Russian and Persian subjects should be decided by Persian officials in the presence of a representative of the Consulate. The immunities granted under this treaty are far less extensive than those formerly current in Turkey, but there is no reason to think that this caused serious inconvenience or embarrassment to the Persian Government. Other nations, with a few exceptions, merely claimed such favourable treatment as was accorded by this treaty to Russian subjects, but in practice never insisted on as rigorous an interpretation of the somewhat vague clauses of the treaty as did the Russians. But the extra-territorial rights provided for in the separate "Compact" annexed to the

[1] *Selections from State Papers*, Bombay, 1908, Saldanha, p. 48.

Treaty of Turkomanchai were not, as has sometimes been suggested, extorted from a conquered nation at the point of the sword. The provisions of the treaty merely served to confirm and regularize immunities and judicial procedure which had been customary in Persia long before. The evidence for this is to be found in the contemporary narratives of travellers. The wording of the clauses indeed indicates that the Russians in making the treaty took no undue advantage, having regard to the fact that the Persians immediately before had suffered a severe defeat in the field, and had been forced to surrender valuable territory and pay an indemnity of some £3,000,000. The Soviet Government, in 1921, declared this and other treaties of the former Russian Government to be abrogated. There was, however, no suggestion that the indemnity should be repaid, nor that the territories surrendered to Russia under the Treaties of Gulistan of 1813 and Turkomanchai should be restored, and it was in any case essential to the execution of the policy of the Soviet Government that the treaty should be terminated, as the provisions for freedom of trade by Persians in Russia, and *vice versa* were reciprocal, and were inconsistent with the commercial policy of the U.S.S.R. Soviet representatives in Persia, however, have not in practice given full effect to this act of abnegations, and other European governments, and the British Government in particular, were entitled to claim that extra-territorial privileges had been maintained by custom and sufferance without the smallest prejudice to the Persian Government's authority.

The first Treaty of Commerce between Great Britain and Persia of 1841 was replaced by the Treaty of Peace between Great Britain and

Persia signed at Paris in 1857, Article 9 of which reads:

> "And that the treatment of their respective subjects, and their trade, shall also in every respect be placed on the footing of the subjects of the most favoured nation."

The Commercial Convention between Great Britain and Persia of 1903 reproduces this stipulation as follows:

> "It is formally stipulated that British subjects and imports into Persia, as well as Persian subjects and Persian imports into the British Empire, shall continue to enjoy under all conditions most favoured nation treatment."

The authority of His Majesty's representatives in countries in which extra-territorial privileges are current is made effectively binding on British subjects by Orders[1] issued by Her Majesty in Council under the provisions of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act of 1890. The last-named act recites that by treaty, capitulation, grant, usage, sufferance and other lawful means, Her Majesty hath jurisdiction within divers foreign countries, and enacts that "Her Majesty may hold, exercise or enjoy any jurisdiction which Her Majesty hath or may at any time hereafter have, within a foreign Country, in the same and as ample a manner as if Her Majesty had acquired that jurisdiction by the cession or conquest of territory." Power to pass such legislative measures depends upon treaties entered into and acquiesced in by the local sovereigns,[2] or upon grant, custom and sufferance such as existed in Persia.

[1] In the case of Persia by the Persia Order in Council, 1889—for North Persia. Persian Coasts and Islands Order in Council, 1907, and amending Orders—for South Persia.

[2] Wheaton, *Elements of International Law*, 5th edition, 1916, p. 183.

It seems to be a reasonable deduction from the foregoing that European British subjects enjoyed a privileged position in Persia quite apart from the provisions of the Treaty of Turkomanchai in virtue of earlier Royal Rescripts previously granted, frequently confirmed, and never abrogated. It was not, however, clear that non-Christian British Indian subjects, and other British subjects and protégés from countries which were added to the British Empire during the nineteenth century could claim such privileges equally with European British subjects. The Persian Government always viewed with distaste the exercise of extra-territorial jurisdiction by European Powers over their non-European subjects or protégés, and such cases of friction as have arisen, so far as concerns British jurisdiction in the past, invariably involved individuals in this category, e.g. inhabitants of British India or of Indian States, Egyptians, subjects of Arab Principalities of the Trucial Coast, of Muscat, Najd, Bahrain and Kuwait, of Aden and of Zanzibar, Somalis, and latterly 'Iraqis and Palestinians.

Until 1907 Persia was outside the pale of international law, but the fact that the Persian Government was invited to send representatives to the Second Hague Conference may be taken as an acknowledgment of her international status, thus necessarily modifying to some extent, in practice, the earlier international juridical position.

It is evident, however, that a law inextricably bound up with a religion which, in common practice and vulgar acceptance though not in theory, rejects equality between Muslim and non-Muslim, (the provisions of the Persian Constitution and of the Code of Persian Law notwithstanding), and an administration so highly decentralized as that of

Persia, offered no sufficient guarantee that the rights of foreign subjects would be adequately dealt with by the courts.

In the countries newly inclined to Western administrative and legal ideas, law tends to develop in advance of custom. It is easy to create organizations on European lines, it is less easy to make them function as in Europe: new institutions cannot at once replace ancient forms which have slowly adapted themselves to local needs.

The Persian Government recognized this fact, and spared no pains to elaborate the framework of a judicial system, and a series of laws which would serve to regulate commercial relations and the rights of individuals. As Great Britain had more nationals resident in Persia than all other Christian nations together—a term which now excludes Russia—it was of first importance to secure British support and consent in principle to the abrogation of extra-territorial privileges. This was obtained, after negotiations in which both parties displayed good-will and an understanding of the very small requirements alike of European residents and of the Persian Government.

Brown,[1] after citing Politis, Pillet, Despagnet, Fiore, Laurent, Heffter, Mancini, Holzendorff, and other authorities on international law, summarises their general conclusions, as to the rights of foreigners in national jurisdictions, as follows:

> 1. The rights of foreigners may not be subject to the unrestrained judgment and action of any one nation. Sovereignty does not confer on the territorial legislature full powers over foreigners. Their rights may be determined only by the deliberate united agreement of al nations, in

[1] Brown, *Foreigners in Turkey*, 1914, a most valuable work on which I have freely drawn in this chapter.

accordance with the most liberal conceptions of the Law of Nations. International, not national, jurisprudence must have sway.

2. Foreigners carry with them wherever they go such rights as accompany their nationalities, in so far as the recognition of such rights is not repugnant to the law and order of the State within whose jurisdiction they may temporarily reside.

3. These rights are in general terms such as relate to civil status and capacity, and include such matters as marriage, separation or divorce, legitimation, bankruptcy, etc., etc. In penal matters nations reserve the right to protect their nationals against unduly harsh punishments such as imprisonment for debt, or against any evident failure of foreign courts to accord full justice.

If the above summary of international law on the subject of extra-territorial rights is correct—and a pronouncement on April 25th, 1927, by President Coolidge[1] in relation to the South American States suggests that such views are tenaciously held on the other side of the Atlantic—it is clear that there is adequate justification in international law for some measure of differentiation in status before the municipal law of foreigners and indigenous residents.

Such differentiation was, in fact, accorded by the Persian Government in the course of its negotiations on the subject with foreign powers. These negotiations were wisely deferred until the Ministry of Justice and the Courts of Law had been radically reorganized. In formally announcing the inception

[1] "While it is well established in international law that we have no right to interfere in the purely domestic affairs of other nations in their dealings with their own citizens, it is equally well established that our Government has certain rights over, and certain duties towards, our own citizens and their property wherever they may be located. *The person and the property of a citizen are a part of the general domain of the nation even when abroad.*"

of the new Judicial Regulations[1] in April, 1927, the Shah declared that he had instructed the Prime Minister to take action with a view to the abolition of extra-territorial privileges of foreign subjects. This was followed by a formal announcement by the Persian Government on May 10th, 1927, that all such privileges would be abolished twelve months from that date. The French Government, with almost no French citizens in Persia other than those employed by the Persian Government, or in the French Diplomatic or Consular Service, hastened to announce that they accepted in principle the abolition of extra-territorial privileges, subject to an assurance that French nationals would enjoy "most favoured nation" treatment. The course of negotiations between Persia and Great Britain was more sophisticated, being complicated by the question of an air route across Persian territory from Baghdad or Basra to India, and by protracted tariff negotiations.[2] The issues were not finally settled, but temporarily adjusted, by a treaty (not yet ratified by His Majesty's Government), covering a period of eight years from 10th May, 1928, and by the exchange of numerous notes. The settlement thus arrived at was summarized by Sir Austen Chamberlain, as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in the House of Commons on May 14th, 1928, in the following terms:

"The treaty, which has been concluded for a period of eight years, provides for the abrogation of all provisions of existing treaties which limit in any way the right of Persia

[1] These regulations included certain safeguards for foreign subjects, providing, for example, that any lawsuit between a Persian and a foreigner should be referred to arbitration compulsorily on the demand of either party.

[2] See *Survey of International Affairs*, 1928, Oxford University Press, London: Humphrey Milford.

to settle her customs tariff autonomously. It provides that, on condition of perfect reciprocity, British and Indian goods imported into Persia shall not be subject to higher duties than are the goods of any other foreign country. By this treaty, the minimum rates in the tariff approved by the Persian legislature on the 3rd May will be applied to British and Indian goods. It is also provided that if at any time the rates of the minimum Persian tariff are reduced on any frontier, British and Indian goods shall benefit by those reductions, by whatever frontier they are imported. In a protocol attached to the treaty, the Persian Government reserve the right to increase the rates of the minimum tariff in the event of the duties on the chief Persian articles, other than oil, imported into Great Britain or India being increased. In an exchange of notes, it is agreed that the treaty shall provisionally enter into force at once pending formal exchange of ratifications, and that goods consigned to Persia before the 10th May shall not pay rates higher than those in the 1920 tariff.

"Further notes were exchanged at the same time maintaining in force, with a view to the conclusion within a year of a full treaty of commerce and navigation, those provisions of existing treaties which do not limit Persia's tariff autonomy. In particular, reciprocal most-favoured-nation treatment of subjects and trade and the *status quo* in regard to national treatment of shipping are to be continued. Other notes exchanged regularised the position with regard to the Dominions.

"As regards facilities in Persian territory for the proposed air service between Egypt and India, the Persian Government have formally stated their readiness to enter into negotiations with a representative of Imperial Airways Limited, regarding the conditions on which such a service should be operated.

"With regard to the abolition of the Capitulations in Persia on the 10th May, the Persian Government have addressed to His Majesty's Minister a list of the safeguards which they are prepared to extend to British nationals in Persia; and steps are being taken to bring these safeguards

to the knowledge of British nationals concerned.[1] These safeguards are in complete accordance with the relevant provisions of Persian law as recently amended.

"Finally, the Persian Government have agreed formally that missionary enterprises in Persia shall be authorised to carry on their charitable and educational work on condition of not contravening either public order or Persian laws and regulations."

Great Britain having fallen into line with the policy pursued by Riza Shah, other nations were not slow to follow suit, and during the following few months the principal powers in Europe signed similar treaties. The Persian Government were quick to follow up their advantage: they took drastic steps to reduce the number of Persians claiming foreign protection, or in possession of foreign passports.[2] They introduced an Income Tax Law which, whilst applying to Persian and foreigners alike, in practice affected foreigners far more than Persians; indeed, the former pay at least 80 per cent of the total sum thus raised. Here was the main inducement to the abolition of extra-territoriality. Persians abroad had experienced all the rigour of Income Taxes, *permis de sejour*, and other impositions: they could see no reason, and there was no reason, why foreigners resident in Persia should be exempt.[1]

The Persian Government had, partly as a matter

[1] See Appendix to this Chapter.

[2] It must not be assumed that such passports had been easily or improperly obtained. The question is one that bristles with difficulties. It has hitherto eluded all the efforts of Committees at Geneva, whilst the strenuous attempts of propagandist bodies and the unilateral actions of various governments have increased the confusion. In some countries the place of birth decides nationality: in others, the nationality of the father, in others of the grandfather. In some countries a child born of foreign parents may declare at the age of eighteen whether he wishes to be naturalized or not: elsewhere, he has no option. Never have there been in the world so many persons with two nationalities, or none, and nowhere is confusion on this subject more marked than in the British Empire itself.

of tactics and partly on grounds of policy, long refused to give facilities to Imperial Airways Limited to run along the Persian coast from Basra to Karachi, professing to attach importance to the adoption by the company of an inland route via Isfahan and Kerman. Persia does not stand to gain by a route which follows the coast, already well supplied with coastal services; a regular mail service between Kermanshah, Isfahan, Kerman, and Karachi, on the other hand, would be a valued amenity. By a temporary agreement for a period of three years, the Company were permitted to follow the Persian Coast, connecting at Baghdad with the Junkers Air Service to Tehran. Towards the close of that period a representative of the Company made a thorough investigation of the Central Persian route which had been suggested by the Persian Government, and found that such a route was entirely impracticable for aeroplanes of the type in use owing to the great height of the mountain barrier which would have to be crossed. In the spring of 1932 it was therefore decided definitely to transfer the air route to the Arabian coast of the Gulf, the investigation of which had revealed certain hitherto unsuspected advantages. Meanwhile a brief extension of the three years' permit was granted by the Persian Government to enable the necessary preparations to be made for the transfer. Here again, in spite of, or perhaps because of, the elaborate machinery of the League

[1] The problems arising out of the imposition of Income Tax on the emoluments of foreigners and on the profits of companies domiciled in one country, but incorporated in another, are of great complexity and have, likewise, eluded the efforts of Committees of the League of Nations. The result very frequently is that incomes are in effect taxed twice and the natural flow of capital and the growth of enterprise are appreciably impeded. The problem is, in its way, as serious as that of Tariffs, and not less difficult of solution.

of Nations, obstacles to commercial air services are scarcely less acute in 1932 than in 1922; political difficulties are a greater handicap than physical or economic factors, and what might be a valuable international artery becomes affected by sclerosis. The history of the growth of international telegraphic, telephonic and postal services from 1870 onwards compares very favourably with that of post-war aviation services. A solution will perhaps some day be found on the lines of the Wagons-Lit Company—a truly international aviation company embracing all interests, with a *siège social* in Switzerland, and under cosmopolitan but competent management.

This is only one of several matters of real importance awaiting a comprehensive settlement between Persia and 'Iraq. It is mentioned here only to show that the abolition of extra-territorial rights has not caused the Persian Government to display any less caution in the conduct of international relations.

Four years have passed since the Persian Courts became the sole tribunal, for most purposes, for the stranger within the gates of Persia. The new régime has worked well, and provided that the Persian Government perseveres in its efforts to bring its laws into line with modern requirements, there is no reason why it should not endure and give satisfaction to both parties. The retention, with the concurrence of the Persian Government, of the powers of Consular Courts to deal with matters of personal status, coupled with widely drawn rights of arbitration (paras. 12 and 16, Appendix) is of particular importance and value.[1]

It contrasts sharply with the proposal made in regard to Egypt to transfer to the Mixed Tribunals

[1] Egypt No. 1 (1929) Cmd. 3376. See Carle, *Journal R.I.I.A.*, March, 1932, and *Journal Central Asian Soc.*, July 1932.

jurisdiction over British subjects in such matters. If this suggestion takes shape, and if other Powers accept it, a Court of First Instance of the Mixed Tribunals—consisting, it may be, of a Belgian, a Greek and an Egyptian—will be the sole authority in Egypt as to the legitimacy of a British subject's children, the validity of his marriage, the question of his divorce, the validity of his testamentary dispositions, of his duties as trustee, and so forth. It is not stated what law this court is to administer; but; assuming that it is their conception of English law, it is this body (the majority of the Judges of the Mixed Tribunals neither reading nor speaking English with any facility) that will have to construe such various Acts of Parliament as the Law of Property, Administration of Estates and Trustee Acts. It is apparently intended that in Egypt these and other matters are to be governed by a hazy and indeterminate derivative of French law as administered in the Mixed Tribunals by Judges who, in the majority of cases, take an utterly different point of view from that of English law. It must also be remembered that, since by the existing code, the Mixed Tribunals are, and have been ever since their inception fifty years ago, prohibited from entertaining questions of *statut personnel*, and civil questions between parties of the same nationality, the Bench and Bar alike are entirely devoid of experience in dealing with such matters, and so could hardly be expected to be successful for some time to come in applying a variety of foreign Codes of Law.

As to Persia there is still much to be done, but it may fairly be said that, in judicial matters, Persia has thus far given the world an example which deserves close attention, and her action may well serve in some respects as a guide to other countries.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER IX

(Translation of Note from the Persian Government to Sir R. Clive, dated May 10th, 1928, respecting the position of British nationals in Persia.)

In reply to enquiries addressed to them on the subject, and on the eve of the realisation of their resolution to abolish on the 10th May the régime known by the name of the capitulatory régime, the Imperial Persian Government, animated by the wish to dispel possible anxiety on the part of foreign nationals resident in Persia by reason of the novelty of the régime which shall henceforth be applied to them, and desirous of keeping your nationals informed through you of the measures taken by Persian legislation and the Persian Government on their behalf, send you the accompanying decision in order that you may transmit its gist to your nationals.

It is unnecessary to inform you that the Persian Government themselves—whose interest and desire it is to obtain for Persian citizens as many guarantees as possible, and with this object in view to establish a judicial system the working of which shall be as nearly perfect as possible—has accomplished very appreciable reforms as to the judicial personnel and the laws of Persia.

Apart from a knowledge of the laws which are known to everybody, a knowledge of law equivalent to that required for a legal diploma is at present an essential condition for anyone entering upon a judicial career.

As for the situation of British nationals in Persia resulting from this decision, the following measures taken by the

Persian Government will be applied to them as from the 10th May, 1928:

(1) On the basis of perfect reciprocity, they will be admitted and treated on Persian territory in conformity with the rules and practice of international law, will enjoy the fullest protection of the laws and the authorities of the country, and will benefit by the same treatment as nationals.

(2) In all civil or commercial cases in which one of the parties is a foreigner, only written evidence will be admitted.

In all proceedings, even criminal proceedings, the judgments shall be reduced to writing and will contain the considerations of law and of fact on which they are founded.

Those interested in the proceedings shall have the right to obtain a copy of the evidence and of the judgment, on condition of paying the legal charges.

In criminal matters, oral testimony being a normal method of proof, the interests of the accused will be safeguarded as at present by the article in the Criminal Code dealing with perjury.

(3) To the exclusion of all other jurisdiction, only the courts and tribunals subordinate to the Ministry of Justice will be competent to deal with cases in which one of the parties is a foreigner.

Only the criminal tribunals subordinate to the Ministry of Justice shall generally speaking be able to pronounce a sentence of imprisonment on foreigners.

Nevertheless, in the event of the proclamation of martial law, when a case is brought before a special tribunal which has been established, that tribunal shall also be able to take cognisance of cases in which a foreigner is concerned.

Moreover, in fiscal matters, and in general in a dispute between an administration and a foreigner relating to a purely administrative matter, the administrative tribunals will retain their competence.

(4) Foreigners shall in every case be tried only by "lay" (non-religious) tribunals, and lay laws alone will be applicable to them.

(5) The ordinary police courts shall only be competent in matters of slight importance and involving only a small fine.

According to the law, the police courts cannot sentence to more than one week's imprisonment.

They can only pronounce sentence of imprisonment in cases where the accused himself requests that the fine imposed on him shall be converted into imprisonment. It is clearly understood that they will never sentence foreign nationals to corporal punishment.

(6) A foreigner arrested while actually engaged in committing a crime shall not be kept in prison for more than twenty-four hours without being brought before the competent judicial authority.

Unless actually committing some crime, no foreigner will be arrested or imprisoned without a warrant emanating from the competent judicial authority.

The private or business premises of a foreigner shall not be forcibly entered or searched without a warrant from the competent judicial authority with a guarantee against abuses to be determined later.

(7) Foreigners arrested and imprisoned shall have the right, in conforming with prison regulations, to communicate with their nearest Consul and the Consuls or their representatives shall have, in conformity with prison regulations, permission to visit them.

The governmental authorities shall at once transmit to their destination such requests to communicate with them.

(8) The Imperial Government has taken into consideration the making of generous provisions for release on bail, which shall be compulsory in all cases except cases of crime as it is defined in the Penal Code.

The sum demanded as bail shall be reasonably proportioned to the nature of the offence.

In cases of appeal the same facilities of bail as those mentioned above shall be given until judgment has been pronounced.

(9) According to Persian law, trials are, in general, and save in exceptional cases, held in public, and those interested

in the cases and in the parties to the cases have, therefore, the right to be present, save in exceptional cases, as spectators, without, however, any right to take part in the proceedings.

(10) In criminal matters, the accused is absolutely free to choose his counsel, who can be chosen even from his compatriots.

(11) The Imperial Government has decided to reform prison conditions in order that these may conform to a greater extent to modern customs, and a sum sufficient to provide a prison at Tehran which shall fulfil the necessary hygienic conditions has already been voted.

Pending the provision of other prisons, foreigners who have been condemned to imprisonment for more than one month—imprisonment for one month or less being convertible into a fine—shall be transferred at their request to a prison fulfilling the necessary hygienic conditions.

(12) Whereas Persian subjects enjoy in the British Empire most-favoured-nation treatment in questions of personal status, it is understood that in matters of personal status—i.e. all questions relating to marriage, conjugal rights, divorce, judicial separation, dower, paternity, affiliation, adoption, capacity, majority, guardianship, trusteeship and interdiction; in matters relating to succession to personalty, whether by will or on intestacy, and the distribution and winding-up of estates; and family law in general—it is agreed between Persia and Great Britain that as regards non-Moslem British nationals in Persia their national tribunals will alone have jurisdiction. As regards British Moslem subjects, Moslem religious law in conformity with the Persian Code will be applied to them in matters of personal status until the question is definitely settled.

The present stipulation does not affect the special attributions of Consuls in matters of status in accordance with international law or special agreements which may be concluded, nor the right of Persian courts to request and receive evidence respecting matters acknowledged above as being within the competence of the national tribunals or authorities of the parties concerned.

By way of exception to the first paragraph of this Article, the Persian courts will also have jurisdiction in the matters referred to therein, if all the parties to the case submit in writing to the jurisdiction of the said courts. In such case the Persian courts will apply the national law of the parties.

(13) In matters of taxation, foreign nationals shall be treated on a footing of equality with Persian subjects, and shall not be compelled to pay, under any pretext whatever, imposts, taxation or any other fiscal dues which Persian subjects are not compelled to pay.

(14) In judicial matters all judgments given by the former tribunals, even if they have not been put into execution, shall be considered as definitely settled, and in no case be reopened; in the same way every final judgment given by the former tribunals is recognised as one to be put into execution. Generally speaking, all cases concluded under the former judicial régime are considered as definitely settled and shall in no case be reopened.

Cases not finished in the tribunal of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and in the Courts of Provincial Governors shall be finished before these tribunals unless a foreign national requests before the end of the discussions to transfer the proceedings to the Court of Justice.

The period allowed by the Imperial Government for finishing cases unfinished by those tribunals is at the latest until 10th May, 1929.

(15) All questions relating to security for costs, execution of judgment, service of judicial and extra-judicial documents, commissions, rogatories, orders for the payment of costs and expenses, free judicial assistance, and imprisonment for debt, are left to be regulated by separate conventions to be concluded between Persia and Great Britain.

(16) Seeing that in civil or commercial matters Persian law allows arbitration and clauses in agreements providing therefore, and since arbitral decisions rendered in pursuance thereof shall be executed on order of the President of the Court of First Instance, who is obliged to issue that order unless the decision should be contrary to public order, it

is clear that foreign nationals will be in complete enjoyment of this legal arrangement.

(17) As regards immovable property it is understood that British subjects are permitted as in the past to acquire, occupy or possess such property on Persian soil as is necessary for their dwelling and for the exercises of their commerce and industry.

(18) British subjects cannot be arrested or suffer restraint in their individual liberty in order that civil claims of a pecuniary nature against them may be provisionally safe, except where there would seem to be a serious risk that distraint to be made owing to any act on the part of a debtor, upon that debtor's possessions which are actually in Persia, would not be effective and could not otherwise be assured. '

CHAPTER X

CURRENCY AND FINANCE

THE standard currency of Persia is the silver *kran*,[1] which is legal tender to any amount and which is the only metal currency in use apart from the subsidiary token coinage of nickel and copper. The money of account was formerly based on the *dinar*, which is mentioned in early records as a gold coin; the kran is nominally a thousand dinars, and the *toman*, which signifies ten krans but is not now represented in actual coinage, is a word introduced by the Moguls under Chengiz Khan. The numerical term toman means ten thousand, and the toman of money signified ten thousand dinars. The toman was the unit of reckoning in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries A.D., when it was worth about £3 9*s*. 0*d*. In the time of Shah Abbas (1587–1629) a silver coin bearing his name, the *abbasi*, was in current use. The toman was equal to fifty abbasi, and the abbasi was divided into four *shahi* of 18 grains silver. The shahi was worth about fourpence and 200 shahi=50 abbasi=1 toman was equivalent to about £3 7*s*. 0*d*. These coins were later debased in value, and in 1678 the toman of 50 abbasi was worth £2 6*s*. 8d. Under Nadir Shah (1736–1747) it fell to £1 18*s*. 0*d*. and by 1810 it was worth £1 only. Under Fath Ali Shah (1797–1834) the kran was first introduced as a silver

[1] See footnote to p. 285.

coin weighing 142 grains. The kran was then equal to five abbasi or twenty shahi and was the tenth part of a toman, which was then worth 15*s*. The shahi thereafter ceased to be silver coins and with the later debasement of the kran in turn the silver abbasi was also abolished. The kran suffered successive reductions in weight and silver content, and its exchange value fell proportionately. The toman was worth 10*s*. 9*d*. in 1839, and 8*s*. in 1874.

These figures outline three centuries of debasement and devaluation. The comparative values in sterling are not seriously affected by the relative values of silver and gold, for the highest and lowest average ratios of gold and silver from 1687 to 1871 were 1 to 14.14 in 1760 and 1 to 16.25 in 1813, giving an extreme variation of 15 per cent, while from 1815 to 1873 the extreme variation was 5.43 per cent only. The course of movements of bullion and specie to and from Persia over these centuries can only be guessed at. D'Alessandri, in 1571, states that importers of silver gained 20 per cent, of gold 14 to 15 per cent, and of copper 15 to 20 per cent profit. It is recorded that in 1644 the export of gold and silver from Persia was prohibited, but such a prohibition might be due to temporary stringency or might, as in later times, indicate merely the desire to prohibit re-export by another frontier. Writers in the seventeenth century speak of the scarcity of gold, and refer to the coinage as being principally of copper.

The effect, on the exchange value of the kran, of the drop in the price of silver after the Franco-German war is clearly shewn in the following table giving the Tehran rate of exchange on London in krans per £ sterling and the London price of bar silver in pence per standard ounce. The silver price

given is that for January to December of the first year in each case, the Persian year being from March to March.

The silver kran from 1857 to 1878 was in mint specification 77 grains 900 fine, the average current weight being 76.30 and current fineness 820. Nearly every large town had its own government mint,

YEAR	KRAN RATE	BAR SILVER d	YEAR	KRAN RATE	BAR SILVER d	YEAR	KRAN RATE	BAR SILVER d
1863	21·2	61⅜	1886–7	33⅛	45⅜	1909–10	54	23·72
1864	21·2	61⅜	1887–8	34	44⅝	1910–1	54·53	24·67
1865	21·95	61 1/16	1888–9	34	42⅞	1911–2	55·10	24·59
1866	24·70	61⅛	1889–90	35	42 11/16	1912–3	55·78	28·03
1867	25	60 9/16	1890–1	34	47 11/16	1913–4	55·51	27·59
1868	25	60½	1891–2	36	45 1/16	1914–5	61·74	25·,0
1869	25	60 7/16	1892–3	38	39 13/16	1915–6	58·43	23·67
1870	25	60 9/16	1893–4	45	35⅝	1916–7	38·90	31·31
1871	22·65	60½	1894–5	50	28 15/16	1917–8	29·15	40·88
1872	23	60 5/16	1895–6	50	29⅞	1918–9	27·70	47·56
1873	24·50	59¼	1896–7	50	30¾	1919–20	25·50	57·06
1874	25	58 5/16	1897–8	50	27 9/16	1920–1	34	61·48
1875	26·50	56⅞	1898–9	50	26 15/16	1921–2	51·29	36·89
1876	27	52¾	1899–1900	51⅞	27 7/16	1922–3	56·56	34·44
1877	27·80	54 13/16	1900–1	52½	28¼	1923–4	47·28	31·92
1878	28	52 9/16	1901–2	53	27·19	1924–5	42	33·99
1879–80	27⅜	51¼	1902–3	57	24·09	1925–6	43·50	32·10
1880–1	27⅝	52¼	1903–4	56	24·77	1926–7	48·60	28·68
1881–2	27¾	51 11/16	1904–5	60·60	26·41	1927–8	49·25	26·03
1882–3	28⅜	51 13/16	1905–6	61⅜	27·84	1928–9	48·03	26·75
1883–4	29	50⅝	1906–7	55	30·88	1929–30	58	24·45
1884–5	30⅝	50⅝	1907–8	49⅜	30·20	1930–1	63·40	17·67
1885–6	33⅝	48 9/16	1908–9	52½	24·37	1931–2		14·60

which was farmed out on the administrative system formerly in general practice. These provincial mints were naturally not conducive to the maintenance of honest and uniform currency, and their abolition was an essential preliminary to reform. A new mint was established in Tehran, with French dies and a German overseer, and from it was issued in 1877 the first coinage in the forms now current, the legal

tender unit being the kran of 71.04 grains 900 fine. The table shews, in 1871 and 1872, a break in the depreciation, which was due to the remittance of funds to Persia for famine relief in those years. Thereafter the rise of the exchange rate is almost continuous and parallel with the fall of silver until 1906, when silver made a temporary recovery. The yearly averages given smooth out temporary fluctuations, up to five per cent or more over short periods, caused by disequilibrium of trade. The conduct of the mint after 1877 was not above reproach, but illicit profits appear to have been moderate. Normally the kran has always maintained an exchange value well above its intrinsic parity: there has generally been an outflow of specie to Transcaspia and Afghanistan which has created the need for imports of bullion from London: the imported bullion has paid heavy transport charges, and long delays in minting have added at times ten per cent or more to the cost in interest, while the mint seigniorage has added another three per cent or more to the local monopoly value of the currency.

Rabino, in *An Economist's Notes on Persia*, writes in 1901: "The mint is in a wretched condition, and the plant, which dates from 1877, is worn out and much of it useless. The output is therefore very limited, and at best may be put down at three to four million tomans annually" (£566,000 to £755,000). "On account of the deficiencies of the mint machinery, of the Eastern practice of hoarding, and of the economic attraction of Transcaspia for Persian silver, there is a permanent dearth of currency. The attraction of Persian silver into Transcaspia needs some explanation. Persian silver is a standard currency, although defective, being usually some 2 per cent below legal weight and fineness.

Russian silver is a token currency, or at best midway between a token and a standard currency; there is therefore in an equivalent amount of exchange a much larger quantity of silver in Persian than in Russian coin. For example, Ts. 100,000 are at present rate of exchange equal to Rbs. 185,000, but the weight in fine silver of the tomans is legally 133,200 oz. troy, or say, less 2 per cent, 130,536, whilst the roubles contain only 107,062, shewing a difference of 23.47 per cent in favour of the Persian coin. The Russian authorities have long been alive to the irresistible competition of Persian with Russian coin in their Asiatic provinces on this frontier, and about 1891 issued a decree forbidding the importation of Persian coin." This decree was found unworkable, and after some months had to be withdrawn. In 1899 the Russian Government again prohibited the import of silver coin, but the import continued in contraband. Part of it, says Rabino, was probably minted in Afghanistan, but the greater part was said to be melted into bars and used in the inland trade with China. In 1912 it was estimated that the annual export of krans to Transcaspia (mainly from Enzeli to Merv) was about six million roubles (£630,000).

The copper coin of Persia was formerly heavily over-issued for the sake of minting profits, and it circulated at as much as 75 per cent discount on its face value in silver currency. About 1897 the government withdrew some Ts. 720,000 nominal of the copper coin at 25 to 50 per cent discount. The circulation of copper diminished and there was a dearth of small coin, to remedy which the government in 1900 commenced the minting of nickel coin of one-shahi and two-shahi pieces in Brussels, composed of 25 per cent nickel and 75 per cent copper. Later

supplies of nickel coin were obtained from the Birmingham mint.

Writers up to forty years ago frequently referred to the hoarding of gold and silver in Persia, a practice pursued by every man of wealth, from the Shah downwards. The royal treasuries were traditionally reputed to be stocked with millions, and doubtless were so in times of power and prosperity, as they provided the nation's only central store of the precious metals. It may be surmised that the value of gold concealed in private hoards would normally greatly exceed the value of silver coin in current circulation.

The following table gives the recorded movements in bullion and specie from March 1914 to March 1931. The figures for coin include rupees at their fiduciary value, demonetised francs imported for minting, gold roubles and Turkish liras. The official figures for gold exports include amounts confiscated by the Customs. With the exception of bar silver the table indicates only a part of the inward and outward movement. Amounts conveyed by smugglers, by foreign troops during the war, and by travellers would swell the totals heavily. Much of the kran currency which had found its way to Afghanistan returned to Persia by the south in the earlier years.

The deficiencies of the Tehran mint have been made good from time to time by the import of Persian krans minted abroad under contract. In 1902 Ts. 500,000 was minted in Russia. In 1923 the import of Ts. 2 million minted in Russia was authorised, a tax of 12 per cent to be paid to the Persian Government in lieu of the silver import duty of 5 per cent and the mint seigniorage. At the end of the following year Dr. Millspaugh, as American administrator-general of finance, reported

CUSTOMS ENTRIES OF BULLION AND SPECIE

	IMPORTS					EXPORTS			
YEAR	BAR SILVER	SILVER COIN	GOLD COIN	BAR GOLD	NICKEL COIN	SILVER COIN	GOLD COIN	BAR GOLD	BAR SILVER
1914–5	22,704,152	3,813,124	106,600	—	533,100	13,193,816	348,968	—	—
1915–6	9,084,161	3,176,332	201,892	—	—	4,781,741	267,906	—	—
1916–7	19,011,438	11,608,806	—	51,640	—	2,002,512	183,700	—	—
1917–8	8,508,550	14,996,016	298,700	131,303	—	7,464,125	18,810	—	—
1918–9	2,900,315	2,922,674	218,150	241,410	—	1,397,680	—	—	—
1919–20	12,586	4,390,605	18,939,931	111,425	800,000	4,968,395	209,000	—	—
1920–1	10,729	4,523,016	728,413	3,835	50,080	2,977,575	—	—	—
1921–2	16,988	5,191,172	3,531,499	22,983	—	5,749,172	10,400	—	—
1922–3	112,064	7,901,725	2,101,163	110,436	—	11,640,896	510,000	—	—
1923–4	72,763	9,107,608	1,465,293	12,450	—	12,658,809	—	—	—
1924–5	8,560,505	8,636,563	2,151,293	1,914	—	12,642,721	—	—	—
1925–6	17,152,698	27,812,819	1,061,917	350	—	8,719,481	11,500	—	—
1926–7	5,014	7,494,151	70,420	—	784,884	5,999,687	2,647,587	214,560	—
1927–8	—	10,879,904	232,314	—	—	—	—	—	—
1928–9	1,801,466	59,819,469	40,756	—	—	587,150	—	—	—
1929–30	1,655,755	40,719,173	26,685	4,720	500,030	4,337,790	—	—	—
1930–1	—	43,150	26,400	160	—	493,987	—	—	12,824,438
Krans ..	91,609,184	223,036,307	31,201,426	692,606	2,668,094	99,615,537	4,207,871	214,560	12,824,438

Total value of recorded	imports	1914–31	Silver	Tomans	31,464,549
,, ,, ,,	exports	,,	,,	,,	11,243,997
,, ,, ,,	imports	,,	Gold	,,	3,189,403
,, ,, ,,	exports	,,	,,	,,	442,243
,, ,,	imports	,,	Nickel Coins	,,	266,809

that only a very small proportion of the Ts. 2 million had been officially imported. "It is believed," he writes, "that large quantities of these coins find their way into Persia through unofficial channels, are quickly placed in circulation and immediately lose their identity." Simultaneously he remarks: "There has been no change in the law prohibiting the export of gold and silver. Illicit export continues." The export referred to was both of gold and of silver, the white metal having been drawn heavily from Persia in payment for imports on the rise in the price of silver after the war and the diminution of invisible exports in 1921, when the unprecedented wartime expenditure of foreign forces in Persia ceased on the final withdrawal of the British elements.

The effect on currency of the war years was remarkable. In December 1914 the kran-sterling rate rose to 68. Thereafter the rate of exchange fell in a headlong course till in April 1920 it reached 19 krans per £, the lowest rate touched in sixty years. The import of silver was then impracticable as it was almost unobtainable in London.

The extraordinary foreign expenditure of 1915–20 in Persia brought about an unrestrained boom in imports, and Manchester goods changed hands at greatly inflated prices. Large profits were made, especially in re-exports to the Caucasus, which the Caucasus paid for chiefly in Turkish gold. In spite of the fact that these flourishing conditions extended over several years it could not be said that the country really prospered, the main reason being that no steps were taken to foster the export trade, which remained at a standstill after the Russian revolution of 1917. The rich province of Azerbaijan suffered more than any other part of the country. Much of the

high profits made by merchants in these years was lost, not only in the ensuing slump, but also in heavy speculative purchases of depreciated rouble notes which ultimately became valueless.

From 1921 to 1925 there was an influx from disordered Russia of solid silver articles of all sorts which were sold to the mint and turned into krans to the extent of several million tomans. The Russians tried to stop the traffic in 1924 by hanging some of the exporters, but the trade was resumed a few weeks later. The Tehran mint was otherwise exceptionally unoccupied, as for once in a way the rate of exchange until 1924 was above the London price of bar silver, the cessation of British expenditure having dried up the principal source of exchange, with the result that all the silver introduced from Russia, and a great quantity of accumulated stocks in addition, was hurried out by the south in contraband export of krans to 'Iraq and India, partly to pay for inflationary imports of goods and partly in flight to a more secure place of deposit than Persia provided in those uncertain years.

In 1923 the embargo on silver exports was modified to permit of the export of silver rupees, which had become the general medium of exchange on the whole of the Persian Gulf littoral. It was considered that the extensive circulation of the fiduciary currency of a foreign power was derogatory, and that the national money should be used throughout Persia.

At the end of 1926, Dr. Millspaugh again reported: "Persia during the last four years has been an importer of silver, and although silver is undoubtedly being smuggled in and out, the country nevertheless shews at the present time a large net importation

of silver." The flow of krans was still eastwards, and the mint was less able to cope with the demand for new currency, having undertaken, in addition to its normal duties, the reminting of defective coins collected from the public at par in terms of arrangements concluded between the government and the Imperial Bank of Persia in 1924 and 1926. Authority was therefore given in 1927 to the Banque Russo-Persane and to the Imperial Bank to import each Ts. 3 million of two-kran and five-kran pieces minted in Russia and England respectively, free of duty but subject to a tax of 6 per cent in lieu of seigniorage, which tax was paid by the banks. These were the last imports of Persian krans minted abroad. In 1929 the National Bank imported a consignment of French francs for minting.

The renewal of the currency undertaken in 1924 proved a more formidable task than had been anticipated. Of the heavier kran pieces issued before 1877 there was naturally very little left to withdraw, but much of the coin issued by the Tehran mint after that date bore the evidence of defective minting, and a large proportion of the total coin in circulation had been damaged by the tribespeople and villagers, who punched holes in the coins or attached metal loops to them with solder, and then strung them on the persons of their women and children by way of adornment or for lack of a strong-box. The total amount withdrawn by the Imperial Bank from circulation for reminting up to February 1930 was Ts. 10,360,000, equal, at the rate of 50 krans per £, to £2,072,000—an embarrassing figure to a mint already overburdened. The withdrawal of defective coin has been and is still a source of constant friction, largely owing to the malpractices of money-changers and petty

shopkeepers who are tempted to make illicit gains at the expense of the ignorant public. The regulations determining the quality of legal tender coin have been altered from time to time, and the discount imposed on coin wilfully mutilated has varied. Nevertheless the reform was overdue and has been very effectively carried out, though there is still considerable vexation and dispute over the question of what is good coin and what is unacceptable or subject to discount. Gresham's Law, in consequence, is active in the bazaars, and doubtful coin is bandied about and, in its harassed movement, acquires an exaggerated importance.

In curious contrast to the normal flow of silver, the course of gold has for many years been from the north to the west. Considerable amounts of Russian gold roubles and Turkish gold liras were smuggled out of Russia and the Caucasus between 1918 and 1923, and smuggled out again from Persia to Baghdad. The Persian customs authorities confiscated these export consignments when they found them, but the ingenuity of the dealers eluded their vigilance in most cases. The gold crossed the 'Iraq frontier in little bags under the tails of the Persian broadtailed sheep; in radiators, spare covers, or false bottoms of petrol tanks on Ford cars; in iron pipes; and in the coffins of the pious dead whose corpses were sent for burial in the holy places of 'Iraq. Unlike silver, gold is normally at a heavy discount in Persia, and as it is a commodity not in use for currency the only means of disposing of imports or liquidating hoards was to export them. Why such exports of an unserviceable metal should have been prohibited has always been a mystery. Actually the traffic provided a useful transit or entrepot trade in gold which might well have been

encouraged: but mercantilist conceptions linger in the East.

The present silver currency is in good condition. It is composed of pieces of one kran and of two krans, with a small proportion of five-kran pieces. The two-kran piece is a coin 142.08 grains 900 fine. The subsidiary nickel coinage is very serviceable and is in adequate supply. Copper is gradually disappearing from circulation. It will readily be understood, however, that a currency limited to silver is an inconvenient and expensive medium of exchange because of its low value in relation to its weight and bulk. In practice, therefore, payments of any magnitude invariably take place in cheques and bank-notes, and a large part of the coin lies in the bank treasuries or moves from one town to another as a backing for notes and deposits. It is impossible to indicate with any claim to accuracy what the total amount of coined silver in Persia may be, but a maximum figure of 60 million tomans (£8,000,000) may be suggested, or say 80 million fine ounces, which is about one-third of the average annual world production for 1920–30.

Until 1889 there was no legal tender paper money in Persia. The one historical exception to this statement occurred in 1294 A.D., when Kai Khatu, the grandson of Hulagu Khan, following the example of the Chinese, issued a royal edict forbidding the use of the precious metals as currency. Banks were opened and notes were issued for sums ranging from $\frac{3}{8}$*d.* to *4s. 7d.* Within three days the decree was repealed and the first Persian experiment of paper money ignominiously expired, the minister who suggested it having been torn to pieces by the mob. Six centuries later, in 1883, the Russian paper rouble had become so popular in the north that the

Shah was induced to ban it in a decree which declared that Persians who took dirty pieces of paper for gold and silver were very foolish, and that in future all Russian rouble notes would be confiscated. The decree, however, was allowed to become a dead letter almost as soon as it was promulgated, and some seven years later the paper rouble rose 50 per cent in value in terms of Persian currency, to the great detriment of Russian export trade with Persia.

The lack of a convenient currency was increasingly felt as trade and intercourse with the West increased towards the end of the nineteenth century, and about 1888 reference was made to the unequal distribution throughout the country, at any given moment, of the precious metals, and to the enormous cost of the transport of specie. Merchants experienced the greatest difficulty and risk in making remittances to Europe. Credit was at a low level. Native capital was deterred from any enterprise of public advantage by the distrust attending all investment. Native bankers charged 24 per cent per annum for loans, and private money-lenders exacted a good deal more. The British Consular Report for Tabriz 1886–7 reads: "In the absence of proper banking establishments, conducted upon European principles, all commercial operations have to be carried on with cash, whilst, to facilitate business of this kind, the *sarrafs* or native bankers, a very numerous community at Tabriz, play a prominent part. It may indeed be said that all the ready money is in the hands of these individuals, and money payments are effected by cheques transferred from one sarraf to another." The sarrafs were in the habit of paying by 'cash orders' on each other, and holders of such cash orders who demanded

payment in actual currency were charged anything from one to twenty per cent premium for it. "The commercial community energetically protest against such proceedings. . . . the Persian authorities have more than once put a stop to this practice, punishing the offenders; and there being signs of further attempts on the part of the sarrafs thus to enrich themselves at the expense of the trading community, I understand that the Governor-General of this province has announced his intention of again dealing with a question of such vital importance and affording redress." Habits die hard, however, and history repeated itself in almost identical terms in Isfahan a generation later, when the sarrafs, hard put to it by the existence of an adequate currency of bank notes, offered payment in discredited coin which they did not possess, and charged a premium for the coin or notes in general use.

Rabino quotes from the Rev. J. Cartwright an amusing reference to native bankers at Kazvin in 1601. "In the same market-place sit every day twelve men whose business it is to sell and buy pearls, diamonds and other precious stones, and change gold, silver and Spanish money against Persian money, by which they gain much. They also advance money on security, but not with so high a rate of interest as is charged by our devilish brokers and notaries in London." The British consul at Meshed reported in 1890 that there were 144 sarrafs in that town, which is an important place of pilgrimage and of trade with Transcaspia and Afghanistan. He added that they had a reputed total capital of Ts. 931,000 (£266,000). The race of sarrafs has diminished, and is dying out with the extended use of public banks in modern times.

The introduction of banking proper dates from

1888, when the New Oriental Bank Corporation, which was established in India, decided to include Persia within the sphere of its operations, and opened branches or established agencies in Tehran, Meshed, Tabriz, Resht, Isfahan, Shiraz and Bushire. As a trading company, dealing in a branch of commerce open to all, it required, says Curzon, no special concession from the Persian Government. Its cash orders, for sums of five krans and upwards payable to bearer, enjoyed a considerable circulation in the capital. The Persian business of this bank was bought up early in 1890 by the Imperial Bank of Persia, which purchased for £20,000 the Tehran lease and the whole equipment and goodwill.

The inception of the Imperial Bank of Persia derives from an omnibus concession given by the Shah to Baron Julius de Reuter (the founder of Reuter's News Agency) on 25th of July, 1872. This concession was of such a monopolistic and all-inclusive nature that it was found politically impracticable. Out of it arose the bank's concession granted on 30th January, 1889, which was followed by the grant of a British Royal Charter in August.[1] The concession included full trading rights in addition to banking, the exclusive right of note issue under prescribed safeguards, exemption from taxation, and the exclusive right of mining except as to precious metals and precious stones, and without prejudice to existing mining concessions. The mining rights, which were to lapse if and in so far as they were not exercised within ten years, were not in fact exercised and they lapsed accordingly. The banking

[1] The prospectus was issued in London in October, and the capital of £1,000,000 was subscribed fifteen times over, at a premium of £2 per £10 share which was paid to Baron de Reuter as the price of the concession.

concession, including the note issue, was for sixty years. The royalty payable to the Persian Government on the profit of the mines was to be 16 per cent, and the bank royalty was fixed at 6 per cent of the net profits.

Reference to the table on page 254 will shew that between 1889 and 1895 the exchange value of the kran fell by 43 per cent. The proportion of the bank's capital held in Persian currency was depreciated accordingly, and in less than six years after its foundation the bank was compelled to write down its capital by 35 per cent to £650,000. The capital still stands at this figure, which is however now exceeded by the published reserves. The note circulation at 20th March, 1931, was Ts. 15,051,761 (£1,681,761). This institution, the first of its kind to be formed in Persia and the doyen of British corporate enterprise in that country, was until 1928 the sole trustee of the Government's banking affairs and the principal channel of the financial concerns of the public. The sterling loan of £1,250,000 redeemable by 1965 was floated in 1911 under its auspices. The right of note issue was relinquished under an agreement dated 13th May, 1930, which included the payment of £200,000 by the Government to the bank, the cessation of royalty payments, and other provisions. The notes have not yet been withdrawn pending the completion of arrangements for their replacement by a national issue.

The year 1889, which gave birth to the Imperial Bank of Persia, records also the opening of the Banque de Prets de Perse, a subsidiary of the Russian State Bank. The Banque de Prets, later known as the Banque d'Escompte de Perse, was the intermediary for the Russian loans to Persia of

Rbs. 22,500,000 (£2,400,000) in January, 1900, and Rbs. 10,000,000 in March, 1902. A further loan of Ts. 6,000,000 was made to the Government by the Banque de Prets in 1910. These three loans were cancelled by the Russo-Persian treaty of 26th February, 1921, and the Banque d'Escompte, with the whole of its Persian assets and liabilities, was simultaneously handed over to Persia as a going concern and re-named the Bank i Iran. The Bank i Iran is still in process of realising its claims on Persian debtors and settling the claims of depositors whose funds had been entrusted to the Banque d'Escompte. Its activities are confined to liquidation.

The Ottoman Bank opened a branch in Kermanshah in 1920, in Hamadan in 1921, and in Tehran in 1923. The Banque Russo-Persane, a Soviet establishment, serves the Russian trading interests at all important towns in the north, and is extending its ramifications southwards. The Bank i Pahlevi is a purely Persian institution founded by Riza Shah with capital borrowed from the army pension funds. It has branches throughout the north and does a moderate internal business in loans, discounts and inland bills.

The latest arrival in the Persian banking world is the National Bank, which was created by an act of the Majlis in September, 1928. Its capital is provided by State funds and it is now the principal repository of the Government internal balances. This Bank is under German management, but with representative Persian control. It has expanded rapidly and has now branches in all towns of importance in Persia. Its business with 'Iraq, Europe and elsewhere abroad is conducted through other banks.

With these five active institutions, the Imperial Bank of Persia, the National Bank of Persia, the

Banque Russo-Persane, the Ottoman Bank, and the Pahlevi Bank, the country is now well supplied with banking services on efficient and thoroughly competitive lines. There is naturally no parallel to the central bank system of more highly developed countries, with its re-discount facilities and control of international financial settlement through regulation of interest rates and by market operations in bills. There is no internal public debt, and the joint-stock company has not yet found sufficient favour in Persia to create negotiable securities or to call for the existence of a single stockbroker. Rates of interest vary between 6 per cent and 10 per cent on discounts and advances and 2 per cent to 6 per cent is paid on deposits, according to the state of trade and credit, the position of the exchanges, and the circumstances or policy of the individual banks. As there is, practically speaking, no available means of negotiable investment in Persia, and the exchanges are subject to the heavy risk of fluctuation in silver, it will readily be understood that there are no floating foreign funds in Persia or Persian-owned liquid balances abroad of any magnitude, the flow of which could be influenced by a mere matter of bank rates of interest as a regulator of the balance of payments and the course of foreign exchange: such determinants of productive activity can have little or no force in a country where capital is still highly individual and where corporate enterprise is only now advancing from the stage of development reached by England in Tudor times. Given security and stability, however, Persia's progress in industrial development over the next decade may be rapid. As a primary producer, at present dependent on other countries for most of her manufactured

necessaries, she is well aware of her deficiencies and is making characteristic efforts to supply them. Side by side with an intense and jealous nationalism, therefore, there has been growing during the past ten years a sense of the value of foreign capital, not, fortunately, in the form of state loans to an improvident monarch, but as aids to the creation of domestic manufactures. The reconciliation, however, between nationalist sentiment and productive ambitions, has yet to be achieved.

With the improvement in roadways and the establishment of security and good order throughout Persia, the introduction of motor transport has provided the means of rapid transfers of specie from one part of the country to another. Twenty years ago the rates of exchange for inland remittances and bills varied considerably owing to the great difficulty, cost of transport, delay, and uncertainty attending the movement of silver between different towns and provinces. Caravans of fifty to a hundred mules or camels bearing boxes of silver coin from one branch of the Imperial Bank of Persia to another were then a common sight on the highways, and such caravans, though escorted by ten or twenty armed and mounted guards supplied by the government, were sometimes attacked by robbers or by raiding tribesmen. The discount or premium on inland bills accordingly varied within limits of five per cent or more, as determined by the local scarcity or abundance of currency and the condition of the roads, whereas in the past few years the place-value of internal funds has rarely differed by more than 1½ per cent over the whole country.

The provision of insurance facilities is naturally of later growth than the banking services. There

are as yet no underwriters in Persia, and it is only within the past decade that British companies have considered the local possibilities of business apart from transport and warehouse risks. It is now possible to cover property in Persia of all kinds, against risks of fire, with local agents of London corporations, and a conspicuous demonstration of the efficacy of such cover was made in December, 1931, when claims arising out of damage to the Majlis buildings in Tehran were promptly met by two British companies. Life assurance will no doubt follow in due time if the country is blessed with a clear prospect of security from civil or political disturbance, but the scope for such business will obviously be limited by considerations of the state of legal administration, registration of births and deaths, medical certification, and the moral hazard generally, apart from the absence of all material for actuarial data. Infant mortality is still very high, and the average length of life of adults certainly appears to be much less than in western Europe.

The foregoing survey of currency and the financial system brings us to present times, when a financial revolution is on foot. Before discussing the measures taken, or contemplated, for the long-awaited conversion of the currency to a gold basis, it is desirable to enter a few records and reflections regarding the cost of living and the general standard of life. "Statistics of Persia," says Rabino (writing, be it said, in 1891) "I look upon as practically valueless"; and this comfortable judgment applies with particular force. not to records of wages and prices, but to their use for comparison historically with the past, or in the present time with our own figures: for there can be no just comparison, between the budget of an Isfahan shoemaker and that of a

Northampton factory hand which does not take account of intangible elements in the circumstances of either; and it is difficult to say whether a chieftain, with two motor-cars and a well-furnished town house electrically-lit, is better off than his great-grandfather with fifty saddle-horses and a castle lit with floating wicks and barren of chairs and tables, but finely carpeted.

Early references to prices are like glow-worms in a mine-shaft. Barbaro, in 1474, tells us that bread costs a little more than in Venice, and that meat is sold at 1½d. per lb. Contarini, in the same year, states that fowls are seven for a ducat: Pietro della Valle in 1620 quotes fowls five or six for a piastre. The last two indications are less illuminating than the first. If we come at once to 1890 and 1891 we find more reliable means of comparison with the present. The prices then given as current in Meshed were:

	Krs.	s.	d.
Wheat per 100 lbs. ..	5	2	11
Barley per 100 lbs. ..	3·38	1	11
Bread per lb.	·062		0½
Mutton per lb.	·25		2
Fowls each	·85		6
Labourers' wages daily	1		7
Carpenters' ,, ,, ..	3	1	9
Masons' ,, ,, ..	2	1	2
Servants' wages monthly	40	23	6

The kran exchange was then 34 to the £. Four years later, in 1895, the kran rate was 50, and the prices in Isfahan were:

	Krs.	s. d.
Bread ,, ,, ..	·096	½
Mutton ,, ,, ..	·384	2
Fowls each	·90	4⅓
Labourers' wages	1·35	6½

The currency had depreciated in gold exchange value by 32 per cent and prices had apparently risen by about the same percentage. The coincidence, however, is largely accidental. A caveat must be entered about price comparisons generally. Owing to insecurity, defective communications, and alternations of famine and abundance, the prices of thirty or fifty years ago were liable to wide fluctuations between different localities and seasons. The same remark applies to the years 1915–20. In Kermanshah in April 1918, as a result of crop failure and the appetites of Russian troops, wheat had risen to eight times its normal price. Other important commodities are liable to exceptional fluctuation. Between 1922 and 1923 the price of opium prepared for export rose from Ts. 45 to Ts. 120 per *man*, largely as a result of abnormal foreign demand.

The Report to the Department of Overseas Trade written in 1928 reads: "Bad harvests, the Russian embargo, and fresh taxation have militated against a rise in the standard of living of the lower classes. A labourer's wage of Krs. 3 to 4 per diem (12 to 17 pence) will not buy very much more than bread and cheese and an occasional piece of cotton cloth for his women folk. The normal wage of the artisan varies between Krs. 5 and Krs. 10 per diem (2*s*. 0*d*. to 4*s*. 0*d*.) There has, however, been a distinct rise in the standard of living of the middle and upper classes as testified by the increase in the imports of luxury articles, particularly motor-cars. Nevertheless, one fails to notice a corresponding creation of wealth."

In January 1932 prices were as follows on an average of four large towns:

		Krs.	*Pence*
Bread	per lb.	·25	½
Mutton	"	1·07	2¼
Loaf sugar	"	2·46	5¼
Rice	"	·74	1½
Clarified Butter	"	3·08	6¾
Fowls each	.. ..	3·80	8¼
Eggs each	.. ..	·10	¼
Labourers' wages daily	.. .. ..	3·50	7½
Carpet Weavers' wages daily (average)		5·	11
Servants' wages monthly (average)	..	150·	27s. 3d.

The above prices are converted to gold at Krs. 110 per £, based on a market rate in January of about 77, plus 30 per cent depreciation of sterling from gold parity.

It would appear that prices since 1890 have risen by about 250 per cent in terms of Persian currency and by about 10 per cent only in terms of gold exchange. The rise in the kran price of commodities has been more or less continuous over the whole period. It has to be noted that the depreciation of silver in 1930 has been partly counterbalanced by the fall in the world prices of commodities in 1930–1. It would appear likely, however, that if silver does not recover above 20 pence per oz. standard, the kran cost of living may rise further.

As a result of better roads and the use of motor lorries the cost of transport has not risen as much as commodity prices. In 1890 the cost of carriage of merchandise from Bushire to Tehran (750 miles) was Ts. 47½ (£14) per ton in summer and Ts. 68 (£20) in winter, and the average time for the journey was two months. The average cost in 1930–31 was Ts. 138 (say £21) per ton and the time taken was about six days. In January 1932 the cost was about Ts. 165 or £15.

The standard of living is markedly higher than the average in India, and lower than in western Europe. The Persian peasant eats unleavened wheatmeal bread and supplements it fairly frequently with cheese, mutton, rice, fowls or eggs. The very poorest villagers eat bread made of barley or even millet or acorns. Sugar and tea are expensive, but astonishing quantities are consumed. The Persian digestive system thrives on heavy lubrication with animal fats. Fruit in season is plentiful and good. The people are usually well clad and there is little destitution. To Europeans who pay high rents, employ well-trained servants, and supplement the native produce with expensive imports, Persia is emphatically not a cheap country to live in. With Persians the extremes of poverty and wealth are not so far apart as in industrially organised Europe. The general standard is simple but sufficient. There is less complexity and variety of life, but perhaps the zest for it is no less keen. In social matters the standard in such services as health and education has been vastly improved in recent years.

The figures of present prices given above demonstrate the fact that for the daily needs of the people a currency of low value is essential. Assuming the total silver currency as under 80 million fine ounces we may perhaps take 30 million tomans or 40 million ounces as adequate for the active silver currency requirements of a population of 12 million provided that there is, as at present, a reliable paper currency in denominations of one toman upwards. There remains, therefore, at the most, a matter of 40 million ounces which might be replaced by gold or by a fiduciary issue supported by gold or gold exchange. At 21 pence this 40 million fine ounces gives £3,500,000, as the London value of that pro-

portion of Persian currency requirements which is not, as a matter of public convenience, required to remain in silver form. This is a small amount but it covers the most important problem in Persia's finance and trade.

The desirability of changing the currency standard from silver to gold has exercised the minds of Persians intermittently for the last forty years at least. The main reason for advocating a change has always been the instability of the currency relatively to that of most of the countries with which Persian trade is conducted. As is shown in the table on page 254, the kran fell in exchange value between 1881 and 1904 by 50 per cent, the gold value of silver having fallen over the same period by the same percentage. The unsettling effect of such changes, and of the rise in prices which they entailed, was mitigated in that period by the gradual nature of a movement extending over a generation. The course of exchange in the years between 1914 and 1921 was complicated, apart from violent fluctuations in silver, by foreign military activities in Persia, and by depreciation in the exchanges of countries formerly on a gold basis. The extreme fluctuation of the kran in those years was between 68 and 19 per £. The fall in the gold price of silver was resumed in 1921, and continued with increasing momentum until 9th February, 1931, when the bottom was reached with a price of 1*s*. per standard ounce. The highest price paid for sterling in 1931 was about 120 krans, as against the rate of 19 krans which was recorded in April 1920. The intrinsic parity of the kran in terms of gold, when the price of bar silver reached 1*s*., was 139 krans per £.

The secondary object of the advocates of the gold standard in Persia was convenience and economy

in internal use of the currency. With a ratio of 16 to 1 in the value of equal weights of gold and silver the advantage of gold for storage and transport is already obvious, but when the ratio had become 50 to 1, and internal prices in Persia had risen correspondingly, the need for a less cumbersome means of internal settlement was three times greater than on the old ratio. Whereas, for example, a native banker might have occasion to send twenty mule-loads of krans from Tehran to Kerman in 1884, a string of forty mules would have been required twenty years later to pay for the same goods, and the number of mules would have increased as time went on.

The third advantage claimed arose out of the second, and it enforced the first. The import of silver bullion from London costs much more when the bullion is of low value, and the cost and delay of minting is proportionately higher. The export of krans is similarly burdened with higher charges in terms of gold or commodities. It follows that foreign exchange settlements by means of bullion remittances can only be effected at a heavy cost. Even with unrestricted bullion and specie movements, therefore, the foreign exchanges may fluctuate within a range of say fifteen per cent. This great difference between the bullion points aggravates correspondingly the instability arising out of variations in the gold price of silver. If the balance of payments with foreign countries can be settled with gold or with balances abroad the cost of settlement is reduced, the import and export bullion points are brought nearer, and stability can be attained within a maximum variation of say five per cent.

With these objects of foreign and internal stability in view, the possibility of adopting the gold standard

was actively considered from 1926 onwards, and the first measure designed to this end was the Act of 24th February, 1930, which prohibited the import of silver for the first time in Persian history, appointed a Commission to control rates of foreign exchange, and declared that all sellers of foreign exchange must dispose of it through the banks at the control rate. This Act was followed by a supplementary Act on 22nd July, 1930, and by numerous decrees and regulations under which exporters were allowed to retain a percentage of their exchange and to export silver under certain conditions, while importers were precluded from obtaining exchange except for imports approved by the Commission of Control. Shortly before the passing of the Act the rate of exchange stood at 68. On the formation of the control commission it was lowered by stages till it reached 60 krans per £ on 13th March, 1930, and it was pegged at that figure until 8th February, 1931, when it was raised by a stroke of the pen to 90 krans per £. This Foreign Exchange Control Act had a three-fold purpose—to keep the exchanges steady at a low level, to provide the government with cheap exchange for its requirements abroad, and to regulate the balance of trade by restrictions and discrimination in the sale of exchange by the banks. It was designed to pave the way for the Gold Standard Act which was passed on 28th March, 1930.

The Gold Standard Act establishes as the legal unit of currency the gold rial, to be represented in coinage by the *pahlevi* of 20 rials and the half pahlevi of 10 rials. The pahlevi is to contain 113 grains fine gold, and is to be nine-tenths fine and one-tenth copper alloy. It is thus laid down as of equal value to the English sovereign. The silver currency is to be in ½, 1, 2 and 5 rial pieces. The

silver rial which is to be unlimited legal tender, is to contain 69.445 grains fine silver and is also to be 900 fine. This gives a ratio of 12.29 silver to 1 gold as against the market ratio of about 53 to 1 with silver at 19 pence per fine ounce, which was the average London price for the year 1930. On that basis the silver rial would have a token quality of 77 per cent, which, as the silver coin is to be full legal tender, requires an adequate reserve of gold or foreign balances if the exchanges are to be protected; since the parity of gold and silver rials would only be reached (and the token quality of the silver rial disappear) if bar silver rose to 76.7 pence per standard ounce.[1] The law, in fact, provides that a reserve equal to the whole amount of the token currency shall be kept in gold in Persia and in foreign balances in gold currencies abroad.

The minting of gold is to be open, and the seigniorage is fixed at not exceeding three-tenths per cent. The coinage of silver is naturally reserved for the government.

Article 10 of the Gold Standard Act provides that customs, excise and other revenues shall forthwith be collected on a rial basis at rates to be fixed by the government. Article 11 provides for a supplementary Act to be passed within one year, determining the date of conversion and the manner of exchange from krans to rials and from silver rials to gold or to foreign exchange. Under Article 12 the import of gold is free, but the import of silver and the export of both gold and silver are prohibited, as in the Act of 24th February, 1930.

It will be seen that the main provisions of the Gold

[1] The record high price for silver is 89½ on 11th February, 1920. The price of silver is always reckoned per standard ounce which is 925/1000 fine.

Standard Act are broadly similar to those in force in India and also to those adopted eight months later for ultimate use in ‘Iraq. The prohibition of gold and silver export may be accepted as a temporary measure which will be withdrawn when the system is solidly established. The one element lacking in the Act is that of provision for paper currency, which, as has already been explained, was a monopoly of the Imperial Bank of Persia. The adoption in principle of the gold standard having been confirmed, it became the object of the government's solicitude to recover the right of note issue in order to complete their structure with this coping-stone of modern currency systems. Negotiations were accordingly opened with the Imperial Bank of Persia, and the matter was quickly arranged as indicated earlier in this chapter (page 267). The question of an actual circulation of gold coin was not decided, and this question is still open. The desire to emulate the advanced fiduciary methods, which post-war necessities have made orthodox in the leading countries of Europe, is tempered by the realisation that the Persian public may demand more tangible proof of the value of their currency than is contained in paper or in token silver: the government recognises that the active circulation of gold coin is wasteful, though much less so than standard silver; the public, however, in Persia as in other countries, may not trust the government to safeguard the reserves.

The new pahlevi notes have now (July, 1932) been issued and those of the Imperial Bank are being withdrawn. The government has substantial balances abroad and a stock of foreign gold coin purchased at cheap rates in the Persian markets; the mint is prepared to undertake the coinage of silver rials ·828 fine containing 4·14 grammes of

fine silver—almost exactly similar to the kran. The change is thus one of style only.

The delay in applying the Law of 1930 was due in the first place to the deliberative and procrastinating methods traditional in Persia, and thoroughly justifiable in the case in point. The law once passed, its execution was postponed from time to time to permit of adequate preparation for meeting the difficulties that became apparent as ways and means were considered. The working of the Foreign Exchange Control Act of 24th February, 1930, had in fact been a source of disappointment and some heart-searching. Its three-fold purpose had only been partly achieved in the course of eighteen months of strain and difficulty, for the exchanges ran away from the pegged rate in spite of stringent regulations, the government obtained very little of the foreign exchange available on the ordinary market, and the artificially low rates had, so far as they were effective, a contrary influence to that desired on the course of foreign trade. Merchants were vexed with a multitude of forms, restraints, and delays, and most of them were driven to one subterfuge after another in an attempt to defeat the regulations. Importers who owed money abroad seized the obvious excuse to delay remittances, as the banks had no exchange to sell at the pegged rate and were precluded from dealing at the illicit rates current in private negotiations between exporters and importers. Creditors in Europe were therefore left unsatisfied, and the price of imported goods rose to levels that reflected not only the high rates of exchange (the depreciation of the kran) on the "bourse noire," but the difficulties of actual settlement. The responsible financial authorities wavered, stuck to their guns, and took a leap half-

way to parity on 8th February, 1931, when they raised the pegged rate by 50 per cent. The markets, however, urged by the persistent demand for remittances abroad and stampeded by the collapse of bar silver prices, kept well ahead of the official rate, and the demoralising struggle between economic forces and government policy continued. Exporters were nevertheless discouraged by the legal prescriptions, while the check on imports bore indiscriminately on necessities such as tea, sugar, textiles and base metals, with the natural consequence of a lowered standard of living and an increased cost of living.

To check the flow of unnecessary imports an Act in one clause was passed on 25th February, 1931, creating a government monopoly of foreign trade, and this was followed up by a supplementary Act on 11th March, 1931. The government does not, in fact, undertake trade, much less monopolise it, but controls its volume and direction by a system of licenses for imports, obtainable only against certificates of exports. Not all exports, however, are eligible for certificates, and a favourable balance of trade is thus aimed at to meet the government's requirements abroad. The Act of 11th March, 1931, provided that all exporters must sell their exchange to the banks acting on behalf of the government. This provision has similarly been made largely ineffective by evasion and by relaxation of stipulations found to be barely practicable. The supplementary Act was elaborated by a mass of regulations in 21 articles, approved by the Cabinet on 26th March. Finally, the quota system of foreign trade was definitely applied to the source of imports in the Russo-Persian Trade Agreement of 27th October, 1931.

These successive provisions, with their extension

and intensification of bureaucratic control, are more a reflex of world-wide movements, and of Russian example to some extent, than the direct issue of national policy. They are not a characteristic manifestation of the Persian spirit, which is more liberal and individualist. Locally considered, however, their inception and direction may be traced to the depreciation of the currency consequent on the decline in the world-price of silver. The impetus to intensive government action was found in the government's requirements of foreign exchange to pay for railway material, and for other purposes, but the government itself was first urged to action by the trading communities, who suffered from instability of the exchanges and from the rising cost of living.

The prohibition of silver imports, or more conclusively the closing of the mint to silver coinage, was by itself a constructive measure of the highest value as a step towards a gold standard. Persia, as we have seen, is normally a steady importer of silver to replenish her currency, and the cessation of minting might of itself have served in the end to increase the normal premium on the kran, while a judicious use of a part of the government balances abroad (accumulated from the sterling royalties of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company) would have been amply sufficient to achieve a stability unattainable by mere decree. The government, however, retained the royalty payments in sterling to form an interest-bearing reserve for the future fiduciary currency, and were not willing either to let the kran find its depreciated level or to support it by sales of sterling.

The cessation of gold payments by England on 21st September, 1931, took the ladder from under their feet. The funds intended for the gold standard

reserve had climbed to a substantial figure, and the proceeds of the Sugar and Tea "Monopoly", earmarked for railway construction, were also partly in sterling. The laws provided that both, so far as they were held abroad, should be held in gold currencies, and the possibility of a lapse of sterling from that category had hardly been seriously considered. The resultant depreciation of the foreign reserves was felt as a national injury, the greater because it was unprecedented in the history of a country that had never before held balances abroad. In the first apprehensions of the unknown it was not remembered that England herself had suffered worse from all the leading powers of Europe, nor that it was but a decline of 30 per cent as compared with the French devalorisation of 80 per cent, the Italian of 73 per cent, or the total loss of currency values in Russia and Germany, of which private individuals in Persia had taken their share. Actually the initial depreciation was equivalent to the loss of a year's royalties of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, but the shock to public confidence was none the less severe.[1]

As the months passed, and the winter of 1931–32 dragged on in a European fog of monetary theory out of which loomed strange and fitful lights, it was realised in Persia, as it was in 'Iraq, that the gold standard must wait a little longer. With the financial press of the world preoccupied with schemes of managed currency, and talk that ran from the remonetisation of silver to the demonetisation of gold, the time was certainly unfavourable for a change of currency in Persia. The commission controlling exchange rates had altered its base in

[1] The Goverment's sterling balances on 22nd August, 1931, amounted to £3,890,000 (*Iran*, 5th October, 1931).

October from sterling at 90 krans per £ to French francs at 72.90 krans per Fcs. 100, and the latter rate was maintained as the pegged rate from which the equivalent for other foreign currencies was derived in accordance with the course of the international exchanges. The official rate for sterling thus fluctuated between 60 and 70 krans per £, while the market rate for unrecognised dealings moved within limits of 75 and 85. Importers not only had to work on the higher rates, but were also obliged to purchase import licences from exporters at a further cost of Krs. 12 to 20 per £, so that the gross cost of sterling to those who desired to import goods without shipping exports to pay for them was between 90 and 100 krans.

On 14th February, 1932, the Majlis repealed the Foreign Exchange Control Act of 24th February, 1930 and the supplementary Act of 22nd July, 1930, and the rate of exchange was accordingly freed from government control. Within a fortnight the banks' rate of exchange for sterling rose to 86, or slightly over parity with the silver price of 19¾d.

The foregoing Chapter, and that following, were prepared in February, 1932. The Amending Act of 13th March, 1932, provides for a silver rial containing 4·14 grammes of fine silver, and the rial is now (August, 1932) in course of replacing the silver kran as the standard monetary unit of Persia. The silver content of the rial is about ¾ per mille less than the kran, but for practical purposes the change is one of style only. The new rial notes are now being issued, and the toman notes of the Imperial Bank of Persia are in course of withdrawal. There is no immediate prospect of the effective adoption of the gold standard. Trade and foreign exchange restraints are still in operation.

CHAPTER XI

NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

THE adventures of Aladdin and Ali Baba typify for us the delight of Persian poets and story-tellers in tales of hoarded wealth and buried treasure. The relish for coined gold runs through all their folk-lore: the Court poet's ode was rewarded literally with a mouthful of it; the townsman in history thrilled at the sight of largesse munificently scattered by a tyrant; the beggar dreams of bulging sacks; the merchant thinks of bags of roubles, liras, ashrafis, as his wife thinks of rubies and pearls. Yet there has been little gold in currency for centuries, and one wonders how much of it there ever was. The old coins of the Shahs are no more evidence than the ashrafi of today, which is a store of value but not a medium of exchange. The simple traveller, wondering at the monuments of Achaemenian grandeur at Persepolis, speculates on the extent of the treasure of Darius; but there is no balance sheet on the rock of Bisitun to satisfy his vulgar curiosity. The empire of Abbas the Great has left on record all the evidence of its wealth, but no account of it. The treasures of the Sophy were a byword with us in Shakespeare's time, when merchant adventurers traded English broadcloth for Persian silk, and when the royal palaces were embellished with the work of artists who came from Italy to Isfahan. One may hazard a guess that Persia, at

the height of the Safavi Empire, was a richer country, in terms of metallic reserve, than the England of Elizabeth, but the royal mustawfis (ever a secretive race) have left no records of that prosperous age.[1] Yet the wealth of India was vastly greater than that of Persia, as the Afshar ruler of Persia found over a century later: the loot of Delhi, brought by Nadir Shah to Isfahan in 1739, was valued at thirty to eighty millions sterling, which is merely to say that it was immeasurably great.

Periods of royal penury in Persian history are less notable, but possibly more frequent. International amenities, however, and internal finance, were not of such an order as to tempt a Persian monarch beyond his means until near the end of the nineteenth century. Nasr ud Din had been induced to grant a few concessions to enterprising foreigners, and the cancellation of one of them called for a heavy indemnity. He therefore raised a loan of £500,000 which was issued in London in 1892. His son, disappointed by the barrenness of an inheritance which included Persia's first national debt, and pressed for funds that he had not the force to acquire by sturdier methods, accepted in 1900 a Russian loan of 22½ million roubles, out of which the sterling loan of 1892 was repaid. This was followed in 1902 by a further loan of 10 million roubles. These loans were entirely unproductive and had not even the excuse of a war. Both amounts were secured on the customs receipts of northern Persia, and the 1902 loan was made the occasion of a revision of the customs tariff. Muhammad Ali, who succeeded Muzaffar ud Din in 1906, thus inherited a considerable

[1] Balbi, consul of Syria 1578–82 gives the *resources* of Persia as 4 to 4½ million ducats: d'Alessandri in 1571 puts them at 5 million ducats. Olearius in 1637 gives 20 million florins, and Chardin, in 1672, 700,000 tomans or £1,631,000.—Rabino, *Banking in Persia*, 1891.

financial burden; and being dissolute, weak, and unpopular, he would doubtless have increased it had he reigned long enough.

The country's financial difficulties grew worse after the revolution of 1909, and foreign relief was again invited. A sum of 6 million tomans was borrowed from the Russian bank in 1910, and a loan of £314,281 was received from the Indian Government in the same year. This loan, and the sterling loan of £1,250,000, which followed it in 1911, were secured on the customs receipts of the southern ports. Between 1912 and 1914 advances amounting to £490,000 were made by the British Government: in 1913 the Banque Russo-Persane added £200,000, secured, like the earlier Russian loans, on the northern customs.

This completes the tale of borrowings abroad, in addition to which floating advances were made by the Imperial Bank of Persia from time to time. This floating debt amounted on 20th March, 1920, to about 1,500,000 tomans, or over £700,000, at the rates of exchange then current. Thus in twenty years Persia had incurred foreign debts to a total of some £7,000,000. The Russian Government, however, whose pre-war loans to Persia had amounted to some £4,500,000, realised the inconsistency of maintaining a claim to the outstanding amount in the face of their wholesale repudiation of the Russian Tsarist debts to Europe. Against the enormous amount owed by Russia to England and France, the sums owing by Persia to Russia were a mere trifle—insignificant even in comparison with the private property of foreigners in Russia misappropriated after the war. With a suitably dramatic gesture, therefore, the whole of the Persian debt was declared cancelled, in the Russo-Persian Treaty of 26th February, 1921. The nobility of the renun-

ciation was somewhat lost on the Persians, who suggested that the occasion was equally appropriate for the return of Persia's Causasian territory, wrested from her by Imperial Russia.

With the fortuitous elimination of this block of Russian loans, happily brought about by the logic of events with which Persia was not directly concerned, the country's admitted foreign debt on 8th December, 1923, stood as follows:

	Outstanding Amount. £
British-Indian Loan of 1910	115,403
Sterling Loan of 1911	1,190,318
British Government advances of 1912–14	490,000
Imperial Bank Advance of 1923 ..	648,936
	£2,444,657
Imperial Bank Advances of 1919–23 .. .. .. Tomans	1,637,738

Thereafter the position steadily improved under strong government and constructive administration. On 21st December, 1925, the total funded and floating debt was £1,724,347 and Ts. 700,000, less the revenues of the Sugar and Tea surtax which had begun to accumulate in June. On 20th March, 1929 (the British-Indian Loan having been finally redeemed in 1928), the total debt was £1,626, 481 and Ts. 116,766, and the accumulated funds from the Sugar and Tea surtax amounted to Ts. 9,713,136 or close on £2,000,000, in addition to which substantial balances had been built up in pension funds. With no internal debt, and with her foreign liabilities more than covered by accumulated funds, Persia had again achieved a credit balance, and was

thus in a position of financial liquidity unique in the post-war world.

The credit for this capital achievement is due, first and foremost, to the Shah himself, whose statesmanship has restored Persia from the degeneracy of the Qajars, in financial as in other matters. He was aided by fortune as most good rulers are, but the Russian cancellation of 1921 merely cleared the ground, and the cautious and careful constructive work of the American Financial Mission under Dr. Millspaugh would have been of no avail without the active support of the country's leader. The recovery of the internal revenue was made possible by effective government, and the rapidly growing royalty payments of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, which assisted greatly in the uphill work of financial rehabilitation, would have been quickly dissipated had they accrued twenty years earlier.

The oil royalties were for a time retained as a reserve for the conversion of the currency to a gold basis. The revenue from the surtax on sugar and tea imports is likewise earmarked for railway construction. These two sources of revenue amount together to some £2,000,000 annually, but the budget is approximately balanced without the assistance of either of them. The total receipts under the Sugar and Tea Monopoly Act of 30th May, 1925, amounted on 21st March, 1931, to Ts. 40,276,028, out of which the amount expended on railway survey and construction to that date was Ts. 21,925,060, leaving a balance in hand of Ts. 18,350,968, or say £2,000,000. The government reserves abroad amounted on 22nd August, 1931, to £3,890,000.

The potentialities of a metallic or exchange reserve are obviously but one item in a country's balance sheet. Other less tangible factors are more

important, in an account of national wealth, than budget totals or figures of reserves or public debt. If, however, we examine the quality of the other assets, we find a parallel improvement since the arrest of the decline in government and finance. There has indeed been steady constructive development over the past ten years. The physique and moral fibre of the townspeople have improved; there has been increasing activity in public works of all kinds and in private capital outlay in the construction of buildings and in productive enterprise. Machinery for manufactures and for preparative processes, and to some extent for agriculture, is imported on a growing scale, and corporate industrial undertakings are being strenuously assisted to birth by provincial governors and their like, who supply the place of the optimistic company promoter. In these regenerative activities the National Bank plays a leading part, and it will share accordingly in the fruits of such as reach maturity.

As may be expected reliable statistics of government income and expenditure do not begin to appear till near the end of the nineteenth century. Earlier figures merely light up a corner here and there, and give no trustworthy indication of the proportions of the structure itself. In the absence of civil organisation and public responsibility it could hardly be otherwise; for even if a robber chief should keep accounts, they would be destroyed before he was caught, or lost when he was hanged; and an absolute monarch in Persia, however excellent, was never answerable for the intromissions of his treasury. Taxation, moreover, was more of the nature of tribute, to be paid or exacted as policy or circumstance might decide from one season to another; and this conception of taxation still affects the

behaviour of many worthy Persians in regard to their regular assessments, while the custom of tributary offerings or mulctings is not yet quite dead. A minor difficulty lies in the perception of taxes in the form of produce, the cash value of which at different periods in the past may be a matter of conjecture, however more indicative such quantities of produce might be as a measure of wealth. Thus, for the province of Khurasan, which in 1890 had a population of about 600,000, we learn that in 1840 the revenue was Ts. 200,000 and 50,000 *kharvars* of grain, in 1875 Ts. 340,000 and 45,000 kharvars, and in 1889 Ts. 539,000 (£154,000), 43,000 kharvars in the proportion of two-thirds wheat and one-third barley, and 13,600 kharvars of straw. Of this 1889 revenue the Shah received Ts. 87,200, and, as his share of the grain, Ts. 9,200. The remainder was absorbed in pay of troops and civil officials, pensions, etc.

The total revenue and expenditure of Persia for the year 1888–9 is given by Curzon[1] as follows:

Revenue.		*Expenditure.*	
Taxes paid in cash ..	Ts. 3,607,676	Army	Ts. 1,800,000
" " " kind ..	1,010,098	Shah's establishment, allowances to Royal Princes and subsidy to Royal tribe ..	1,060,000
Customs	800,000	Pensions	1,000,000
Other sources ..	119,178	Deductions from revenue for collection charges, deficits, and upkeep of government buildings	263,347
		Civil servants, clergy and colleges ..	190,000
		Foreign Office ..	100,000
		Navy	10,000
	Ts. 5,536,952		Ts. 4,423,347
at 33½ =	£1,652,820	at 33½ =	£1,260,700

[1] "A system that is based upon covert exaction is not likely to favour the publication of details which would reveal its own clandestine workings;

The sources of fixed revenue in 1888 are subdivided as follows:—

1. Direct taxation.
   - (*a*) Land tax, commonly assessed on the water supply, and payable four-fifths in cash, and one-fifth in kind.
   - (*b*) tax on animals, flocks and herds, supplementary to or in place of (*a*)
   - (*c*) tax on shopkeepers, artisans, and trade.

2. Revenues of crown lands.
3. Customs, about 20 per cent of the fixed revenue.
4. Rents and leases.

In addition to the fixed revenue there were the special receipts from New Year offerings, fines, requisitions, etc.

The land tax, which provided the greater part of the revenue, was nominally 20 per cent of the produce, the tithe having been doubled by Fath Ali Shah.

The disorder and weakness of the government finances led ultimately to the calling in of foreign fiscal experts. A Frenchman, M. Bizot, was engaged in 1909, but the Herculean task was not one for which he was qualified, and in 1911 he left matters much as he had found them. An American, Morgan Shuster, with two assistants arrived in Tehran on 12th May, 1911, armed, by the Persian Government, with adequate powers, which he proceeded to exercise with single-minded energy. Equipped

and after Russia, where statistics exist but are systematically suppressed, I know of no country in which they are so difficult to procure as Persia, where they barely exist at all."—(Curzon's *Persia*.)

though he was with the necessary authority and personal driving power, he was unfortunately deficient in tact, tolerance, and patient humour, and within eight months his mission came to an abrupt end. He writes as to the condition of the inland revenue: "Although there has never been any modern budgetary system in Persia, we were able to ascertain, shortly after assuming charge, that there was a current annual deficit of about Ts. 6 million, assuming that all the *maliat*, or internal taxes, were collected. As, during the year preceding, there was nothing to indicate that more than one-fifth of the *maliat*—which is supposed to produce about Ts. 5 million annually in money and grain—had been received by the central government, this minimum annual deficit of Ts. 6 million would quickly mount to Ts. 11 million unless we could get in a very much larger share of the *maliat*." In 1912 practically nothing reached the treasury, and the fiscal situation worsened throughout the period of the Great War. In 1920 a British adviser, Mr. (now Sir) Sydney Armitage-Smith, took up the task; but the times were unpropitious, and his stay was short. In 1922 Persia again turned to America partly with an eye to a fresh loan which would put existing debts in the shade. The result was Dr. Millspaugh's Mission, which, as shewn above, lasted till 1927 and did excellent work.

From 1923 onwards the reproach of earlier writers was no longer valid, for statistics (which Americans collect as they do antiques) became at last available. Dr. Millspaugh's progress was recorded in reports which were issued quarterly throughout his term of office, and these reports were later continued for half-yearly periods. The last to appear covers the period from March to September, 1929, and is

printed in the Persian language only. The publication of the budget estimates, and of financial statistics in scattered form throughout the year, is now carried on by the daily newspapers in Tehran, but it is to be hoped that the issue of periodical official finance reports may be resumed, and that their translation into a European language may again be found possible.

The direction of reforms and developments in the financial administration may be broadly summarised. Dr. Millspaugh found, on his arrival, that although adequate legal provision for a budget had existed in Persia for twelve years, there was, strictly speaking, no such thing. The accounts, which until 1888 had reputedly shewn a surplus, had shewn a deficit ever since. There were in 1922 some 50,000 pensioners on the government pay-roll, requiring annually (as in 1889) almost a million tomans if their bonds were met. The land tax was badly in arrears, and the assessments were obsolete.

The pensions, a parasitical growth of pestilential dimensions, were largely commuted or disallowed. A cadastral survey was instituted, the land tax assessments were revised, the arrears called in or compounded, and a miscellaneous collection of antiquated forms of taxation done away with. The vexatious system of local tolls and exactions of one sort or another was abolished and replaced by a tariff of charges on imports and exports, collected, under the name of road tax, by the customs. The opium revenues were brought under firmer administrative control and were increased, and the tobacco excise was introduced. Finally the range and incidence of taxation was widened by the inauguration of income tax, stamp duties, and registration fees.

The following are the total figures of general revenue and expenditure for the past ten years.

		Revenue.	*Expenditure.*
1922–3	..	Ts. 22,871,430	Ts. 25,507,791
1923–4	..	23,111,860	24,131,084
1924–5	..	23,749,905	23,498,818
1925–6	..	29,067,659	24,615,907
1926–7	..	28,677,378	24,021,503
1927–8	..	20,571,488[2]	24,153,081
1928–9	..	24,870,455[2]	27,543,709
1929–30	..	31,112,404[1, 2]	34,945,260[1]
1930–1	..	35,337,483[1, 2]	35,298,778[1]
1931–2	..	39,906,940[1, 2, 3]	39,903,335[1, 3]

The above figures do not include the accounts of the Sugar and Tea surtax or the Road tax, or the Oil royalties received after March, 1927. The figures shew average revenue 1922–5 Ts. 23¼ million, equivalent to £4,780,000 at 48.61, the average rate for the three years, as compared with the average estimated general revenue for 1929–32 Ts. 35.4 million, which at say 75 krans per £ as an approximate average effective rate would be equal to £4,727,000.

If the average Sugar and Tea surtax for 1929–32 be taken as Ts. 8 million, and the Road tax as Ts. 4 million, we have at 75 £1,600,000, plus average Oil royalties 1929–32 £1,151,979, making an average total annual revenue of £7,479,000 estimated for 1929–32, as against £4,780,000 actual for 1922–5.

On a population of 12 million these 1929–32 figures would shew a per capita revenue from all

[1] Estimates.
[2] Not including Anglo-Persian Oil Co. royalties.
[3] Including pahlevi at Krs. 90.

sources of 12*s.* 4*d.*, as against 3*s.* 4*d.* per capita on a population of 10 million in 1888–9.[1]

The principal items of actual revenue from all sources in 1924–5 are as follows:

Item		Amount
Direct Tax—cash	Ts.	3,938,465
Direct Tax—in kind		1,189,958
Public Domains—cash and kind		1,129,247
Customs		9,128,356
Opium and Tobacco		1,892,255
Road Tolls		765,129
Other Indirect Taxes		1,196,962
Oil Royalties		1,736,469
Posts and Telegraphs		1,440,094
Total	Ts.	23,749,905

The following is a summary of the budget for 1931-2 passed by the Majlis on 18th March, 1931.

Estimated Revenue 1931-2

Item	Amount	Subtotal
Property tax and rent of crown property	Ts. 5,000,000	
Revenue of crown lands, mines, forests and inland fisheries	1,950,000	
Income tax	2,800,000	
Tax on motor cars, etc.	600,000	
Land and property registry and stamp duty	900,000	
		Ts. 11,250,000
Customs	9,869,700	
Opium	7,500,000	
Tobacco	3,750,000	
Alcoholic liquors	1,000,000	
Sheep's casings	600,000	
Customs fees, office fees, etc.	430,400	
		Ts. 23,150,100

[1] Comparative figures for 'Iraq are (1929–30) Rps. 15: for Turkey (1930–1) £T 13.99: and for Greece (1931–2) Dr. 1295. These figures do not include local taxation or other public charges.

Collection charges for Sugar and Tea surtax and Road tax	300,000
Allocations from Road tax for education and public health	333,074
Concessions	81,250
Interest on capital of National Bank ..	48,000
Sundry Government dues	554,466
Posts and Telegraphs	1,350,500
Justiciary fees, etc.	400,000
Passports, etc.	175,000
Miscellaneous	209,550
Ultimate receipts (?) Sundries	2,055,000
	Ts. 39,906,940
Add for Sugar and Tea surtax say ..	Ts. 8,000,000
,, ,, Road tax say	4,000,000
Total estimated receipts say	Ts. 51,906,940
or Total at say Krs. 90 per £	£5,767,438
Add Oil royalties paid	1,323,679
Total estimated receipts from all sources	£7,091,117

Provision for Expenditure 1931–2

The Royal Court	Ts. 514,664
Parliament and Cabinet	722,200
Army, Navy, and Air Force	17,456,998
Ministry of Finance, including Customs and opium and tobacco administrations ..	3,919,000
Ministry of the Interior	500,000
Police and Gendarmerie	3,754,000
General Registry and Statistics	406,000
Ministry of Justice, land registry, etc. ..	1,519,896
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1,151,116
Posts and Telegraphs	1,980,864
Education	2,611,769
Public Health	630,400
Ministry of National Economy	1,051,446
Pensions and Allowances	522,724
Additional capital of National Bank, and capital of Agricultural Bank	1,048,000

Destruction of locusts	100,000
Tribal settlement	100,000
Foreign debt sinking fund and interest ..	927,450
Bank interest and commission and transfer charges	150,000
Miscellaneous	836,808
	Ts. 39,903,335

On the side of revenue, leaving out, in accordance with the practice of the government, the receipts earmarked for railway and road development and gold reserve, the estimates shew that 58 per cent is derived from customs and excise and 28 per cent from direct taxation and crown property, while if the self-balancing revenue be eliminated the proportions are roughly 60 per cent and 30 per cent, as against the 1888–9 indications of 14½ per cent from customs and 83½ per cent from direct taxation. This change in the direction of taxation has been of gradual growth, and has arisen from the ease and economy of collection of duties at the ports as against the chronic difficulty and expense of collecting the direct taxes on crops, etc. The change has been made easier by the efficiency of the Customs under Belgian administration. If the Sugar and Tea surtax and the Road tax (but not the Oil royalties) be included, the proportions on the gross figures for 1931–32 become 22 per cent for direct tax and crown lands and 68 per cent for indirect tax, as against 28 per cent and 59 per cent respectively in 1924–5.

On the expenditure side, the item of defence accounts for about 44 per cent of the general budget, and shews only a slight increase on the proportion in 1888–9, though the results of this expenditure for the past ten years are incomparably better. Police and gendarmerie account for 9.4 per cent.

The total for the fighting services and police is undoubtedly high, but is justified in the circumstances, and may be reckoned so far as money well spent. Education receives about 6½ per cent, the amount provided under this head having quadrupled in the last ten years. Public health provision is still low at 1½ per cent. Posts and telegraphs shew a net cost of Ts. 630,000. The budget includes substantial provision of a capital nature, notably Ts. 1,048,000 for bank capital and £390,000 for the purchase of ships. The amount allocated to the Ministry of National Economy (corresponding to the Board of Trade) is also to some extent for outlay of a constructive nature.

Consideration of the main heads of taxation resolves itself largely into an examination of new laws and regulations, many of which have not yet taken full effect. The land tax is still undergoing modifications entailed by the cadastral survey. The tax on rented property was raised from 5 per cent to 8 per cent on 24th July, 1930. The income tax is an innovation which dates from 1st April, 1930, only. It provides for 3 per cent tax on the profits of companies of moderate size, and a fixed tax on private business in four grades according to the turnover. Thus a merchant whose annual sales are between Ts. 40,000 and Ts. 60,000 pays Ts. 150 per annum (say .3 per cent on sales), and a tradesman whose annual sales are between Ts. 20,000 and Ts. 40,000 pays Ts. 48 per annum (say .16 per cent on sales). The assessment is on the previous year's sales and the tax receipt is in the form of a licence, without which trading is prohibited. Other incomes above Ts. 500, including salaries, pay 1 per cent to 3 per cent, while the salaries of civil servants are assessed on a slightly higher scale. The same act

introduces a stamp duty of ½ per mille on drafts and bills sold.

As has been shewn above, the backbone of the revenue is the foreign trade. Until 1902 the customs duties levied in Persia were those laid down in the Treaty of Turkomanchai in 1828, which provided for a uniform and reciprocal rate of 5 per cent on imports and exports to and from Russia. This rate was also applied by Persia to trade with other countries, except Turkey with whom a special convention existed. The customs, like the other administrations, was farmed out to individuals who made what they could out of it. The 5 per cent duties applied only to goods belonging to foreign subjects, who were exempted from further exactions in the interior, whereas native-owned goods, which paid lower rates at the ports, were subject to further duty on entering other provinces, and also to road taxes and town dues. The average customs revenue which actually reached the central government for the ten years 1879–80 to 1888–9 is stated by Curzon as Ts. 783,609, or £258,241 at the average rate of 30.35 krans per £, the lowest amount for the period being £235,294 and the highest £281,600. To these figures Curzon adds 20 per cent to obtain the actual amount levied. Rabino, in 1901, stated that nothing like the amount of duty leviable reached the government, which received barely more than 2 per cent or 3 per cent of the value of foreign trade. In these circumstances the government, in pressing need of further revenue, decided in 1900 to centralise the administration of customs, and this led to the appointment of the Belgian controller.

On 13th December, 1902, a convention was signed with Russia fixing new rates of duty on exports and imports, and the new duties were applied to

exports to, or imports from, all countries which accorded most-favoured-nation treatment to goods of Persian origin. By 1911 the customs administration comprised 27 Belgian employees, and the net receipts for the three years 1908–9 to 1910–11 averaged Ts. 3,100,000, most of which however was consumed in the service of the foreign loans. In 1920 a new tariff was set up and was applied to all countries except Russia. The latter insisted on the retention of the lower rates of the 1902 tariff, which moreover favoured Russian trade in their particular incidence. The discrimination in Russia's favour continued till a fresh tariff was negotiated with that country and subsequently ratified by the Majlis on 24th October, 1927. This tariff was applied in 1928 and is now in force with all countries as an autonomous tariff with minimum and maximum rates. The following figures of revenue shew the progress since 1913:

	Customs Receipts	*Sugar and Tea Surtax*	*Road Tax*
1913–4	Ts. 4,740,296		
1914–5	3,519,937		
1915–6	2,949,813		
1916–7	2,891,784		
1917–8	2,418,878		
1918–9	3,007,588		
1919–20	3,606,262		
1920–1	4,755,769		
1921–2	5,964,145		
1922–3	6,809,326		
1923–4	7,526,529		
1924–5	9,129,058		
1925–6	9,346,946 }	Ts. 11,433,461	s. 224,670
1926–7	9,166,502 }		3,612,320
1927–8	8,972,878	6,106,735	4,049,517
1928–9	11,170,106	8,613,355	3,616,438
1929–30	12,295,517	7,636,663	3,879,568
1930–1	12,456,451	8,488,814	4,002,918

The estimated receipts under the above three heads for 1930–31 amount to about 53 per cent of the total estimated revenue for that year. The only charge on the customs is for the service of the 1911 sterling loan, which requires £68,750 annually till 1965, and which is specifically secured on the southern customs only. From the table it will be seen that there is a gradual increase, which was interrupted by the war years 1914–20. If the figures of 1920–1 be compared with the total under all heads for 1929–30, the increase for the ten years amounts to 400 per cent. Owing to the depreciation of the kran, the comparison in sterling is less impressive, but the improvement is nevertheless remarkable. The 1920–1 figures give about £1,400,000 at 34 krans per £, as against £4,100,000 for 1929–30 at the rate of 58, shewing an increase of 193 per cent. The revenue from foreign trade has, in fact, quintupled in krans and trebled in sterling.

The total foreign trade for 1930–1, not including oil exports, which are exempt from duty, was Ts. 126,937,390. The customs, sugar and tea surtax, and road tax for the same year amounted to Ts. 24,948,183, which is 20 per cent of the value of the whole trade less oil exports. The import duties alone, plus the sugar and tea surtax and two-thirds of the proceeds of the road tax, amounted to Ts. 22,413,657, on total imports of Ts. 81,052,874, shewing an over-all burden of 27 per cent on imports of all classes. As, however, one-fourth of the imports was exempt from duty, we arrive at a revenue burden of no less than 36 per cent on the total c. i. f. value of dutiable imports. Import duties, specific in some cases, and ad valorem in others, are scaled in accordance with conceptions of national utility and the public interest. Thus

industrial machinery, motor lorries, and motor cars of a value under Ts. 3,000, are exempt; cotton piece-goods pay Krs. 2.40 per 6½ lbs. (say 7 per cent to 8 per cent of the average value), woollen piece-goods 12 per cent, iron and steel bars 5 per cent, iron manufactures 10 per cent and petrol 40 cents per 6½ lbs. These duties are certainly moderate, and it may be said that the import duties on most other items are by no means excessive. The explanation is found in the burden on tea and sugar. This burden appears to be something like 80 per cent of the import value, and 25 per cent of the retail price, of these two commodities, which take second and fourth places in the list of imports. Actually the ordinary duty on tea and sugar alone, quite apart from the surtax, yields about half the total revenue from imports. The Persians are a nation of tea drinkers, and they sweeten their tea to a syrup. The vanishing muleteer who sips his little glass with noisy gusto at a wayside teashop may reflect that every fourth sip is a contribution to the railways that are to put him out of action.

Since the control of the opium trade, instituted under the opium monopoly law of 18th July, 1928, the revenue from opium exports has been heavily increased. The excise receipts have likewise grown. The latest figures are:[1]

	1929–30	1930–31
Sales of Stamped Banderoles .. Ts.	996,408	Ts. 1,545,779
Customs	1,629,152	2,031,613
Fines	62,828	94,855
	Ts. 2,688,388	Ts. 3,672,247

[1] *Iran*, 14th September, 1931.

The government control of the use of opium in Persia has been tightened in recent years; the excise tax was increased by 50 per cent on 29th December, 1931, with the double aim of discouraging the use of the drug and augmenting the revenue.

It has been shewn above that Persia depends upon foreign imports for a very high proportion of the essentials of modern civilised existence, and for almost half her revenue. The character and dimensions of her foreign trade are therefore of vital significance in any comparative account of her finances. Statistical records are not available before the centralisation of the customs under Belgian administration in 1900, but the estimates obtained by Curzon[1] for the year ending 30th September, 1889, are sufficiently indicative. Imports for that year are given as Ts. 13,696,000 at 35 = £3,913,100, of which the principal items are cotton piece-goods Ts. 6,500,000, woollen and silk manufactures Ts. 3,500,000, sugar Ts. 1,080,000, spices Ts. 1,000,000, tea Ts. 200,000, window-glass, glassware and porcelain Ts. 400,000, petroleum Ts. 180,000, iron bars and plates Ts. 165,000, indigo Ts. 150,000, and hardware Ts. 100,000. Exports are estimated as Ts. 7,442,000 at 35 = £2,126,000, of which the principal items are opium Ts. 1,900,000, raw silk and cocoons Ts. 1,350,000, rice Ts. 1,000,000, raw cotton Ts. 500,000, dried fruits, raisins and nuts Ts. 410,000, tobacco Ts. 350,000, carpets Ts. 300,000, wheat and barley Ts. 200,000, asafoetida Ts. 280,000, gum tragacanth Ts. 100,000, gall nuts Ts. 100,000, woollen goods Ts. 100,000, and spices Ts. 100,000. Curzon adds to these detailed figures, which he considers understatements, an estimate of total imports and exports as £7,000,000 to £7,500,000, of which imports

[1] Vol. II, pp. 559–561.

constitute two-thirds. He also estimates the total trade with Britain and British India as £3,000,000 and with Russia as £2,000,000. Rabino in 1901 estimates the total foreign trade as £9,000,000 to £10,000,000, of which opium export, "which dates back only a comparatively few years," amounts to £450,000 to £500,000. He remarks that owing to Russian export bounties and the high cost of transport the import of sugar and matches through India has been almost entirely displaced by imports from Russia.

The figures of foreign trade for the last twenty years (including bullion and specie) in tomans are given in the table on the opposite page.

The total figures, taken in sterling, are shewn to have doubled in the ten years from 1901 to 1911, and to have doubled again in the twenty years ending March 1931. The main features of these twenty years are the growth of the oil exports and the setback to normal trade in the war years. There was a temporary collapse of trade with Russia after 1917: in 1913–4 Persian exports to Russia amounted to Ts. 30 million: in 1921–2 they had declined to Ts. 2.6 million. Thereafter the trade with the north recovered rapidly till in 1925–6 Persian exports to Russia amounted to Ts. 28 million against imports from Russia Ts. 21 million. On 1st February, 1926, the Russians imposed an embargo on all imports from Persia except cotton; the figures for subsequent years shew an excess of imports from Russia on a total average Russo-Persian trade of about Ts. 40 million. The disabilities suffered by Persia in her northern trade over a decade after 1917 resulted mainly from the internal condition of Russia. "The decline in Russian national productivity which started with the February revolution of 1917 was

Year	*Imports*	*Exports except Oil*	*Oil Exports*	*Total Trade*	*Rate*	*Sterling*
1911–2	57,020,844	42,078,468	—	99,099,312	55·10	17,985,400
1912–3	56,757,564	43,633,327	—	100,390,891	55·78	17,997,000
1913–4	64,716,484	43,807,501	1,776,463	110,300,448	55·51	19,870,300
1914–5	49,932,291	36,270,588	3,335,198	89,538,077	61·74	14,502,400
1915–6	46,410,796	35,627,318	2,086,144	84,124,258	58·43	14,397,400
1916–7	49,477,102	36,826,880	6,562,654	92,866,636	38·90	23,873,200
1917–8	46,806,591	23,170,591	10,700,848	80,678,030	29·15	27,676,800
1918–9	47,628,679	11,593,599	15,493,296	74,715,574	27·70	26,969,500
1919–20	62,979,266	18,711,331	18,070,404	99,761,001	25·50	39,122,000
1920–1	48,235,163	13,744,132	23,375,746	85,355,041	34	25,104,400
1921–2	60,977,537	17,954,852	32,249,627	111,182,016	51·29	21,677,100
1922–3	61,920,105	30,565,612	42,832,672	135,318,389	56·56	23,924,700
1923–4	68,132,182	38,534,216	38,305,000	144,971,398	47·28	30,662,300
1924–5	77,144,514	48,536,219	51,480,095	177,160,828	42	42,181,100
1925–6	88,102,541	51,470,192	54,468,800	194,041,533	43·50	44,607,250
1926–7	78,739,672	44,976,230	65,435,300	189,151,202	48·60	38,920,000
1927–8	80,743,337	46,313,805	59,727,300	186,784,442	49·25	37,113,600
1928–9	81,986,546	48,005,369	103,754,750	233,746,665	48·03	48,666,800
1929–30	91,985,369	48,739,603	108,744,168	249,469,140	58	43,011,900
1930–1	81,052,874	45,884,516	100,497,480	227,434,870	63·40	35,873,000

followed by a catastrophic downfall caused by the October revolution. By 1920 the output of big industry amounted to 12.8 per cent of the pre-war level. Under the New Economic Policy, the national productivity revived rapidly, reaching and even surpassing the pre-war level by 1927–8. Taking into account the qualitative deterioration of goods, the output in 1927–8 can be regarded as having reached the pre-war level . . ."[1] The state monopoly of industry, transport, trade and credit in Russia was extended to national accumulation of capital, which was achieved by compulsory contraction of individual consumption and which brought about a lowering of the standard of living. "Under the system of monopoly, with its methods of forced accumulation, the restoration of Russian productive forces to pre-war level and the launching and realisation of the scheme of reconstruction has been achieved by means of internal accumulation, and practically without the help of foreign capital."[1]

The last sentence displays a parallel to Persia's policy since 1925 in accumulating capital for railway construction, foreign reserves, and internal development, and to her present policy of controlling imports. There is happily no parallel in the methods adopted by Soviet Russia.

The following are the principal imports to Persia for 1930–1:

Cotton piece-goods	Ts. 14,282,000
Sugar	10,491,700
Machinery	8,807,800
Tea	6,571,300
Mineral oils	4,510,100
Motor cars and parts, etc.	3,501,200
Iron manufactures	2,635,300

[1] Birmingham Bureau of Research on Russian Economic Conditions. Memorandum No. 3, November, 1931.

Nails, screws, rivets, pipes, etc .. Ts.	2,635,400
Arms and munitions	2,150,100
Iron and steel bars, plates, etc. ..	2,032,100
Cotton yarn	1,910,900
Haberdashery	1,847,400
Woollen piece-goods	1,177,500
Chemical products	1,005,200
Cotton and rayon piece-goods	836,700
Cotton and wool piece-goods	806,400
Spices	712,100

The following are the principal exports from Persia for 1930–1:

Mineral oil .. .. Ts.	100,519,000
Woollen carpets	12,471,500
Dried and fresh fruits	5,786,100
Opium	4,913,000
Rice	3,201,100
Raw cotton	3,125,200
Raw wool	2,326,400
Gum Tragacanth	1,617,600
Silk cocoons	1,471,800
Sheep's casings	1,067,300
Lambskins	905,000

Of the imports, piece-goods account for 21 per cent of the total, and sugar and tea together account also for 21 per cent. Machinery and iron and steel manufactures and semi-manufactures amount to 20 per cent and are mainly destined for railroad construction and for the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. Petrol and kerosene are imported from Baku for the requirements of Northern Persia. The exports, excluding oil and carpets, are mainly agricultural products of limited range. Exports of wheat and barley amount to Ts. 153,300 only. Apart from the oil royalties the only export of significance as a direct producer of revenue is opium. Including

oil exports, Persia's share of world trade in 1927–8 was about .31 per cent as compared with Turkey .295 per cent and 'Iraq .085 per cent.[1] The British Empire including India provided Ts. 36,862,000 or 45 per cent of Persia's imports in 1930–1, and Russia supplied Ts. 23,424,000 or 29 per cent.

The question of the balance of payments has long perplexed the minds of those interested in Persian finance. Until the recent growth of oil exports the visible balance of trade was consistently adverse. The figures shew total imports 1911–2 to 1930–1 Ts. 529,964,780 and exports Ts. 386,864,488, giving an import excess of Ts. 143,100,292, equal to £32,500,000 million at the average rate of Krs. 44 over the ten years. How has this yearly average of £3,250,000 been paid for? Partly, no doubt, by British, Russian, Turkish and German expenditure on Persian soil, between 1915 and 1921, and partly by the development expenditure of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. But the amount is too great for such explanation, and moreover the phenomenon is of a more permanent nature and appears much earlier. Curzon blandly estimated an import excess of over £2,000,000 in 1889 on a total trade of £7,250,000, but he left the excess unaccounted for. The total foreign trade for 1904–5 to 1910–1 shews an import excess of Ts. 59 million, or an average of over Ts. 8 million yearly. Undervaluation of exports cannot account for the balance, as, so far as merchandise is concerned, the preponderance of undervaluation is presumably on the side of imports. Invisible exports such as interest on Persian investments abroad and foreign commercial, diplomatic, and tourist expenditure in Persia are probably less than invisible imports such as Persian expenditure abroad on education, resi-

[1] League of Nations Statistical Year Book, 1930–1.

dence and travel, and diplomatic representation, and in interest on Persia's foreign debt, and these amounts are in any case small. Persian shipping and ancillary services are non-existent, and emigrants' remittances are quite insignificant. Smuggling of merchandise normally applies to dutiable imports more than to exports.

The undeclared export of specie probably covers a good deal of the difference. As was shewn in Chapter X, the export of silver and gold by the south and west after the war reached very high figures, but these exports of silver were quite abnormal. There has been, however, at all normal times a flow of silver currency eastwards to Afghanistan and Transcaspia, and this normal flow of undeclared silver exports (some of which has normally returned through the customs ports of the south) may well explain the apparent normal excess of bullion and specie imports. When all is said, however, one is driven to ask whether Persia has been dissipating unsuspected hoards of gold in undeclared export over the past half-century.

The problem is worthy of expert consideration in Persia, but whatever the solution may be Persia is taking strenuous measures to restrict imports within the dimensions of her recorded exports of merchandise. The visible balance of trade has, in any case, been attained within recent years by virtue of the oil exports, but it is the ambition of Persia to achieve a trade balance even without the oil.

The question of the title of these oil exports to rank in full as an item in the balance of trade has been often debated. It is argued for their exclusion that they constitute an export of capital wealth which is irreplaceable, and that the profits of the enterprise go mainly to foreign shareholders. The

same considerations might be urged as applying to oil enterprise in South America or to the South African gold mining industry. The contention has force only in so far as it raises the larger question of weighing trade values as contributions to national wealth. In any such computation, which must take account of many intangible factors, the efficient extraction of oil or gold (either of which may be superseded fifty years hence as units of power or service) might be accorded a full 100 per cent, while the culture of opium, the export of lamb-skins, or the production of cinema films might be degraded to a mere 20 per cent of current values.

CHAPTER XII

THE MILITARY RECORD OF PERSIA IN THE PAST, AND THE PRESENT STATE OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE SHAH

LIFE on the plateau of Persia has always been precarious; failure of rain in one season meant scarcity: and if prolonged the only alternative to starvation was wholesale emigration of all the inhabitants over a wide area, with their flocks and herds. The process involved of necessity violent clashes with neighbouring communities and, not infrequently, bitter warfare with wild beasts—lions and wolves—which in hard times would prey upon the flocks. It is not surprising therefore to find that the profession of arms has from the earliest times been honoured among the people of the great plateau.

Herodotus tells us that, after valour in battle, it is most reckoned as manly merit among the Persians to show the greatest number of sons. He gives a minute account of their organisation and equipment. Commenting on the battle at Plataea, against the Spartans, he says: "Now the Persians were neither the less valorous nor the weaker; but they had no armour, and moreover they were unskilled and no match for their adversaries in craft; they would rush out singly and in tens, or in groups great and small, hurling themselves on the Spartans and so perishing. . . . So long as Mardonius was alive the Persians stood their ground and defended

themselves, overthrowing many Lacedaemonians, but when Mardonius was slain and his guards . . . the rest, too, yielded and gave way before the men of Lacedaemon."[1]

Could any tribute to Persian courage be higher? Arrian assures us that:

> "The Persians"—when, under Cyrus, they conquered all Asia—"were but a poor people, inhabiting a rugged country and approximating closely in the austerity of their laws and usages to the Spartan discipline."[2]

Heeren adds that:

> "The host of Cyrus, as was generally the case in Asia, consisted principally of cavalry, perpetually accumulating fresh recruits from the conquered nations (which also took place with the later Persian armaments), and thus his wars resembled, in some sense, the migrations of an entire people, who, for the time at least, were transplanted from their original seats to other countries."[3]

Xenophon refers to "the discipline of the Persians," and "ancient Persian bravery," as proverbial.[4]

Alexander met with more opposition in Eastern Iran than he had met anywhere else in Asia. Four years after he left the Hellespont he had secured the throne of Persia, but fighting with the Aryan peoples of Eastern Iran, the Bactrians and the Sogdians, occupied all his energies for three years. He here encountered men with a passion for freedom, and a national feeling such as he had met only at Tyre and in a few mountainous areas: only when their leaders, Bessus and Spitamenes, perished did their resistance cease. "Not only was the quality

[1] Herodotus I, 136.
[2] McCrindle, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, p. 86.
[3] Heeren, *Historical Researches*, Vol. I, Asiatic Nations, Persians, p. 337.
[4] *Cyropaedia*, VII. 5. 67.

of the enemy different from before, but their mode of fighting differed. Here in Eastern Iran no great battles were offered to Alexander, such as he had hitherto won—principally by the same method of the 'oblique' battle-formation in which the army he had inherited from Philip was particularly well drilled; it was a genuine people's war which awaited him. The enemy was difficult to get hold of; they never opposed him in large numbers, but as soon as he advanced, they appeared in his rear, if possible in several places simultaneously; they made a fresh rising; they entrenched themselves in inaccessible rocky recesses, or, if in danger, vanished into the Turkman steppes, only to break out again suddenly and make a surprise attack upon him."[1]

Alexander recognised the military value of the Persians, the only race he was willing to treat as racial equals. He married the young daughter of a Persian noble, Roxane, who was, in the judgment of his companions, next to the wife of Darius, the most beautiful woman that they had seen in Asia. Not only did he marry her, but made her his consort. The marriage was performed with Zoroastrian ritual, and Alexander and Roxane ate of one loaf which he severed, like a modern bridegroom of His Majesty's Armed Forces, or a Turkman of to-day, with his sword. (The male child born of this union died in infancy.)

He encouraged mixed marriages between his Macedonians and Persian women: to those of his men, some ten thousand in number, who had taken the step without previous instructions he gave wedding presents. He arranged for eighty nobles of his court to be married to Persian princesses and

[1] Ulrich Wilcken, *Alexander the Great*, 1932, one of the most remarkable biographies which has appeared of recent years.

daughters of magnates, by the Zoroastrian rite at Susa. In such circumstances it is not surprising that he was able to raise an army of young Persians—the *Epigoni*, thirty thousand strong. He had hitherto organised his army in parallel Persian and Macedonian formations: he now arranged for mixed corps, comprising men of both races, and even admitted Persians to the Royal Bodyguard. The Macedonians were resentful, but Alexander stood firm. His tragic death at the age of thirty-two set a term to development which might have changed the face of the world. The armies were disbanded: racial particularism triumphed over internationalism.

"The nobles of Persia," says Gibbon (Book VIII), "in the bosom of luxury and despotism, preserved a strong sense of personal gallantry and national honour. From the age of seven years they were taught to speak truth, to shoot with the bow, and to ride; and it was universally confessed that in the two last of these arts, they had more than a common proficiency. The Persian nobles (so natural is the idea of feudal tenures) received from the king's bounty lands and houses, on the condition of their service in war. They were ready on the first summons to mount on horseback, with a martial and splendid train of followers, and to join the numerous bodies of guards, who were carefully selected from among the most robust slaves, and the bravest adventurers of Asia. These armies, both of light and of heavy cavalry, equally formidable by the impetuosity of their charge and the rapidity of their motions, threatened, as an impending cloud, the eastern provinces of the declining empire of Rome."

The pages of history, from this date onwards, bear little testimony to the military potentialities of Persia until the arrival on the scene of the Mongols under Timur, who "declared his esteem of the

valour of a foe, by extirpating all the males of so intrepid a race."[1] Timur was an optimist. The survivors performed their parental duties to such an effect that, two centuries later, Persia was again populous and martial.

Albuquerque, in his Commentaries[2], pays an indirect tribute to the bravery of the Persians whom he fought at Naband, near Bandar Abbas, in 1508, saying that "in these parts, Persians are reckoned for the bravest men in the world."

Teixeira (1586–1605), in a "Short Account of the Most Notable Provinces and those that have continued longest under the Dominion of Persia," says:

> "The whole country of Persia is for the most part well supplied with provisions. . . . The people are fair, handsome, etc. . . . They generally fight on horseback, with spear and shield, bows, arrows, scimitars, coats of mail and maces; and ride with short stirrups, and with their horses caparisoned. In warfare they are formidable and very dogged therein."

Pietro della Valle, who travelled in the East from 1615–26, speaks highly of the valour of the Khans and Sultans in command of units in the field, but criticises the absence of military organisation, tactics or strategy.

Sir Thomas Herbert, who visited Persia in 1626–7, writes of the Persians that:

> "they are valiant, proper for the most part, olive-coloured, mirthful and venerious . . . they never ride without bowes and arrowes . . . which, though not comparable to the gun (an instrument they now make practise of) yet they have been famous for their archery."

[1] Gibbon, *Op. cit.*
[2] Vol. I, p. 250.

Olearius (1633–39), affirms that "the Persians hate and condemn cowards, and the officers who neglect their duty in the wars are most severely punished."

The learned Doctor Fryer (1672–81) makes no observations on the quality of the Persian army or soldiers, but, referring to the lack of personal valour on the part of the then Shah—Sulaiman—says:

"That which he least cares for is to go forth armed at the head of his Army, against his enemies, chusing rather to be Terrible at home under the Persian Banner (which when displayed is a Bloody Sword with a double point, in a White Field, and is always carried next the Emperor's person) than become Formidable abroad to his Foes. Let others reap those hazardous Praises of Grinning Honour, he has no stomach nor no mind for Feats of Arms."

This period was undoubtedly one of decadence and a prelude to the short-lived Afghan domination of Persia. The cause is not far to seek—the personality of the sovereign and his immediate predecessors. This is made clear by Chardin (1671)[1], who says in effect:

"The Persians, if I dare say so, are naturally brave and warlike, the honour and flower, so to speak, of Asiatic peoples, the founders of the most ancient and extensive monarchy; for, in her beginnings, she was mistress of the East, as is shown in Gen. XIV, where it is said that the kings which made war with Chederlaomer, had been his vassals. The conquests of Abbas the Great, one of the last kings of Persia, of all the neighbouring peoples, without the help of any foreign troops, show that Persia is capable of making great progress by the power and courage of her people alone; but the long period of peace which she has enjoyed since the death of this great king, 80 years since, and the bloody rule of his successors, has debased the courage and almost extinguished this power. Luxury, sensuality and idleness,

[1] Langles Edition, Vol. V. p. 294.

on the one hand, and the study of letters on the other, have also had the effect of making the Persians effeminate.

"It must not be supposed that military discipline is observed by the Persian troops as it is with us; sentry duty, guard-house, drill, evolutions, and such commendable things in the art of war, are unknown in the Orient."

It is the fact that, under Abbas the Great (1585-1628) the country had made, single-handed, immense territorial progress; but the peace which ensued upon his death brought in its train the destructive influences of ease and luxury. Abbas himself had been reared in camps, but he caused his children to be brought up in the *andarun*, and no education could be more enervating; for the future of the line it was fatally so.

From the ruins of the Safavi dynasty of Persian kings arose a great Conqueror in the person of Nadir Shah (1736–1747), a soldier and a commander of soldiers, possessed of marvellous qualifications. To him the exigencies of a military profession—strategy, drill, discipline and duty—were stern realities to be acknowledged and practised.[1] History in 1925, repeated itself. The present Shah, like all great Asiatic statesmen, is first of all a soldier.

Hanway (1743)[2] says that Nadir's standing army was computed at 200,000, composed of the following, among other elements:

50,000 Afghans, who, he says, "use the bow, lance and sword, and are very brave"; 20,000 Afshars, the people to which Nadir himself belonged; 6,000 Uzbeg-Tartars of Khiva, Bukhara and Samarqand; 6,000 Turkman Tartars, and 6,000 Baluchis.

[1] Sir F. Goldsmid, J.R.U.S.I. 1880.
[2] *An Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea*, 1754.

"All of them," he says, "wear sabres, in which they, as well as the Persians, are very dexterous . . . they are seldom exercised except in shooting with the bow, or with a single ball at a mark, at which they are very expert."

The rifle had come by this time into use in Persia, as elsewhere, and the Persian proved an apt pupil. Nadir showed his perspicacity and knowledge of men, for, says Colonel Drouville[1] a French officer, born in Persia:

"he gathered together in his army Arabs, Kurds, Turkmans, Afghans, and Indians, and by this means excited the emulation of the Persians who, being naturally proud and unable to suffer that their chief's success should be attributed other than to themselves, fought ten times better than if they had been alone."

The nineteenth century in Persia opens, to quote Lord Curzon's work,[2] upon a "yet unexhausted epoch of submission to foreign leading-strings, in the futile effort to infuse some stability into the mobile and dissolvent atoms of an Oriental fabric." The Persian army, not to mention other departments of State was, in fact, subjected to a series of experiments in reorganisation, by the agents of various European nations successively—France, England, Germany, Italy, Austria and Russia.

Neither the genius nor experience of Nadir Shah produced any formal military regulations. He did not require them. His enemies, for the most part, were undisciplined, like his own troops. Courage and strength of arm were all he wanted; and, as a public robber at the head of his wild and rapacious

[1] *Voyage en Perse*, 1828.
[2] *Persia and the Persian Question*, 1891, Vol. I, p. 572.

tribes, he broke into kingdoms, plundering, despoiling and leaving a desert, rather than an empire, behind him. The same style of warfare, whether for defence or aggression, continued through all the successive reigns, from Karim Khan to Fath Ali Shah; till the genius of one man, having laid almost all Europe at his feet, cast his eye towards Asia, and, hoping to grasp it also, attempted a first step towards it by making a friend of Persia, and then changing the nature of her military character.[1] By the arrival of the Gardanne mission in Persia, Buonaparte advanced his aims; this was the first of the series of experiments alluded to by Lord Curzon.

But, according to Ker Porter and Morier, it was Abbas Mirza, the Vali Ahd, or heir apparent of Fath Ali Shah, who, about 1800, really introduced regular training and European discipline among the Persian troops, in the face of great prejudice and opposition. He found out that it was in vain to fight the Russians without soldiers like theirs; that 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. To overcome prejudice, he himself adopted a soldier's dress and submitted to learn military exercises from a Russian; 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.[2]

The Gardanne mission of Buonaparte proved shortlived and a failure, and the prosecution of the experiment of forming an organised and disciplined

[1] Ker Porter, *Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, &c.*, 1821.
[2] Morier, *A Second Journey through Persia, &c.*, 1818.

Persian army passed into other hands. But, before examining the results of this experiment upon the patient Persian, it will be of much interest to note what, in the view of our numerous nineteenth century writers, was the character and quality of the human material with which the professors of European army methods and tactics had to deal.

Says Sir John Malcolm:[1]

"As a nation, the Persians may be termed brave: though the valour they have displayed, like that of every other people in a similar condition of society, has, in a great degree, depended upon the character of their leaders and the nature of those objects for which they fought." Elsewhere he writes: "The irregular horse of modern Persia are the same kind of troops which opposed the Romans; and they have preserved not only the habits, but the mode of fighting of their forefathers. As the men are robust and brave, and their horses active and strong, there cannot be a cavalry more suited for all the purposes of predatory warfare."

Of their skill in horsemanship Ker Porter[2] speaks in high praise:

"A Persian has the reins put into his hands, almost as soon as he quits his cradle, and mounts the most spirited animals, at the age when our boys are just bestriding a rocking horse. . . . When we talk of fiery steeds, in this country, the term carries no comparison with what may bear that name in Europe. These are, indeed, horses of the sun; beautiful and fleet, and often fierce as the burning element . . . these words are something more than a metaphor."

[1] *The History of Persia*, 1815, Vol. II, p. 637.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 496.

Waring[1] notices the surprising length of Persian military marches—forty or fifty miles a day; on urgent occasions "at the rate of seventy miles for three days together," without baggage. As to the capacity of the Persian soldier for long marches, Sir Henry Rawlinson once took the trouble to calculate the distance travelled daily in all the marches of Abbas Mirza. The total distance he traversed was about 2,500 miles, and the average distance of each day's march was 21½ miles. "It is," he says, "perfectly unique in military history to find a march of 2,000 or 3,000 miles performed by an army of regular troops at the rate of 21½ miles per day. His powers of endurance are, in fact, quite extraordinary."[2]

Elsewhere Rawlinson says significantly that:

"The Persian, considered as a mere animal, is so very superior to any other Asiatic—to an Indian, or a Turk, or even a Russian—that it is impossible to avoid foreseeing that, as any European war becomes developed in the East, the military resources of Persia must be called into action. In fact, it seems we could not have a more formidable engine of attack and offence launched against India than a Persian army commanded by Russian officers. In the same way, we could not have a more efficient engine of defence than the same army led by British officers, or by officers acting in our interests."

Speaking of the nomads in particular, Morier[3] tells us that:

"As raw material for soldiers, nothing could be better than the Eelauts. Accustomed from their infancy to camp

[1] *A Tour to Sheeraz*, 1807. [2] J.R.U.S.I., 1858.
[3] *Op. cit.*

life, habituated to all sorts of hardships, and to the vicissitudes of weather, they have undertaken incredible marches with 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. Accustomed to their old mode 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. . . . Their ideas of courage are indeed totally different from ours."

In answer to Morier's opinion that Persians "are greatly deficient in the soldier's first art," Sheil[1] who was one of the detachment of officers sent by the Government of India for the drill and discipline of the Shah's army, says:

"In this sarcasm Mr. Morier seems to me to have done great injustice to the profession of arms in Persia. No irregular troops, whether they be native, Persians, or Koords, Arabs, Afghans, Toorkomans, or Turks, are able to contend with the disciplined Persian forces. The *Nizam*[2] of Persia and Turkey have never yet met; but in the last contest between these two nations, three or four thousand Persians of the regular army put to flight thirty or forty thousand Turks at Toprak Kalla, between Bayazeed and Erzeroom.

"The Persian soldier is active, energetic, and robust, with immense power of enduring fatigue, privation and exposure. He is full of intelligence, and seems to have a natural aptitude for a military life. Half clothed, half fed, and not even half paid, he will make marches of twenty-four miles day after day, and when need be he will extend them to forty miles. . . . Unlike a sombre apathetic Osmanli . . . the Persian soldier is full of life and cheerfulness."

[1] *Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia*, 1856, by Lady Sheil. With Additional Notes.

[2] Disciplined troops.

"A Persian," he further remarks, "is sometimes called the Frenchman of the East, from his intelligence, his quickness, his social qualities, and to these may be added the same aptitude for arms which distinguishes the Gallic warrior. Though he never attains the wonderful precision of an English soldier—I doubt if he ever could—he has a very satisfactory readiness in comprehending and attaining the really essential points required in a regiment of infantry."

As a final tribute, were further tribute needed, to the qualities of the material composing the Persian fighting element, I quote at length that of a more recent writer, the observant Dr. C. J. Wills[1] who views his subject with the critical eye of the medical practitioner:

"The country is the finest recruiting ground in the world. English officers of the practical type have frequently asserted that material for making some of the finest soldiery in the world is to be found in Persia. The Persian soldier is brave, active and hardy. His physique is magnificent, and his power of endurance great. Upon dry bread, with an occasional bit of cheese, or a basin of curds, the Persian will think nothing of marching his thirty miles a day, for days in succession. And the Persian soldier, if not perhaps as tall as our ordinary linesman, is as heavy and as strongly built. Only feed him and pay him, and the Persian sepoy, essentially a mercenary, will be as faithful to his colours as any soldier in Asia. So much for the infantry.

"As for the cavalry, as irregulars they are probably the finest in the world. No rocky pass is too steep, no march too long. The Eeliauts, or wandering tribes such as the Bakhtiaris, Kashkais, etc., can supply their fearless horsemen in tens of thousands. Why are the Government cavalry in Persia so ragged and their poor nags but skin and bone? Simply because they generally get neither pay, forage, nor

[1] *Persia, as it is*, 1886.

rations. Start on a fortnight's march of some 300 miles with a Persian horse-soldier or two: at the end of it he and his horse are the picture of health and condition. And why? Because they have been fed. We talk of the Cossacks. Three years ago the Shah had three Cossack-dressed regiments, drilled by Europeans and regularly paid; a finer body of men and horses it was impossible to see.

"In truth the Persian is no fine weather soldier; nor is he a mere fighting machine. Hardy and of powerful physique, he is at the same time very intelligent, amenable to discipline, sober, and ready to follow his officers if he can only trust them. It is the officering that is the worst of it. The cavalry are also very efficient. Their ill-fed horses are always in hard training. . . . The Persian cavalry soldier has been a trained horseman from childhood; and he is usually a good shot in the saddle and on foot."

So much, then, for the material. Could praise, with certain reservations, be higher? And now for the views of the same writers on the results, obtained and obtainable. Ker Porter[1] writes very fully on the question and says:

"A plan was digested for the organization of a body of infantry and the establishment of another of artillery. . . . also a certain number of officers and non-commissioned officers, sent from His Majesty's and the Company's service in India, to instruct the new Persian levies according to British military tactics. . . . The result was very promising; for with regard to the rank and file, there cannot be better material in any country for forming a perfect soldier, than the native Persian; he being strong, active, quick of apprehension, brave, and, when properly managed, sufficiently docile and steady. But as such management is the thing particularly required, to produce the two last essentials in the character and practical use of a soldier; the almost total

[1] *Op. cit.*

absence of it for so many ages in Persia will sufficiently account for even her bravest troops having sometimes shewn themselves as little to be relied on as an army of wild animals from the jungle, whom accidents are as likely to scare away as to bring on to their invited prey."

"As a consequence of training, only a very short time elapsed before a fine body of native soldiers, regularly clothed, armed, and disciplined, appeared in review before the King, in a style in no way inferior to our European regiments of the line. [All were] amazed to see how completely the rude aspect of the nomad and the mountaineer was changed to an orderly deportment; and above all, how soon their fierce unshackled habits of independence had been subdued into the docility of attention, and finally regulated within the restraints of the strictest military discipline. In short, instead of a camp of wild barbarians, they now saw a field of serviceable soldiers."

"The native soldier, from natural disposition and habits, cannot fail being adapted for war in any part of these Oriental climates. He is inured to heat, fasting, thirst, fatigue, in short, privations of every kind, without a murmur. Indeed, his usual moderation is such, that bread, water and a little fruit, dried or fresh, makes a feast for him at any time. These people have been known to make the most unparalleled long marches, without refreshment of any kind. . . . They are alike patient and active, are anxious to be taught any useful art, and emulous of excelling. When once brought to discipline, no men on earth can be more steady and obedient under arms, and their sobriety is inviolable. This last virtue is of the first consequence in a soldier. Hence when we sum up all these qualifications for a soldier, and this adaptation to climate and its resources besides, it may be seen that were these battalions chiefly officered by Europeans, 50,000 Persians so organised would prove more formidable during a campaign in the East than four times that number of the best European veterans."

But there were obvious limitations to the effectiveness of a trained army in Persia. Of these limitations

Sir John Malcolm[1] was amongst the earliest to take note, and to express misgivings as to its efficiency. He observes:

"The reigning monarch of Persia (Fath Ali Shah) has been disposed to try this system by an observation of the advantages which the Russians derived from their discipline, and a belief that his subjects, if clothed, armed, and trained in the same manner, would be more equal to a contest with that nation; and he has probably seen with satisfaction the growth of a force, which is also calculated from its formation, to increase his power over the more turbulent part of his own subjects; but it is perhaps, fortunate for his kingdom, that this plan has not yet proceeded to an extent that can have seriously injured either the feelings or the efficiency of that irregular army, to which Persia must (while her Government remains unaltered) trust principally for her defence against the attack of any European power. The means which this nation possesses to resist such an attack are far from inconsiderable; but they are of a character which would not be improved by the partial introduction of a new military system."

Waring[2] detects a flaw in the national character of the Persian: deprived of their natural freedom of action and initiative, they were prone to play for safety. "If," he says, "we were to attend to the natural prejudices of the Persians, we should entertain no unfavourable opinion of the valour and discipline of their troops; but if we estimate their courage by the resistance which they make against victorious troops, or by the losses they sustain, I fear they will greatly resemble the armies of the Italian States, who fought whole days without losing a single man."

[1] *Op. cit.*
[2] *Op. cit.*

Commenting on conditions of service in Abbas Mirza's army, J. B. Fraser[1] writing in 1825, says:

"In attempting to take a view of the military resources of Persia, the reader must divest himself of every idea that can bring to his mind the existence and attributes of a regular army; the King possesses nothing of the sort. The establishment, if such it can be termed, is as irregular as the nature of the conflicts they usually have to sustain; very little controlled by any sort of discipline, and perfectly unattended by anything that could impress a soldier of Europe with the ideas he attaches to the pomp and circumstance of military appearance."

"At this time the most efficient troops in the King's (Agha Muhammad Khan) command . . . consisted entirely of cavalry, and which, though sufficiently active and hardy, have greatly degenerated from their ancient character for courage and zeal.

"In the days of Nadir Shah the troops of Persia were active, brave and expert in the discipline of that prince; he endured no coward and his men dreaded his frown more than the enemy's sword. Agha Muhammad Khan had likewise the talent of forming good and brave troops. His active and ambitious disposition kept his army constantly engaged; and they acquired a veteran hardihood and expertness that rendered them superior to any other Asiatic troops. When they were called up to oppose more disciplined legions, he well knew how powerful their efforts might be made, when directed tc a harrassing and desultory mode of warfare.[2] But it was the genius of these commanders that alone

[1] *Narrative of a Journey into Khorasan, in the years 1821 and 1822.*

[2] When preparing to attack the Russians in Georgia, Agha Muhammad assembled the leaders of his army and said: "My valiant warriors shall be led against them; and we will, by the blessing of God, charge their celebrated lines of infantry, etc."

He said to on.: of his ministers, "Can a man of your wisdom believe I will ever run my head against their walls of steel, or expose my irregular army to be destroyed by their cannon and disciplined troops? I know better. Their shot shall never reach me; but they shall possess no country beyond its range. They shall not know sleep; and, let them march where they choose, I will surround them with a desert." Malcolm's *History of Persia* Vol. II, p. 297f.

made their troops so powerful. Their continual wars kept alive the military spirit in full vigour: the system has changed with the sovereign. Not only is the present ruler unwarlike himself, but he has taken every possible step to break the national spirit which he found in the country, and to destroy all he succeeded to of an army."

Of the Persian artillery-men termed *Topchis*, Stocqueler[1] writes: "They form a most useful and efficient branch of the army, and have called forth the enconiums even of Russian officers"; and of the comparative value of disciplined Persian, as against irregular troops, he says:

"Of the superiority of disciplined over irregular forces . . . It is sufficient to mention that throughout the war with Russia, they maintained an immeasurable pre-eminence over the undisciplined troops, though badly commanded, in almost every action. At Aberan, where they were led on by a famous chief named Goreb Khan, and others of tried courage, they took fifteen hundred Russians prisoners, and killed and wounded a much greater number. . . . Instances might be multiplied of their steadiness and efficiency under proper training, but these will suffice."

England's participation in the endeavour to create an organized and disciplined army in Persia after the European model—first prompted, according to Rawlinson[2] "in order to counter Russia,"—ended, so he says, in dismal failure. It was not that the material was not present. On the contrary, Rawlinson, like so many others, asserts that it was there in abundance.

"One half of the nation," he says, "lives in tents, and the other half lives in houses, and this distinction is much

[1] *Fifteen months' Pilgrimage through untrodden tracts of Khuristan and Persia*, 1832.

[2] J.R.U.S.I., 1858.

greater than might at first be supposed, because it involves an entire distinction in the way of life. The former are mere shepherds; their life is pastoral, they live by their flocks and herds." (The words might also be those of Plato that we have quoted.) "The latter are agriculturists. . . . In general, those who live in tents have summer and winter pastures, and they migrate from the one to the other with their flocks and herds: they derive all their notions of property from their produce. They are a people of particular interest, because they furnish the great mass of men for the Persian armies. They are the fighting class, and as such are of great importance, because they are far superior in all the best qualities, both mental and bodily, to the Persians of the towns. They are comparatively honest, they are certainly brave, and they possess many of the characteristics of the hill or mountain tribes of Europe."[1]

"It can be proved, we think," Rawlinson says elsewhere,[2] "that whatever benefit Persia may have derived as far as regards the centralization of the power of her monarch, from the introduction into her armies of European discipline, she has been as a substantive power progressively weakened by the change, and rendered less capable of sustaining pressure from without. . . .

"It would detain us too long to explain in detail the seeming paradox of discipline engendering weakness. If it be remembered, however, that when the system is affected with chronic paralysis, the attempt is vain to restore any particular member to a healthy action, it will be understood that to a nation devoid of organization in every other department of government, a regular army was impossible. It thus happened that, notwithstanding the admirable materials for soldiery which were offered by the hardy peasantry of Azerbijan, and the still hardier mountaineers of Kermanshah--notwithstanding the aptitude of the officers to receive instruction—notwithstanding that a due portion of physical courage appertained generally to the men—the disciplined forces of Persia, considered as an army, and for

[1] *England and Russia in the East*, 1875.
[2] *Op. cit.*

the purpose of national defence, were from the epoch of their first creation contemptible. Beyond drill and exercise, they never had anything in common with the regular armies of Europe and India."

We will pause for a moment to examine the size and composition of the fighting force which, at successive periods, Persia has had at her disposal. We have no means of arriving at even an approximate estimate of the numbers of the Persian army in the 'great days'; but its strength was undoubtedly enormous—millions are spoken of—in so widely extended an empire as compared with the present-day area. Chardin is the first to give us actual figures, and tells us that the Persian effective army on the death of Abbas the Great was reckoned at 120,000, of whom 50,000 were royal and 70,000 provincial troops, though he gives no clue to its composition or to explain so high an estimate.

Chardin's figures are borne out by Sanson[1] a missionary from King Louis XIV to the Court of Persia in 1683, who estimated the Persian army at 150,000 men (exclusive of the garrisons of the towns in the interior) distributed over the defensive frontier as follows: 12,000 in Kandahar overlooking India, 20,000 watching Balkh and the Tartars, 15,000 by the Caspian, 12,000 for the Caucasus, 20,000 for Circassia, Georgia, etc., 20,000 for Turkmania and Kurdistan, 12,000 towards the Turkish Empire, 12,000 in Luristan, 15,000 in Susa for Arabia, and 12,000 for the littoral from the Persian Gulf to India. Scarcely any of these, he tells us, were foot soldiers, "because they could not support the fatigue of many deserts and mountains; and artillery was little used for the same reason."

[1] *Estat présent du Royaume de Perse*, 1694.

With the decline of the Safavi dynasty came *pari passu* the decline of the army and, so bad did things become that, when the observant Polish Jesuit, Krusinski[1] was in Isfahan during its siege by the Afghans in 1722, though there were, he tells us, some 400 pieces of cannon mounted at various places, each of which discharged at least 400 times, they were so badly served that not four hundred Afghans could have been killed by them. From the ruins of the decadent Safavi dynasty of Persian kings arose that great conqueror, Nadir Shah: the essential leader appears and, at once, under his leadership, the army performs great feats. To cite an instance: the Abdali Afghans were preparing with 30,000 horsemen to move upon Meshed. Nadir met them with 12,000 of his horse and gained a signal victory in spite of the great odds. We have noted Hanway's computations of 200,000 men in Nadir's standing forces, composed to a great extent of Kurds, Qajars, Bakhtiaris or Afghans: it was the leadership and the choice of the material which mattered—not the numbers.

Under Fath Ali Shah (1797-1834), again, a high state of efficiency in the army was attained. Sir John Malcolm[2] divides the force then into "a considerable body of irregular horse, furnished by the military tribes of the country, and commanded by their own chiefs; a numerous irregular militia, raised and supported by the provinces and principal cities of the empire; and a corps of infantry and artillery clothed and disciplined in the European manner." The first retained the habits and mode of fighting of their forefathers, using, however, a carbine instead of a bow and arrow; robust and brave, with strong

[1] *Histoire de la dernière Révolution de Perse*, Vol. II, p. 185 f.
[2] *Op. cit.* Vol. II.

active horses, they formed a cavalry, thoroughly suited to the predatory warfare of the country. Fath Ali, like Nadir, was strong enough to compel to his service contributions of the chiefs of these fighting tribes. The militia, said to have exceeded 150,000 men, was composed of men of wandering tribes and inhabitants of towns and villages. Maintained by the province or community to which they belonged, they were liable to be called up when required, receiving at such time pay from the State; but providing their own arms—usually a matchlock, sword, and dagger, and clothing—they obeyed their own officers, but none besides; no machine-made officer could exercise any control over these.

We now come down to the period of tutelage by European officers, when Abbas Mirza, anxious to present something like a creditable front to an antagonist from the north, resolved, as aforementioned, to introduce European drill and discipline among his soldiers. Lindsay of the Madras army, Christie of the Bombay army, Hart, Sheil, to mention only a few English names, succeeded by their exertions at different times in working wonders on the various branches of the service—artillery, infantry, cavalry—not to mention similar efforts on the part of officers of other nationalities. Of the efforts made by these English officers, in particular, Colonel Sheil[1] himself records as follows:

"Major Christie was a man of considerable military endowments; he was killed at the battle of Aslanduz in 1812. His able successor was Major Hart, of the Royal Army. Under the auspices and indefatigable co-operation of Abbas Meerza, by whom absolute authority was confided to him, he brought the infantry of Azarbijan to a wonderful state of perfection. The artillery was placed under Lieutenant

[1] *Op. cit.*

Lindsay, afterwards Major-General Sir H. Lindsay. This officer acquired extraordinary influence in the army, and in particular among the artillery. He brought this branch of the forces in Azarbijan to such a pitch of real working perfection, and introduced so complete a system of *esprit de corps*, that to this day his name is venerated, and traces of his instruction still survive in the artillery of that province, which even now preserves some degree of efficiency."

Abbas Mirza died in the life-time of his father; Fath Ali Shah did not long survive him; he was succeeded by Muhammad Shah. Anglo-Persian relations changed and the work of training was quite worthily carried on by officers of other nationality in succession. But the cumulative effect of all this training was disappointing: internal discipline became lax; even parades were perfunctorily performed; the cavalry gradually lost its ancient repute, since the creation of the *Nizam*, to the prejudice of the tribal system. And the cause? Some suggest the want of the inspiring commanding leader of the earlier days; others, that the material was not drawn from the same sources; others, the irregularity of pay. The latter shortcoming may be illustrated by an anecdote of Fath Ali Shah who, when speaking to a foreign minister who had complimented him on the appearance of some of his regiments, replied: "Yes, they are excellent, and better still, though they have been three years without a fraction of pay, they never ask me for arrears."

Yet in the sixties of the nineteenth century, according to Mr. Robert Grant-Watson[1] for some time attached to H.M.'s Legation at Tehran, we gather that the army, in spite of various disabilities, still continued to make a good show.

[1] *A History of Persia from the beginning of the Nineteenth Century to the year* 1858. (1866.)

"The military force of Persia," he says, "consists, in theory, of a hundred thousand men, infantry, cavalry and artillery. The cavalry is nearly all irregular, and is in general only called on for local service under the chiefs of the particular district where it is raised. The Shah's body-guard consists of two regiments of regular cavalry, of about 800 men each, more or less. There has been lately raised another small troop of body-guards known by their accoutrements of silver. The irregular cavalry are variously habited, according to the custom of the country whence they are drawn. One small troop in Kurdistan is clad in mail and complete armour. There are about 5,000 artillerymen in the Persian army, and this branch of the service is by no means badly organised. It is their artillery that gives to the Persians the advantage in their contests with the Turkoman tribes."

Watson's opinion of the material was most favourable, but he condemned the prevalent system under which they worked—pay always in arrears and, when issued, reduced in amount by the exactions of the distributing officers, even from the highest grades downwards, lack of ability in the command, and the general unpopularity of the service for these and other reasons.

Coming nearer to our own times we may, in conclusion, give the views of an authority[1] who had exceptionally varied experiences of Persia and the Persian people during a long period from 1865–72, and we will then leave the reader to form his own conclusions on the military potentialities of Persia, having said enough to lead him to judge them, given the right conditions, as being of no mean order. In substance, Goldsmid was of opinion that the marching power and endurance of the *Sarbaz* was wonderful, and though better food might in some respects improve his physique, his frugality was such as to

[1] Major-General Sir Frederic J. Goldsmid.

account in some measure for his bodily strength. With good officers and good training the Persian soldier might be made very efficient. If wanting in the discipline considered in this country as essential to the well-being of the service, the fault was that of his superiors, by whom he was ill-commanded, ill-taught and ever accursed with an evil example. The moral value of the soldier, according to our authority, deteriorated as the social grade improved—promotion even to the rank of non-commissioned officers, becoming "the first step to demoralization." Remedy these defects, he says, and Persia "is so far important as a military power and military ally that she has, with all her misgovernment and short-comings, great resources for a powerful army."

Withal, in the operations of the Anglo-Persian campaign of 1856-7, it is true, the Persian army when put to the test is recorded to have made a sorry spectacle. At Mohammerah, Hunt[1] says: "the army seems literally to have vanished . . . at the last moment all courage had deserted the foe. . . . Their army fled, although the odds were greatly in their favour." But the question before us is not whether any section of an organized Persian army, but without long tradition behind it, was a match for a body of picked European troops with the finest equipment then available; but whether or no, the Persian soldier inherently possesses those attributes which, given the essential leadership, go to make up a doughty fighter. The answer can scarcely be in doubt, with the weight of evidence before us. The country does possess fighting elements of no mean order which, if rightly selected and given the right supreme leader and officers, go to make up a formidable force. The case is well summarised by Colonel

[1] *Outram and Havelock's Persian Campaign*, 1858.

Drouville[1] who had a share in the successive efforts made to form a disciplined Persian army, and who himself brought a body of regular cavalry to a considerable degree of discipline as lancers. The Persian people, he says in effect, have been distinguished from time immemorial by an eminently warlike character; history bears this out, and even the Romans were not always happy in their contests with them—Valerian was taken by Shapur I, and the Emperor Diogenes Romanus fell under the heel of Alp Arslan, whom he had defied. Persia has had, like almost all the nations of the world, her epochs of glory, and whenever she has been ruled over by a warlike king, she has shaken herself free of the apathy which is, in a way, natural to her character, and which has so often been the root cause of her failures.

The principal arm of Persia, Drouville goes on to say, consists, as with all Orientals, in cavalry, and he maintains that few can pride themselves more in the use of the sabre than the Persians. The Persian army is more or less strong according to the enemy with which it has to deal. Towards the Turks they show no fear. Persia could, if need be, dispose of more than 30,000 Kurds, who are certainly not their worst troops.

Space does not permit of inclusion within the scope of this chapter of detailed reference to that fine body of men, the South Persia Rifles, or the somewhat similar organisations which were started during the Great War under British auspices in Eastern and North-western Persia. It is sufficient tc say that the experiment of enlisting Persians and training them for the maintenance of order in their own country was carried out by selected British officers, drawn for the

[1] *Voyage en Perse*, 1828.

most part from the Indian Army, with entire success. The most pleasant relations existed throughout between the Persian officers and men and their British instructors. The exigencies of post-war politics necessitated the break-up of this corps, but it is satisfactory to know that a large proportion of the officers and men who received their training at Shiraz and elsewhere, under British officers, are incorporated in the new National Forces of Persia and are held in high esteem by their colleagues. Their martial qualities have at no time been in dispute, and the experience of Sir Percy Sykes, Col. W. A. K. Fraser and others, between 1916 and 1920, proved once more that the claims of British officers, during the early part of the last century, that Persians were capable of subjecting themselves to discipline and of being welded into a formidable fighting machine, were fully justified.

Prior to the Constitution of 1906, the military system prevailing in Persia was a modified form of conscription based upon the area of cultivated land and pastoral property of the tribes. In 1842 a survey of the cultivated land was made, and each unit (the amount of land which can be tilled by one plough) was liable to provide a soldier. In addition, the liability extended to a monetary contribution, one portion of which was applied towards the expenses of the conscript's family and paid direct to them, while the remainder was paid to the government in order to provide the fund for the pay and expenses of the soldiers. The injustice of the incidence of this system was great, because the survey was soon obsolete and changes of population involved much hardship. Under this scheme the country was divided into districts, each of which was compelled to provide a regiment, and the recruits from the tribes

and villages were drafted into these regiments which were mostly officered by the local land owner or the tribal chieftain.

When the Constitution was proclaimed, the armed forces of Persia consisted of a Cossack brigade numbering about 6,000 under Russian officers. There was also a number of regiments under arms in the capital recruited on the old basis, but later on disbanded owing to lack of funds. From 1906 to 1911 the Persian Government relied entirely on tribal forces and on guards recruited from each district for the enforcement of law and order. During this period the Cossack brigade was not utilized, as it was directly under Russian influence. It was, however, regularly paid, and prevented outbreaks of violence or anti-dynastic movements in the northern provinces.

In 1911 a gendarmerie under Swedish officers was organized as a force for the preservation of order and security on the highways of the country. A large sum of money was spent on this force, which in 1915 numbered about 8,000. It came under German influences during the Great War, and was disbanded.

In 1916 the Persian Government, under pressure from Russia and Great Britain, agreed to increase the number of Cossacks and to permit the formation of the South Persia Rifles under British officers. It should also be noted that from 1916 till 1920 the greater part of Persia was under occupation by foreign troops.

In 1921, when the *coup d'état* was effected, the armed forces of Persia consisted of the following:

A Cossack division, numbering 14,000.
The Central Brigade of Tehran, numbering 2,000.

South Persia Rifles, numbering 6,000. (This force was never considered by the Persians as a Persian force.)

The Gendarmerie, numbering 12,000. (This force had been re-organized since 1919.)

Local forces recruited by governors of different provinces the number of which varied.

In March, 1921, the gendarmerie, which till then was under the Ministry of Interior, was taken over by the Ministry of War, at the head of which was the present Shah. Towards the end of 1921 the re-organization of the army was started, and all the various armed forces of Persia were placed under the administration of the Ministry of War.

By 1924 the Persian army had been divided into five armies and one independent brigade, as follows:

The Central Army was stationed in Tehran and consisted of two brigades of infantry, one brigade of cavalry and one brigade of artillery.

The North-west Army had its headquarters in Tabriz and was responsible for the security in the province of Azerbaijan. It consisted of one brigade of infantry, one brigade of cavalry, one regiment of artillery and one company of engineers.

The Western Army had its headquarters at first in Hamadan and later in Kermanshah. It consisted of one brigade of infantry, one brigade of cavalry, one regiment of artillery, and one company of engineers.

The Southern Army had its headquarters first in Isfahan and later in Shiraz, and was composed of four mixed brigades, stationed in Shiraz, Isfahan, Kerman and Khuzistan, and one independent battalion, stationed at Bushire.

The Eastern Army had its headquarters in Meshed and was composed of several brigades, stationed in different parts of the province of Khurasan.

The Independent Brigade of the North was stationed in Gilan.

At the same time a separate police force was started, called *Amnieh*, to maintain security on the main roads.

In 1925 a law was passed by the Majlis providing for the registration of births, marriages, deaths, etc., throughout Persia. A few days later the Conscription Act was passed by the Majlis, which provided for universal military service for two years by all male subjects of Persia reaching the age of twenty-one, subject to the usual exemptions. Special provision was made to exempt all young men who had obtained a university education; those who were studying in secondary schools were required to serve only for one year.

In 1926 the Conscription Act was enforced in the districts where the Registration Act had been enforced. A certain amount of opposition was experienced, but to-day these laws are in force everywhere, except in the tribal districts. In 1931 the Conscription Act was further amended, and the exemptions were curtailed, so that all those who have had a university education must now serve in the army for one year, all secondary students for eighteen months, while all who are supporters of a family have now to serve for four and a half months.

The present organization of the army may thus be summarised. Since 1927 a gradual re-organisation has taken place. The five armies have been reduced to three, and the number of independent brigades has been increased, thus reducing the dangers inherent in the existence of large bodies of armed men under single commands.

The Ministry of War is under the personal supervision of the Shah, from whom the Chief of the General Staff takes his daily orders. The General Staff, presided over by the Chief of the General Staff,

is divided into four sections, each of which deals with certain specified duties. In addition to the General Staff, the Ministry of War is organised departmentally as follows:

1. Army Finance.
2. Arms and Ammunitions.
3. Finance Inspection (Audit).
4. Medical Department.
5. Conscription Department.
6. Arsenal.
7. Army Tribunals.
8. Quartermaster-General (Supplies).
9. Cash Office.
10. Department dealing with the breeding of horses, camels, mules, etc.
11. Veterinary Department.
12. Engineering Department.
13. Military Schools.

The real work of mobilization, direction of armed forces, fighting, etc., is carried out by the General Staff; the other departments of the War Office receive their orders from the Chief of the General Staff acting as intermediary between the whole organization and the Shah, who, like every great Asiatic ruler and administrator, regards the army as the backbone of the government of which he is the responsible head.

The following is the present strength of the Persian army:—

21 regiments of infantry.
13 regiments of cavalry.
9 regiments of artillery.
1 regiment of engineers, and
15 mixed regiments.

These are distributed in the following manner :—

1. In Tehran there are 2 brigades of infantry (8 regiments), 1 regiment of engineers, 2 brigades of artillery (1 field brigade, composed of 2 regiments, and one mountain, composed of 2 regiments), 4 regiments of cavalry, and the Royal Air Force composed of about 35 aeroplanes, some of which are fighting and some instruction and inspection planes. All these brigades are independent and responsible to the General Staff.
2. In the province of Azerbaijan there are two armies, one for the eastern districts with headquarters at Tabriz (composed of 2 mixed brigades, each consisting of 2 regiments of infantry, 1 of cavalry, and 1 of artillery), and the other for the western districts, with headquarters at Rezaieh (formerly Urmia), with similar units.
3. The Eastern army, with its headquarters in Meshed, is composed of 1 mixed brigade and 4 mixed regiments.
4. Independent brigade of Kurdistan.
5. Independent brigade of Luristan.
6. Independent brigade of Kerman.
7. Independent brigade of Baluchistan.
8. Independent brigade of Fars.
9. Independent brigade of Asterabad.
10. Independent brigade of Khuzistan.
11. Independent regiment of Gilan.
12. Independent regiment of Isfahan, and
13. Independent regiment of Kermanshah.

Most of these independent brigades are composed of two regiments of infantry, one of cavalry and one of artillery, while others of less importance are composed of one regiment of infantry, one or two squadrons of cavalry, and one or more batteries of artillery.

The total number of the armed forces of Persia at the present time (1932) is something between 70 and

80 thousand men, but the exact figures are not made public. On an average each regiment of infantry has about 2,000 men, each cavalry regiment 800, and each artillery regiment 600; but the number in each regiment varies with the number of conscripts available in the particular district. For instance, the infantry regiments of Tehran have each 2,400 men, while that of Isfahan has 1,200. The War Office aims at an army of 100,000 within the next two years.

There are between six and seven thousand officers in the Persian army, one third of whom have received modern military training either in Persia or in France. The officers are well and regularly paid and their pay compares favourably with officers of Continental armies. For the past twelve months the men have likewise been regularly paid, the rank and file receiving a nominal sum of seven and a half krans a month (about half a crown). Before conscription was introduced, the pay was 15 to 20 times as much.

There are two military schools in Tehran which are doing excellent work in the training of officers. Both schools are staffed by teachers who have received their military training abroad and have had, in addition, considerable experience of service in Persia.

Admission to the first or "Officers' School" is for candidates who hold the secondary school diploma. The course lasts for two years and, on graduation, the candidate obtains the rank of second lieutenant. Admission to the second or "Junior Officers' School" is easier, the course is also two years, and on graduation the candidate obtains the rank of third lieutenant, corresponding to "aspirant" in the French army. Most of the students of the Junior Officers' School are promising youths who have had

a fair education and have served in the army as non-commissioned officers.

In addition, the War Office sends a number of students every year to France and Germany for further technical instruction. Formerly they went to French military schools for the whole of their military training, but since the establishment of the Officers' School in Tehran, students are selected from among the officers of the army regardless of rank, and are sent to Europe only for technical training of a higher order. At the moment there are over a hundred such students in Europe. In addition to the above, each brigade has its own school for training non-commissioned officers.

The Persian Navy has only recently been inaugurated. It comprises six gunboats built in Italy for service in the Persian Gulf only, as Soviet Russia has a monopoly of armaments on the Caspian. More than 100 men recruited from the southern provinces were sent to Italy to be trained as sailors; and about 50 students underwent training under Italian auspices as naval officers. A naval workshop is under construction at Bushire and the establishment of a naval school is contemplated.

The Air Force of Persia is at present very small, but financial provision has been made for the purchase and equipment of fifty fighting planes by the end of 1933.

During the past two years purchases of arms and ammunition of various types totalling £1,200,000 have been made in Czechoslovakia, including 150,000 rifles and a number of field and mountain guns. A further sum of £1,500,000 is to be spent in 1932-33 on arms and aeroplanes.

The Tehran Arsenal comprises a factory capable of turning out rifles at the rate of eight a day, and

also a cartridge factory. About twelve miles from Tehran is situated a factory, equipped with plant brought from Germany two years ago, where smokeless powder together with by-products such as sulphuric acid, alcohol, etc., are produced.

The number of the Security Force, known as *Amnieh*, responsible for the safety of the Persian highways, is about 12,000 and it is proposed to increase it by another 3,000 during the next two years. It is recruited on a voluntary basis, and the pay is 90 krans per month.

It will be clear from the foregoing pages, in which I have dealt with past history in what may to some readers appear to be disproportionate length, that the traditionally warlike instincts of the Persian race are being sedulously fostered on modern lines by the present monarch, himself a soldier of experience, with all the prestige which attaches to military prowess. It will likewise be evident that the armed forces at his disposal are, and must always be, inadequate to offer effective opposition to any force that might be brought to bear on Persia by the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, or even by Turkey with an effective male population at least twice as great as that of Persia and with far greater practical experience and strategic advantages. The probability of a military menace from the direction of India, 'Iraq or Afghanistan, or from the sea is clearly so remote as to be negligible.

The Persian army, as in Japan and in accordance with the unbroken tradition of every Asiatic and most European countries, is under the direct supervision of the monarch, to whom alone it is responsible. The War Office is even less under parliamentary control than other departments of

the State; it is an educational instrument of the first importance, and in internal politics almost the only force that counts. It carries more weight than the priesthood: it exercises authority concurrently with all civil authorities. It is the means whereby the sovereign power, rather than the parliament of the people, exercises authority. It is, in the Old World, a very ancient pattern: it will not be a matter of surprise if, during the next twenty years, it becomes a new model for many countries in Europe.

CHAPTER XIII

PERSIAN EDUCATIONAL TRADITIONS AND THE SCHOLASTIC SYSTEM

"Where the innate capacity is good, education may
"make an impression upon it: but no furbisher knows
"how to give a polish to badly tempered iron.
"Were they to take the ass of Jesus to Mecca, on his
"return from that pilgrimage he would still be an ass."

SA'DI—*Gulistan VII, On the Effects of Education.*

UNTIL quite recently the strongest element in Persian education was Religion, with which in Persia as elsewhere education has ever been associated. For thirteen centuries the Zoroastrian religion was the nucleus of education, which was regarded as a matter of the first importance to the welfare of the State, and formed the subject of a special chapter of the Sacred Book—the *Avesta.* When Persians came under Arab rule they changed their religion for the most part, but not the tradition of religious education, which was from the outset the monopoly of the Islamic divines and when, in the eleventh century, regular colleges were founded, the education programme was still essentially religious, and was until 1851 wholly controlled by the priesthood, who administered the endowments left by pious men for educational purposes. Besides these colleges, there existed the *maktabs,* often attached to mosques, which were elementary schools usually

taught by one teacher, almost always a turban-wearer, one of the clergy. These two kinds of schools (and, of course, private home teaching for the wealthy classes) provided education for the people, and Elisée Réclus could write of Persia in the second half of the last century: "Elementary instruction is more developed than in certain European countries. To nearly all the mosques is attached a school where the children learn at least to repeat passages from the Koran and strophes from the national poets."

It was thus natural that the agitations which led up to the grant of a Constitution in 1906 should have been engineered largely by the religious leaders, and that the tenets of the Ithn Ja'fariya, or Shi'ism should have been adopted as the religion of the state. This was followed by the provision of Article 18 that "the acquisition and study of all sciences, arts and crafts is free, save in the case of such as may be forbidden by the ecclesiastical law," and of Article 20 that "all publications, except heretical books and matters hurtful to the perspicuous religion (of Islam) are free, and are exempt from the censorship," and the whole body of law that was passed by the Majlis on education was permeated with the same spirit.

Article 19 of the Constitution reads as follows:—

> "The foundation of schools at the expense of the Government and the Nation, and compulsory instruction, must be regulated by the Ministry of Science and Arts, and all schools and colleges must be under the supreme control and supervision of that Ministry."

The Minister of Education or, to give him his full title, the Minister of Sciences, Religious Endowments and Fine Arts has very wide powers: those of his

Executive Secretary, who is generally also an Under Secretary of State, are scarcely less wide, and with the authority of the minister he may perform almost any ministerial duties, which range from the creation of elementary schools, or *maktabs*, to the sending of students abroad, the organization of libraries, museums, reading-rooms, and literary and scientific associations, the acquisition of antiques and control of archæological excavations, and the preservation of monuments and holy places. The ministry is, however, not free to select its staff, for the Civil Service Law of 1922 designates the persons from whom administrative staff may be chosen, both at headquarters and in the provinces: the system thus tends to become unduly bureaucratic and rigid, but the powers vested in the ministry are so wide, and the terms of the Law leaves so much discretion to the administration, that changes can be and are made in the light of experience. "Local Government" has in such matters no share whatever: there are no bodies, such as County Councils in England or States in the U.S.A., to whom authority can be delegated. The country is divided for educational purposes into provinces each under a Director, responsible to the Ministry. The system works, and on the whole works well, and its scope is not limited to Persia, for Persian schools are maintained in the Caucasus, 'Iraq and Turkey, and might with advantage be established in India and Egypt where Persians are numerous and where they find, as do other nationalities, that the indigenous educational system is wholly foreign to their needs.

Article 8 of the Fundamental Law on Education, passed in 1911, classifies the schools into public and private according to the source from which the income is derived. The public schools are all recently

founded. The private schools may be divided into four categories: *maktabs*, religious colleges, and national and foreign schools. The national schools are those founded by individuals or communities of the Persian Nation, as distinguished from the Persian State. The foreign schools are those created by American, English, and French missionaries, forty-six in number, and four small schools established by the Soviet Government to educate the children of Russians who are temporarily residing in Persia. The *maktabs* and religious colleges are those that have existed from time immemorial, and will be discussed subsequently.

Article 15 of the Fundamental Law provides for four grades of modern education: village schools, town schools, secondary schools, higher institutions. The first two are of elementary level, and are at the present time differentiated only by the number of years of schooling. The system is unilateral. The elementary schools are the same for all classes of people, but a few of the public schools situated in large towns charge fees not exceeding fifteen krans a month. The village schools retain the children four years, the town schools six years. The secondary course is one of six years and leads to higher schools.

Compulsory attendance is not yet enforced, and not more than 10 per cent of the total child population attend school, though in the towns from 25 per cent to 50 per cent of children of appropriate age do so. Admission to the elementary schools is free, but in large cities there are certain elementary schools for admission to which a small fee is levied.

"The aim of elementary education," writes Issa Khan Sadiq, in his valuable treatise[1] on which I

[1] *Modern Persia and Her Educational System*, New York, 1931.

have drawn extensively in writing this chapter, "is to make God known to the child, and to make of the child a Persian who possesses the skills and abilities necessary for adult life."

"Education," he remarks, quoting Sir Michael Sadler, "being a corollary of the social order is so mingled with the whole of life, so directly dependent upon all the elements that make a nation, that it is inconceivable to speak of the one without speaking of the other." He summarizes the ideals of the Persians in the following words —

(1) Persians desire to have a country strong and independent to preserve their entity and their national life.

(2) They wish to have a Persia prosperous through scientific development of her natural resources in agriculture and mines, and through exchange of those products with other countries.

(3) They desire healthy citizens, able to earn their living, to enjoy life, and to contribute to the enjoyment and happiness of their fellow-citizens.

(4) They aspire that Persia should have a place of honour among the nations of the earth by contributing the country's best to the culture of the world.

(5) They seek with the blessing of God to harmonize, at the same time, the principles of the Muhammadan Religion with the requirements of the time and with the needs of intercourse with other beliefs of mankind.

The aims of education he summarizes, not less simply and eloquently, as follows:—

"Education must create national solidarity through appreciation of the common culture and the spiritual heritage and capital of the Nation's past. It must form in the Persian citizen good habits of work, both intellectual and manual. It must train

youth to collect facts, to analyse problems, and to think independently. It must make the young people realize that God's blessing is acquired by righteousness and tolerance."

Having set forth these ideals and aims Issa Khan summarizes the educational programme before the nation at somewhat greater length, in words which demonstrate his mastery not only of the English language, but of the essential problems that confront his generation. I make no apology for quoting the passage in full.

(1) To create in the minds of the people a living consciousness of the past by showing the great achievements of the race during its long existence, in spite of great calamities and misfortunes, wars and struggles.

(2) To train boys and girls to become good citizens of modern Persia, that is, to share those ideals which are the ideals of the Nation, and to co-operate with their countrymen for the attainment of those ideals. To train the girls to be worthy mothers of the coming generation, upon whose education rests the future of the Nation.

(3) To teach by precept and by example that God extends his blessings to those who have good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, which are the bases of righteousness and tolerance.

(4) To teach the rural people and the tribes how to live, how to make a home, how to furnish it, how to prepare food and clothing, how to prevent diseases and to acquire health habits; in other words, how to live may be more important than mere learning of the rudiments of literacy.

(5) In secondary schools and in institutions of higher learning and the university the gifted youth must be trained for leadership and service in the State. They must be given a vision of Persia's place, past and present, in the world, with the ideal of leading the

country in culture, science, technology, business, statesmanship, and government to such a height as befits a progressive State.

(6) In special schools those skilled workers who are to lead in their callings must be trained for vocational efficiency and must be given a sense of their responsibility.

(7) The promotion of health and healthful sports must be stressed in all schools.

(8) Finally, youths must be trained to use their leisure time intelligently by æsthetic activities (paintings, songs, music, dramatics, and plays), by social activities (visiting, parties, receptions, competitive games, clubs), by pleasure in reading, by intellectual investigation, and by constructive activities.

Issa Khan Sadiq is perhaps ahead of his contemporaries, but not so far in front that he is unable to lead: the views he expresses are unquestionably those of the Shah and of the Ministry of Education which he has done so much to shape. The clarity of thought and moderation of language displayed is some measure of the intellectual ability of his race—an ability which in every century has enabled Persians, whether as rulers or as servants of foreign states, to rise to the highest offices. Of female education he has much to say that is wise, and his criticisms of the existing system are well balanced and constructive. Writing in English, primarily for American readers, he is critical of the tendency of the Persian Government, for historical reasons which he explains in some detail, to follow French models in educational and other matters. Dr. Ali Akbar Siassi, on the other hand,[1] himself imbued with French ideals and writing in French, takes the view that the Napoleonic system of administration, French

[1] *La Perse au contact de l'Occident.* Paris, 1931.

culture and the French outlook on world affairs, are better guides to the makers of modern Persia than those of any other European country.

On one point, at least, the balance of argument is in favour of Dr. Siassi's views. The system of Local Government which obtains in England and in Germany whereby, in England, an immense variety of functions are delegated by government departments to local bodies, whose composition and organization are often ill adapted to execute the will of the State, is certainly unsuited to Persia: the French system of centralized control, is unquestionably better suited to Oriental conditions.[1]

Another aspect of the Persian educational programme which bears the impress of French rather than British traditions is the insistence on vocational education, and the linking of compulsory military service with the training of the youth of the country in the duties of citizenship. The Ministry of War not only educates tens of thousands of persons every year, but organizes classes to teach reading, writing and arithmetic to adults, whilst the Ministry of Justice conducts adult classes of a higher level, in which many hundreds of officials and graduates from secondary schools study at night and, after passing examinations, are appointed to the service of the Courts. Moreover, the Ministry of Education sends every year to the principal universities of Europe several hundreds of students, selected for the most part by competitive examination, whilst several hundred other young men follow their example, at the cost of their parents. Of the total number thus sent a larger proportion go to France than to any other country.

[1] The system of Local Government in India is based upon English ideas, and has, generally speaking, failed to take root.

Reference has already been made (vide p. 99) to the work of the Stuart Memorial College at Isfahan, under the control of the Christian Missionary Society, and of the American Mission College in Tehran. These institutions were and still are in some respects the pioneers of Higher Education in Persia. Young men who have graduated at these Colleges, especially at Isfahan, are playing creditable parts in many spheres of life, for the aim of both Colleges is to turn out good Persians, with the high moral standards predicated by Issa Khan. My experience of the work of many graduates of Stuart Memorial College enables me to say with confidence that the foundations have been well and truly laid, and that Persia is the richer for the presence in her midst of these quasi-autonomous institutions, directed by men with an altruism of aim and a technical competence which deserves our unstinted admiration, and the fullest measure of practical support.

In conclusion, it is fair to mention that the Persian ideal is "education for those who can profit by it." It is an ancient philosophy, which was embodied seven hundred years ago by Sa'di in the three following verses—

> "Waste not thy labour in scattering seed upon a briny soil, for it can never be made to yield spikenard."
>
> "Rain, on the purity of whose nature there is no disagreement, cherishes the tulip in the garden and the common weed in the salt marsh."
>
> "The wolf-cub must prove a wolf at last, even though he may be brought up among men."

The idea, still deeply embedded in the educational traditions of Eastern countries under British rule,

that every boy and girl should have a literary education, has not taken root in Persia. Teachers are free to weed out unsatisfactory pupils and do so ruthlessly. The path on which the feet of the younger generation of Persians has been set is steep and stony, but it is being traversed with courage under the guidance of men such as Issa Khan Sadiq, who have emancipated themselves from the prepossessions with which the theory of education was encumbered in the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PROBLEMS OF POPULATION AND OF DECADENCE

THE sub-title of the series of which this book forms a part is "A Survey of World Forces." The fact that the population of the world as a whole during the past century has doubled, and is increasing every year by some fifteen to twenty millions is of all world forces the greatest. No apology is therefore needed for examining the facts, so far as they can be ascertained, in their relation to Persia.

There is little doubt that the population, at present estimated at twelve millions, is either stationary or increasing very slowly: the same is true of the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan, Arabia and Turkey. There is, in all these countries, an appreciable excess of adult males over adult females and, in the absence of elaborate provision for the maintenance at the public cost of the insane, the mentally deficient, and the crippled or infirm, a small proportion of the latter categories in comparison with "progressive" European countries. Owing to the lack of sanitary and public health services, the scarcity of doctors and the rigorous conditions under which the vast majority of the population live, the "expectation of life" between the ages of twenty-five and fifty is less, probably by from five to fifteen years, than in England.[1]

[1] cf. East, p. 216. Expectation of life of males in England at 30—34 years, at 60—13 years. In India 22 years and 10 years respectively.

In consequence the proportion of "dependents" in the total population is probably lower, and their standard of life is, by convention and necessity, a bare subsistence. As stated elsewhere, the population of the fifty towns in Persia of 10,000 inhabitants[1] or over is estimated at two and a half millions, or about one fifth of the total population. This may usefully be compared with the position in England, where 22 per cent of the population is "rural," in France 54 per cent, and in the U.S.A. 48 per cent. The population of India has increased since the census of 1872 by rather more than 50 per cent (from 202 million to 323 million): that of Russia in the same period from 80 million to 140 million. The population of Afghanistan has probably changed but little, that of Turkey is probably appreciably smaller than it was within the same geographical

[1] The following table based on official figures shows the estimated population of the most important towns in Persia.

TOWN	POPULATION	TOWN	POPULATION
Tehran	320,000	Firdaus (Tun)	24,000
Tabriz	240,000	Urmia	23,000
Meshed	152,000	Pahlevi (Enzeli)	22,000
Isfahan	127,000	Sehneh	22,000
Resht	70,000	Shahrud	22,000
Abadan	70,000	Sabzawar	22,000
Shiraz	54,000	Nishapur	22,000
Kermanshah	50,000	Simnan	20,000
Hamadan	50,000	Ahwaz	18,000
Kashan	50,000	Shushtar	18,000
Kazvin	50,000	Quchan	17,000
Yezd	50,000	Nehavend	17,000
Barfrush	45,000	Turshiz	17,000
Sultanabad	42,000	Damghan	16,000
Burujird	35,000	Qumisheh	16,000
Kerman	35,000	Asterabad	15,000
Qum	35,000	Dizful	15,000
Ardebil	35,000	Tusar Khan	12,000
Zenjan	30,000	Khurramabad	12,000
Khoi	30,000	Deh Kurd	12,000
Bushire	27,000	Bandar Abbas	11,000
Najafabad	28,000		

area before the war, being estimated in 1927, probably somewhat optimistically, at 13,600,000.

The population of 'Iraq was estimated in 1919 at about $2\frac{3}{4}$ millions: the partial census of 1922–24 generally confirms this figure, and there is no reason to think that during the last decade there has been an appreciable increase. No figures are available as to the increase of population in the Asiatic States of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, but the official figures for 1925 (quoted by Leo Chuzza Money) are as follows:—

Soviet Socialist Republic	Trans-Caucasus	5,500,000
	Uzbeg	6,000,000
	Turkman	1,100,000
Allied Soviet Republics	Bukhara National Soviet Republic	3,000,000
	Khwarazm do.	500,000
		16,100,000

There is some reason to believe that the population in these areas is increasing as a consequence of extensive irrigation schemes to the east, and industrial developments to the west of the Caspian. There is, however, little pressure on the land in the regions beyond Persia's northern frontier, and such migration into Persia as has occurred is due to political rather than to economic causes. Nor in Persia itself is there any "pressure on the land" in the usual sense of the term; all the available evidence leads to a contrary conclusion. Landlords find it difficult to get tenants: the vast expanses of terraced hillside to be seen all over Southern Persia, which have been abandoned for many centuries,

point to the existence in earlier times of a highly skilled and industrious population practising methods of cultivation, now unknown in Persia, which if utilized to-day would at least double the area of land under seed.

The traveller in these regions cannot but gain the impression that the population, on both sides of the Gulf, has decreased greatly within historical times; the same is true in Mesopotamia, which is, however, beyond the scope of this work. When did this decline set in? Was it catastrophic, or gradual, the result of war, pestilence or famine—or of long continued climatic changes? The latter presumption we may discard with some confidence; there is no evidence of permanent climatic change in the last thousand years or so, and much evidence to the contrary. Such records as have come down to us, to quote only one instance, indicate that the northern limit of the date tree, which is very sensitive to frost, was the same in earliest times as in the tenth century and at present. The extreme antiquity of the ancient canal systems in Khuzistan, some of which are at least 2,500 years old, of *qanat* construction on the plateau, and the evidence of alluvial deposits in lacustrine areas and valleys all tend to show that there has been little change in the rainfall in historic times: this is probably true of Mesopotamia and Palestine also. The food of the people and their cattle are unchanged, as also their general habits of life, with one important exception, viz., the nomad population appears to have been smaller and to have played a less important part in South Persia in earlier times than at present. In Fars they do not appear to have existed in large numbers before the Mongol invasion: they are scarcely referred to in the *Fars-Namah* of Ibn ul Balkhi.

In the plains of Khuzistan, and in many parts of the Kuhgalu and Bakhtiari Mountains, the nomad way of life, was and still is an economic necessity, as it enables a far larger population to support life than could be accommodated in the same area in settled villages, whilst those who lead it are healthier, hardier, happier and better fed and clothed than villagers. Until the Qajar dynasty came to the throne, flourishing villages existed in predominantly nomadic areas: during the last 150 years anarchy has gained the upper hand; the villages have been in many cases wiped out by the short-sighted folly of the tribes, who have become progressively poorer as a result.

In Luristan, even more than elsewhere, the traveller is struck with the signs of former cultivation over great areas now deserted and rarely visited, even by nomads, for more than a few days a year. In the low country from Khanaqin to Bandar Abbas where to-day scarcely a single settled village is to be found in a week's journey in any direction, hillsides are elaborately terraced wherever there is sufficient soil to make cultivation possible. The terracing is less well marked in the higher valleys and disappears altogether at 7,000 feet or 8,000 feet—the climatic limits of wheat and barley cultivation.

With this intensive cultivation are associated the foundations of forts and of old dwellings. These remains, ascribed in Luristan to the days of Noshirwan (A.D. 531) bear every indication of a far greater antiquity: the foundations, which alone remain, are of great unhewn boulders, set in straight lines to form rectangles: neither lime cement nor gypsum mortar seem to have been used in construction: the exposed face of the limestone boulders is deeply

pitted by sub-aerial action: the buried side almost as smooth as if it had been taken from the torrent bed a few years ago. This is also true of the boundary walls or defensive ramparts to be seen in narrow passes—e.g., the Kam Firuz pass, south of Cyrus' Tomb on the way to Shiraz, and the pass from Dizful to Qilab below the Bard i Balla. To get some idea of the length of time needed thus to pit and wear down the surface of limestone boulders it is only necessary to note the surface of the inscribed limestone rocks at Bisitun and Persepolis, which are almost as smooth to-day as when they were fresh from the hands of the sculptor.

It is reasonable to suppose that South Persia was populated before Mesopotamia, facilities for easy pasturage all the year round being greater, defence against enemies and wild beasts easier, thanks to hill-tops, caves and easily barred ravines, whilst the oak trees, with their almost unfailing crop of acorns, were a certain source of food, warmth and shelter and doubtless furnished, as now, the staff of life for several months of the year to needy nomads—the Prodigal Sons of the present day. This population probably grew steadily in numbers and power as the centuries passed, expanding into every possible area and slowly developing the pastoral and agricultural arts.

Of the Achaemenian monarchs and their predecessors we know but little as yet; the devoted labours of Professor Herzfeld will doubtless, in due course, yield a rich harvest. This much is certain, that not only did they bear rule over a rich and cultured people, but themselves succeeded to a kingdom in which the arts and crafts of civilization had reached a high level, higher perhaps than anything in contemporary Egypt.

The Sasanian monarchs built a network of paved roads from south to north and from east to west, bridging the great rivers and ravines, and erecting caravansarais and toll-gates. There is no part of the Zagros from Khanaqin to Isfahan and Shiraz in which traces of these ancient tracks cannot be found, running up hill and down dale like the Roman roads in England, zig-zagging up precipitous slopes, and cutting into the solid rock where necessary. The extension of central authority over great areas and the construction of these substantial roads and bridges, which are far more numerous than the needs of trade can ever have demanded, may well have given an economic impetus to nomad life, and it is probably during this period that the habit of long tribal migrations of 200 or 300 miles first took root. The Arabs, when they conquered Persia in the seventh-ninth centuries, far excelled their predecessors in the size and magnificence of their bridges, many of which remain almost intact to this day; they do not appear to have done much to the roads, but there can be little doubt that they sought to keep them open to trade, and that they were still extensively used.

Ancient Islamic graves clustered round shrines are to be seen at frequent intervals along these now forgotten routes, and the ruins of stone-built villages, in valleys that have been deserted for many centuries, testify to a thriving population which must have looked to the traffic on the roads, as well as to agriculture, for a living. Tarhan, Khurramabad, Malamir and a number of other sites, now marked only by mounds round which the black tents of the nomad are pitched for a few months of the year, were thriving cities in Sasanian days and for some centuries after. When and why they sank into

oblivion we do not know, but it seems clear that by the time the Safavid monarchs came to the throne, the process was far advanced. The principal factor was probably the Mongol invasion of Central Persia which, though it never reached the Zagros and scarcely affected the hill dwellers, by wiping out the central government and by depopulating the principal centres of population, let loose forces of disorder.

Some writers hold that Persia has not even yet recovered from the ravages of the Mongol invaders, and that the under-populated state of the country is due primarily to them. There is, however, little evidence to support this view; the detailed description of the large cities recorded by sixteenth and seventeenth century travellers suggest, on the contrary, that the recovery was by that time complete in the cities, but the wars of the Safavid monarchs and of Nadir Shah and of Qajar misgovernment have probably prevented the countryside regaining the prosperity which prevailed before the Mongol invasion took place.

Under the Safavid monarchs there was a revival of prosperity in the towns and the principal trade routes appear to have been reopened, but epidemics, famines, occasional earthquakes[1] and, above all, a comparatively low fertility rate, have combined to keep the population at a figure certainly not higher in the twentieth than in the sixteenth century.

Whilst in South-West Persia, I asked some five hundred middle-aged men of the peasant and nomad type for details of their families. The results may be summarized briefly as follows:

[1] *Earthquakes in Persia.* Wilson, Bulletin of School of Oriental Studies, 1930.

The average number of children born living per family was 5; the average number who reached maturity—say 16 years of age—was 3. The average age of marriage in the case of men was high for an Eastern country, about 25. Nineteen men out of twenty had only one wife living: one in ten had married again on the death of the first wife.

Professor Gounard, in a recent work,[1] concludes that to the ancient Aryan and Semitic peoples, population was a question of religion; to classical antiquity, one of politics; to the Middle Ages, one of morals; under mercantilism, again of politics; from the eighteenth century, mainly one of economics; at present, let us hope, one of sociology (pp. 341, 350). "*La viriculture intensive*" he remarks, "*est en opposition avec la viriculture extensive.*" It is doubtful whether this aphorism is applicable to Asia. In Persia to-day, as in Turkey and Arabia, there is, as yet, little if any effort to struggle upwards in the social scale, but the absorption of energy involved by daily labour of bread-winning, especially on the wife, appears to limit effective fertility, for the families of the well-to-do are noticeably larger, though the survival rate is also very low.

The possibility that successive visitations of plague, pestilence and famine may have laid waste the Middle East, including Persia, in a greater degree than neighbouring countries deserves careful consideration, if only for its bearing on modern needs. The locust and the grasshopper are perhaps the greatest of plagues in modern Persia. The country is so sparsely populated and so easily invaded from equally desert areas on its borders that preventive measures are unlikely to succeed.

[1] *Histoire des Doctrines de la Population*, 1923.

Walford[1] mentioned Persia as having been ravaged by famine and pestilence in 1299 and 1581 and by famine in 1871, but does not mention locusts, though they figure frequently in his reference to famines in Egypt; locusts are never mentioned by Firdausi, nor so far as I can ascertain, in any early Persian literature,[2] and they are not mentioned in the long series of Letters of the East India Company. In matters relating to Persian history the *argumentum ab silentio* is more than usually unreliable, and I do no more than suggest that the subject deserves closer study than it has yet received. It is conceivable that the locust and the grasshopper may have spread to Persia, as a consequence of the extension of grazing, due to the growth of nomadism, resulting in widespread deforestation in the very regions which are now the favourite breeding grounds of these pests.

Of the occurrence in Persia of pestilences, such as bubonic plague, cholera, and the type of influenza which swept over the world in 1918-20, costing more in human life than four years of war, there is little documentary evidence in Persia. Cholera is not infrequent, but has hitherto usually been local in its incidence owing to the absence of rapid means of communication for human beings, the sole effective carriers for long distances in hot countries. Both cholera and plague appear to have been imported into Persia from India or 'Iraq and never to have become endemic. The first definitely recorded epidemic of cholera in Persia is that of 1820, which had its origin in Bengal in 1817 and slowly spread to

[1] *On the Famines of the World*, Journal Statistical Soc. Sept., 1878.

[2] They are mentioned in Hamdullah al Mustawfi al Qazvini's Zoological Section of the Nuzhat-ul-Qulub, pp. 37, 67. It is possible, however, that the author's remarks are based on second-hand knowledge from Arabian writers.

Asia Minor. It appeared again in Persia in 1830 and spread to England in 1832; it was not until 1837 that this epidemic subsided in Europe. A fresh outbreak occurred in India and China in 1841 and 1850 and spread through Persia to Europe. In 1865 steamers from India carried the infection from India more rapidly than in former years, and in the following year England and the U.S.A. were affected. The last important epidemic was that of 1892–5. It began in India in March, 1894, at Hardwar, it reached Kabul on 19th April, and Meshed on 26th May, Baku on June 18th and thence to Europe; 63,000 persons are said to have perished in Persia alone. Since then epidemics, which always definitely originate in India or in 'Iraq, have been kept within bounds by the Sanitary Service which was established at Persian ports in 1894 as a consequence of the International Sanitary Conference of 1894: to this Conference both Persia and Turkey were for the first time parties. A scheme was drawn up and ratified (in 1898) by Great Britain and Persia—but not by Turkey, whose sanitary activities were regulated by political prepossessions rather than by scientific principles—quarantine[1] stations were established at the principal ports on both sides of the Persian Gulf,[2] and at frontier posts, and the sanitary defences of Persia are to-day as good as those of any

[1] The period qualifying for admission is now five days from the last infected port. Cf. Pepys *Diary*. 26.11.1663. O.E.D. *sub voce*. Making of all ships . . . to perform their "quarantine of thirty days," as Sir Richard Browne expressed it . . . contrary to the import of the word (though, in the general acception, it signifies now the thing not the time spent in doing it). The late Lord Curzon, as Viceroy of India, did his best to replace the word by a suitable periphrasis, but in vain.

[2] Those at Persian ports on the Persian Gulf were, until 1928, staffed by personnel supplied by the Government of India, at the request of the Persian Government, which from 1864, if not from an earlier period, had looked to the British Consul-General at Bushire to organize and maintain measures of sanitary control, as only British ships were in practice concerned.

nation in Asia. Epidemics since 1894 have been frequent, but they have never been severe except in relatively small areas. It seems probable, from the complete absence of any reference thereto in history that cholera was unknown in early times, and only crept into Persia in the nineteenth century as a result of improved communications, and this course of infection being now under control, it is unlikely again to cause serious anxiety.[1]

The highly efficient sanitary and medical services of the Anglo-Persian Oil Coy., Ltd., have had a powerful influence in S.W. Persia and in an even wider sphere in spreading practical knowledge of the cause and prevention of cholera and other epidemics.

Bubonic plague is both more ancient and more modern than cholera, for while cholera is of recent introduction in Europe, and even in Asia cannot be traced back with certainty to an earlier date than the second decade of the nineteenth century, plague, on the other hand, existed in Libya as early as the third century B.C., and ravaged Europe in the sixth century of the Christian Era. In the fourteenth century, under the name of the Black Death, it destroyed not less than one-fourth of the entire population of Europe, and was the cause of the Great Plague of London in 1664–5. It is believed to have come from the East, via Genoa: it became endemic, but during the nineteenth century it gradually retreated towards the shores of the Mediterranean, and is now virtually unknown in Europe. It was probably of periodic occurrence in Asia from very early times, but we have no certain knowledge of the subject previous to 1773–4, when it devastated

[1] According to the final figures of the cholera outbreak in 'Iraq in 1931 there were 1,119 cases and 599 deaths in Basra and 1,215 cases and 846 deaths in the rest of the kingdom. The cases and deaths in South-West Persia were probably about 200 and 100 respectively.

Basra, causing one thousand deaths a day and a total loss estimated at 200,000 lives. In 1802 and 1831 it broke out again at Basra and also at Baghdad, which was depopulated as Basra had been in 1773. After thirty years it reappeared in the Hindiya district of 'Iraq, and remained endemic until 1881, if indeed it was ever stamped out. In 1876 the disease was carried by pilgrims from Karbala to the village of Jallakan on the Karun, where more than a fourth of the population perished, and it spread thence to Dizful and Shushtar, causing 2,500 deaths, of which 1,800 were in Shushtar.

Plague has visited Khuzistan frequently since 1876, but never with such disastrous results, and it has on occasions broken out in the coastal districts north and east of Bushire. The diminished loss of life is more likely to be due to a lessening virulence of the germ than to the efficacy of any sanitary system; and it is easy to imagine, from the known facts of visitations in the last one hundred and fifty years, that it may well have swept across Persia many times during the past two thousand years.

Smallpox has been known and feared in Asia from remote antiquity: it is recorded in the sixth century, and the Persian physician, Al Razi, described its symptoms clearly. It was spread throughout Europe by returning Crusaders—though it almost certainly existed in Europe from the sixth century and perhaps earlier. The Eastern form is at present far more virulent, when contracted by Europeans, than the Western type, but amongst Persians the mortality from smallpox in Persia is comparatively low; yet it, too, may have contributed from time to time to depopulate great areas. There is, at present, less smallpox in Persia than at any previous period of which we have records,

thanks, in part, to active measures of prophylaxis, and in part to the fact that the germ itself appears, at the moment, to be of lessening virulence.

Of the possible social causes of a stationary or declining population involving racial decadence, there is little or no evidence in Persia. It is a commonplace of historical criticism that nations have, in Shakespeare's phase, "their exits and their entrances"; when they are playing a notable and spectacular part on the world's stage, they are regarded as "progressive"; when they cease to exercise military power and political dominion beyond their old borders, they are popularly regarded as "decadent." In no country is this theory more generally held, by the inhabitants themselves, as well as by outsiders, than in Persia. Shepherds feed their flocks among the ruins of palaces; nomads ferry their families across rivers formerly spanned by majestic bridges. Villagers squat in reed shelters upon the gigantic mounds of ruined cities. Yet the Persians are emphatically not a decadent race. Vice and luxury have in every age been associated with large cities. No Eastern or European country has a smaller proportion of town-dwellers than Persia. Despotism and slavery in their worst forms, to which historians have attributed many national ills, have not afflicted Persia for a hundred years: civil anarchy, once rife, has not existed since 1923, and was never a very serious factor in limiting increase of population. Nor is in-breeding, until recently a feature of the European countryside, so commonly practised as in many parts of Asia. The population as a whole is remarkably mobile, and social conventions operate not against but rather in favour of exogamous marriages. The soil of Persia is not exhausted; malaria, to which some

authorities have ascribed the decay of the Greek race, is not so widespread as to be a serious contributory cause; religious beliefs and monastic practices may be ruled out.

There are decadent as well as progressive forms of life, and retrogressive as well as progressive nations and races. By what criterion shall we decide which of these question-begging epithets apply in a given case at any particular period of history? Perhaps in races, as in men, progress in one direction is complementary to retrogression in another. "By no means," said Nestor, "do the Gods give all things to men at the same time." Over abundance of bread was regarded by Ezekiel as a cause of the downfall of Sodom: the conquest of the East by Pompey was followed by the fall of the Roman Republic. The ancient history of Persia displays to us, with a detailed continuity that has no parallel elsewhere, the waxing and waning not of one but of five successive civilizations. The monumental remains of all are still visible, thanks to the climatic conditions of the Persian plateau. First came the Empire of Sumer, next that of Assyria; followed by the Achaemenid Empire. These empires cover perhaps 3,000 years. They had all the essential characteristics of a modern state: an elaborate civil administration, an efficient army, a system of civil justice, an organized priesthood, and a hereditary monarchy. The life of the countryside differed little in successive ages: the nomads tended their flocks and the peasants tilled their fields: merchants passed up and down the great trade routes and wrote their accounts, using gold and silver as standards of value. Then, in 334 B.C., came the great event in Persian history—the incursion of Alexander. The ancient East, which had long known no masters

but the Aryan-speaking Persians, fell, and with the Achaemenian monarchs disappeared the old arts. It was, in the conventional language of history, a time of decadence.

During the first two centuries of the Christian era, the stream was reversed, Orientalism was permeating the West, not by arms but by arts, not by terror but by trade. The Sasanian dynasty arose (A.D. 227) and Persia became once more a powerful military State, which extended its border into Mesopotamia and central Asia, absorbing the Caucasus and carrying its flag into remote Arabia.

In the seventh century a movement originating in Arabia, whither Greek ideas had never penetrated, destroyed within a few years the ancient glories of Persia. The Persians, little enamoured of their priesthood, whose power had grown at the expense of the monarchy, surrendered almost without a struggle to the barbarian hordes. Yet never were conquerors more swiftly and more subtly captured by their captives. The Persian followers of the Ja'fari cult, known to the Sunni world as Shi'ahs, or schismatics, developed within Persia a type of Islam which embodied some of their own ancient religious beliefs, their own patriotic preference for Persian rather than Arab saints, and their own passionate *joie de vivre*. The Persians have always refined their pleasures before tasting them. Their kings went out hunting accompanied by musicians, encouraged their women to share the joys of life, couching their mistresses amongst flowers, whilst they engaged lions in single-handed combat. Such doings were anathema to the Arab conquerors, but they inveighed in vain against the national spirit of *galanterie*. They called the Persians decadent; they burned their books and defaced their monu-

ments; yet of the great works of Arabic literature and science of the following three centuries the greater part was the work of Persians in Syria and Baghdad, who used the tongue of the country of their adoption as the vehicle of their thought as do the Russian émigrés to-day in France and England.

The eleventh and twelth centuries were marked by the rise of Persian literature of a quality which has ensured its immortality. Then came a fresh catastrophe—the Mongol invasion and the fall of Baghdad. One third of the population of Persia perished miserably within a few years. Once again the Persians showed their extraordinary capacity for absorbing the invaders. The sixteenth century dawns with a powerful Safavid dynasty, ruling over a united Persia, patronizing a revival of Persian art and literature in which one may discern the shadow of the European Renaissance. Shah Abbas was in some respects the counterpart of Henry VIII, and contemporary travellers, such as Tavernier and Thévenot, saw in Persian civilization and in the arts of Eastern government much to admire, and not a little which, in their view, European monarchies might copy.

The age of commerce was now approaching. Europe was growing in strength, her merchant venturers, stimulated by the discovery of the Americas, were her sinews, her ships were to her as hands and feet, her embassies as eyes. Persia, without accessible supplies of coal and iron, without easy access to the seas, and bound by the fetters of Islamic convention, though they hung lightly on her limbs, saw the advantages of her geographical position vanish, almost overnight, before the overmastering advantages of the sea routes. Since then she has seen the Russian Empire grow till its frontier runs with hers for a thousand

miles. She has suffered from Turkman raids and from Afghan and Turkish forays. She has endured, with less patience, the Russian and Turkish invasions of 1914–1918, and is now seeking, under a powerful leadership, a fresh path to prosperity. The way is stony, but it is not one which a "decadent" people would choose. The record of history outlined above is one of endurance of vicissitudes, of attachments to the central idea of nationhood transcending that of race, creed or language, that would do credit to any people. We are in the midst of one scene in the sixth act of a great drama, and we cannot foresee the end. Time, which in the East is one of the dimensions of excellence, will reveal her secrets and, as Bacon says somewhere, "The counsels to which Time hath not been called, Time will not ratify." The motor car and aeroplane have brought into Persian life alien elements which have yet to be absorbed.

Persians may regret the material, social and spiritual changes which these and other things bring in their train, and we may share their regrets. We may legitimately question whether to change is to improve, we may with J. B. Bury ponder upon the implications of the Idea of Progress. It may be that the Persian nation, in the interests of true progress, would have done better to follow indefinitely the footsteps of their Zoroastrian forefathers, but had they done so, the world of Islam would have been much less competently managed; science, philosophy and medicine would have been poorer: there would have been no Firdausi, no Hafiz and no Sa'di; Persian art would never have burgeoned and shed its blossom over half the world. It is one thing to admire a nation in its greatest moments, and another to wish that it had been petrified, like Egypt, at its apogee, for unchanging institutions or political

systems are no more possible than unchanging species. Whatever is living is subject to change, whatever is stationary has lost the power of adaptation and in a changing world must die. I believe that George Meredith was right in telling his friends "to look at the good future of men with some faith in it, and capacity to regard current phases of history without letting our senses blind and bewilder us," and with Tennyson I "doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs, and the thoughts of man are widened with the process of the suns."[1]

From a purely scientific point of view the past and present characteristics, both physical and mental, of the Persian people as a whole, are of exceptional interest and deserve careful and dispassionate study. No other race of importance in the world's history lives in similar climatic conditions at an average altitude of four or five thousand feet, or in a country with so wide a range of temperature. In no other country do the pastoral arts play so important and indeed vital a part in national economy. Nowhere else have the nomadic peoples such a fine physique or such natural intelligence.[2] As already explained,

[1] *Locksley Hall.*

[2] Many travellers and all Persians are under the impression that these large scale nomadic movements are confined to Asiatic countries. This is not the case, for in certain parts of Southern Europe climatic conditions have from very early times brought about a great semi-annual migration of flocks and herds from their summer pastures in the mountains to the milder climate of the plains in winter, an ordered movement of domestic animals similar to the seasonal migration evolved for themselves by many wild animals. This seasonal movement is called by the French *transhumance*, and has had in Europe, as in Asia, profound social and economic and even legal consequences. Special laws exist (witness the famous Mesta of Spain) to protect the interests of the nomadic shepherds and those through whose lands they migrate. The subject is dealt with fully in Miss E. H. Carrier's book, *Water and Grass—A Study of Pastoral Economy of Southern Europe*, 1932, and by Mlle. Therese Sclafert's *Le Haut Dauphine au Moyen Age*, 1926. The Persian Government will make a profound mistake if it seeks to abolish instead of regulating these vast nomadic movements, which alone enable the pastoral industry over great areas to survive.

the racial origins of the nation are lost in antiquity, but within the historical period there have been successive admixtures, expecially in the governing classes, of Mongol, Arab, Afghan and Caucasian strains. Yet the exotic features of each race tend to disappear, and the dominant characteristics of the race in successive centuries seem to have changed but little; a Persian type raises its head after each wave of invasion, and remains when the flood has spent its force.

Though Huxley's third evolutionary centre, the Mongolian, was at one period in history dominant in Persia, it is no longer a strongly marked feature in the physical make-up of the race. Mongolism and Achondroplasia are rare, and other manifestations of aberrant action of the thyroid gland or of the endocrine or hormone system have very seldom come under the notice of doctors. Racial segregation[1] has not been effective in Persia for at least six thousand years: physical barriers have never been of importance since Achaemenian times: migration has been the rule, not the exception. "Human prejudices," says Keith (referring to race-feeling) "usually have a biological significance."[1] In Persia the source of race-feeling is primarily economic. De-racialization is proceeding rapidly—its place is being taken by the growth of nationalism. Individual races are being merged into a territorial unit with a national consciousness. In the words of Lucretius

> "Augescunt aliae gentes, aliae minuuntur
> Inque brevi spatio mutantur saecla animantum
> Et quasi cursores vitai lampada tradunt."

[1] See Keith,—*Ethnos*, 1931.

We may picture the procession of the nations through the ages as a great relay race of heroes. Over a course infinitely hard, with little experience to guide her, Persia ran her mighty race of old, pausing at times to fight for her life in the pitiless arena. Of those who came before, none ran so far, of those who came after none ran more nobly. And when her course was run the torch was held for a time by others, until after many centuries it seems likely to pass once more into the hands of the lineal successors of those early heroes of imperishable memory whom the poets of Persia have taught their countrymen to revere. They will run their course more worthily if they base their lives on the stern virtues of their ancestors, and take to themselves the warnings that their own history, if read aright, teaches. Failure is a more potent teacher than success, and the tragedies of Persian history only throw into relief those arts wherein Persia excelled. She spoke in terms of beauty and forms that were unknown before: her creations were the envy of Rome, the inspiration of Greece, and have an intrinsic value to-day not inferior to the finest productions of other races. The civilization and culture of a large part of the world is dependent upon the ability of eastern nations to adapt, and to mould to their purposes, the products of Western skill and Western thought. The Persians bid fair to show themselves able, in a measure equalled by no other nation, to imbibe, without intoxication, the strong wine of the West. They have not forgotten that they were, in historical times, the brains and sinews of a great Empire, or that they share, in common with their eastern and western neighbours, a common body of law, of tradition and of learning. They are endeavouring to help themselves and others to recover

a unity which is neither offensive nor defensive, but cultural, and thus independent of the changing phases of world economy. On such a foundation a new civilization may arise and, having arisen, may stand.

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY PURNELL AND SONS
PAULTON (SOMERSET) AND LONDON