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FROM
**BOMBAY TO BUSHIRE,
AND BUSSORA ;**

INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT OF
THE PRESENT STATE OF PERSIA,
AND
NOTES ON THE PERSIAN WAR.

BY WILLIAM ASHTON \ SHEPHERD. \

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LONDON

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Dedication.



TO

HER WHO HAS BEEN MY SOLACE IN SICKNESS, AND
COMPANION IN TROUBLE,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS DEDICATED.

PREFACE.



FIVE years since, my first impressions of Bombay were received, and a few months ago, I returned from my second visit to the shores of the Persian Gulf. The whole narrative is from a personal Journal, wherein I endeavoured to sketch things as they actually appeared, and to recount their striking characteristics.

LONDON,

Feb. 21, 1857.

CONTENTS.



CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
Light a-head—Conflicting Opinions—Entrance to the Harbour	
—Bombay—Bunder Boats and Bustle—First Night on Shore	
—Malabar Hill by Moonlight—Esplanade—Fire Worshippers	
—Bhendy Bazaar—Crowds of Natives—Indian Betrothal—	
Pingreepoor—Flying Foxes—Ghibers Gambling—Secular	
Education—Infidelism—Padre Lawu—Prize Distribution—	
A Ruler—Indian Navy—Anecdote—Breaking of Monsoon	
—Noon in India—Afloat	1

CHAPTER II.

Approach to Muscat—Dense Fog—The Harbour of Muscat—	
Its Walls crumbling at the Recoil of Artillery—Governor's	
Message and Offerings—Sensation created by the Steam-	
vessel—The Agent's House—Native Caution and Insecurity	
—Reception-room—A Reception Banquet—A pliant Mus-	
sulman—Ben Comise, the Interpreter—The Imaum—His	
Vanity—His Hospitality—Muscat Tom—The Imaum's	
Stables—A Ride into the Country—Mussulman Burial-	
ground—An Oasis—A Mountain-pass—A Happy Valley—	
A Harem—Bazaar—Choice Sweetmeat—How to Make it—	
A Specimen of Slavery	39

CHAPTER III.

	PAGE
The Quoins—Votive Offerings to Neptune—Funeral Superstition—Khismis and Ongar—Aspect of Khismis—Sandbank of Nearchus—Diversity of Landscape—Bassador—Cadāda—His “Plenty” Qualifications—No Government Security—A Small Chapel—Commodore’s Residence—The Hospital—A Domicile of Medicals—Shrewd Remarks on the Shah of Persia—Political Prognostications—Russian Intimidation and Policy—Herat—Ormuz—Peaks of Rock-salt—Cadāda’s Ships for Inland Commerce—“The Pleasant Island of Khismis”—Its former Importance—The Bazaar and its belongings—English Burial-ground—Lady’s Tomb and quaint Epitaph—Portuguese Reservoirs—Cadāda’s House and Investment—“When nobody care, God no care, and nothing grow”—The dozing Vulture—Antelope and Date Sauce—“A slim thing, slithering along,” Whip-snake—A Night in the Dead-House—Lively Dreams—Commodore’s House—A self-willed Donkey—Independent Driver—A regular sell.	66

CHAPTER IV.

Lingar—Wind Chimneys—Cadāda’s Notions of Persian Prowess—Bahren Climate—Pearl Divers—A Fast Life and a Wet One—Two Kinds of Pearls—An Old Author’s Quaint Account of Bahren—Anglo-Persic Pearl Dredging Company—Prospectus—Origin of the Pearl, from a Quaint Author	108
--	-----

CHAPTER V.

Bushire—Nadir Shah’s Man-of-War—Native Crowd—Custom-house—Yankee Skipper—Caravanserai—Delicate Dilemma, and How to Get out of It—Blind Bartimeus—Auricular	
--	--

CONTENTS.

xi

	PAGE
Sensitiveness—Walk through the Town—Residency—Shyness Lodge—Resident and Assistant Resident—No Piercing into the Penetralia—A Morning Ride—Walls of the Town—Military Equipments—Sheahs and Soonees—Tenets and Schism—Persian Cleanliness—Population and Militia, their Pay—Bayadr—Governor's Artillery Salute—Visit of Ceremony to Déryâr Bey, Lord of the Waters—Chained Captive—Persian Dress—Governor's Official Visit to the Steamer—His motley Staff—Pivot-gun—Astonishment—Persian Character—Climate of Bushire—Beard-dyeing—What makes the Persians a Handsome Race—Ally's Sentiments—"Mr. Murray and Colonel Rawlinson"—Undeveloped Resources—Means of Development—Up and Away to Kharrak—Gheber Tombs—Danish Settlement—Various Possessors—Island of Kargs—Hints for Commissariat—Pearl Banks—Latitude and Longitude	123

CHAPTER VI.

Shat-al-Arab—Resident's House at Marghill—Excursion on Shore—Luncheon and Arab Impudence—A Dangerous Elevation—Resources of the Country—Entrance into Bussora—Reception by the Pacha—Bussora Present and Past—A Duck—Habits of the Wild Pig—Musquito Smoke—Wild Boar Shooting—The Good Mussulman—Conscientious Mahomedan—Purser in a Fix—Jack Charged and Delivered—Self-Defence—Arab Habits—Pilgrim Boats—Conclusion	164
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BOMBAY TO BUSHIRE.

CHAPTER I.

Light a-head—Conflicting Opinions—Entrance to the Harbour—Bombay—Bunder Boats and Bustle—First Night on Shore—Malabar Hill by Moonlight—Esplanade—Fire Worshippers—Bhendy Bazaar—Crowds of Natives—Indian Betrothal—Pingerecpoor—Flying Foxes—Ghobers Gambling—Secular Education—Infidelism—Padre Lawn—Prize Distribution—A Ruler—Indian Navy—Anecdote—Breaking of Monsoon—Noon in India—Afloat.

It was a dull dark night, the sun had gone down some two hours, not a star shone out from the lowering sky, and the depressing air hung heavily on sail and deck ; somewhat heavily, too, on those whose spirits, wearied with a fourteen weeks' voyage, were tired of themselves, tired of their companions, tired of alternate calm and storm, and variable adverse winds ; tired of the sameness of sea and sky ; more tired of the same faces, the same objects, the same thoughts, the

same occupations; tired of waiting in compelled inaction, whilst busy life was moving and calling for them elsewhere.

“Does any one see a light a-head?” said the captain.

No more dulness: instant animation was produced; all eyes were strained into the darkness, all fancied they could see it, few I believe did, (except the man at the mast-head), but in a few minutes—half an hour, perhaps—there it surely was, right a-head, low on the horizon, now to larboard, now to starboard, flickering, twinkling, now distinctly visible, now lost to view, uncertain, like the star of hope. It was the outer light of Bombay harbour! What a revolution it made in all our feelings! And this was indeed the end of our journey; long looked for, long delayed, and yet (as will be, perhaps, on the last night of a yet longer voyage), it came, as it were, unexpectedly, suddenly, as a surprise. All seemed hurry and bustle. Though for the last ten days all had been prepared for landing, everybody felt as if they had a hundred things to do, and nobody did anything. “What are these tall stakes looming in the darkness, and

holding themselves up, like warning fingers, on our larboard bow?"

"We have no business here, sir," said the first mate (who happened to be the only one of the ship's officers who had landed in Bombay before); "these are, if I remember right, fishermen's stakes; this harbour is fairer above water than below, as the charts show, and we are within soundings. It's pilot's work now, you may take my word for it."

"Heave-to," said the captain; "heave the lead." So we hove-to till morning, wondering what its light would reveal of "the glory and havock of the East."

It was a general subject of congratulation, every one was in a state of excitement; but the first bustle over, a kind of silence fell, broken now and then by a repetition of rejoicing, or some disjointed sentence, the summing up of some one's previous reflections.

"I shall be glad enough to get out of this old ship," said one.

"It will be long enough before I undertake another voyage round the Cape," said another.

“Hurrah ! for the last night on board. Where shall we sleep to-morrow ?”

“Amongst the musquitos,” was the cool answer of the first mate.

“I shall be very sorry to leave the ship ; these have been the happiest months I ever spent, and I wish they would last for ever !” said a young man, with a soft voice and a flushing check. Poor fellow, he had lost his heart (*irrevocably*, as he then believed) to a young lady, who intended as little to return heart for heart, or even hand for heart, as her mother did, who was reserving her for “the first match in Bombay.”

“As for *me*,” said a young middy for the Indian navy, “*I* don’t care a straw how long we stay, nor how soon we go ; on the ship or the shore, it’s all one to me ; life’s a desperately dull affair at the best, it’s all the same,” and he went off whistling, “There’s a good time coming boys,” as if in mockery, stopping at the words, “We shall not live to see the day.” His was also a heart disease, I suspect, a little deeper seated than the other’s ; but he knew that he was doomed to an

income of sixty rupees a month for the next five years ; so how could he offer himself to one, whose fair face would doubtless win her a score of hearts before as many months were over her head ? as it proved to his sorrow. So he declared he " cared for nobody, no not he, and nobody cared for him."

The more thoughtful were considering all that lay before them in the new life, considering it afresh and gravely, as if for the first time ; looking back at the past (which seemed somehow to have come nearer), calling up old scenes, old memories, listening to old voices, and—

" The lordly music flowing from
The illimitable years ; "

stealing

" Fire
From the fountains of the past
To glorify the present. . . . "

At length all hands turned in, to dream of the morrow ;

" Entranced with that place and time,
So worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid."

With the earliest dawn, were all eyes awake, and sweet and fairy-like, was the line of varying

soft blue hills on our right, their bases wrapt in curling white vapour, produced either by the watery mists which hung about the low lands of this coast at sunrise, or the smoke of fires lighted by the natives to consume some of the jungle. Something like buildings appeared ; was it a town ? Flights of little white-winged vessels glittered in the sunlight, and sped before the slightest puff of wind, like water-fowl scared at our approach ; their graceful latteen sails bending into picturesque lines, looking at a distance like swans upon the water. On our left, as we neared, rose the light-house, at the end of the long, dry, red-earth line of Colaba ; the gun announced the approach of a vessel, and soon our colours were flying from the flagstaff. One of the pilot boats, rigged in the aforesaid Eastern manner, and manned by brown-faced, bare-limbed, turbaned natives, brought the welcome pilot on board, and soon we were sailing into the oft-praised harbour of Bombay. Beautiful, indeed, it is ; the long blue line of mountain coast on one hand, with the distant Ghauts pale in the distance, headlands and islands breaking and changing into view ; “ Henry and Hennerly ”

(as we chose to call them), the Caranjahs, the far-famed Elephanta, gleaming in the dazzling Indian sun-light, soft green, like a piece of aquamarine on the sea. On the left, passing the uninteresting line of Colaba, dotted by low-roofed barn-like buildings, called subaltern's-bungalows (poor fellows!), we open out the town itself, crowned with its cathedral, which — though we afterwards found it to be 'of a mongrel gothic, enough to give Mr. Pugin the nightmare—looks very well, rising above the mass of deep-roofed chimneyless houses.

We have arrived opposite Elephanta, before the town, in front of the Apollo Bunder (landing-place), in the midst of all the bustle of a large sea-like harbour, crowded not only by native craft, sailing, rowing, skimming, sculling in all directions ; but by vessels of all sizes, from a yacht to a man-of-war, merchantmen from all lands, loading, unloading, refitting, arriving, and departing ; and last, but not least, the frigates and steamers of the Indian navy, of which Bombay is the head-quarters.

Now the plot thickens : our ship "pays out" her anchor, our pilot has taken leave, we are

surrounded by native boats, "Bunder boats," that is, boats to take folks to and from the Bunder ; they haul alongside, they come under our cabin windows, the natives grin and show their white teeth, they open their large eyes to see what they may—especially the chance of a fare—they jabber and clamour in the most uncouth lingo you ever heard ; and, finally, mutter and subside, when convinced that there is no attention for them, seating themselves on the very edge of the boat, with bended backs, like monkeys, commence a leisurely washing of the mouth, using the forefinger for a toothbrush, and slowly filling their primitive pipe,—familiarily called by the English, from the noise it emits in smoking it, "hubble-bubble,"—and compose themselves, sending puff after puff of the mild tobacco into the air, with a sleepy look, as if no power on earth could move them.

Now come on board friends of some, agents of others, men of business, idle lookers-on, "parties" with handful of letters, each eager to find whom-ever he is in search of, and deliver his mission. We hire a "dingy-boat" (N.B.—the *g* in that word *hard*, like the *g* in "dingle"), bestow our-

selves under the cabin on deck for shelter from the blazing, fever-giving sun, and find ourselves in a nest, not of thieves, but of those insect tribes for which Indian boats, &c., are justly celebrated, and which are as anxious to rob us of our rest as thieves would be of our money. O India! thou paradise of noxious insects! We will allow thee all thy ravenous beasts, by sea and land, if thou wilt only forego thy insect plagues, thy numerous invisible torments, whose name is legion! We never rightly appreciated the powerful means of coercion used in favour of the Israelites in ancient Egypt, till we experienced what it was to have such horrors, "in all their quarters."

We land at the Bunder; we are assailed by jabbering blacks; our English blood is up; we are pressed upon by shoals of dirty natives; we can neither understand what they say, nor speak to them, but our thews and sinews carry us through; we leave them laughing at our excitement, which serves to aggravate us the more, and leap into a Palki, saying, "British hotel."

We expect to come to the grand city of

Bombay ; unfinished-looking streets, heaps of unremoved rubbish, bricks, rabble, want of foot-paths, want of form, shape, and neatness, impress us with the idea that we are in the outskirts of it. Not a bit of it ; we are *in* Bombay, and this rambling, irregular, dirty, insect-pervaded house is the British hotel. Parsees, with their long white garments, short white trousers, stockingless slippered feet, shaven heads, and large eyes, are the owners of the place. Of course they charge us outrageously for everything. Having made ourselves ill by the rashness of a fruit-tea ; having washed our faces in water, which we supposed was purposely scented with strong musk, but over which, in reality, a musk-rat had played his unbidden gambols ; having been disturbed, during the first part of the night, by the coming and going of billiard players, travellers, &c., and the second, by uninvited occupants of our long-anticipated bed on shore ; having drunk iced soda-water and brandy as an antidote to our fruit-tea, and admired the intense, and really wonderful moonlight, which made even a back street in Bombay beautiful—painting projecting roofs, gables, lattices, every irregularity

which was ugly by day, accurately as though drawn by daguerreotype lenses, on walls or other flat surfaces ;—we betook ourselves, at the earliest possible opportunity, to the subalterns' quarters allotted us at Colaba, said, for our consolation, to be the second healthiest part of the island.

The geography of this place is very difficult to describe, so irregular is it ; having been formerly several islands (of which Colaba was one), now joined to that on which the town stands by a velard, forming, as it were, two bays, of which the low line of Colaba is the northern division of the one (which is the harbour), and the southern division of the other, called Back Bay. Its opposite horn, a line of higher land, called Malabar Hill, where the "Burra Sahibs," alias, Big Wigs, live ;—many of them, at least, for this is the healthiest portion, the highest. The first time we visited Malabar Hill was by moonlight ; slowly ascending the road cut along the rock, the waters of Back Bay glittering under the moon's rays on one side, the tall pines, rooted on huge masses of black rock, on the other, the scene was very Eastern and striking ; the broad branching leaves

of the palms intensely dark, against a sky luminous with incredible moonlight, which served to make their spiny fronds more fine and delicate ; and yet to mass the whole, and to throw over all that grand quietness, which that time, and perhaps the absence of colour, tend to produce,—impressed us greatly, and we went home with a strong feeling of the grandeur of tropical foliage. But ah ! we were “ griffins,” we had a good deal to learn yet. Much as we need and desire shade, we had to learn to shun trees, “ jungle ;” for the damp they engender, the malaria they emit, fever-laden, the insects they harbour, destructive of all peace, the snakes they overshadow, and the airs they shut out. Let us remark, in passing, that our second view of Malabar Hill, in the broiling midday sun, with a glaring red earth, black baked rocks, tall shadeless trees, wearying to man and beast, stripped it of much of the romance, and all the calmness of the night scene !

One of our first drives was from Colaba along the esplanade towards the native town, under the pilotage of one who had long passed his period of griffinage, and also his second year of

“horrid griffinage,” when folks are supposed to commit worse blunders than before, on account of their too much confidence.

It boots not to tell, how, in crossing the esplanade we beheld the élite and subélite of Bombay, assembling round the band-stand, to listen to music of the polka style, ill-performed, and to give and receive polite gossip : one well-dressed crowd is so like another, when—

“All the world arrayed *en masse*,
Disputes each inch of withered grass.”

But we will notice the fine situation of this broad plain, between the hot town and Back Bay, over which the sun sheds a splendour just before he departs, flinging up to the very zenith gradations of delicate colour, such as only tropical regions boast, and no pencil can depict ; it glorifies the meanest objects, and draws forth hundreds of Parsees, the followers of Zoroaster, the ancient Ghebers, to the shores of Back Bay, to do homage to their visible luminous deity. There they stand whitening the shore, some divesting their feet of slippers, bowing, salaaming (*i.e.* bending the body often, almost to the ground, touching the forehead with one or both palms of the

hands, meaning thereby, to put dust on the head, as a sign of humility), muttering prayers in a language unknown to them, and continuing this practice till the sun has dropped below the horizon ; then they are free till he rises again on the morrow, when the like ceremony recommences. As we pass along the broad road across the esplanade to the Bhendy Bazaar, we think the light open carriages, with their small Arab horses, strange anomalous-looking vehicles, driven and guarded by native servants with flowing garments, and vari-coloured turbans ; the ladies within displaying gay attire, but small amount of beauty ; partly owing to the want of health in their colourless faces, and partly to the want of expression, the causes whereof our gallantry forbids us to investigate. Though our friend furnishes us with an anecdote which some may consider a clue to the unravelling of the last mystery.

“Why they are educated for India,” said he ; “to dress well, dance well, play a little, sing a little, and write charming little notes of nothings ; this is all that is required ; a lady, a friend of my own, speaking of these accomplishments, for the

attainment of which her daughter had spent six years apart from her parents, added, 'As to geography, I don't care for that, she will soon learn it, if she marries into a marching regiment.'

"Poor India," said I.

"Poor wretches, we," said he, "who, coming out at seventeen, not having enough at our banker's to take us home to choose an English wife, must put up with one such as I describe, or live as bachelors."

"Why it puts me in mind of lists of manufactures, in which you see this item," replied I, "so and so of inferior quality for the Indian market."

"Precisely so," said he.

"That is a simple, pretty spire."

"It is the free Scotch kirk,—simple in architecture and worship ; very different from yonder pile of plaster and paint, covered with minarets."

"I should like to enter that."

"Rarely allowed ; it is Mahomedan. No one ever crosses the sacred threshold without special permission, and bare feet."

Now we enter the Bhendy Bazaar, very different from our English idea, formed upon the model of that in Oxford Street, or Soho Square.

This is one of the principal thoroughfares of the native town, quite separate from the English portion, where stand the British hotel, town-hall, pay offices, cathedral, banking-houses, post-offices, and shops of Parsees and English. This is a long, tolerably wide, irregular street, with high irregular houses on either side, containing many windows, built principally of wood, some of the projecting parts rudely, yet rather richly, carved, some painted, all full of dirt and darkness, and crowded with inhabitants. The lower story is usually devoted to the goods to be sold, where the vendor sits, cross-legged, on the same shelf as his bread, cakes, flour, grains, oil, stuffs, calicos, earthenware, wine, or whatever other article he has for sale, lazily smoking his "hubble-bubble ;" or, half dozing. If he be a Persian or Mahomedan, leaning upon dirty cushions, and sublimely indifferent to purchasers.

"What's the price of that pipe?" said my friend, drawing up before one of the shops.

"Six rupee, Sāhib," replied the fat indolent Hindoo.

"I'll give you two."

"Nay, Sāhib."

“Achcha” (very good) was the reply, and we prepared to drive off.

‘ Two rupee and half, Sāhib.”

“ Two rupees,” persisted my cicerone.

“ Lāo ! ” (take it) “ cost me that, Sāhib.”

“ The lying rascal,” said the purchaser “ he gave one rupee at most for it, and has got cent. per cent. profit ; if he sells no more for a week he’ll do very well, he can live—feed, that is—on two rupees a month. Take this, Kaleōn, smoke the gurāco in it, and you will not find fault with your first Indian purchase ; let it remind you to offer one third of what you are first asked, for all articles sold by natives, you will then have the satisfaction of knowing that you have not paid more than seventy-five or a hundred per cent. too much, for your possession.”

Slowly we drove through the crowded bazaar, crowded with vehicles of all kinds, rough carts, buggies conveying drunken sailors to and from places, where they are easily deprived of their money and their senses, carriages of rich Hindoos and Parsees, miserable shake-down shandrydans of all sorts ; men, women, children, dogs, horses,

and bullocks in gharries* and otherwise, all straggling about, with no concern for their own safety, or the convenience of others; we drove slowly, partly because we could not help it, and partly because, out of regard to the lives of the lieges, the government has issued an order to the effect, that a heavy fine will be levied on all who, driving furiously through native bazaars, knock down or maim passengers—a consummation very likely to ensue as natives, (either from Asiatic indolence or a blind belief in fate,) will walk under the very nose of your horse, rather than hasten one step out of danger's way. This crowding of half (often not indeed quarter) clad natives, dirty, lazy, low-looking creatures, literally swarming; from every door and window, issuing from the darkness of low doorways and filthy alleys, gives one a most melancholy idea of their mental and moral state. To see human beings in such a degraded condition is sad to behold and contemplate, congregated like animals, apparently but little above animals; for, just sufficient food eaten with fingers; just sufficient clothing (a mere rag) to enable them

* Carts or carriages.

to escape the government fine, or imprisonment ; just sufficient dirty space for their length on the ground, for sleeping ; just the same in all things which their fathers enjoyed for twenty generations before them,—is amply sufficient for them, their religion forbids the hope of rising, their supineness prevents their desiring it.

Presently we came literally to a stop, caused by a procession, accompanied by a motley crowd, with “tom-toms,” (a kind of mongrel drum,) and a host of squeaking trumpets. Two horses, covered with rich trappings (!) of tinsel, tassels, and finery, bore, the one a boy, the other a girl, both children, bedizened with the like gauds,—faces even hidden with pendant fringes of silk and gilt, proceeding at a foot’s pace, attended by various men and women, made gay with flowers, bearing boxes and baskets, brass and copper vessels, the possessions of the two children. It was a Hindoo betrothal. After their mutual relations had spent upon this, to our eyes baby-play, more than they had, or could afford, the little urchins would return to their parents’ houses, to be really married at the proper age, unless the boy die before-

hand, in which case the little widowed maiden was till lately doomed to single blessedness — something better than the ancient “Suttce” (widow-burning), and a great deal better than the slavery, beatings, howlings, hardships, that would await her married life in Hindoo homes. Deafened by the catawauling, we were glad to drive on towards the large Tank, situated in an open space, where four cross roads meet in this bazaar ; frequented at certain hours by picturesque groups of natives, in gay garments, and almost no garments, with water vessels on their heads, or pendant, (held by ropes from a bending bamboo yoke,) red, yellow, black, rudely formed of clay. “Bhistees,” with their humped bullocks, bearing water-skins, “Pāni-wallas,” stooping under theirs ; women, with long flowing robes, silver bracelets and anklets, a brass water “chatti,” filled, and carried gracefully on the head, reminding one of the fair Rebecca ; bullocks, (drawing carts) brought there for refreshment, and also for washing the beasts, and perchance, their drivers, who, habituated to an extremely minute portion of clothing, have little of that article to remove, and not any scruples, in per-

forming their ablutions in public ;—these various groups, approaching, retiring, and surrounding the well, present a most eastern and interesting appearance.

“ Now for it,” said my friend. “ Hang the government fine ! We’ll whip on past that Hindoo house, covered with red paint and carved elephants, past those jangling brass-workers—past the ‘ Pingereepoor.’ ”

“ The what ? ”

“ Take a rapid glance, my dear fellow : the wind blows this way, and there is no knowing what it may bring with it, besides stench. The Pingereepoor is a kind of Hindoo infirmary for all mangy, diseased birds, beasts, and insects. A devout Hindoo, besides believing all animal life to be part of deity, would not kill the most dilapidated beast alive, lest in crushing a lively flea, he put to a second death an imaginative wife, or by shooting a blind and lame horse he destroy a respected uncle. If a Hindoo has forgotten some of his offerings to the hypocritical Brāhmīns, he may perform short penance and sharp, by standing in the midst of the Pingereepoor, and allowing its myriad vermin

to feast unmolested on his ghee-polished flesh."

"Is that some precious preserve," asked I, "that tree, from which hang scores of old rags?"

My friend replied by a howl and a ringing crack of his whip. "Look at your rags!" said he.

They had all taken flight: flying-foxes were heavily flapping their large wings, trying to rise, some wheeling away, others settling lazily again, hanging by their feet from the branches, again composing themselves into the shape of old rags. A rapid glance at the Jamsetjee Hospital, and Grant College, and back by the esplanade, where the band was winding up with "God save the Queen," the carriages driving off, and groups of Parsees sitting tailor-fashion on the ground, in circles, as if they were playing at "hunt the slipper,"—in reality playing a much deeper game. A small lamp in the centre of each group, threw its light on faces intent on the cards they held in their own hands, and on those laid down by others, evidently gambling to some extent.

“ You have just time to prepare for mess ; there is the first bugle. Put on white trousers and white jacket ; that is sufficient for etiquette, and more than sufficient for comfort.”

“ Well, what think you of Bombay ? ” was the first enquiry I met.

My cicerone took upon himself the reply. “ Oh ! he is such a desperate griffin, that it makes him melancholy to witness what he calls such degraded human nature in the native town. I have given him a taste of some of the best parts : what would he say to the worst ? He looks upon these wretches as human beings like ourselves—a nigger, forsooth ! ”

“ Is it not rather a deep reproach to us, that we have been two hundred and fifty years on this land, and have done nothing more to raise them above the condition of brutes ? ” asked I.

“ Raise them ? It were one of the labours of Hercules, to cleanse the Augean stable of centuries of ignorance, sensuality, and caste prejudice. Caste is one of the great obstacles. Moreover, I fear our example does not help the matter. ‘ To drink like a Sāhib, ’ is a common phrase amongst them ; and as to debt, lending

money to officers, at an exorbitant percentage,—which accommodation they press upon us, asking no security,—is one of their regular investments for money. The interest of such loans, often swallows up a fellow's whole pay, till he gets his step; and cripples him so much, that he dies in harness, with grey hairs, and a diseased liver, because he cannot leave the country on account of debt. It is a horrid system, and one, little calculated to raise the European in the opinion of the black man.”

“ Well, but education—is there not a government grant for education ? ”

“ A precious grant! bestowing some money certainly, some privileges, but mighty little good judgment on the matter! Why, the niggers themselves read us a lesson on this subject: you behold a Hindoo, a Mahomedan, a Fire-worshipper, sunk in the lowest grade of superstition, dark in mind, as in body, (we are pleased to pronounce him,) clinging to his faith and its requirements, ready to forego any personal advantages rather than break it; and our government—a soi-disant Christian government—puts it forth as its enlightened opinion, that ‘ it was,

and is, indispensable that education, conveyed in government institutions, shall be exclusively secular.' The Bible *may* be placed on the shelves, but, nothing is to be said about it; all instruction on the Christian religion, even if asked for, by students, is strictly forbidden during school hours; so that however willing, pupil, or teacher, may be, to study it, it must be at the sacrifice of hours of leisure, when both are wearied by close confinement to mental occupation, in a climate where air, and needful rest, are life. The reason given being, that 'it is *necessary*, in order to prevent the *slightest suspicion* of an intention on our part, to make use of the influence of government for the purpose of proselytism, that no notice should be taken of it, by the inspectors in their periodical visits.' What conscientious man could accept office, under such a law, or expect any good to come of it if he did?"

"Right!" said Chaplain Lawn, who dined that night at mess. "You're fit to be a bishop, sir. The system is a cowardly one, and the natives can see its weakness as well as ourselves. They say, 'So long as we believe our

tenets, we hold by them ; English learning teaches us to depise the fables our fathers taught us. We percieve that enlightened Englishmen have no religion at all, so we have none.' And you turn out a set of infidels. The natural transition state between one faith and another is scepticism ; but it seems unnecessary to educate men for infidels."

" But you have a first-rate bishop, have you not, sir ? " said I.

" Why, there was a fearful dearth of cambric pocket-handkerchiefs, when he left his parish. Have you ever read Mr. Ruskin's pamphlet on Pre-Raphaelism ? Do you remember what he says about a man being quite incapable of conducting a large banking establishment, or an extensive commercial enterprise, but who, having been formerly esteemed a good judge of peas, might safely undertake a small greengrocery business." With that, Padre Lawn walked away, leaving us laughing at his wit and wisdom.

" That's a capital fellow, and made almost as good a fluke as I have done," said my friend, as he pocketed the red ; " though he does not

spare us in the pulpit—nor out of it either for the matter of that. He is a general favourite, always welcome at mess, though he won't stand a word he does not approve ; but there is no humbug about him : you always know what he means. I first saw him at Aden."

"But what's this about the bishop—is he not popular ?"

"A popular bishop is a very different thing from a popular preacher : the priest's cassock is easier to carry than the lawn sleeves. 'Honores mutant mores.'"

"We have done an awful amount of 'peacocking' this morning," said I to my sworn chum, as after having been some months in the Presidency, I thought it my duty to return a good deal of civility and hospitality by baking myself, my shigram, and horse, all the morning in the sun, to leave a few words or a small piece of pasteboard at various houses.

"Not done yet, you may doff your harness, take hasty tiff, and come with me to see the governor give away the prizes of the Elphinstone Institution at the town-hall," said chum.

“Burruff pāni, aur brandy lāo, bahāi,” said I, “aur jaldi”—(Iced water and brandy, bring boy, and be quick)—the latter a very unlikely order to be obeyed, for “jaldi” is the first word an Englishman learns to speak, and the last a native learns to obey.

Chum’s buggy pulls up at the steps of the town-hall; Ghorawalla (horse-keeper) jumps down from behind to hold the horse’s head. I take a glance at the Bombay Green, (alias brown, for dust is lying thick, and light, in the place where the grass ought to be), notice the cathedral, church gate, pay office, &c., the native buggies, shandrydans, and other vehicles, drawn up under the two or three trees; and wonder at the scores of pigeons covering the “green,” kept and fed by the Banyans (rich Hindoos); then up the flight of steps to the town-hall, under its Doric pillars and pediment, through its splendid hall, into the apartment allotted to the present occasion. The room lined with benches was more than half filled with natives of every caste and costume, of all ages, from six to six and forty,—no women of course, save some of our own country. The room kept filling, the

time ebbing away, the Governor not appearing. At length there was a little stir, and a tall, slim, aristocratic looking man entered quietly, bowed slightly to this side and that, and took his seat (as though he would say, "I am sorry to have kept you all waiting," but was too shy to put it into words) opposite a long table covered with piles of books—the prizes. On his right, several fat natives, some of the richest of the community, with idol names, such as Guggernauth Sunkersett, Rama Somnauth, &c. On his left, Sir Henry Lake, Rear Admiral, and Commander-in-chief of the Indian Navy. His Lordship, with the simplest manners, too simple almost for his position, the most amiable expression of countenance, and utter absence of anything like assumption, had the effect of making everyone else look plebeian. The part he took was not prominent; a few papers of figures read by the Principal and others, received his bow of acknowledgment. He then rose, with a small piece of note paper in his hand, said a few words of approbation, a few of congratulation, respecting the late facilities granted by the home government, for educational purposes, a few

assurances of his willing co-operation, and he sat down.

The prizes, consisting either of books or a grant of money to assist the studies* of the ensuing twelve months, were given to about fifty students, and his Lordship withdrew.

“Is that all?” said I.

“What more would you have?”

“Have? why, he lost a fine opportunity of saying a word to many who would never forget it.”

“He never says much, he always looks as amiable, as gentlemanly, and as shy, as you saw him to-day.”

15010.

“But is this the man to govern India, and rule the state? he seems popular with the natives.”

“That is his policy; he makes it a rule, to listen to any petition from a native, and to conciliate their favour, sometimes to the detriment of his own countrymen.”

“A ruler should know how to strike the balance, and make all classes feel, that each has full justice.”

“There are not so many men of that stamp in the world, that they can afford to send such

to Bombay. Anything will do for us. If they have some one, the best of whose energies and constitution, bodily and financial, have been spent elsewhere, India is the place for him, and they get rid of an encumbrance."

"Who's your friend?" said I, as a gentleman greeted us from a high seat on a large vanlike drag, driving four showy horses.

"Do you not recognise him? That is the same whom you saw just now, beside the Governor, Sir Henry Lake. You will be sailing under his flag before long."

"Why?"

"It is your 'nüssib' (fate); you will have to serve your two years in the Indian navy, escape general duty, which is only another name for general misery, and see a little of the Indian seas; perhaps be sent to Rangoon, away to Calcutta, the Red Sea, or up the Persian Gulf."

"I should prefer the latter."

"I congratulate you on your choice; a miserable monotonous life at Bassador, or a broiling on the Pearl Banks."

"What kind of service is it?"

"Ah," said chum, "ought to be the finest in

the country, it is one of the oldest ; but like all the rest, so abominably mismanaged. Favouritism, pique, petty jealousies, lucky accidents, being the recommendations to favour, and turning points, of promotion and dismissal. They have done some gallant things, though, and good service to the state, and were never known to lower their flag to an enemy, equal, or even superior, in force to themselves. As far back as 1749, Commodore James was at the capture of Severndroog, and afterwards went to the Bay of Bengal, to clear those seas of pirates,—a most dangerous service. They were at the capture of the Isle of France, and the Seychelles Islands, in 1810. The expedition against Java owes much to them, and all the world knows the work they did in China, in 1842-43, for the ‘Queen,’ the ‘Sesostris,’ ‘Nemesis,’ ‘Atalanta,’ ‘Ariadne,’ and ‘Auckland,’ were names at the time, ‘familiar in our mouths as household words.’”

“And during the Burmese war in 1852-53 they did good service to the state, when that brave excellent fellow, Captain Charles Dugald Campbell, fired the first red-hot shot, from the deck of his vessel, that had ever been

fired from the deck of a man of war.”—“I think it ought to be considered a fine service.”

“So it ought to be, but unfortunately it is not; give them a head to whom they may look up for long service and acquaintance with these seas; let such a head be chosen from among their own seniors; increase their officers in an equal ratio with their ships, and the Indian navy may yet become the navy of these seas. I must tell you a good anecdote of one of their commodores who was sensitive on the score of his dignity. Driving under the main guard, where of course no more notice was taken of his commodoreship than of any other gentleman, he pulled up, and asked for the officer on guard, demanding to know why the soldiers did not salute him.

“‘I have not the honour of knowing who you may be,’ said the officer.

“‘I am (with a handful of titles) the Commodore Commander in Chief of the Indian navy.’

“‘Then, sir, you ought to carry your flag on the top of shigram, so that the guard may know you.’

“However, I have no doubt you will soon

have an opportunity of judging for yourself what the Indian navy is like, when you find yourself placed at the disposal of its chief. One piece of advice—don't refuse an invitation to Lady Lake's balls, there are few better."

Piping hot was the weather in this fearful month of May. Sick and headachy it made you to drive in the sun, even in a close shigram, with a puggree round your hat in the middle of the day, though clouds kept gathering round the horizon daily; and every evening soft lightnings played, and broke open luminous vistas, through them, in glorious variety. One night, the 7th or 8th of June, sleeping with scarcely any covering, on account of the heat, in the verandah of our bungalow, we were suddenly awoke by boisterous gusts of wind, bearing heavy drops of rain, deafening peals of thunder, like the artillery of demons in the dense darkness, broken by vivid flashes of forked lightning, making everything intensely visible one minute, and the next, the darkness doubly black. Drenched and astonished, we rushed out to view the war of elements,—the first burst of our first monsoon. A dangerous shower-bath, though effectual; for

the next day, strong rheumatic pains and fever gave us leisure to contemplate the floods and buckets of rain that fell (from six to seven inches) in three days,—to see the dusty parade-ground green with young grass, our own compound, a pond, our own house, a damp island in the midst thereof.

“Where is the glory and splendour of the East?” said I to chum. “I have long ago decided that it is nowhere to be found but in the atmosphere, which I must own looks like nothing less than sparkling diamond dust in the sunlight; now that is gone, all the glory is gone with it, and nothing remains but bareness, ugliness, roughness, dulness everywhere!”

“Well, it is cooler anyhow, and in a fortnight, perhaps, you will have a break of a few days; then to it again, pell-mell, drip, drip, drip, till you are in a nervous rage with depression and monotony.”

“It will stop in September, that is one comfort.”

“Query comfort? The damp exhalations added to the heat, cause a depression ten times worse than this. September, though rich in

flowers, foliage, and outward beauty, is the most trying in the year."

September came, and with it, all that my friend predicted. Lazily strolling after sundown one oppressive evening, my attention was attracted and charmed, by some trees, illumined by fairy fires, sparkling, changing, ever moving, going in and out like magic. They were fire-flies, little mean-looking insects when caught—their lamp of loveliness caused by a throbbing muscular movement in the tail. I put a few into a wine-glass, they threw a pure greenish light around them, which made our lamps of cocoa-nut oil appear red and coarse.

"It is no wonder that neither pen nor pencil has ever fully portrayed this frightful heat," said I to chum, as we lay in "idlesse" one morning at the beginning of October, "I never heard of anything like it."

"A fellow in our regiment wrote some lines that give some idea of it, what say you?" He repeated,

NOON, IN SEPTEMBER, IN INDIA.

The air is noiseless, scarce a leaf is stirr'd;
The sun bath clomb to his meridian height,

Shedding hot beams upon the parched earth.
 A deep oppression filleth all the space
 From earth's burnt cheek, up to the topmost sky,
 And weighs the languid sense.
 A pause pervadeth Nature,
 As all things waited for more life, more breath,
 More energy to live.—'Tis silence all. .
 The broad banana spreads her banner'd plumes,
 The sun rests on them. The shoe-flower droops ;
 The quisqualis doth hang
 His pendant corals, fainter than their wont ;
 And the fair moon-flower,
 Closeth her pale cup.—Inanimate Nature,
 And the larger beasts, earth's silence keep ;
 But 'mid the wide-spread mango's leafy shade,
 The little squirrel leaps, and runs along the branches.
 Many a bird's swift shadow skims
 Over the Sunpath ; many a wingéd thing,
 Bright insect and small beast, come forth,
 Breaking the stillness with a varied hum
 Of unseen life, emboldened by the calm,
 Which hideth danger with her silent wings.
 The sultry heat weighs on the heavy eyes ;
 The limbs hang listless, and the tired brain
 Forgets to mark the hour.

Not quite "dulness in fourteen lines," (I remarked as he finished,) "as some one has said of a sonnet ; but here is the Tapālwalla, "What news bring'st thou ?" I asked, as he handed me a letter bearing the important mark "On Service." I opened it eagerly, thinking that one of my many letters of introduction might have turned up trumps (and not as most of them had hitherto proved, only tickets for soup), and

brought me the intimation of a staff appointment; but found that it only proved the truth of my friend's words, and intimated that my "services were placed at the disposal of the Commander in Chief of the Indian navy."

"Go and ingratiate yourself in the good books of that functionary to-morrow morning," advised chum, when I showed him the letter, "and apply for the steam-frigate 'Questionable,' fitting out I am told for the Persian Gulf." I did so;—a week found me outside the harbour, steaming away for those waters.

CHAPTER II.

Approach to Muscat—Dense Fog—The Harbour of Muscat—Its Walls crumbling at the Recoil of Artillery—Governor's Message and Offerings—Sensation created by the Steam-vessel—The Agent's House—Native Caution and Insecurity—Reception-room—A Reception Banquet—A pliant Mussulman—Ben Comiss, the Interpreter—The Innaum—His Vanity—His Hospitality—Muscat Tom—The Imaum's Stables—A Ride into the Country—Mussulman Burial-ground—An Oasis—A Mountain-pass—A Happy Valley—A Harem—Bazaar—Choice Sweetmeat—How to Make it—A Specimen of Slavery.

WE are now in sight of the high beetling land of Arabia Deserta, and about three miles to the north-east of Muscat. I write "in sight," because, until the last five minutes, we have been enveloped by a dense fog, damp as a Scotch mist, and so thick, that the old quarter-master was heard to wish that "his soup had the same consistency." Some time before it wrapped us, we saw it clinging to the sea, and driving before the wind, like clouds of smoke; direct from the land it came, and losing its grasp of the moun-

tains, it fell suddenly to the sea, and drove rapidly past us, hiding, as it floated astern, both sea and sky. The helm is down, and our head is rapidly rounding towards that narrow entrance, flanked on each side by commanding rocks, frowning about 500 feet above the sea. We have passed it, have steamed a good half mile, bearing slightly to the right; the captain's voice from the bridge has sounded "Stop her." The boatswain's pipe is whistling, the chain is running out; and we are at anchor now, in company with three of the Imaum's frigates, some half-dozen French and English traders, and a host of native boats, in the beautiful smooth bay of Muscat. How shall I describe it? A rocky basin, a third of whose circle is formed on the sea-board by a towering, dark, volcanic-looking island, some six hundred feet high, rough and rugged as rock alone can be, and separated from its bigger and rougher brother, the mainland, by a narrow chink, through which rolls over the deep blue sea, and occasionally steals the breeze that alone cools the town, obviously built there to receive it. Everywhere are forts, from the proud castellated building above the sea-breeze chink,

to the small, round, rock-hidden, and scarcely perceptible ones on each side of the harbour mouth ; in front, behind, on the right, on the left, above, and on a level with us, are forts,—but how built, you shall presently hear.

All hands are at quarters. Fire ! and the first gun of our salute hath belched out. The Imaum is here, his flag is recognised, and twenty-one guns must tell it. Twenty-one guns truly ; but how many thousands and thousands of echoing voices, have those guns awakened ; from each crag and stone and roughness of those beetling rocks, they peal and roll, and roll and peal, jumping from crag to hollow, from hollow to crag, as if they would never cease till doomsday, and only then for want of listeners. Our last gun was barely discharged, when a flash, a roll of smoke, and bang from the nearest fort, told that they had commenced answering, returning us the same number of guns with which we had saluted. It was amusing to see huge masses of the forts rattling down as some of their heavy metal discharged. Presently a boat, pulled by four African slaves, in the stern-sheets of which were seated two Armenian

Jews, come alongside ; they both mount, and ask for the captain : the one—counting or playing with amber-beads, and with a jewel-hilted dagger stuck in his waistband, which was formed by a Cashmere shawl, with feet enveloped in coarse knitted socks, and heelless yellow slippers—has introduced himself, speaking bad English, as the Company's agent. A gold-hilted sword, with Damascus blade, and decorated scabbard, has been sent by the Imaam as a present to the captain, with his "salaam," and request to see him on the morrow. The message was scarcely delivered before two boats were alongside : the one containing black-faced sheep and large-uddered goats ; the other, filled with fruits and vegetables for the crew, consisting of mangoes, dates, melons, oranges, insipid limes, sweet potatoes, onions, and green food, to say nothing of four large baskets, of all kinds of eastern sweetmeats for the marine boys.

"Small work for the doctor," whispered the first lieutenant in my ear, as the last-mentioned "parties" conveyed away in triumph their treasure.

Here, in this spacious bay, with its smooth

waters unruffled, save by the shoals of fish that everywhere manifest life, is anchorage ample for the largest fleet that England boasts ; fortified by art, nature gives a strength to it, that art could never furnish. Look around, nowhere is vegetation to be seen, nothing green, save the turbans and robes of some natives on shore. There are some goodly-looking houses, as viewed from the vessel's deck, built of rock, cemented with mud, with flat roofs, and two stories in height. The one, standing slightly back, and commanding the landing, where boats and canoes are jammed together, and of a square, rather important look, was once a cathedral, built by the Portuguese in 1520, but it is now the Inaum's palace and harem :

“ To what vile usage do we come ! ”

The sentries and quartermasters have much work to do in keeping the ship clear of boats and receiving visitors ; boats are alongside with the pourings out of the bazaar ; fishermen are screaming and offering cargoes of fish for a few coppers : all Muscat seems to have come out to visit us ; for native merchants are every-

where on the deck, talking with the captain, salaaming our first lieutenant, who is well known here, and arguing with the purser, who is equally well known, and a good Arabic scholar. Some are knotted around the stern-gun, an 8-inch swivel, the first that has appeared in these waters ; and others are amazed at the brightness and clearness of the engines, expressing their sentiments thereon to the chief engineer, who feels a consciousness of what they are saying, although he does not understand a word. Everywhere is bustle, at least as much as can be permitted on board a man-of-war steamer ; in the midst of which the second lieutenant, the purser, and myself, leave on a special invitation to the agent's house ; and, having scrambled through the jam of boats and canoes, fought our way through a crowd of half-clad dirty slaves and natives, climbed gingerly up the heap of broken sharp coral, picked it through the narrow muddy street, and made way for a black goat that took a strange fancy to our white trowsers, we found ourselves, at last, before a low door-way of a two-storied whitewashed house, without a semblance

of a window. Stooping, we enter, and stumble into a low, dark, dirty reception or basement room, with mud-floor, and no windows, furnished with a bench and some half-dozen chairs, occupied by merchants and slaves ; and affording some little interest to an Englishman, as being the only room in which the slave is allowed to smoke in the presence of his master. I had no sooner asked myself the question, Are we supposed to spend the evening here ? than it was answered, by our host climbing up a rickety ladder from the darkest corner of the room, and bidding us follow, which we did, over a shaky landing, up another short ladder, minus two rounds, through a dimly-lighted narrow passage, into a long lofty room, lighted at the opposite end, by two windows opening down to the floor, on to a verandah overlooking the sea, from the outside of which, sprung the davits that suspended a boat, ready at any moment, to be lowered into the water, that washed up to the walls of the house. The arrangements in this and every other house that we visited in Muscat, gave the impression of mistrust on the part of the owners. Low and small doorways,

few, or no windows towards the land, confined approaches to the upper rooms, and ready means of escape, indicate the cautious provision, of persons living under a despotic rule, liable to incursions from surrounding Arabs, and internal insurrections. Although the present Imaum, is an exception to the general rule of despotic tyrants, being a venerable old man, and much beloved by his subjects, he, however, has not been safe from family dissensions and tragedies, having in early life nearly fallen, beneath the treacherous plottings of an uncle, who attempted to usurp his throne. On such a narrow staircase as the one above mentioned, they met—the uncle and nephew. The uncle was wounded, and fled; the nephew pursued on a swifter horse, overtook and slew him, and the Imaum returned to his throne—so unstable are the highest places, and so loose the administration of justice, in this the most important seaport of Arabia Deserta. The room we have just been introduced to—the principal one of the house—with its whitewashed walls, and unwashed floor, is furnished with some dozen arm-chairs, a couch, and round table supporting the chibouk

(or household pipe,) with its long, elastic, snaky tube. On one end of the sofa, sits our host, in the long flowing Cashmere robes, and loose slippers, of the Armenian Jew. On that portion of the sofa which is unoccupied, lay our second lieutenant, who has stretched himself out in the true devil-may-care style that befits a sailor only, discoursing easily in Arabic, whilst the host plays negligently with a loose string of amber-beads. Our purser, unheeding of ought else, records the important fact of our ship's name, and date of arrival, on the walls with his pencil, amongst a host of such inscriptions, by similar hands. Sitting in rows, are some eight or nine Arab merchants, all fingering their amber-beads, displaying on the third finger of the left hand a signet ring, used for the real old purpose of signing their name; some talking, some looking at us, and some lost in day-dreams. From the fresh furnished pipe, with my legs dangling over the arm of the chair, I inhale and send forth, puff after puff, the white scented smoke of the odoriferous gurāco, which I ought to say, *en passant*, is composed of equal parts of tobacco, rose leaves, spices, and honey, buried for

some time in an earthen jar, and then washed in rose-water. At my elbow stands the black property of mine host, the coffee-bearer ; who pours out the dark essence of Mocha, from a carved silver coffee-pot, into a small china cup, held in a silver one of the same shape ; sugarless and milkless is the stimulating drop, and grateful indeed is it, after the soothing dreamy sensation produced by the pipe ; from mouth to mouth is the elastic tube passed, (for all smoke,) and a dozen whiffs, with a cup of coffee, suffice for some time. Then is served sherbet, sweet, colourless, and cool. Again pipe and coffee ; talk, day-dreams, bead-playing—thus passes from day to day, and hour to hour, the life of these Arabs. All have left, save one, who is in close talk with our friend, who presently claps his hands, and two slaves, the one bearing a brandy bottle and limes, the other, hot water and sugar, appear. The pipe has been dispensed with, our cigars have been lighted, and I am mixing grog. Mine host takes none ; but under the impression that he would, I had mixed four, and was bewailing myself that so much good liquor should be

wasted ; when, to our great astonishment, the Arab, who had been eyeing me during the operation, exclaimed, "Pray do not distress yourself, I shall be only too happy to dispose of it for you, and beg to be permitted to do so, by drinking the Queen's health."

"Who the devil are you?" asked, or thought the whole of us. "Mahmood Ben Comise, his highness's interpreter," was the rejoinder ; and so we made friends with "Mr. Mahmood," whom, by the by, we found to be a fine fellow, a good linguist, and a remarkably well-informed man ; for he had been educated at Highgate, at the expense of the Imaum—was a captain in his navy, had command of the frigate (which a few years since was to be seen at anchor off Blackwall), and whose portrait, when he was attached to the embassy, appeared in the Royal Academy. So, with "Mr. Mahmood," having wished our host good night, we sallied forth to visit the city by moonlight ; it appeared squalid and narrow in the extreme, and not repaying our trouble, we quickly returned on board, inviting our cicerone, to breakfast in the gun-room on the morrow. The morrow came, the day appointed

for our visit of ceremony to the Imaum, the party consisting of the captain, the second lieutenant, the purser, and myself. The cutters are manned and alongside. The boatswain has piped, the sentry presented arms, we are down the ladder, in the boats, and have pushed off ; it is but a short pull ; past the three frigates, all of them very fine looking ships—especially the ‘Victoria,’ (the one that brought the Imaum from Zanzibar recently, of which place he is king)—past those Arab bungalows, and we are at the custom-house square. Up the rough bank, through that crowd of natives, too busy with their barter to observe us as we pass, or to make way for our so doing, until reminded by the flat of our scabbard that they obstruct the passage of English officers. This square, one side of which is open to the harbour, and the other three, formed by low sheds with projecting roofs, is filled with bales of merchandise, Turks, Armenians, Persians, Arabs, Hindoos, and slaves ; and shut out from the town by a narrow low gate, guarded by the Imaum’s soldiers. Through that narrow gateway we pass into a narrower bazaar, where cross-legged

merchants are smoking ; where dirty, lazy soldiers squat, hugging their matchlocks ; and women with bare legs and covered faces, jostle against us ; where ebon slaves in the full knowledge that you are not their master, elbow you ; where ragged boys point at you ; and dogs, cats, chickens, goats, and filth, stare you every where in the face. Through such a crowd, for forty long yards have you pushed and scrambled, when you are suddenly startled by the upspringing of two red-coated, tight-waisted, loose-trowsered, bare-footed soldiers, from your feet, heralding you to yon stone archway, beneath which, you pass into a cool corridor, surrounding a square of orange and lime trees, in the centre of which, once played a fountain, the basin being now filled up by the carriage of a brass nine-pounder. Here you are met by a benign-looking old gentleman, with a silvery-grey beard, who gives you a John Bull grasp of the hand ; an example that is followed by three handsome middle-aged men, his sons, and two youths his grandsons. He bids you welcome in Arabic, which Mahmood Ben Comise renders into English,—for it is the Imaum you are face to

face with. He bows you to proceed round the corridor, into a narrow stone hall, opening on to the bay, with steps leading down to the water, scarcely a hundred yards from which are anchored the three frigates already mentioned. Here are seven chairs on each side, those on the right hand are filled by himself, three sons, and two grandsons, according to their ages ; but the seat next himself is left vacant—the son who ought to fill it, his eldest born, is regent during his absence from Zanzibar.

Opposite the Imaum is seated the captain, the rest in a row, with “Mr. Mahmood” for its tail-piece, and eke the mouthpiece. As I have before written, the old gentleman impresses you as benign and fatherly, in his fine manly open face, with broad brow, large grey eyes, tight close mouth, hedged round with silvery moustache and beard, which terminates in a sharp point about six inches below the chin. In all this there is so much of firmness, honesty of purpose, kind feeling and decision of character, combined with his genuine welcome and warm grasp, that your esteem is won at once. Tall, about six feet, broad in proportion, with a firm

elastic step, he moves upright as a dart, and save for the mellowness of his face, and the grey of his beard, he might pass as one in manhood's prime. The sons have all the appearance of craft and design, which usually distinguishes the Arabs of these parts; especially the third, who seems to concentrate the subtlety of the whole family. In the eldest of the grandsons, there is much of the grandfather; he is an orphan, his father was the second and best loved child of the old man, and was a guest of our Queen some few years back. In him I observed an air of dandyism; his was the richest hilted sabre, and most costly dagger, and he appeared prouder of his hands, which were small and elegant, than of the diamond that glittered on the little finger of his right hand. The garb of each was the same; with turbans of chequered silk, and flowing robes, girded in at the waist, with shawls of Cashmere, which held jewel-hilted daggers; bare-legged, and feet sandal-shod. Each wore a sabre—the old man's being the plainest, and the grandson's the most ornamented—forming a strong contrast to our uniforms. We are scarcely seated, when five

servants enter, each bearing a china cup held by a gold one, containing coffee—strong and hot, minus sugar and milk ; in swallowing which, we perhaps have scalded our mouths, which are cooled by the delicious rose-flavoured sherbet, that five other servants come rushing in with, in magnificently carved crystal cups. The captain, and the Imaum, (through the interpreter,) have a long complimentary and nautical talk. His highness has offered us the use of his stable, and desires the interpreter to chaperone us over the town. The visit ends. Again we are bowed round the corridor ; again, we have the same friendly, firm, John Bull-like shake of the hand from the old gentleman ; again, we struggle through the bazaar, force our way through the crowd in the custom-house square ; again, enter our boats, and are alongside the ship ; again, the boatswain whistles, the sentry presents arms, and we have returned from a visit of ceremony, to one of the noblest-looking men I have seen in the East. There is not a feature in his face, that would indicate the possibility of his being guilty of a tithe of the deeds that report lays at his door, excepting perhaps

the firm tight mouth, and large grey eyes ; but there is so much that is mild and kind, gentle and loving, that you endeavour to excuse and shield him under the plea of necessity.

Any body who has ever been on board a steam-frigate, when she is coaling, will remember with anything but pleasant recollection, the dirty black mess she is in. On such an occasion, to avoid as much as possible the dusty nuisance, we determined to swallow a hasty dinner, and avail ourselves of the Imaum's horses ; so, placing ourselves under the pilotage of " Mr. Mahmood,"—who, after the interview above-mentioned, finding no call on his tongue, had joined our mess, and employed his mouth—we again sought the shore, leaving the ship this time in one of the many canoes that surrounded her. We had the pleasure of being nearly capsized, when midway between her, and the shore, by a huge fish of the grampus kind, called by our friend, and well known to every sailor in the harbour, as " Muscat Tom." The natives are delighted whenever they see him (which is generally twice a week), as they believe he keeps the harbour free from sharks. Certes,

since his first visit, now six years gone, a shark has not been seen, before which period they were as numerous, as dangerous. But we are on shore, and are steering away for his highness's stables ; that is, we have left the water, and are pushing our way through narrow streets, playing at "follow my leader," as we can only travel single file through narrow bazaars of drugs, of rice, of pottery ; follow on, follow on through dirt, muck, dust ; jostled here, knocked there, and pushed somewhere else, with our English blood heated by the foreigner's sun and effrontery, we arrive in sight of the sea, and are cooled by its breeze, just as we have determined to knock down the next fellow, who shall touch but the hem of our garment. But here on the beach all is clear, no one likely to do so, save yon Bedouin with his ringletted hair, and naked sabre. There are a dozen of them in charge of the Imaum's stables, ugly-looking customers, with their matchlocks piled against the wall, and a peculiar look in their leering eyes, that said, "We hold our lives cheap, and would not think much of taking yours !"

Enter that door on your left, you have crossed

the threshold of the stables, they are built in the form of a square, like that of the custom-house, three sides of which, have shelving-roofs forming long sheds occupied by the animals, some two hundred in number, fastened in front by two ropes, extending from a ring in the halter, right and left, to pegs in the ground ; and behind by two heel-ropes to similar pegs—thus preventing the possibility of quarrelling, should vice or jealousy instigate. They were all fine barbs, shoeless, and the majority of them mares, two, out of the three sides of the square, being so occupied. The governor, it appeared, took delight in riding the worst horses ; for certainly those pointed out as his especial favourites, were brutes, compared with the beauty, and elegance of the others. Four horses were quickly ready for us, saddled, to our surprise, not with heavy native clumsiness, but with real “Peats ;” and mounting, we are away. Now, it is proverbial, that if you “place a beggar on horseback he will ride to the devil”—no very great distance, if we are to believe the Indian navy sailor’s idea of the heat of Muscat, who, when asked “What like a place is it, Jack ?” replied,

“Why, there is only a sheet of brown paper between it and hell!”

Methinks the adage would apply as well to the sailor, for certainly the horses we mounted, felt they had one, or the other, on their backs.

“Now I will show you how an Arab can ride,” remarked Mahmood.

“All right,” was our rejoinder, which meant, though not graceful in the saddle, we can stick and steer.

Away then at Gilpin-pace we sped, through narrow streets and bazaars, with women, children, and natives jumping helter-skelter out of our way, and dogs barking at our heels; through the gates, rousing the sleeping guard as we passed (for the city is walled); through the market on the outside, and the date-leaved huts inhabited by squalor and filth, to the little open square Mussulmān burial-ground at their back, where, having hitherto followed close at the heels of our leader, we passed him, and at a break-neck pace, galloped up to the only date plantation Muscat has. There, pausing until Mahmood overtook us, we observed that there was a small stream, flowing from the base of the

black rocky mountains, about a quarter of a mile from where we stood, fertilising the little narrow strip of ground through which it passed, whereon sprung up, the ready, tropical, vegetation, in the shape of date trees, oranges, limes, melons, and the gracefully clinging vine.

Peculiar and very grateful to the eye, was this solitary little patch of verdure, looking as if some kind hand had dropped a little earth into a crevice at the base of the black, barren, sun-burnt mountains, that frowned about, and around —so willing is Nature to drop a beautifying touch, wherever she has a chance. Retracing our steps over the burial-ground, we turn sharp to the right, and commence the ascent of the mountain side, in some places so precipitous that steps had been cut in the rock. How our shoeless barbs found footing we know not ; but up they scrambled, like mountain cats, and brought us to a narrow, rough, strong wooden door, about which lingered some twenty African soldiers ; the Imaum, I presume, fearing to trust so important a post in the hands of his Arab guards, this being the only pass by which Muscat is accessible from the interior. A few

words from Mahmood, and the gate opens. We stare to see immediately beneath our feet, groves of orange trees, plantations of dates, pleasant gardens, and everywhere verdure, bordered by pretty bays of blue quiet sea, reflecting sky and mountain—strange contrast to the hot-looking town behind us. We were much struck with the natural strength of this position, the path to which, from the interior, was so winding, steep and narrow, as to be almost inaccessible ; and not liking to run a greater risk of our necks, than we had done in ascending to our present position, we decline the permission ironically given us, “to gallop down and visit the Happy Valley at our feet.” “*Facilis descensus Averni, sed non Muscat.*” It was done this-wise : our animals drew their legs under, and slid, and we arrived safely, to our surprise, at the bottom. Any of our readers wishing to know what we felt, during the operation can, in these days of locomotion, easily transport themselves to Muscat, and try. We slowly re-entered the town, arrived at our friend’s house, of which it is not necessary to give a description, as only one set of ideas

seems to prevail in the house architecture of these parts. Here we found the walls of his sitting-room, hung with coloured prints of ballet-dancers, race-horses, and engravings of Shakspeare's plays. His library consisted of French and English standard works on history, biography, science, and novels by various hands, especially Scott and Bulwer—a rare collection for these parts. Mahmood, though a Mussulman,—of a very liberal kind, since he eat ham and drank wine with the best of us,—was by birth an African, a native of Zanzebar, and by constitution, mental and bodily, of far, very far, superior capacity to the dull, sleepy, un-energetic Asiatic, as most of his race are. Accompanied by him we walk to the Imaum's harem and palace,—the one we have previously seen from the deck of our own vessel,—which is a square building of considerable size, and something like ecclesiastical architecture, with small, square windows, whose iron bars served the double purpose of keeping the air out and the beauties in. As we cannot enter, we walk round and find, to our astonishment, some eight or ten horses, tethered under the windows of

that part of the building, which our friend informed us, was occupied by Circassian fair ones. Hence to the main Bazaar, a street covered in with date-branches extending from roof to roof, but so narrowed by a raised pathway on each side, from which again springs a platform about three feet high, that it looks like a long covered alley. Here on a mat, sit cross-legged, merchants, their wares around them,—coffee, senna leaves, dates, marine stores, spears and mats from Zanzibar; silks and carpets from Persia; cottons from Manchester; knick-knacks from China; sugars from the Mauritius; and rice from India. Next to this, lies the Oolwa Bazaar, a sweetmeat for which Muscat is celebrated; it is of the consistence of a glutinous jelly, and is composed of almonds, barley sugar, butter, and rose-water, all boiled together in a large copper cauldron, and stirred up with an equally large copper spoon, handled by a black slave. The cauldron is supported by two mud walls, beneath which is the fire, fed with arms of date-trees; behind this, reached by passing through a low black doorway, is a dark room, filled with pottery and wood, and holding

three or four huge chests, unlocking one of which, the oolwa-maker brings forth, with an air of deep mystery, pot after pot, of his sweet wares, of sizes ranging from a small saucer to a large soup-plate. He speaks English, Arabic, French, and Hindoostanee, extols their freshness and sweetness in the three latter, and invites you to purchase in English ; but you have seen so much that is black and smoky, from the greasy cauldron and stirring slave, to the Arab master, and his dark warehouse, that you decline the offer, with an inward feeling, that if you are to taste oolwa, it must not be of that which you have seen made. Continuing our ramble, we everywhere saw the same tall, dark, windowless houses, and smelt the same unsavoury smells ; everywhere saw sleepy dreamy natives, or sturdy dark African slaves ; everywhere met bare-legged women, with eyes peering through prison bars of crape ; and snarling dogs ; and everywhere found the streets too narrow to allow of two persons walking comfortably abreast.

“Slightly different this,” remarked the enlightened Mahmood, “from Cheapside or Regent’s

Street ; we have nothing in this country like the walk between Highgate and Hampstead."

"Your Alma Mater," said I, "and mine, too, in a different sense." So shaking hands with him at the landing-place, and promising to send him the last volume of Macaulay's "History of England," which he designated as "mighty pleasant reading," we bade good-night to our most pleasant cicerone.

Little more remains to be said of Muscat, the principal sea-port of Arabia ; by nature peculiarly defended, locked in by high barren rocks from the open sea ; shut off from the interior, by the same frowning barrier, and there approachable only, by a very narrow pass, which a handful of cowards might keep against an army of warriors ; cooled by the north-west breeze, filled with dirt ; fed by fish and dates, the former thrown up at their very doors, as an offering from the sea, the latter, grown in the interior, and brought in by the natives in exchange for the fish ;—seldom visited by fever, less so by cholera, and well supplied by nature, with hot and cold springs. The inhabitants live and die, themselves in a state of mental slavery, and

tended by dark Nubians, whom they hold in bondage. On the morrow we sailed for the Persian Gulf, and were scarcely out of sight of the harbour when two fugitive slaves were discovered; they had come on board with the coals, and secreted themselves in the bunkers, in the desire to escape from the cruelty of their master, who had "several times hung them up by their neck until they were nearly dead, and then flogged them until they fainted," as their backs amply testified. So much for the happiness which some people persist in declaring to be the portion of the slave. They were granted the protection of the British flag, and entered on the ship's books as coal-trimmers.

CHAPTER III.

The Quoins—Votive Offerings to Neptune—Funeral Superstition—
Khismis and Ongar—Aspect of Khismis—Sandbank of Nearchus
—Diversity of Landscape—Bassador—Cadāda—His “Plenty”
Qualifications—No Government Security—A small Chapel—
Commodore’s Residence—The Hospital—A Domicile of Medi-
calis—Shrewd Remarks on the Shah of Persia—Political Prog-
nostications—Russian Intimidation and Policy—Herat—Ormuz
—Peaks of Rock-salt—Cadāda’s Ships for Inland Commerce—
“The Pleasant Island of Khismis”—Its former Importance—
The Bazaar and its belongings—English Burial-ground—Lady’s
Tomb and quaint Epitaph—Portuguese Reservoirs—Cadāda’s
House and Investment—“When nobody care, God no care, and
nothing grow”—The dozing Vulture—Antelope and Date
Sauce—“A slim thing, slithering along,” Whip-snake—A Night
in the Dead-house—Lively Dreams—Commodore’s House—A
self-willed Donkey—Independent Driver—A regular sell.

“WE are at no great distance from ‘the Quoins!’” exclaimed the purser (puffing a mouthful of smoke from a bad cigar into my face).

“From the what?” I asked.

“Why, five little islands at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, called after, and said to

resemble, that—”, pointing to the quoir of a 32-pounder.

“And who may have given you that piece of information ?”

“Dekho tum, Dekho Sahib,”—drawing my attention to sundry cocoa-nuts and melons we were at the moment passing.

“It is all twaddle, man,” I replied, quoting a favourite expression of his ; “if you wish to persuade any one that that fruit has been washed from the Quoins, try one of the Marines, as I am afraid your time and trouble would be thrown away on my belief. The Quoins are barren, arid limestone rocks, in whose clefts the wild sorrel alone grows ; cocoa-nut trees and melons require rather more soil than the cleft of a limestone rock can harbour.”

“Know you not,” he replied, “that all the native boats and bugalows trading from India to Persia, as they pass the Quoins, throw over-board fruits and flowers, and often models of their own vessels, laden with samples of their cargo, as an offering to the sea, and a prayer for a propitious voyage ?”

“What then ?” I inquired.

“The poor wretches watch them most anxiously, and augur from the direction they take, of the event of their expedition. If landward, they believe their prayer is heard, and their voyage will be propitious ; if seaward, they shrug their shoulders, and say it is their ‘nasib’” (fate).

“Do your ‘poor wretches,’” I asked, “never avail themselves of strategy, as the Parsees do, the ancient fire-worshippers—the Ghebers—who were kicked out of the land we are rapidly approaching? They, when they expose their dead on the iron bars, throw them across the mouth of the ‘Towers of Silence,’ and leave their bones to be picked by every crow and carrion bird that likes Parsee meat, until they fall into the vault beneath, cover the left eye with a stone, or piece of lead, so that the right may be first picked, and the soul be insured of its passage up aloft, believing that, should the left be chosen, the poor soul would go, as the Jacobite song hath it, ‘Down, down’—I will not say whither, but leave that to your imagination?”

“I don’t suppose,” he answered, “that should the wind be dead off shore they would throw

them overboard, but I imagine they always avail themselves of the sea breeze."

As the purser prognosticated, we soon passed the Quoins, and the morning's early sun found us steaming in sight of the islands of "Khismis" and Ongar, the latter of which is sacred to Poseidon. The aspect presented by Khismis is arid and barren; even the flat-topped sand-hills that rise in the middle look lifeless and parched; on the sea-board, no cocoa-nut or date-tree anywhere breaks the monotony of the arid, desert look.

"Ah! the Commodore is here; his flag is flying from the staff at the point, in front of that square, flat-roofed, mud-like stable, where he resides, and which presents the only appearance at present of life on the island. But how is this? The coast has changed its character; the sandy beach, shelving from the main, ceases here; and the point, with its abrupt limestone rocks, beetles over the sea. Why are we bearing away? I thought we were to go into the Roads of Bassador."

"To avoid a considerable sand-bank, or we should ground, as did here the ships of Nearchus,

Alexander's admiral—he to whom that fast young monarch gave the third of the golden crowns ; *vide* any Encyclopædia,” answered the pert young midshipman to whom I had put the question.

Having paid our compliments to the Commodore's ship, the H. E. I C. sloop of war “The Clive,” in the shape of a certain number of guns, and the expenditure of a given amount of gunpowder, we have time, before asking permission to go on shore, to look around, and take stock of what we see. Perhaps the thing we are most struck with is the alteration of the seaboard expression of the island, which, instead of being what we had expected to find, judging from what we saw coasting down the island, a sandy shelving shore, is like the point we have just rounded, a high limestone rocky coast, terminating in a marshy greenish-looking swamp. And that jetty, where the Commodore's boat is waiting, and which somebody has been at great trouble and expense to cut, is the only place we can land at, unless we choose to pull to the marsh, three miles off. On the right hand of that jetty, as you ascend, is a small

chapel, and on your left is a long barn-like building—the Hospital. These two buildings, with the exception of three or four flat-roofed houses, are the only signs of habitation to be seen from the steamer's deck. Bassador certainly does not present a very imposing appearance, nor a very prepossessing one; but having obtained from the first-lieutenant permission to go on shore, we were told by the purser that we can do so in Cadāda's boat; and, at the same time, are introduced to that "party," a tall, fine, keen, honest-looking Arab, with rather a grey beard, and some forty-five years of age, who says, "Salaam, master; hope master quite well; what master want for gun-room mess? Got plenty eggs, fish, Buslire-fowl, young antelope, honey, butter."

"Any of 'Khismis's golden wine' to be had?"
I asked, quoting "Lalla Rookh."

"No, master, no wine, no grog, on shore. Commodore not let sell."

"You do not seem to have much vegetation; we saw no trees as we coasted along the island."

"No, master; no grow on shore; all same as this deck. No tree; got plenty fun, plenty

hare, partridge, antelope ; ‘Clive’s’ midshipmen keep greyhounds ; yesterday kill two antelopes, plenty catch, plenty fun, but no tree.”

“Why don’t you plant some, and make a garden about your house ?” I asked.

“Take plenty time, plenty money, master. Shah of Persia say, ‘Cadāda plant tree, make grand house, have plenty money, give me money ;’ and I give money. Everybody say Cadāda plenty money, give money ; and I give money, because I plant tree, and make nice. Arab come, say, ‘Cadāda, fine house, fine garden, plenty money ;’ cut my throat, kill my wife, and take my money. No, master, I live in house same as everybody, and nobody say Cadāda have money,—not like you, master, no government care for Cadāda. Your government, your father, your mother.”

Thus Cadāda delivered his sentiments on the want of government security, stroked his beard, and thanked Mahomet. So, leaving him to fight out a religious discussion which the purser had opened with him, I availed myself of his boat, and landed, determined to visit first the little chapel that looked so humble and clean,

and read such monuments as set forth the qualifications and names of those who died on the station, and were buried either within or around its walls ; partly, perhaps, in the hope of adding to a collection of quaint epitaphs I was making. But what was my surprise to find that, instead of being a chapel for the station, erected for the benefit of the Indian navy sailors, it was a Roman Catholic chapel, built by the united efforts and subscriptions of the Portuguese, contributed by the apothecary of the hospital, the servants of the officers, and the cooks of the different ships belonging to the station. I entered with a slightly different feeling to that which had actuated me to seek it, and found it to be a long room, forty feet by thirty, with walls built of sandstone white-washed, the floor of mud. Over the altar (a small, black wood table, covered with a white cloth, on which stood two brass candlesticks, holding half-burnt candles) hung a large black wooden cross ; various cheap coloured-prints of the Virgin and tortured saints adorned the walls. The building contained but two windows, both on the same side, facing the

harbour ; the roof was formed by beams of split date-trees, covered in with matting, and the whole was beautifully swept and clean. Standing with my back to the porch, and looking past the hospital, and over the huge heap of coals belonging to the company (guarded by a Sepoy, one of the Marine Battalion, of which there are fifteen stationed here), I saw some twenty or thirty low houses, three-fourths of them forming a bazaar, the rest, as if not on good terms with their neighbours, straggling or dotted here and there, with sailors galloping donkeys from one to the other. Far away, as I turn and look towards the interior, are the sand-hills and rocky mountains we marked when we first sighted the island. On my left stands the flagstaff, from which flies the English ensign ; and that track, having something the semblance of a road, leads to the only building worthy of the name of house, where the Commodore resides. Feeling that I ought to pay my respects to that personage, I accordingly, following the track, enter the little square yard, occupied by servants' out-houses, some half-dozen ducks, three times that number of

fowls, four greyhounds, and two or three goats ; in the midst of which I am saluted by the butler, head-servant, who informs me that the Sāhib is "bahargaza" (gone out). So handing him my pasteboard, I retrace my steps, and arrive at the jetty in time to welcome on shore an old friend, the Medicalis, who informs me that he has been on board, leaving a note, inviting me to share snacks with him during the vessel's stay in the roads.

"We domicile there," he said, pointing to the hospital.

"There!" I echoed ; "what, with your sick ?"

"I have none at present, excepting one with Guiana worm, and another with fever ; besides, there is a little room at the end—come, see, and 'tiff'" (lunch).

So, entering the end door, we pass through the hospital, along rooms, some sixty feet by thirty, with six square mud pillars, down and up the middle, a great portion of which they occupy in the support of the roof, formed by beams of split date-trees, supporting in their turn the branches they originally wore, —covered with matting made of their leaves,

and enclosed from the sky with mud, the same element of which the walls are formed and the floor made. The side next the sea, looking over the anchorage on to the mainland of Persia, with its barren hills sparkling in the sunlight, is the only one boasting windows; they are large, and are hung on hinges from the top; opening and shutting, pushed and propped at the desired angle, by a stout stick, of about four feet in length,—thus screening off the sun and sky, and admitting the breeze from below. At the opposite end to that by which we entered, and mapped off by a wall which only reaches midway to the ceiling, with a door of canvas, is a little room six feet by nine, and boasting the dignity of a window. Stooping our heads as we enter, my friend bids me welcome; here we find two camp-stools, two small tables, one occupied by a desk and sundry Persian books, the other with green baize for a table-cloth, on which stood an inkstand, a few reeds, half-a-dozen sheets of foolscap covered with Persian characters, and as many more unsullied, a “coojah” (water-bottle) and tumbler. Opposite to this table and the window is my friend’s

bed, but no bedstead ; or rather instead of such a thing, a long deal box that had once held a skeleton, and now answered this double purpose of bedstead and book-cupboard. In the corner, facing the doorway, which is between the end of the bed and the outer wall, is a washing-stand, holding a large shallow tin basin, and immediately above it a shelf containing five plates of various patterns and sizes, two vegetable dishes, a pickle-bottle half filled with diseased onions and cabbage parings, two blue breakfast-cups minus handles, one saucer,—white, with gold rim,—four wine-glasses, a teapot that had been “ fouled, and carried away half its jibboom ;” a bottle of Mango-chetney, and a cold fowl ; two tumblers, one cracked (as I afterwards discovered to my discomfort) ; an odd assortment of knives, forks, and spoons ; a napkin, a tablecloth, and a bottle of arrack.

“ Here you see I exist, study Persian—”
“—and discomfort,” I remarked. We tiffed and talked. He had not heard from England for four months, so I told him a little news, the last from home, and of Sebastopol.

“ The time will yet come,” he remarked,

“when you will have a tougher struggle on these shores.”

“With whom?” I asked; “not your lazy, rascally Persians.”

“Yes, with those friends of yours; officered by, and comrading with, your present enemies.”

“What mean you? I thought Persian sympathies were with us.”

“No, with Russia; she is already half Russia. There is Russian gold everywhere, spent by Russian agents; Russian influence, Russian diplomacy, coaxing, threatening, persuading the Shah; they have roused him from the animal, from the lethargic state he has for some time been in, and given him a Russian telescope with which to look at Herat.”

“And will he ever dare to break faith with us?”

“All in good time he will; why should he not? He does not love you. You have never gone the way to teach him to do so. He does not fear you; until he does, he will not love you. He fears Russia, or rather the rapid strides she is making from the Caspian shores inland. He fears the loss of some part of his empire, or

the whole, and so he loves her, 'as victims love;' and as he loves he is led, and will follow as she dictates. And so, as you beat her in the Crimea, she will endeavour to sting you sharply through Persia."

"What remedy, pray, would you in your wisdom recommend?"

"Why, coerce Persia more than Russia can, and she will fight Russia instead of facing you. This our Indian Government can do readily and quickly; for we have much less of redtapeism to clog the wheels of progress, and younger men at the head of action, than the home government. Promptitude and energy must meet craft and diplomacy; and with open eyes and ready hands the Indian Government (should it be called upon, as I am convinced it will before many years have passed) will be more than a match for Persia, backed and befriended though she may be by Russia. Persia, to use a homely expression, 'hail-fellow-well-met,' with semi-Asiatic Russia, would form a very nice little party, and Persia might become Russia's high road to India; for what would be a few thousand miles to Russia through a friend's country, commis-

sariated by its kindness? And would not Herat, with its fortifications and fertile valley, be a delightful recruiting spot for an invading army?"

"Pray, what antidote would you use, should this chimerical poison ever be found at work? Would you send an opposing army to be lost again in the Bolan and Kyber passes? Are not enough of your countrymen's bones already bleaching there? and how would you coerce Persia?"

"I would not send an army through those passes again; but to Peshāwur, where we have a camp of 5000 men, and which is only a few miles from the Kyber pass, I would send a strong reinforcement, and from there 5000 picked men to the Kyber, who might hold it against 100,000 with ease; and if I could depend on the fidelity of our old enemy and present ally, Dost Māhomed, I would supply him with able heads and full pockets, arms and ammunition. The able heads should officer the irregular troops I would arm, feed, and pay; and trust me, their sympathies would then be much more (as I believe them to be now) with England

than with Persia or Russia ; and should they be overwhelmed and driven back, fighting (as they would do) like devils, for their own land, inch by inch, they might take their stand at the pass ; and not the Czar himself, backed by all the Russias, could force it."

"What would you do in the meantime in the Persian Gulf?"

"Send up a force of 20,000 to occupy Bushire, Lingar, or any town on the sea-coast, and, if needs be, to march into the country as far as Shiraz. This latter movement should be cautiously taken : they would find nothing but ruined villages on their road of march ; all the cattle would be driven before them, and they would have to convey their commissariat."

"Would you not send up a fleet?"

"Certainly, to hang in the rear of the army, for them to fall back upon, and to trade up and down the coast with provisions ; but there would be no other work for a fleet to do. Half-a-dozen gun-boats might destroy all the towns on the sea-coast of Persia."

"Do you think that an idle intimidating army, occupying the different sea-ports and staying

commerce, would be punishment severe to the Shah, and coercion enough ?”

“Certainly not. The grand secret of coercion and greatest punishment, would be in subsidising the Arab tribes, who, like so many wasps, would inflict such a constant stinging as to make the Shah long remember the day when he awoke the British lion. The Arabs love him not : they have an eternal remembrance of former feuds, and a religious abhorrence of the heretic Persian. With these two incitements, making fierce and more furious their nature, they would scour the country, carrying devastation and terror to all who fought for Persia.”

“True, the Persian can bring into the field a host of irregulars, and herds of flying cavalry ; smart skirmishers, unorganised certainly, but nothing lacking in courage and daring ; for even to this day there is the same martial spirit in them which fought so well against the Romans under Shapoor, making prisoner the Emperor Valerian, and bestowing the purple of Cesar on another. There is the same spirit that made the arms of Mahmood victorious against the Turks, and gave him for empire the provinces

of Georgia and Baghdad, of Bokara and Kasgur, of Bengal and the Deckan. Though lacking organisation and discipline, they must not be despised. Successfully they fought against the Afghans and the Turks in Mesopotamia, and more than once were victorious against the disciplined armies of Russia. With such antecedents, it would be folly to despise the Persians, and worse than folly to risk a small force in the interior."

"A truce to your Russo-Persian politics; tell me, do you know anything about Ormuz or Geron, that once famous emporium of commerce?"

"Little or nothing. I have never yet found time to visit it, and have learned all I know about it from Cadāda; and I very much doubt if it would repay a visit, with the exception perhaps of the ruined fort built by the celebrated Albuquerque in the year 1507, and which still contains some pieces of large Portuguese cannon, now in possession of the Imaum of Muscat, who garrisons the place with Nubians. It certainly was not wise of the great Abbas to deprive (with the assistance of the East India Company) the Portuguese of

that island in the year 1622. By so doing, he added neither glory nor wealth to his kingdom, but destroyed a commercial emporium, a noble settlement, that merchants from every quarter of the earth sought, and commemorated it by giving his name to Grombrom, which to this day is called Bunder Abbas — it should have been Blunder Abbas, Abbas's folly ! As the crow flies, you will find it to be about sixty miles hence, and if you wish a sight of it, ride to yonder mountains, and from their summit you will see its peaks of rock-salt glittering in the sun, as if covered with snow ; it has neither vegetation nor fresh water ; 'its circumference,' so writes the learned Malcolm, 'is not twenty miles ; both its hills and plains are formed of salt, which impregnates the streams, and crusts over them like frozen snow. The nature of the soil, or rather surface of the earth, renders the heat of summer more intolerable at Ormuz than in any of the parched islands or provinces around it, and unless we consider the advantages of its excellent harbour and local situation, it appears to be one of the last spots on the globe which human beings would desire to inhabit.'

The first settlers on this island were some Arabs, compelled by the Tartar invaders of Persia to leave the continent. They gave it the name of Hormuz, or Ormuz, being that of the district which they had been obliged to abandon. An old fisherman, whose name was Gerron, is said to have been its sole inhabitant when this colony arrived. Çadāda says that the island abounds in pure sulphur, and has numerous tanks for retaining the rain water, of which a great quantity falls during the season, built by the Portuguese on the same principle as those in this island. If you are fond of investigating old ruins, and don't mind snakes, you will find the one and plenty of the other to your heart's content, about three miles hence. Come, let us walk, it will give an appetite for dinner, which we will order at seven o'clock; that is, if you can eat antelope with date sauce, and wash it down with the wine of Shiraz. I am sorry I can give you none of the bread of Yezd, and we must endeavour to realise the proverb without it, which says that to live happily, 'Man must eat the bread of Yezd, and drink the wine of Shiraz.'"

“Light your cigar. B’hài! Āg lão,” calling his servant, and telling him to bring a light.

“What,” I asked, “are those browsing, lumbering camels doing there?”

“They are Cadāda’s ships, as he calls them; he keeps them for traversing the island and conveying merchandise, which he sells to the different Arabs distributed over its surface, purchasing their produce, and bringing it back for the use of the bazaar in which we now are.”

“What merchandise, and what produce?”

“Such as he receives several times during the year in bugalows from Bombay; rice, sugar, coffee, and a host of other things, with which he supplies not only this island, but also many bazaars on the main land; taking in return, corn and tobacco, horses and cattle. Do you see that marsh-looking land, in the midst of which the ruined fort is buried? That land produces, with very little culture, more than sufficient vegetables to supply the bazaar and squadron: melons, small and delicious, huge gourds, long large cucumbers, the mealy sweet potatoes, and almost every sort of vegetable grows there.”

“You astonish me,” I remarked. “I had

fancied that no island could be so arid and barren as this."

"It certainly is both barren and arid, but not of all barren and arid places the worst. From those few date trees that spring from the middle of the ruined fort, all along that side of the island is land that might be rendered most productive with any other industry employed, beyond that awakened by Arab energy, and encouraged by the loose state of things around. It is the coolest and healthiest island in the Persian Gulf, and might, with very little effort and cultivation, be restored to what Tom Moore describes it to have been, the 'pleasant little island of Khismis,'—Persian for raisin; of grapes. I do not think the whole island produces a bushel; but tradition says that it was once famed for its vines, as its name would suggest; and it contained above three hundred villages: all have been swept away, and there remain not now, with the exception of this place here—" pointing to the bazaar,—“there remain not now more than a hundred huts scattered over the face of the island, located on little patches, where the earth yields untilled vegetation, and

which Cadāda in the season visits with 'his ships' to purchase.

"And this is the bazaar that Cadāda keeps 'his ships' to supply; mud huts, roofed in with date branches, that shelve over mud platforms, raised some three feet from the ground, on which are spread tobacco, rice, cocoa-nuts, dates, curry-stuff, and allspice, raisins, sugar, crockery of all kinds, candles, oil, sweetmeats, drugs, and everything that a sailor or native can possibly want, or not want. Here the tars spend much of their time, smoking their clays. And as no grog is allowed on the island, and Jack must drink, and, when on shore, stand treat to everybody, he spends much of his money on the hot and sweet coffee, or the cool and insipid sherbet sold in this bazaar."

"Those straggling houses, that wear rather an important look compared with the others, what are they?"

"Those houses, from which the sailors on donkey-back are rushing to and fro, are Cynthean dwellings, acknowledged by Government for the use of the squadron."

We had now reached the English burial-ground,

having walked over and passed by many native graves to reach it, which everywhere obstructed our progress, with huge stones heaped over them, marking their site, and preventing the jackals from tearing forth and sharing their contents with the bare-necked, white-breasted vultures that everywhere showed themselves.

In through that narrow gate, and you stand in the square, pleasant-looking, and well-kept yard. Not a grave (and many are there) but is marked by a head and foot-stone, recording the name of its occupant, while as a contrast to all about is a plain white marble tomb, its very simplicity touchingly poetic, and its black letters telling the name and age of her, the only one of England's daughters, whose bones rest in this desolate island.

"A strange, drear place," remarked my friend, "for one so fair as she I am told was to be entombed in. During the time we occupied Kharrak there was a captain and his company in occupation here, and she was his wife.

'With thy rude ploughshare, Death, turn up the sod,
And spread the furrow for the seed we sow.
This is the field and acre of our God,
This is the place where human harvests grow.'

But look, what think you of that epitaph?" pointing to a head-rail that set forth,—

"Here lies W. G.
Who you never more will see
Has happy Has can be
So do not think of he."

"Short and quaint; but how much to the point, I am not prepared to say."

Having copied it, we quitted "God's acre," and shutting the small gate after us, to prevent the entrance of dogs and jackals (that divide the day and night in scavengering), we proceeded to examine one or two of the few remaining reservoirs, built by the Portuguese and kept in repair by the East India Company, whose ships they supply with water. We found them to be about twenty feet long, by seven wide, and as many deep, covered in with an oval stone roof, opening only at one end by a large flat stone, that shut out sun, dust, and dogs, thus keeping the water cool and clean; all are of the same shape and size, looked after and kept in order by Cadāda, at whose house we have just arrived. In, through that rather important archway, with its strong wooden door

wide open, facing the sea ; it has at its entrance, on either side, two long mud seats, whereon sit dirty Arabs, idle sons or dependants of Cadāda, who take not the slightest notice of us as we pass, but continue smoking their pipes with a perfectly lordly indifference to all around ;— through a passage twelve feet long, and you find yourself in a large, square, dirty, ill-sorted farm-yard, minus straw, where some half-dozen cows are fastened, as far from each other as is possible in the space ; a dozen or two hens, following a noisy cock that is seeking its roost ; seven or eight goats, with big udders, long beards, and soft wool, casting (as they “chew their cud of sweet or bitter food”) their large mild eyes inquiringly at us ; and a large Bushire cat is purring round the purser, who is talking Persian to it, and occupying the only respectable one of the three chairs Cadāda possesses. The latter rises, as we enter, from one of the mud benches (of which there are two, like those on the outside), makes us a low bow, and bids us welcome. While the handsome-faced Nubian who has been despatched for the kaleone is bringing it, we observe that the four

sides of the square are occupied by out-houses, store-houses, and dwelling-houses, covered with a flat roof, which serves as a promenade by day, and sleeping-place during the hot season. I asked, between the mouthfuls of fragrant smoke which I was sending forth—

“For what purpose are those big-tailed, black-faced sheep fastened by their legs and thrown on their backs?”

“To-morrow morning, three o’clock, master, cut their heads off so—” (drawing his fingers across his throat), “take on board, and ‘Clive’ men and your men eat them.”

“What,” I said, “do you cut their heads off; is that the way you slaughter them?”

“Always, master. My fashion, every man’s fashion like me, to cut sheep’s head off.”

“What you think to that watch, master. You think that good one?” drawing out from an inside pocket a handsome hunting, engine-turned gold watch, with all recent improvements, and bearing on the face the name of its maker, M’Cabe, Cornhill. “I give sixty tomans for that” (about as many pounds sterling). I know that good watch. You see that name,

all gentlemen have that man's watch; that best maker. Shah of Persia have that man's watch: all big Persians have that man's watch."

"And that is the reason why you have it," I replied.

"No, me not Persian, thank God; me Arab."

"But why would not a very much cheaper one than this do? You might have had one, for a quarter of the money" (mentioning the amount in tomans) "that would go as well as that, and lasted you your lifetime."

"Master, what your dress cost—coat, shirt, everything?"

"About ten tomans," I replied.

"And you have three, four, altogether cost thirty tomans. You see this—" (pointing to his turban and robes); "altogether my dress cost one toman. You eat breakfast, dinner, tea; drink wine, brandy, grog; smoke cigars; every day, cost half toman. Cadāda curry rice, eat little bread, small fruit, drink water, every day cost so much—" (pointing to the palm of his hand, which held nothing, and signified the minuteness of the sum he wished to express).

"Your clothes, dinner, every day eat, cost

plenty money. What mine cost? You spend one day what I spend one year, that what mine cost. You put your money in government treasure-chest, all safe. Cadāda nowhere put money, buy watch, buy rings. I take my watch, look time, sixty tomans say 'two o'clock;' put my watch in my pocket, tic-tic, live thing say 'sixty tomans:' that my pleasure, that my money. What money I not buy watch, rings with, I hide. Plenty man do so; every people do so; no security here, like England; my life not safe; one man tell Shah, 'Cadāda speak bad word, make plot.' Shah say, 'Cut Cadāda head off.' One man tell governor there (pointing to the main), 'Cadāda plenty money;' governor say, 'take half.' If law all same here as England, I think make this island, make Persia, best country in the world; plenty thing grow, plenty money, plenty care; now I no care, nobody no care make thing grow; when nobody no care, God no care, and nothing grow."

Such were the philosophic sentiments (radical, the government party would have called them) that Cadāda in his quaint broken English slowly gave utterance to. Our pipes and chat finished,

we continued our walk towards the ruined Portuguese fort, which we reached in just sufficient time to see that it had been one of some considerable extent, and of which there remained now scarcely one stone upon another. This accomplished, we retraced our steps homeward, everywhere over dry, thirsty, and uneven ground, that indicated former habitation, and gave a hollow groan as our feet fell on it, past the straggling houses, through the squalid bazaar, with its many ill-conditioned dogs and numerous inhabitants, its dirty women, naked children, jolly-faced sailors, noisy boys, and rough donkeys; along the ridge, some twenty feet above the sea, where the grey vulture loves to doze in the sun, with one winking eye watching the bones that may be thrown from the cook-house of the hospital close by; and we have arrived at our friend's little room, where the green baize and its foolscap companions have given place to a white table-cloth, telling, as plainly as a table-cloth can tell, that the antelope and date-sauce will be here directly.

“Talk not to me of venison and currant-jelly,”
I said, as I washed down the last mouthful with

a glass of dry Shiraz, "no venison ever equalled the tenderness, the raciness, and the juiciness of that antelope, and no sauce was ever served up so fitting the dish."

"I am glad you liked it, I thought you would," he replied. "You see we are not altogether without some creature comfort in this desolate, bone-drying, arid island; I must not allow you to abuse the head-quarter station of the Indian Navy in these waters,—the Querxoine of the Portuguese,—the Djazeeru Duraz (long island) of the Persian,—and the Oaracta of Nearchus."

We smoked and chatted; and while sipping my grog I observed, by the dim light of the now flickering candles, a slim thing, slithering along one of the dry date leaves of the roof over head, in apparent chase of another half its size, to which I drew my friend's attention by pointing, and asking if those were the friends he studied Persian with; remarking, if they were, I would rather decline being initiated into the beauties of that language. He laughed, and said they were only two whip-snakes (nearly the most deadly of the slimy race), and that there were abundance of them in the roof, but very seldom

any fell; and when they did, they were too frightened to think of biting; in fact, he doubted very much whether, if they did bite, they could inject any poison, as he did not think there was sufficient vegetation in the island to generate it,—had heard of only four cases in three years of natives being bitten and dying from the effects, and they occurred during the rainy season. As for himself, he had been acquainted with them so long that he considered them almost in the light of companions; certainly, when he first occupied the room, he was rather startled by one falling on his pillow; but use is second nature, and so he never thought about them now.

“I hope there are none in the room I am to domicile in to-night; if so, as I have not yet acquired that second nature, and have no desire to do so, I must thank you for your consolation.”

After priming myself with an extra glass of grog, I retired, my friend showing me that portion of the building I was to occupy.

Eight feet long by six wide is the size of what had undoubtedly been the dead-house of the hospital, with a shelving roof of date branches,

meeting sides of cocoa-nut mat, that rested on a mud wall, perhaps three feet in height. Here my bed was made on an old door, one end of which was supported by the mud wall, the other by three lumps of coal, borrowed from the heap outside."

"I hope you will be able to sleep."

"I think I shall," I replied, "provided the snakes allow me."

"Oh, do not think about them, I have only heard of one being killed in this room ; but if you like, you shall have my bed."

"No thank you. I prefer a state of semi-doubt to one of certainty, in this case, at least ; I have seen no snakes here, but I have in your room," I replied.

I turned in, all standing like a trooper's horse, as Jack would say, having previously arranged the lamp so that it threw its light well on the roofing and over my bed. At first the idea that I was occupying the dead-house, and the thought of the cold clammy black fellows that had, in all probability, been stretched out on the very shutter or door I was lying on, did not give quite a soothing sensation to my brain;

then the screaming of the jackals all around, and the baying of the dogs that barked them off, rather tended to keep me awake; and lastly, the horrible thought that a snake might possibly fall on my pillow, and bite, for some time haunted me. How many I started aside from, before I reached that land where only imaginary ones exist—the land of dreams, I know not. How many I was bitten by, haunted with, and killed in those dreams, would be impossible to say; but so real a form did that haunting, killing, and biting hold in my brain, that I was awoke at day-break by the apothecary shaking me, and asking if I was ill, saying that I had been groaning for some time. The speed with which I leaped from the bed, I will leave my readers to imagine. Certainly, I could not for some moments credit that I had not been bitten; so truly Adamic a horror have I of the serpent tribes.

Having swallowed a substantial breakfast and enjoyed a dip in the sea, we went to call on the Commodore, and had the good luck to find him at home. He was seated in the verandah of the house, which, like many of those in Bombay,

consisted of a large square room, verandahed round, and for which the government mulcts the poor subaltern-occupant of 30*l.* a-year house rent ; but, unlike the Bombay ones, this had an upper room, reached by an outer stair, the same size as the basement room over which it was built, with Venetianed walls. The verandah round the basement room is closed in with Venetian shutters, which assist materially (by keeping the sun's rays at a respectable distance, and admitting every breath of air) in cooling that said room, which is generally used for breakfasting and dining in, while the verandah is assigned to sleeping and sitting. The furniture of this large room, with its floor, like that of the verandah, formed of hardened cow-dung, consists of a round table, beneath which a former Commodore and one or two lieutenants, are buried (having died before the establishment of the burial-ground), some half-dozen arm-chairs, a side table, containing two decanters, numerous tumblers, and wine glasses ; a few shells and books, finish the catalogue. The monotonous whitewash of the walls is broken by a few antelope's horns, and a fox's brush.

It has eight windows, two in each side ; and two doorways, which face each other. Such is the Commodore's house at Bassador. A long, pleasant talk, and an early tiffin, occupied the morning ; and hearing that the steamer was likely to sail on the following day, I resolved on riding out into the country to see if I could shoot a few brace of partridges, and perhaps an antelope for the mess. On our return to the hospital I sent my servant for a donkey, which came galloping up, chased by a half-naked, rascally boy, of fourteen or fifteen years of age, its attendant. An old piece of sackcloth, fastened with a strap that went round under its belly, and was knotted in the middle of the back, holding an iron ring, to make, if possible, the knot more uncomfortable to the rider, and through which was rove a stoutish piece of rope, with a rusty stirrup dangling from each end, formed the saddle gear of the animal. Having mounted, and given the boy my gun to carry, I proved the truth of the proverb so well known in the Persian Gulf, touching the obstinacy of a "Bassador Mōke," that is said always to take a direction diametrically opposite to the one

towards which it is urged. The animal I bestrode would have rushed towards the bazaar with the greatest amount of speed his legs could carry him, but move in my direction he would not ; and I am convinced we spent a good half-hour in howling, hallooing, screaming, kicking, pushing, pinching, battering with the butt-end of my gun, poking with the barrel, coaxing, but move in the direction he was wanted to go, he would not. So, bethinking me of the screw part of the ramrod, I removed the brass cap, and gave it to the boy to apply ; there was a wince in his back, and away he started, full pelt, for fifty yards, when he turned suddenly round, and, in spite of the lesson I had learned at many a fair in donkey-racing as a boy, nearly threw me. At a break-neck pace he galloped, heedless of the tugging, first on one side, and then the other, or see-saw torture I applied to his lower jaw, into the bazaar, where, seeing a few of his kind, waiting riders, he rushed into the middle of them, pulled suddenly up, and brayed ! The brute ! I could have shot him ; but the boy had my gun, and ere he came up, my anger had given place to laughter.

“Master,” he said, “’spose you walk there,” pointing to a sand-hill, about a mile off, “I bring donkey : I think go then, ’cause him no smell bazaar there.” I yielded to the advice of the young dog, whose experience had been gained in all probability by being reared and bred in the same stables as the donkey—“Arcades Ambo.” It proved good ; the donkey, at a distance from the bazaar, conquered his fit of obstinacy, and went well. We travelled over the rocky hills, sand covered, on which grew brown, dry, stunted grass, from which a few sheep and goats were endeavouring to extract nourishment, in which the red-legged partridge hid, and the hare, with fur so nearly the colour of all around, was scarcely distinguishable ; but the sharp eye of my donkey-driver spied them out, and he had the pleasure of picking up a few brace of the former and a leash of the latter, which the lazy young rascal, ready and delighted as he was to pick up, would not carry, but insisted on making the donkey do it, much to my disgust.

“No, master, me no carry, me walk. Master shoot, master ride, master carry.”

Dismissing both the obstinate donkey and driver, I lighted my cigar, and rambled quietly on, hoping from the abundant traces in the sand of antelopes to be fortunate enough to meet with some. Fortune forsook me until the moment I had decided on retracing my steps, when I perceived in the dim light, for it was now evening (as sundry jackals had reminded me), three fine ones, grazing on the brow of a sand-hill. I was now to have sport. "Oh, then my heart went pit-a-pat," as the song has it, and I could have spent the night on the sand-hills, so delighted was I at the prospect of sending a leaden messenger to stay the career of one of those bounding beauties. Quietly drawing my two barrels of the shot, and putting a ball into each, and chalking the muzzle of my gun so that I might the better and more certainly direct it, I crept, crawled, and stole, full of hope, till I reached a broken-down wall which had once enclosed a garden, towards which, luck of all lucks! I had the great delight of seeing them progressing. So, crouching down behind it, in some funk of snakes that might be hidden in its rubble, I pushed my gun

through a chink which commanded the path along which they were coming, and waited full of expectation, seconds seeming minutes, and minutes hours ; scarcely daring to breathe, for they were so close to me that I heard them move and browse, I heard their feet fall on the hard sounding rock, heavy, I thought, for the slight antelope. I see them ! they are within thirty yards ! my finger is on the trigger ! my heart beats quick—but stay, they look too large, they are brown, not red like the antelope, what can they be ? Drawing myself gently up to ascertain, my ears are saluted with the most screaming bray, from the mother of those two young asses, that ever donkey gave ! “ There are three of you on that side of the wall, and a great one on this,” I mentally exclaimed ; so seeing I began the day with an ass, I will finish it with one ; suiting the action to the word, I was on the back of the old one before she had well finished her bray, and she carried me home. The joke was too good not to be told, and for some time it was the subject of much laughter on board.

Early the following morning the steam was

up, and we soon left behind us Bassador, whose roadstead is capable of holding a large fleet, and well shut out from the simoon, or south-west gales, that blow so heavily at certain seasons in the Persian Gulf. The village or town, or whatever Cadāda may like to designate Bassador, of which he is the Sheik, with its mud hospital and little Catholic chapel, its three or four houses, and thirty or forty mud huts, its two hundred inhabitants, and guard of fifteen seapoys, looks anything but tempting from the roads.

A barren, sandy plain, with high, rocky, sand-covered hills in the back ground, and sand mounds close at hand, a few miserable sheep starving thereon; a few parched, lumbering camels staggering thereon, jackals coursing over the uneven, broken foreground by night; lazy, dirty natives, and mangy dogs, lords of it by day; a ruined fort; everywhere a grave, or traces thereof; a sandy beach, broken by huge masses of rock, which nature in a freak has hurled there; a few, very few date-trees, scarcely one to each mile of the island, which is sixty long by twelve broad—and you have what “Tom Moore”

has been pleased to call, "The pleasant little island of Khism;" an island that the Imaum of Muscat gave, years ago, in a generous humour, to the H. E. I. C.

CHAPTER IV.

Lingar—Wind Chimneys—Cavāda's Notions of Persian Prowess—
Bahren Climate—Pearl Divers—A Fast Life and a Wet One
—Two Kinds of Pearls—An Old Author's Quaint Account of
Bahren—Anglo-Persic Pearl Dredging Company—Prospectus
—Origin of the Pearl, from a Quaint Author.

WE are now off Lingar, a town on the Persian main, about fifteen miles from Bassador, apparently of some little importance, if one may judge from the number of flat-roofed houses, many of them with wind chimneys, or square wooden towers, in whose sides are perpendicular apertures, but so arranged in the interior as to form different currents of air for cooling the rooms into which they lead, each of them indicating the dwelling of a sāhib, or great man. On the beach in front are drawn up numerous, and some apparently large, bugalows, or native craft. The town, which is square, and walled in, is protected at each corner by a round tower,

on which may or may not be cannon—I could see none through my glass; and near the middle, marked by rather an important wind chimney and flag-staff, from which floated the flag of Persia, was what I presumed to be the governor's house. There were a few palm-trees scattered about; but the whole line of coast looked thirsty and arid, with dry mountains in the back-ground. Cadāda had previously told me that from five to six thousand of the Shah's irregular troops were generally stationed here, at the same time giving me the gratuitous information, shaking both his fists, and spitting out his words from between his clenched teeth, that “they were big beasts, all the same as that master,” pointing to a pig.

“Would those fellows,” I asked, “dare to attack this place” (speaking of Bassador), “if we were to go to war with the Shah?”

“Got plenty boat, come in one, two hours; 'spose no cruiser, no ag boat (steamer) here, come, cut every man's throat, burn that” (pointing to two huge heaps that contained some hundreds of tons of coals stored for the use of the Company's steamers flying up the gulf); “and take away

everything in there," alluding to the house full of marine stores belonging to the cruisers.

"How could you prevent that?" I asked.

"Leave one-half regiment sepoy's here, with five, six gun cannon—bong! bong! when sun get up in morning—bong! bong! twelve of clock—bong! bong! when sun go to bed at night. Persian think, 'big gun, plenty kill; no go there!'"

But the steamer's head is towards Bahren, on the Arabian coast, and we have to show ourselves to the pearl fishers, who are now at the height (June; surely depth is a better word) of their divings, seeing they go down from twelve to fifteen fathoms for pearls of the greatest price and size.

Hot work our cruisers have here, where one of them is always stationed during the three months of the season, May, June, and July, to protect the poor Arab divers from the savageness of the merciless pirates from Katiff, and other such like thievish holes, of which there are many along the Arabian coast; and who, but for the presence of the man-of-war, would sweep down on them suddenly in the night, cutting

the throats of all, and leaving not a pearl behind. Hot work our cruisers have, with a fierce, fiery demon blazing over their heads, and sending his rays through the double awnings, wetted though they be. Hot work, with a thermometer standing at 120° in the shade, and not a breath of air on the idle sea—

“Tis moonlight over Oman's sea ;
Her banks of pearl, and palmy isles,
Bask in the night-beam beauteously,
And her blue waters sleep in smiles.”

Very pretty, sweetly poetic, and descriptive of the moonlight ; but not a word, Thomas Moore, of the dew, whose denseness wets one through most rapidly, as we throw ourselves on the deck, with a boat-cloak or blanket over us, to seek that sleep which the heat of our cabins denies us below. Not a word of the luminous stars that stand out from the fair face of heaven—beautiful, large, and brilliant, in this “the delightful province of the sun.”

Everywhere around us are native boats, with their thick masts raking heavily forward, and full of sleeping divers. There, too, is the island, or rather group of islands, low, and showing

abundance of date-trees. The name of the largest island is Bahren, after which the group is called, and which derives its own name from the province of that denomination on the main.

Bahren is a low island of some thirty miles in length, boasting on its west corner a fortified town, built by the Portuguese, from whom it was taken by Abbas the Great ; but afterwards it fell into the hands of the Arabs, and by them was held until the days of Nâdir Shah, when Mohamed Tuckee Khan, the Governor of Fars, retook it. A fact curious and interesting struck me here, the existence of fresh water springs beneath the surface, so often met with by the divers ; and I was told that the cruisers stationed here, when in want of water, procure it by sending a man down with a gun barrel, which he fills and brings up. The pearls collected here are said to be of great value, and are thus obtained :—The diver, naked as the day he was born, with his feet resting on a double-headed shot or huge stone attached to a rope (which is fastened to the boat, and which he holds), with his nose in a horn, or his nostrils

compressed with wooden pincers, and a basket slung round his neck, is rapidly lowered by his companions ; his feet barely touch the bottom ere he is off the stone or shot, which is as rapidly hauled up as it was lowered down, and another diver occupies it, while our friend who first went down is poking about “astonishing the natives,” and fast filling his basket with pearl oysters. Up he comes, empties his basket, takes three or four deep inspirations, and down he goes again, often, I am told, remaining beneath five or six minutes,—mark, told, for I have never timed them. It is a fast life and a wet one—but not in the sense your man about town would apply the word—and the poor Arab diver, his body covered with sores, and every joint racked with rheumatism, his eyes blood-shot and very weak, finds an early grave.

There are two kinds of pearls procured from these fisheries—the white and the yellow—the latter of which supplies the Indian market, and the former finds its way through Bussora, Baghdad, and Constantinople (at which last place it is heavily taxed to supply the sultanas of the seraglio) to Europe.

Morier, who, in comparing the pearls of Ceylon with those of the Persian Gulf, says that "The pearl of Ceylon peels off ; that of the Gulf is as firm as the rock upon which it grows, and though it loses in colour and water one per cent. annually for fifty years, yet it still loses less than that of Ceylon, and ceases, after fifty years, to lose anything."

Barhen and its fisheries differ but little from what both were two centuries ago, as I find from the quaint words of an old author, who says—

"The Island of Barhen, or Baharen, lies in the Gulph of Bazarā, between that city and the Island of Gerun or Hormuz, one hundred leagues distant from each of them, and but little removed from the coast of Arabia, opposite to the Port of Katifa, which is the Government of Lacok, one of those the Turk is possess'd of in those parts. It is inhabited by Arabs, only the garrison and Wazir, or Governor, being Persians, having belong'd to the kingdom of Harmuz, but ever since the year 1602 possess'd by the King of Persia.

"The land is pleasant, and abounds in fruit,

especially dates, whereof it produces great quantities, but little wheat, and some barley. Rice, which is the most common food, next to dates, is carried thither from Harmuz, of what that place receives from India. It has several waters, rather brackish than fresh, the best whereof is that of Nanyah, having a parcel of extraordinary deep wells in the midst of the island. The next is that which they take under the sea, after this manner. Manama, a town seated on the sea-coast, is the chiefest in the island. In the sea before this place, at about three fathom or three fathom and a half depth, there gush out certain springs of pure fresh water, free from any ill quality. There are men who live by bringing it up in skins, with much dexterity and ease, diving down, and sell it very cheap. Having inquired into the reason of it, some of the oldest Mahometans in the island, with whom I discoursed about it, told me, that those springs, in former times, were upon the land, remote from the sea, which having broke in, had overwhelm'd them, as they now are; and hence I have reason to believe the island had the name of Barhen, which in Arabick sig-

nifies two seas, from 'bar,' which is, the sea, and 'hen,' two ; as it were to express a fresh and a salt one ; though it might also be taken from two considerable streams which cross the island ; but the first seems to be the better. The island of Barhen is famous for the many and precious pearls taken up in the neighbouring seas, which I will briefly speak of, because so universally known. There are two considerable pearl fisheries in the east ; the one in the Persian Gulph, which is this of Barhen ; and the other at Manar in India, in the channel that runs between the Island of Ceylon and the continent, we call Tuto Kory, or more properly Tutan Kory, which is Cape Cory, so called by the natives, and by the Portugueses, Comory, on the coast of Coromandel, or Coro Bandel, signifying the Port of Rice, because of the great quantities shipped off there for other ports. The pearl fishery at Barhen begins some years in June, but generally in July, and lasts all that month and August. There joyn together about 200 terradas or vessels of theirs, 100 of Barhen, 50 of Julfar, and 50 of Nikhelu. They generally go a-fishing to Katar, a port on the coast of

Arabia, ten leagues to the southward of the Island Barhen. As soon as an oyster is brought up, they open it, and take out the pearl. The pearls of this sea surpass all others in goodness and weight; I say in weight, because two pearls, one of this place and one of another, being weighed, though equal in size and shape, that of Barhen will always be found heaviest. The pearls publickly sold in this island every year amount to 500,000 ducats, besides the value of 100,000 more smothered for fear of the Wazir, or Governor's extortions. The trade of this island was worth to the Portuguese Governor of Harmuz above 4000 ducats a year, besides his own dealings. In selling and buying, the term of dealing is by querates, which we call caracts, and by abas, three of which make a caract; as also by meticales, each of them being 24 caracts; and by this they sell the seed pearl, after the rate of 20, 30, 40, &c. to a metica. The Barhenians fish with a stone, which carries them down from 12 to 15 fathom in depth. Besides this general fishery at Katar, at the time above mentioned, there are others of less note in September, at Nikhelu, Barhen, and Julfar;

as also at Mascate, Tene, Rozalgate, all within the Gulph of Harmuz ; but these last are of little value, though sometimes considerable enough for the undertakers."

All the shoals in the Persian Gulf (which are many) abound in the pearl oyster ; and it strikes us as strange, that amongst the numerous schemes which the enterprise of man has conceived for the safe and lucrative investment of money, none should ever have taken up the pearl fisheries in these waters. The outlay would be small, and the return very large. We would suggest such a title as the following, " Anglo-Persic Pearl Dredging Company," of which we should be only too happy to take as many shares as the committee of management may afford us. Seriously, it is an enterprise worthy the attention of speculators. To fish any one of the banks would require a fleet of not less than twenty native boats, involving an outlay of 2000*l.* for said boats—each boat must be manned with twenty men. The entire expense of each boat and crew, daily, would be 1*l.* 10*s.*, or 45*l.* per month for the fleet of twenty. The cost for three months (the fishing season), 2760*l.* ; for

keeping the boats in repair, &c. during the remaining nine months of the year, with agent's pay, an additional 800*l*. Total yearly expenses, 3560*l*. Were we asked to mention the bank likely to yield the best harvest, we should recommend that of the Island of Kharrak, which has been unfished for many years, and whose existence is almost forgotten.

There have been many speculations as to the origin of this beautiful production, the Pearl. For the curious in these matters, we quote the words of the old author already referred to :—

“So much has been writ concerning pearl, that there remains little to add to it. However, with submission to those who have treated of it, I cannot but say, it seems to me very unreasonable to believe and assert that the pearl is form'd of dew, because there are very many objections against it ; as the oyster itself, which being weighty and void of all motion, cannot rise above the water to receive the said dew, much less can it receive any pure at the bottom, since it must pass through so much salt water. Besides, experience teaches us that the oysters, which are taken out of the deepest water, have

generally the most and the largest pearls, and those in the shallowest the least and smallest ; which would not be so, were they form'd of the dew : for then those nearest the superficies would receive most and the purest of it, and the sun would have the greater effect on them ; for his power, as an agent, would be more effectual on what was nearer than what was remoter, whereas we find the contrary. My opinion is confirmed by what I have often seen and try'd by myself, and in the company of Christians, Mahometans, and Heathens, all of them very knowing in what relates to pearls, having taken from the oyster shells, with instruments made for that purpose, pearls growing from those very shells, which either for want of time or the disposition of the matter, or of nature, or for some other cause, were not arrived to perfection, but were still incorporated in the said shell, of whose substance they were formed ; and when taken out, polished and wrought, they appeared as if they had been produced perfect by nature, and sold at very high rates. This makes me certainly conclude, that they proceed and are form'd from the very substance of the shell, and not from any

outward thing : this being very probable, whereas the other opinion is liable to many contradictions. This is much confirmed by the likeness there is in substance and colour between the pearl and the oyster-shell. Besides, it has been observed, and is most certain, that the flesh of all the oysters which have pearl is bruis'd and crush'd, as it might be where there are any greater or lesser excrescencies in the shell, whereas those which have no pearl are sound and entire, as those may be which have it but extremely small : which is no small argument to back my opinion, yet I submit it to able judgments. However, I cannot but admire at those physicians, who, to this day, in their recipes, order pearls that are drill'd or not drill'd, making much account of that difference, whose mistake is unpardonable, since they cannot be excused by ignorance, which cannot be in this case ; or by custom, which is not allowable, since it is well known that all pearls are alike, for the use of physick, whether whole or drill'd by art, for none have holes naturally."

Any one glancing at the map of the Persian Gulf will perceive that besides the islands of

Barhen and Khisma, and perhaps Kharrak, there remain none of sufficient importance to arrest our attention, and the latter only on account of its proximity to Bushire, at both of which places we shall presently arrive, without troubling ourselves to notice in detail the arid Persian coast, of which we have had a fair specimen at Lingar ; or the palm-covered island of Kenn and Sheik Shaab, which resemble those of Barhen.

CHAPTER V.

Bushire—Nadir Shah's Man-of-War—Native Crowd—Custom-house—Yankee Skipper—Caravanserai—Delicate Dilemma, and How to Get out of It—Blind Bartimeus—Auricular Sensitiveness—Walk through the Town—Residency—Shyness Lodge—Resident and Assistant Resident—No Piercing into the Penetralia—A Morning Ride—Walls of the Town—Military Equipments—Sheals and Soonies—Tenets and Schism—Persian Cleanliness—Population and Militia, their Pay—Bayadr—Governor's Artillery Salute—Visit of Ceremony to Déryâr Bey, Lord of the Waters—Chained Captive—Persian Dress—Governor's Official Visit to the Steamer—His motley Staff—Pivot-gun—Astonishment—Persian Character—Climate of Bushire—Beard-dyeing—What makes the Persians a Handsome Race—Ally's Sentiments—"Mr. Murray and Colonel Rawlinson"—Undeveloped Resources—Means of Development—Up and Away to Kharrak—Gheber Tombs—Danish Settlement—Various Possessors—Island of Kargs—Hints for Commissariat—Pearl Banks—Latitude and Longitude.

THE boatswain, after twice emptying his lungs, and performing a series of ups and downs with his whistle, as gruffly bawled "Hands, hanker ship," laying a strong emphasis on the "han," and rolling out the *r* of the "ker," as if the hands and ship were of only minor consideration. And yon low town with its eight or nine mud

chimneys, its two round towers, its rather important spread of white flat-roofed houses, some dozen date-trees, and two flag-staffs, from one of which is flying the Lion and Sun of Persia, from the other, in this the corner nearer to the sea, the Ensign of England ; yon town, looking like a city, half built on the extreme of a sandy peninsula, of which the sea at some time has been heartily tired, and so thrown it up ; with the mountain of Hallilah in the back ground, and a few native boats in the fore—is Bushire. The offer of a seat in the captain's gig tempts us on shore, which we reach by pulling some five miles round, the anchorage being about two and a half as the sea-gull would fly. The town, as we near it, presents sundry round towers linked by low walls, that endeavour to look martial and formidable, but so pitiable is the attempt at fierceness, that no one would envy the position of the gunner who had to fire the first thirty-two-pounder from them, as those white sand-stone, mud-cemented walls would never stand the recoil, but rattle down about his ears.

We have pulled past those twelve or fifteen

bugalows with their high grotesque prows and low sterns, their heavy masts raking forwards in the endless and vain effort of pushing down the prow, with their rough sides and wide seams caulked with oiled cotton, and looking as if no improvement had taken place in ship-building since the days of Nearchus. We have passed those few timbers, just seen above the surface at high water (said to be the wreck of the only man-of-war ever built in Persia, and that by Nadir Shah, with the timber of Mazanderan brought on men's backs over the far mountains); we have nearly run down that heavy boat with six Nubian rowers singing to each stroke of the oar, who had as little idea of making room for the gig, as a bull has of the Pope; and so, after rounding a host of sand-banks, and grounding on as many more, shaving through a small fleet of bugalows and escaping a collision, we have arrived at what is called a jetty, "The Custom-house Jetty," a long strip stolen from the sea, built upon date-tree trunks, and boasting a very primitive crane, rather like a gallows, and near to which is a brass nine-pounder, really a very respectable gun on a broken-down carriage.

Filth heaps, mud pools, dogs, monkeys, hawks, fowls, horses, camels, donkeys, Arabs, Turks, filthy diseased children, dirty peeping women, Armenians and Persians, are all here to stare at us, and get as much in our way as they possibly can, and crowd round, and all but touch us. That slim eager-looking Jew, with his small leering eyes, has already settled the quality of the cloth that covers our backs, the price he would give, ask, and profit make on it; and that tall fair-faced Armenian is puzzled to think why our religion is not as pure as his. That Persian, with his animal eyes and handsome face almost effeminate, has measured us from head to foot, and called us mentally Feringee; while the Arab, stroking his red beard, has not even bestowed a thought on us, we are so far beneath his notice. There, facing us, is the Custom-house, a large building with a large gateway, surmounted by a square tower with Venetian windows opening on each side, where sit and watch the tax-takers. There are some few dozen barrels of sugar from the Mauritius, discharged from yon Yankee bark, the only ship in the roads. The skipper has called at Bombay

on his way, leaving his cargo and selling his "notions" there ; but being a smart customer, he has thought it worth his while to come here and take in exchange for his sugar, wheat and barley. Such barley ! "I reckon you have not a finer shample or that in Mark Lane—it's tar-nation prime," said the skipper of the "Sea Breeze," as he tossed from hand to hand the sample he showed me. Next to the Custom-house is the largest of the two caravanserais which Bushire boasts ; you know it by those bales of merchandise unloading from that string of camels, which with their legs tucked under them, their mild small eyes, and ever moving jaws, have brought their bodies to the ground, and are submitting to the abuse of that ferocious-looking driver, with pistols in his belt in company with three daggers and a sabre, together with a variety of cartouch boxes and several ramrods.

We have entered, and found it to be a large square surrounded by high walls, with long rows of stabling for the mules and horses (the camels may lie about outside), and arched recesses in the walls, for the accommodation of the

merchants and their goods ; with a large square platform in the middle raised some five or six feet from the ground, on which they sleep in the hot weather. Unless you wish to be covered with vermin of every species, and filth of every sort, make your exit. Go not to the left, it would bring you to the towers we have already seen, where the accumulated filth of the city is thrown (for there is no drainage here), and which sends forth a stench that would be smelt through all the gunpowder that could ever be exploded thence at any bombarding enemy. Go not to the left, but turn to the right ; some twenty yards will bring you to the extremity of the bazaar. Heed it not, or you will be late for dinner at the residency ; you have a mile and a half to walk yet, up that short scramble on your right, between the walls of those two-storied houses (all the houses are two-storied in this city), keep close to the wall and be careful not to slip from that shelving path only half a foot broad, or you will sink ankle deep in slush. But what is to be done ? you are face to face with a half-naked, filth-covered Persian, who coolly asks you to give him something, pointing

to his lips and patting his stomach ; he has not the remotest intention of getting out of your way till you have paid him. Seize him by the only bit of cover he has about his chest, lift him up, and deposit him in the mud he would force you into, leave him there to recover from his astonishment, but shake your hand, or other life than that which you care for, will infest it ; now be sure that our friend will remember you when you next meet, and will make room for you. Now turn to the left, but ere you can do so, your companion the captain is stopped by an old blind Armenian, who would make a fortune were he in London, by sitting to the R.A.s'. as a model for the blind Bartimeus, and who salutes him with "Salaam, Captain" (mentioning his name).

"How do you know it is I?" he is asked.

"Seven years gone I know your footstep. Every day I hear. I no forget."

He was right, he had not forgotten the footfall, and received the rupee which was bestowed on him, with many thanks. There, on that seat where he stopped us, he has sunned his sightless eyes, every day for twelve years, saluting every

one who passes by name, which he hears in the sound of their feet, long before they reach him, walk they ever so gently on the soft sand, in the vain effort to deceive him, as I have tried many a time. There he sits, an old servant and dependant of his blind master, the tall Armenian, at whose house every one calls on first landing, to inquire after, and arrange the business that may have brought him on shore, and smoke a mutual pipe. But we have no time now to go up those dirty dark stairs, to be faced by the old blind dog on the landing, who retreats as we approach ; no time to enter that long room, with its two dozen arm-chairs distributed along the walls, that contains many engravings from Sir Joshua Reynolds's' paintings, some of them proofs ; no time to shake hands with his pretty daughter-in-law, with her henna-stained fingers ; no time to taste the best sweetmeats, best coffee, best Shiraz wine, and smoke the best pipe in Bushire. We have no time for any of these processes, for the residency is not yet reached. So shaking hands with the old gentleman (who always occupies during the day the basement room), and taking a pinch from his proffered

snuff-box, we hasten on, round that corner to the left ; past the bath that seems empty, and looks always dirty—sharp to the right, down that narrow lane formed by windowless houses, and made dirty by their refuse, faced everywhere by mangy dogs ; past the mosque, by the burial-ground, where the bereaved mother has thrown herself on the grave of her child, praying it to return ; past those six or eight blind beggars, who at the same moment, and with various reasons for your sympathy, ask your alms ; down that declivity, over those ruins of a fallen house, up that narrow lane, turn to the right, and the ensign of England is flying over your head, and the sea-breeze (should there be one blowing) is fanning your face. Enter that gateway, return the salute of the Sepoy (he of the marine battalion, of which there are thirty stationed here), cross that paved way. On the left the Sepoys' barracks, on the right the resident's stables, the joint occupation of the horses, and their grooms ; through that second gateway into the square court-yard, divided into two by the resident's reception-room, dining-room, and sleeping apartments.

These are built over the stores, which are beneath, and rise high above the surrounding walls, so that its open glass windows with Venetian blinds may catch every breeze. In the left-hand corner, springing up like a square tower from the walls, is the doctor's house, his dispensary below it ; at the opposite corner is a similar house, occupied by the assistant resident, and called by its eccentric and clever occupant, "Shyness Lodge ;" between the two, facing the twelve or fifteen stone steps that we have to mount to reach the resident's portion, is a house similar to the two already described, usually used by visitors. The broad, flat wall which extends from the doctor's abode to the Sepoys' barrack, roofs in the abode of the different servants ; and that, running from "Shyness Lodge" to the stabling, is occupied as government offices. Up those twelve or fifteen steps, into that little portico, knock at the door, send in your card, it saves the resident time and trouble, for it tells him you will not now disturb him, but will join him at dinner—he keeps open house, and is ever delighted to see you at his table ; down those steps again, either

to the doctor's or "Shyness Lodge," asking for the loan of a bed for the night, and soap and water for the present—either host will give you a most hearty welcome, and anything his house affords that you like to call for, which is generally a pipe, and a glass of weak brandy-and-water, both of them refreshing after the ablutions, and appetite-izing for dinner. They are likewise going to dine with the resident ; there is but one table kept on the establishment, and that by him. It is seven-o'clock ; dinner is ready to the minute ; a more punctual master, and a more punctual butler, were never yet ; and if there be any truth in the adage, that " punctuality is the thief of Time," I am astonished that that venerable old gentleman has never given them in charge, for the numerous robberies they must have committed. Into that large dinner-room we enter, shake hands with the host, who tells us that he has ordered rooms to be got ready for us. A portrait of the Shah of Persia, his face scarcely seen for jewels, hangs over the sideboard ; and another of her Majesty, with not one about her—herself beyond all jewels—is over the fireplace ; above the long table, groaning under

the weight of viands, swings the never-ceasing punkah. But for the thick, soft, velvet-like Persian carpet at our feet, and the black servant at our backs, and the swaying punkah over head, we might fancy ourselves in an English dining-room, with every comfort around us. Strange contrast between that large-browed, clear-thinking, unmoved resident, and his quick, volatile, clever assistant. The one seldom smiles; the other, few can resist laughing at. As soon think of moving yonder mountain, as of attempting to gain an opinion regarding our relations with the government around from the resident; the caution at the very tip of every hair of his head, the tightness of his mouth, the searching intelligence of his eye, the compactness of his brow, forbid any such approach. We may yet, perhaps, learn something from our lively friend. Will you? You will get a face that will haunt your dreams, or one that will crack your sides with laughter; a quotation from a Greek play, an ode from Hafiz, a snatch of a comic song, with illustrations, the offer of a cigar or an orange, but not a word of what is taking place, or likely to take place, in the political world of Persia. Coffee

and pipes follow the dinner, dessert, and a quiet chat in the little back room leading out of the dining-room, finish the day.

Before the morning sun was two feet high, with our friend's horses, we had galloped over the almost sandy desert at the back of the town, with its few high, dust-tufted date-trees, cotton bushes, and castor-oil shrubs, its water-melons, cucumbers, and other vegetables, so scanty, that they scarcely break the white monotony of the place; where hares, antelopes, foxes, partridges, abound, and in whose wilds live myriads of pigeons, that darken (as Xerxes boasted his arrows should) the sun, when they fly. Here, too, is sometimes found the wild goat, and occasionally a lion strays from the hills. Turning round to ride back, we had a good view of the town on the land side, which is shut in with high walls, and presents many towers at unequal distances, two of which form the gateway. From these towers artillery could never be fired, they would fall with the first thunder; each of them will hold from fifty to eighty men, whose matchlocks might be very formidable to Arabs or Persian irregulars, minus field-pieces,

but could offer no resistance to a regular force, small though it might be. The walls are composed of a white sandstone, worn so thin with the wind and rain, in places, that a bullet would penetrate them. In the inner side a bank rises from their base, to within six feet of the summit. This bank, which is formed of sand and rubbish, may be two feet thick, and affords a path for the guard to walk round, or station themselves on, in defence; this, like all the houses in the city, is constantly crumbling away, adding dust to the sand around it, for the wind to play with, whenever it may be set in motion by a passing caravan, or scratching dogs of which the city (like all Mohamedan towns) is full. They are the recognised scavengers. Riding round, as I did, I could nowhere discover any place so fortified that could not have been surprised, and taken with the butcher boys of Newgate, armed with their cleavers and marrow-bones. And yet, in a conversation with Ally, an old Persian (who, on account of the number of years he has been associated with the cruisers supplying this bazaar, has become half an Englishman), I learned that they consider this

town almost impregnable, and quite laugh at the idea of a Sepoy army being able to take it. Ally met my assertion, that they were good reliable soldiers, and could do it, by saying, " 'Spose ever come here ; Persian not fight, but make slave, kill your black army."

I counted, as I rode round the wall and through the town, a dozen pieces of cannon, the majority of them brass nine-pounders, four of which were stationed so as to command the gateway ; one had its position on the quay, and three were honoured as the guard of the governor's residence. The soldiers (of whom there were many loitering about, and pretending to do duty on the walls) presented the most grotesque and mixed appearance. Some (evidently the body-guard of the governor) wore, in imitation of our army, shell-jackets and white trousers, but so loose that they had room in their flapping legs for at least a corporal's guard. The shell-jackets had been bought and exported from India. Their arms consisted of the Company's old flint muskets and bayonets ; and with those, following a really very respectable fife and drum, they marched round, morning, noon, and

night, to relieve guard. But the majority of the soldiers were armed with matchlocks and pistols, one or two daggers, and a straight, short sword ; from the shoulder-belts, hung pendent cartouch boxes, with different-sized cartridges, powder-horns for loading, and different ones for priming, and various-sized ramrods, with their high, conical-shaped brown felt cap, stuck down on one side, as is the custom only of the military ; their flowing robes, reaching down to the knees and drawn in at the waist ; their short loose tucked-up trousers, stockingless, and perhaps yellow-slipper enveloped feet, they looked as grotesquely ridiculous as it is possible for irregulars to look.

The town contains between seven and eight hundred houses, built of white soft sandstone, encrusted with shells ; the streets—formed by the inhospitable, windowless walls of these two-storied houses—are not more than six or seven feet wide, and are everywhere infested with mangy dogs, and “ choked with filth and sand,” the former thrown from the houses, the latter derived from the crumbling soft sandstone of the walls, which add—under the influence of

wind and sun—their liberal contributions to the “sandy ground-work of the streets.” The principal of these houses, those occupied by the wealthy, have wind-chimneys rising from sixty to a hundred feet in height, so constructed, as to catch every breeze, and send a current of cold air into the apartment below ; besides these houses, there are from a thousand to twelve hundred “Cajan” huts—the Cajan huts are built of the date-palm leaf, and are occupied by the lower classes and soldiers. The town is about two miles in circumference, protected, as I have shown, on the land side, by a wall and various towers ; and is wholly dependent for its supply of fresh water on wells about three miles distant. It contains several mosques, occupied by the conflicting sects of “Sheahs” and “Soonies,” who, like other sectarians, fight about shadows. One of the chief bones of contention between these parties being, that the latter, like spiteful wicked boys, will make the tops of their graves convex instead of flat—which the former insist ought to be their shape—according to tradition.

It may not be uninteresting here to quote

the words of Conder, who, in "The Modern Traveller," says, "The radical difference between the Sheah and the Soonce creeds consists mainly and ostensibly in this—that whereas the latter recognise the Khalifs Aboubeker, Oman, and Osman, as the legitimate successors of their prophet, the former consider them as illegal and impious usurpers of the divine and indefeasible right of Ali, who, they contend, ought immediately to have succeeded his father-in-law as the head of Islam. Moreover, the true ecclesiastical succession they conceive to have been inherent in the family of Mohamed; they consequently reject and condemn the Souna, or oral traditions, which rest upon the authority of the four great Imaums, or high priests, Haneefa, Malik, Shaffei, and Haubal, "the four pillars of the Soonce faith," restricting the sacred title of Imaum to the twelve immediate descendants of Mohamed. The last of these, the Imaum-Mehdee, is supposed by them to be not dead, but only concealed; and he is expected to appear near the last day, when Jesus is to descend from heaven, and all the world is to receive the faith of Mohamed. Among the Soonees, on

the contrary, it is a dogma, that there must always be a visible Imaum, or "father of the church." It was for a long time held indispensable that he should be of the Arabian tribe of Koreish, to which the family of Mohamed belonged, till the right of succession, yielding to the law of conquest, was formally renounced by Mohamed XII., the last khalif of the house of Abbas, in favour of Selim I., Emperor of Constantinople. "The differences which exist on these points between the Soonce and the Sheah sects," says Sir John Malcolm, "are at once rancorous and irreconcilable. It is one on which the passions are easily arrayed; for it relates to no speculative or abstruse points of faith that are difficult to be comprehended, but is interwoven with the history of their general religion. Names, which are never mentioned but with blessings by one sect, are hourly cursed by the other. The hypocrisy, ingratitude, and disobedience of the first three khalifs, are the essential dogmas of the Sheah doctrine; while the leading principle of the Soonees, is, that next to the prophet, these rulers were, beyond all others, the most entitled to the regard and

· veneration of posterity." The differences in their mode of worship and customs are slight, and have wholly arisen out of the hate they bear each other, and their dislike to have any usage in common. These consist in the mode of holding the hands, of the mode of prostration, and other forms equally immaterial. Professor Lu, in his "Persian Controversies," says, "Now, the belief of the Sheah is this, that every one of the prophets was, from the day of his birth to that of his death, wholly free from sin ; that they were never implicated in either infidelity or error ; and that both their fathers and grand-fathers were likewise free from those crimes. Of this kind there are many passages revealed in the Koran, all tending to establish the truth as consistent with the nature of things, and the deduction of sound reason. Purity (in a prophet) is nothing more than that grace and favour, which they consider is incumbent on the Deity to afford ;" and of the speculative Sooffees, Sir John Malcolm remarks, "It would be vain to attempt to give a full history of the Sooffee doctrine, traces of which exist, in some shape or other, in every region of the world. It is to

be found in the most splendid theories of the ancient schools of Greece, and in those of the modern philosophers of Europe. It is the dream of the most ignorant and the most learned, and is seen at one time indulging in the shades of ease, and, at another, traversing the pathless desert."

Thus leaving the Sheahs and Soonees to their bickerings and mosques, and the Sooffees to their speculations, we continue our ride, and find that the town has, for the washing of its filthy inhabitants, three baths, which they seek rather as a luxurious enjoyment than for cleanliness, during the sweaty months of the hot season; they will wear a shirt for four weeks, and trousers for six months; so that their garments are seldom changed, before they are dangerous of approach!—"Noli me tangere," as the Knights of the Thistle caution. In Bushire, the Armenian Christians have an old church, in whose yards lie the bodies of several of the officers belonging to the Indian navy. It also boasts of its two caravanserais, to and from which caravans daily arrive and depart. The total amount of its inhabitants does not exceed

fifteen thousand, including the two or three thousand militia, or irregulars, who are lodged within it, raised and supported by the governor, and whose pay does not amount to more than six or seven tomans a-year (the toman being about one pound sterling). Now to the bazaar, which extends from the Custom-house quay for some eighty yards, takes a sharp turn to the right, gradually twists again to the left, and terminates in a long straight piece, but very scantily occupied by dealers in leather and horses' trappings; the space of the first eight yards is occupied by general dealers, who sell anything, from tin-plates with the alphabet round their edge, balls of sewing cotton, Manchester and Birmingham ware, Persian carpets, Shiraz tobacco, senna, coffee, tea, sugar, Grecian coins, gun-flints, almonds, raisins, dates, to turquoise and diamonds, the former set in rings of silver, and worn on their fingers, the latter stowed away in some small strong box, folded in dirty paper, unset, and rascally cut. The middle or twisted portion of the bazaar is principally in the possession of gun-smiths and workers in tin, who make as much noise as they possibly can, and

the whole is roofed in, altogether forming a most crowded and anomalous combination ; but we must hasten back to the Residency, where we have our tiffin to swallow, and a visit of ceremony to pay to the Sheik or Governor of Bushire, Déryâr Bey (Lord of the Waters), who has intimated a desire to see our steamer, which he could not do before we pay our visit of etiquette to him. It is two o'clock ; we have donned our regimentals, and have mounted the gaily caparisoned grey chargers provided from the Resident's stud. We walk our steeds at a foot pace, with our servants following at their heels, through narrow streets, where our knees almost touch the walls on either side, over a burial ground, whose flat tombstones objected (in the hollow groan they sent forth), to the hoofs of our horses,—past reed huts, enclosed with reed fences, through which dirty women looked at us, and dogs barked,—by three brass field-pieces, defended by six grotesquely-dressed artillery men, who drew (as we neared them), with a flourish, their crooked swords, and hung them on their shoulders, as an Irish reaper hangs his sickle,—round a tower, the base of

which the sea washed, and from the summit of which springs the flag-staff, that gives to the breeze the red colours of Persia, with a big-faced, half-starved, golden lion, squinting over his left shoulder at the setting sun, who has hidden three-fourths of his face behind the animal, and is staring with all his might and main, his eyes just visible above the lion's back. On we pass, over fifteen yards of hard sand, and then pull up at a dungeon-looking door—dungeon in sound, as the chains rattle that hold a prisoner, guarded by some ten or fifteen, more evil-looking rascals than himself; dungeon in feeling, as we pass through the dank, dark, narrow passage, terminating in a square-court—turn sharp to the right, mount those eighteen mud steps, stoop as you pass through that low doorway, and you have entered a room, twenty-foot square, with bare walls, the floor covered with rich Persian carpet, and furnished with five chairs. In the corner, diagonally opposite the doorway, in one of the five arm-chairs, matted off from the rest of the room by the Chinese mat on which it stands, sits a pale, sickly, shrewd-looking man; his left eye is

small and contracted, his right shows not much fire, but a little cunning, and you feel that it looks round you ; he rises, his height may be five feet six inches, not more, and you shake hands with the Governor of Bushire, which is the most important of all' the ports on the Persian coast. To each side of the room, round which you rapidly cast your eyes, are three doors and windows, each commanding a different view of the fort, with the exception of the one near to which his Governorship sits ; that looks upon the sea, and over the harbour. Through an interpreter he bids us welcome, and thanks us for the trouble we have taken to visit him. Some chat goes on, complimentary and questionary, especially the latter, for his Sheikship is keen, and wishes much to know the understanding that exists, and friendship that holds, between England and Russia ; but the pipe-bearer, making a very profound bow, and leaving his shoes at the door, presents to his master the crystal end of a long elastic tube ; the master passes it over to the captain. The finest of Shiraz tobacco is being consumed, and scenting the room with its delicious fumes, for all

have pipes, kaleoons. Next come bearers with small china cups, filled with coffee, and filigree holders of silver, together with fresh pipes. Then enters a tall Persian, who bows, as all Persians bow, and as David bowed to Saul, "who stooped, with his face to the earth, and bowed himself" (1 Sam. xxiv., 8). "That is, not touching the earth with the face, but bowing with the body at right angles, the hands placed on the knees, and the legs somewhat asunder." He receives his commands, retires for a minute, reappears, without a bow, and seats himself on the floor, doubling under him, in that manner so peculiar to Asiatics, his long legs. Thus seated, he thrice kisses the ground, and is scarcely recovered from the last salute, when a tray is brought in, and placed before him, containing six richly-cut crystal cups and stands, much covered with thick gold. Another tray holds three crystal bottles, two tall, and one little yellow fellow, who stands in the middle, protected by his two big brothers, in blue and gold, on either hand; the six cups are filled from the blue and golden, and sweetened by the little yellow fellow, then handed round, and

we quaff delicious violet and rose-flavoured sherbet, cool as ice, clear as crystal. Again, compliments pass, again questions are asked, again we shake hands, and again pass down the eighteen steps, over the little square, through the damp dungeon-like passage, and prison-like gate, where the chained captive throws himself at our feet, and prays intercession on his behalf with the Sheik. Thus having paid a visit of ceremony to one who kept up very little show of state, beyond the chained captive, and the mat that separated him from us—we returned to the Residency.

The Persian dress, of which we may take that worn by his Governorship as the type, consists—to begin at the head and descend—of a tall conical-shaped black lambskin *kolah*, or hat, generally made of the skin of the sheep of Tartary, which is beautifully black, soft, and crisply curly, and taken from the lamb at the moment of its birth. Enveloping arms and body, with straight gold or silver embroidered collar, and reaching down below the knees, is the outer or dressing-gown like garment, *kouba*, made of various sombre cloths, expensive and magnifi-

cent, with decorated pockets, and embroidered wrists and shoulders, drawn in at the waist with a cashmere shawl, fitting belt for handsome hilted dagger. Beneath this the *peerahum*, or shirt, untucked-in, hanging over the *zeerjamus*, or trousers of silk, and, the *jurab*, or worsted socks, of various patterns and gaudy colours, that reach just above the ankle, and are three parts hid by yellow slippers, finish the toilet of Persian Sāhibs. The socks, when they ride, usually give place to a sort of cloth boot, or stocking, called *shakshour*, generally of crimson, with green, high-heeled *kafsh*, or slippers. The whole dress is very expensive, often costing from eighty to one hundred and twenty pounds. The poorer classes have little or no clothing, excepting in the winter, when they take unto themselves sheepskins. It is hardly possible to conceive people so filthy and dirty as the lower orders of the Persians.

At two o'clock on the morrow, in the steamer's cutter, which had been sent for him, his Governorship comes along side. All the officers are in full dress to receive him ; he mounts the ladder, passes the gang-way, the marines present arms,

and the captain receives him as he steps on deck. Scarcely has he passed the larboard gangway, when up rush, over the one on the opposite side, the most motley group of Asiatics, —motley, no other word can give an idea of the variety of figure, face, and dress, that came in the shape of attendants on his Governorship. With seventeen guns—certainly more than his town boasted—we saluted him and his staff; three of the principal of whom we mention: the Admiral of the Persian Gulf, an Arab, and dressed as such, with flowing garments and turban; the Commander-in-chief, with Persian head-dress, a blue frock coat with Indian navy buttons, full dress field officer's epaulettes bearing the initials G. R., a crooked sabre, with enamelled and gem-covered handle, hanging pendant from a white leather belt, loose dirty bag trowsers that hid their lowest parts, in mis-shaped Wellington boots—completed the toilet of the moustached, bearded, tall and handsome-looking Commander-in-chief; the Aide-de-camp wore a loose blue jacket, with Indian navy buttons, and military scales, white bag trowsers with a red stripe down the side, worsted socks, and

yellow high-heeled slippers. Pipes and coffee, coffee and pipes, a parade round the steamer, a little talk ; discourse with the engineer about his clean engines, which awoke much astonishment, and all gather round the 68-pounder pivot-gun, on the quarter-deck. The size is nothing, they have plenty at Teheran, bigger and longer, and much more powerful ! So at least, all the motley group say. His Governorship, the Commander-in-chief, the Admiral, and Aide-de-camp, have all patted it, and said nothing. It is loaded, a low elevation given,— bang ! and the ball has sunk beneath the waters, at the edge of yonder sand-bank, scarcely half-a-mile from the ship. Stroking his black beard, the Governor remarked, turning to the Commander-in-chief, “ A very short distance, could never reach the town.” Stroking their beards, the motley group remark to each other, “ Could never reach the town.” Different elevations gradually increased — different degrees of astonishment gradually produced in the faces of the Governor, his staff, and motley group. They jump up, they wonder, they question, they look, they stare.

“Where is it?” asks the Governor.

“Where is it?” asks the staff.

“Where is it?” asks the motley group; with starting, staring eyes, and uplifted hands, they see it fall at the foot of the town—their astonishment is now speechless.

The marines present arms, the boatswain whistles, the captain shakes hands, and his Governorship, as he steps down the ladder into the cutter, is again saluted with seventeen guns.

There is much about the Persians to admire: they are handsome, active, lively, and as a nation brave; quick of apprehension, with agreeable and pleasing manners,—and a prompt and fertile imagination, and hospitable. On the other hand, they are licentious, dirty, immoral, cunning, and deceitful. “Under the Mahometan teaching, the strong sense of moral right and wrong, which distinguished the old Persian, has deserted him; and he who was celebrated by Xenophon as above all men the speaker of truth, has become proverbial for lying.”

“Believe me, *though a Persian,*” will they often say, should you express by word or look a doubt of the veracity of their statement.

Bushire, the only seaport of note in the Persian Gulf, and the one through which the greater part of the import and export trade of Persia, with England and India is conveyed, according to the authority of Captain Brucks, is in Lat. $20^{\circ} 0' 15''$ N., Long. $50^{\circ} 51' 30''$ E. From October to May the season is cool and delicious, and abounds with such fruit as no other part of the world produces. But from May to October, the heat is intense, and exposure to the sun fatal. During the hottest of these months, most of the inhabitants leave Bushire for Chakōtā, a distance of twenty-four miles inland, the first stage on the road to Shiraz, where they live, either in tents, or in large airy houses, cooled by "tatteis," which consist of a light framework of date-wood, filled in with camel-thorn, and kept constantly wet; and as the damp cloth on the exterior of the bottle, played over by the breeze, evaporates, and makes icy the liquid it contains: so the tent, or bungalow, enveloped by the tatties, is rendered cool and delightful. Mr. Morier has given us a lively picture of the Persian mode of beard-dyeing, which we transcribe for the amusement of our readers. He says—

“The Persians shave all the head, except a tuft of hair just on the crown, and two locks behind the ears ; but they suffer their beards to grow to a much larger size than the Turks, and to spread more about the ears and temples. They almost universally dye them black, by an operation not very pleasant, and necessary to be repeated generally once a fortnight. It is always performed in the hot bath, where the hair, being well saturated, takes the colour better. A thick paste of henna is largely plastered over the beard, which, after remaining an hour, is washed off, and leaves the hair of a very strong orange colour, bordering upon that of brick-dust,”—a polite term, Senior Morier, for foxy—“After this, a thick paste is made of the powdered leaf of the indigo, and a deep layer is put upon the beard ; this second process, to be taken well, requires full two hours. During this operation, the patient lies quietly upon his back, while the dye contracts the features of his face in a very mournful manner ; causing the lower part of his visage to smart and burn. When the indigo is at last washed off, the beard is of a very dark bottle-green

and becomes a jet black only when it has met the air for twenty-four hours."

The young men of Persia, like the rising generation of the more northern climes, sigh for that ornament, and "grease their skins to hasten the growth of the hairs; because, until they have a respectable covering, they are supposed not fit to enjoy any place of trust."

There is no accounting for taste, is a trite saying, and that Fashion is a Persian monster, is equally true. While the Persian dandy, under the soothing sensation of the warm bath, and the smarting influence of the indigo, emulates the colour of the raven's wing for his beard, the inhabitants of Bokhāra,—like the celebrated wife-killer of nursery tradition,—wears it blue. Most of the Arabs on the shores of the Persian Gulf, and the banks of the Euphrates, prefer what Morier calls "a strong orange," bordering on brick-dust.

That the Persians are a handsome, and slightly effeminate race, may be some excuse for the time they spend, and the pain they endure, in the cultivation of this, their favourite feature. To the red-bearded Arab pilot from

Kharrak (who loved the Persians as well as his satanic majesty does holy water, for the reason, that he was compelled, as all pilots in the Persian Gulf are, to give up half his earnings to the Sheik of Bushire) I remarked, "These Persians are very handsome, and fine men : how do you account for it ?" He made answer, "All same as *pigs*, master ; go everywhere for wife,—my country, your country, every country —take fine woman, make fine children."

It is unnecessary to observe that a comparison to "the unclean animal," is no compliment from the lips of a Mussulman !

One more anecdote, ere we close the chapter, which may show how important is the choice of our ambassadors ; since, unless their known character and their antecedents commend them to the feelings and confidence of those amongst whom they are sent, their influence and powers of persuasion are very small, and their mission often proves a failure,—even amongst people so far removed from our own degree of civilisation as the Persians, for even among a class, where you would only expect to find ideas of exchange and barter, you meet with free opinions

on the policy of enlightened England. Hear Ally's thoughts on the subject :—

“Master, what for your government send Mr. Murry to Teheran?” I explained his mission. “You think your government plenty wise, send Mr. Murry from Turkey to Shah of Persia? Mr. Murry long time at Cairo. Plenty like Turks, Shah of Persia no like Turk. Mr. Murry great friend to Pacha Egypt, Pacha Egypt give Mr. Murry fine horse; I see it, every Bushire man see it. Shah of Persia not like Pacha Egypt. Imaum Muscat give Mr. Murry fine horse; Shah of Persia, Imaum Muscat, all same as that,”—(drawing his hand across his throat). “But what has all this got to do with Mr. Murry and his mission?”—“Everybody in bazaar say, Mr. Murry friend Turkey, Shah Persia no love Turkey? S'pose master want one favour one big man have: master send friend of big man *enemy* to beg? that not wise; I think master send friend of big man's friend, and then master get what master want. Your government send Mr. Murry, friend of Pacha Egypt, friend of Turks, friend of Imaum of Muscat. to ask favour of Shah of Persia. I

think that not plenty wise ; 'cause Shah of Persia love Pacha of Egypt, love Turks, love Īmaum of Muscat, all same as I love *that*,"— (pointing to a dish of pork which one of the marine boys was conveying below to his mess). "What for, your government not send Colonel Rawlinson ? everybody like Colonel Rawlinson ; all Persia know Colonel Rawlinson ; Shah of Persia know Colonel Rawlinson ; Colonel Rawlinson plenty wise. S'pose your government send Colonel Rawlinson, all Persians say—'This man plenty wise, this man stop Baghldad plenty time ; plenty know, plenty like Persians ; this man no humbug.' Shah of Persia say, 'Colonel Rawlinson plenty wise, Colonel Rawlinson my friend. What Colonel Rawlinson want, that I give !'"

Ally may be considered as the spokesman of his nation in this matter.

We know of no country, with more undeveloped resources, or one which would more readily repay English enterprise, than Persia ; both in natural productions, such as gold, silver, sulphur, nitre, &c. ; gems, such as pearls, diamonds, sapphires, turquoises, &c. ; silks, and wools, which make such rich dress fabrics, and

carpets of unrivalled beauty, thousands of which never pass their shores ; many vegetable productions of a fibrous and convertible nature ; fine grains, especially barley and wheat : besides, horses, camels, and sheep, in abundance and perfection, yielding the wool that forms the above-mentioned carpets ; and wines, fruits, and valuable drugs. All these, even in this present state of neglect and uncultivation, abound, produced in different localities, and spread over a large extent of country ; but wanting concentration, the means of secure transit, and an available market. In days of yore, when resources and civilisation had not reached by two or three centuries our present advancement, a flourishing colony of Portuguese at Hormuz (*vide* p. 84) was established ; and Kharrak, as we shall presently find, from a poor fishing-port of two hundred souls, became an important Danish settlement of eleven thousand ; of these, not a trace remains, except their ruined forts, and some traditions.

Such a country seems to ask for cultivation and development ; for which ends it requires concentration, means of secure transit, and a

certain market ; all of which it would find in railways, English factories, and European trade; and it is devoutly to be wished, that all these may be obtained and established by peaceful negotiation without the aid of cannon.

The anchor is away, the paddles are beating the waters, and we are fast approaching the island of Kharrak, slightly raised in the centre, looking pleasantly green, though treeless, and showing a very fair beach, whereon the turtle love to bask. It is about twelve miles in length, and half that number in width, abounding in grapes, melons, and many kinds of vegetables, and feeding some few head of cattle ; it is also abundantly supplied with water, and inhabited principally by Arab pilots and fishermen, who live within the old fort, built in 1753 by the Dutch Baron Kniphausen, under whom the island soon became a flourishing settlement, and in the course of eleven years had a population of twelve thousand souls. Beyond the several caves cut in the rocks, that served for the tombs of the Ghebers, or ancient fire-worshippers, is a tomb erected in the year 1652 over the body of the celebrated

Mahomedan saint, Meer Hunniffā, and the ruins of a village destroyed in the year 1814 by the Wahabce Arabs. Kharrak is said to have been originally a Danish settlement, and the fair complexions and red beards of the fishermen and pilots may infinitesimally confirm the tradition of their origin. It was taken possession of by the East Indian Company in 1838, at the time that the Shah of Persia was paying more attention to Herat than was agreeable either to the town or the merchant princes, by whom it was held until the year 1841. The spot then selected for encampment will, in all probability, be again occupied by the present expedition, and is on the south-east side of the island. All fire-wood and provision must be obtained from the Main, with the exception of such goats and sheep as the small island of Kargs, in close proximity, can afford. The commissariat might be well supplied from the Arabian coast,—that portion of it under the Turkish government, at the entrance of the Bussora River,—where cattle, sheep, and corn are to be had in abundance, and cheaply; and might easily be carried thence by the small steamers of the Indian navy. Kharrak, which

may be considered a healthy and pleasant island, possesses pearl-oyster banks that have been for years unworked, and that for fineness and abundance would rival those of Barhen. It is situated in Lat. $29^{\circ} \cdot 15' 20''$ N., and Long. $50^{\circ} 18' 50''$ E. ; distance from Bushire about fifteen miles, whose governor it now acknowledges.

CHAPTER VI.

Shat-al-Arab—Resident's House at Marghill—Excursion on Shore—
Luncheon and Arab Impudence—A Dangerous Elevation—
Resources of the Country—Entrance into Bussora—Recep-
tion by the Pacha—Bussora Present and Past—A Duck—
Habits of the Wild Pig—Musquito Smoke—Wild Boar Shoot-
ing—The Good Mussulman—Conscientious Mahomedan—
Purser in a Fix—Jack Charged and Delivered—Self Defence—
Arab Habits—Pilgrim Boats—Conclusion.

FOR the last two hours we have been hard and fast on a sand bank at the entrance of the Bussora River, and the Arab pilot has said, in answer to some remarks of the captain's, "Four hours more—plenty water—I wake—steamer move," making a paddle motion with his hands. As if in explanation to "I wake," he has spread his cloak on the larboard paddle-box, and is emulating in his sleep the noise of those animals he holds unclean—in fact, "driving his pigs to market." And here we stay awaiting the tide that is to float us off the sand-bank in which the steamer's nose is imbedded. The

waters of the Tigris and Euphrates, forming by their junction at Korna, the Shat-al-Arab, have it all their own way ; they are too shallow for the steamer to proceed, and too strong for those five pilgrim-laden bugalows, with no wind to fill their sails, to pull against ; so they, too, must anchor, awaiting the tide that shall drive back the river, and carry them on their voyage.

The paddles are grinding the smooth waters, and the steamer is passing low marshy islands covered with date-trees and browsing cattle ; passing villages surrounded by high mud walls ; passing knots of Montefik Arabs, with uncovered heads, bare legs, camel's hair garments, long spears and matchlocks ; passing squares of date-trees, made so by muddy tidal ditches, cut for irrigation ; by minarets that just top the date-trees, and mark the site of Mahomara, by something the pilot calls a garden, where half-a-dozen wild Arabs stare at us,—by beds of gigantic bull-rushes, where the wild duck builds, and the wild boar sleeps ; by four brig-rigged bugalows, flying the crescent, and showing cannon, Turkish men-of-war, anchored off the entrance of the canal leading to Bussora ; by a square rose-garden of

some considerable extent ; by high mud banks, crowned with date-trees ; past several tidal streams, of no great width, but abounding in mud, through which wade naked Arabs, their garments forming a bundle on their heads ; round the corner, into a new reach ; and rather an important looking clay building, bearing an air of strength and defiance, topped with the ensign of England, is in sight ;—we are abreast of it, the anchor is down, and the only boat belonging to the place—for it is Marghill, the residence of J. Taylor, Esq., her Majesty's Vice Consul; and the Hon. East India Company's Agent at Bussora—is alongside.

“What a quaint-looking canoe-like boat,” I remarked to the purser. “Is that the only kind of water conveyance we shall find here?”

“Not exactly, my dear fellow. You can do as the majority of the Arabs do when they arrive at the banks of the river, and wish to cross it : cut a bundle of rushes, seat yourself on it à la Turk, and paddle across with your hands ; but even that mode of passage you will not find much less accommodating than this ‘bellum,’ or canoe-like boat, which, unless you

are careful in stepping into, seat yourself at the bottom of, and move not when seated, you will to an almost certainty capsize."

The consular residence of which we are abreast, was built by the late celebrated Colonel Taylor, father of the present resident, during the time he was political agent at Baghdad and Bussora, and stands within a dozen feet of the river. It is a large square building: the centre portion of the façade built of sun-dried bricks laid upon each other crosswise, so as to have even square passages through which the wind permeates, stands a little in advance of its wings, and is approached by a flight of steps, which open through bright green doors into the reception room. The wings are built of mud and rubble—that on the right hand (surmounted by a round tower, from which springs the flag-staff bearing the English ensign,) unlike the one on the left, boasts an extensive doorway in its centre, opening on a passage which runs through the building, on either side of which are ranged mud benches, occupied by the Arab guards and Turkish attendants, and which terminates in a strong wooden door, opening on the quadrangle,

whose four sides are thus occupied : that on our left, by store-houses and servants' abodes ; that facing us by a stabling for from fifty to sixty horses ; and behind us by the entrance and back part of the reception-room ; while on our left is the bare side of a wall that shuts off the harem, or female portion of the building, from the busier world. This, though built by an Englishman, is built after the Eastern fashion, and consequently has its reception and harem portions, in the former of which the last resident was wont to receive visitors and transact business : in the latter he dwelt with his family, where under Mahomedan rule would dwell—

“ The idol of a secret shrine,
Where one high-priest alone dispels
The solitude of charms divine.”

Like Cadādā's house at Bassador, and the Resident's at Bushire, the one we have just described has a flat roof, which, during the hot months of June, July, and August, serves for sleeping on, and during the remaining nine as a promenade. In front of the building on the little bit of quay formed by date-tree trunks, lie numerous square packages of Nineveh marbles,

awaiting the arrival of some vessel to convey them to London ; to the right and to the left of it are date-trees ; on the opposite bank of the river are date-trees ; behind, all round, are date-trees, for we are in the midst of the date-garden of the world. Immediately beneath the walls, close by the large gateway we have entered, are some ten or a dozen mat-huts, containing the families of the dependants, and at the back of these, between them and a black fowl ditch, lie the bodies of several of the sailors of the Indian navy steamers that have visited this port, all of their graves marked by a rudely carved stone, or as rudely painted board. The present occupant is as well known for his open-handed hospitality, and erudite knowledge of Arabic, in these parts, as he is by the authorities of the British Museum for his discovering and exhuming the hidden wonders of bygone ages. He has just come on board, followed by his pipe-bearer, and is a tall, well-made, rather handsome man, with fine expansive brow, regular features, and large grey eyes, showing quickness of apprehension and intellect. Knowing that sailors are ever fond of walking, he has asked to accompany

him in a ramble, and to a quiet dinner after, as many as like to accept his invitation. After a long walk through date-trees, out into the desert at the back, over rich alluvial soil, asking cultivation ; past some few gardens, growing beans and peas, and where the apple, the pear, the fig, the olive, the date, the vine, the mulberry, and the pomegranate thrive—we reach, as we near home, a village in the immediate vicinity of the Residency. In a Mussulman country the public scavengers, or lanky mangy dogs, whose discriminating instinct leads them to distinguish a Christian from a Mahomedan, always give notice when the infidel approaches ; and we were ushered into the villages by the rascals barking at our heels. Here we find seated, smoking the pipe of peace, and drinking piping-hot coffee with his friends, the Sheik. A large square smooth mud floor, edged in with hard cushions, against which all with their legs tucked under them lean, forms the summer *al fresco* receiving-room of the Arab : in the middle a wood-fire blazes, where the coffee is boiled and the pipes lighted. We do here, as we do in all such places of reception,

smoke pipes and drink coffee, salaam, and take our leave, barked out by our friends the dogs; stared at by naked children, and peered at by prying women, who are more careful to veil their faces than any other part of their bodies. They are remarkable for their graceful and upright carriage, elasticity of gait and rotundity of limb, as are most of the women of the East, owing, doubtless, to the practice of carrying weights on their heads.

Having discussed an English dinner, garnished with English hospitality, and sent out our friend's servants to engage a dozen beaters for the morrow's pig-shooting, we retire on board the steamer. Before the sun is up by two hours, we are afloat. We, (the second lieutenant, sailing master, myself, and twelve of the crew,) have stowed ourselves in a bellum, sixteen feet long, by two wide, and three deep. We have crossed the river safely, for a wonder, and landed on the side opposite to the Residency, where hundreds of acres are covered with gigantic bulrushes, nursing sleeping boars. We were told at Bushire, where we inquired what we should find at Marghill, "Dates and mud."

Verily they said truly, but might have added bulrushes, as we, after six hours' walk in every direction found. At the foot of a tall date-tree, upon a little bit of green bank that shelved up from a muddy ditch, and was left uncovered by gigantic fierce bulrushes that everywhere else grew to oppose the shooters, and shelter the pigs, we threw ourselves down, bespattered with mud from head to heel : not an inch was there of us that had not been washed by the strongest solution of the same. Thirsty, hungry, tired, down we threw ourselves, and glad enough were we when our scout hove in sight, with the buttermilk and dates we had sent him to the nearest village for. Back he came, bringing in one corner of his muddy garment a huge heap of dates, and some bread, in the shape of pancakes about four feet in circumference, and called by sailors, time out of mind, "Slap-Jacks." Dates were very fine, especially when you could find a whole one, or one that was not in some degree amalgamated with Arab dirt, or mauled with Arab fingers. The strangest part of our feast was to observe the free and easy way in which the Arabs helped themselves to

the dates ; they pushed their sprawling hands, that had never known soap, into the heap, and extracted masses of smashed ones ; and when by chance they found a whole one, they would throw it to the nearest Sahib, with the coolest air of condescension and patronage possible, uttering, with their mouths full of a combination of buttermilk, dates, and bread, some Arabic, which signified that you might eat it, as they had in the plenitude of their kindness given it to you. The buttermilk was held in an earthen jar, the whole weighing about twenty pounds, and as we had no drinking-cup with us, we had to raise it to our lips. Luckily for me, I had taken the first pull, a long and a strong one, as every Arab helped himself to it, and in so doing washed his shaggy moustachios, giving to the liquid a certain sweetness, from the date-jam that clung to them ; a benefit by which the next drinker profited. Our feast over, we lighted our cigars, and proceeded. Up to the present time we had killed nothing : nor did we ; for though we saw many pigs, astonished more, and hit a few, yet none fell ; and at three o'clock, having been twelve hours out, we arrived at the

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river-side, abreast the steamer, minus all the elasticity with which we left the ship in the morning, but the gainers of a considerable amount of mud and dirt that would insist upon clinging to us. The seven little pigs we caught and took on board, were soon converted into sausages and sea-pies, being too large for even Jack's idea of a sucking-pig. It was great fun, and "skie," and great novelty ; and much I, for one, enjoyed the day, as I did my bed that night. It may be interesting to mention one little incident that electrified me. I was forcing my way through a bed of rushes some six or seven feet in height, and strong in proportion, wading it through mud and water up to my knees ; the beaters were everywhere about me, hallooing and cracking the rushes as they broke through them, when observing what I thought to be a heap of trodden down rushes, and thinking that its elevation might aid me in overlooking the cover, and give me a better chance to fire at anything that I might start, I made for it, and jumped on to the top of it. If I showed any activity in attaining its summit, I manifested much more in reaching its base. With a stunning grunt and a mighty

heave, up sprung the sow that I had mistaken for a mound, and sent me sprawling in an opposite direction from the one she took, followed helter-skelter by a litter of six squeakers ; she might have been frightened : one thing is certain, I was.

An intimation having been received from the Governor of Bussora, who is a pacha of two tails, that a visit from the steamer's officers will be acceptable, and the Resident having informed us that the easiest mode of passage there will be by water and in bellums, we have arranged ourselves in two parties. The one occupying the bellum hired by the gun-room mess, consists of the purser, the second lieutenant, and the master ; the other, that belonging to the Resident, is occupied by its owner, the captain, and myself. From Marghill to Bussora by water, the distance is five miles, and occupies an hour's paddling ; the banks are everywhere covered with date-trees, amid which one or two villages show themselves. The hour employed by the pull to Bussora, gave me an opportunity of learning from the Resident the state of things around, which, he informed me was, he thought,

encouraging ; that the old dislike to Feringees, so long rooted in the breast of almost every Turk, was fast giving way ; that the Resident at Baghdad had done much by his hospitality, his firmness, and his erudite learning, to awaken in the thoughts of those immediately around, and within the influence of report, a wholesome feeling towards Englishmen.

I asked, "Would not a company of enterprising agriculturists reap abundant harvests from the richness of the soil on these banks ?"

"If you could only induce the authorities to grant a firman to such a company, the development of the resources of the countries bordering on the Euphrates and Tigris would be immense."

"Is the land very fruitful ?" I inquired.

"Fruitful, you ask ? There is the finest alluvial soil extending for hundreds of miles on the banks of both rivers, which for depth, strength, and richness, is perhaps second to none in the world."

"And all this, for want of enterprise, then, is uncultivated and waste ?"

"Waste ! it is desert."

“And what would it produce, this garden of yours?”

“Most luxuriantly all descriptions of corn, rice, cotton, hemp, flax : and few countries can boast a better or greater variety of vegetable productions—the potatoe alone excepted—than this.”

“Does not the Arab cultivate this glorious land?”

“Why should he. Permit him to say his prayers five times a day, and he has done all that his religion requires of him ; give him a handful of dates, and you have offered a feast which to him is most delightful ; but tell him to dig and delve, to plough and prune, and grow rich, he will answer, he can live without it ; and prefers dates to labour and wealth.”

“But why is this so?”

“Simply because the Arabs have little or no sympathies with the government that rules them.”

“Are they not all Mahomedans?”

“Truly ; but is that any reason why they should love one another, because they all acknowledge that there is no God but one

God, and Mahomet his prophet. An Arab never will love a Turk, nor a Turk an Arab."

"Then how is the benefit to be derived from this beautiful productive soil?"

"The revolution must be worked by English enterprise; you must give the articles that nature produces everywhere around us in abundance, almost unasked, a commercial value."

"How?"

"By a different mode of transit to that at present afforded by the flat-bottomed boats, towed against the stream by their crew on the banks, and robbed by every marauding Arab band that is of sufficient power to do so; you must establish a small fleet of steamboats that shall seek and convey the commercial produce either to Bussora, for shipment to England or any other part of the world, or to Baghdad, where the proposed railway may be established from Beyrout there for transit thence."

"Do you really fancy that a small fleet of steamers would pay?"

"Yes; I am convinced that the towing of pilgrim-boats itself would produce a handsome revenue, to say nothing of finding a market for

the immense quantity of corn which is annually destroyed to enhance the value of what is left, and enable the government to turn its portion of the produce into money. The growth of wool—another most important commercial item—in these parts is enormous ; but, from the lack of enterprise, it is allowed to fall useless from the backs of the sheep. Again, consider how the mulberry-tree flourishes, and a small sum invested in planting them in the course of a few years would return, from the silk given by the worms they would feed, something enormous. I am convinced that no better speculation exists than the establishment of steam up these rivers, which, by giving transit, would open up a commerce that would realise the most visionary dream of the greatest speculator.”

“ And would,” I asked, “ the Pacha of Baghdad, in whose pachalic the land extending between there and Bussora is, be favourable to such undertakings. Would he lend his countenance, without which no good could be expected? ”

“ Indeed, would he : only try him ; he is reputed as an upright and intelligent man, whose

best wishes and endeavours are for the development of the resources of his country."

"How many steamers would be sufficient to accomplish the navigation of the Euphrates? Would half-a-dozen?"

"I think ample, with twice that number of flats; but they must all be high pressure, and draw not more than three feet water, if they wish to navigate it at all seasons."

"How would you keep up the steam; in other words, what fuel would they consume?"

"The same as the Honourable East-India Company's armed steamer the 'Comet' does, wood cut and gathered on the banks, and dépoté at certain distances. Such a company sanctioned by 'the Grand Seignior,' and worked by English merchants, will do much to restore the ancient highway to the East.—A truce now to commercial speculations, we are at the entrance of the Bussora Creek; open wide your eyes and shut your ears."

"And your nose too," I remarked, as a scent struck mine anything but like eau-de-cologne.

"Usoof gib shutub," said my friend to his servant, asking for his pipe, as though he had

smelt, but did not chose to acknowledge, the bouquet-de-Bussora.

The canal or creek, or river, which is tidal, may be twenty yards wide : on the right bank as we enter is a small square-house with reed fencings, called the custom-house, at the door of which some half dozen Turks are sitting smoking, and three times that number of ducks quacking ; a hundred yards in advance is a large mosque, wearing more of the air of filth and squalor than of religion, a few native houses, perhaps a dozen ; then garden after garden fills up the space, a distance of two miles, between the creek's mouth and the town ; while on the left bank we have much to interest us ; and first, importantly frowning, is a round large tower of sun-dried brick, looking proudly protective with its two artillery men and one cannon.

Past this is a sort of caravanserai, if one may judge from the number of laden horses and donkeys, Turks, Armenians, and Arabs. Women are everywhere carrying loads on their heads, or standing knee-deep in the muddy water,—their garments held between their thighs, so as not to touch that element, which their sanitary

condition most lacks,—washing fish or filling water vessels. Everywhere are large bugalows, sunning themselves on the muddy banks, as if they never had, and never intended to venture on a voyage. Everywhere are bellums like the one in which we are, with stem and stern alike, and propelled by a man at each extremity, using the paddles on opposite sides and facing the direction in which the boat is proceeding; and almost everywhere are long, low, swift, thievish-looking, canoe-like boats, formed chiefly of reeds covered with bitumen, the cheapest and commonest boat of the country; while abreast of us is the only kufah we have yet seen. Kufahs are, according to Colonel Chesney, and our own powers of vision, “formed of osiers plaited together like baskets over a circular frame of stout materials, covered with bitumen,” in this instance, but in many with skins. We have passed some three hundred ragged Irregulars, armed with matchlocks, and apparently commanded by the infant on the donkey’s back at their head, and who, our bellum boy Mahmood informed us, was the son of the late captain recently killed with many of his men in a

skirmish with some of the Montefik Arabs. Everywhere tumbling down houses and muddy ditches, kingfishers, ducks, and tortoises, women, children, dogs, galloping donkeys, imperturbable Turks, grave Arabs, well-fed Armenians, and stout Nubians. Everywhere filth, squalor, ruin, pride, and poverty. Our boat at last stops, and we are informed that the bank the boat's nose is against, and which is covered with abomination of every kind, is the best landing place. A nice spot for an English officer with spotless regimentals and patent leather boots, who is going to visit a Pacha with two tails, to step into, I thought, and declined it; but mounted the shoulders of Mahmood, to find that I had only stepped from Scylla into Charybdis, for the twenty yards of filthy street we had to fight through was not a shade better than the bank;—over a bridge that spans a filthy sewer, through a knot of Turks, past several important-looking houses with very small trellised windows and strong doors, over a square covered with corn and rice, the grain-market;—everywhere; past ruins of what had once evidently been large houses, past mosques and baths, over many sewer-like

streams; through narrow streets, crowded by the maimed, the lame, and the blind, all importunate for charity, and rich in vermin; through a long arched bazaar, where everything looks dirty, and Manchester ware is prominent and striking; past smoking natives and fan-hiding women; barked at by dogs and sometimes stopped by laden donkeys, splashed by equestrian Turks.—we at last arrive at a small square, in the centre of which is the Pacha's palace, marked by the guard outside and two lamps that hung over the door-way. We enter, turn sharp round to the left, and come suddenly upon that potentate sitting on the steps of his reception-room dispensing justice. At our approach he arose, welcomed and invited us to walk in, leaving, as he did so, his shoes at the threshold, we removing as an equivalent, our Caps. The reception-room is thirty feet long, by twenty broad; its floor covered with a thick Persian carpet, its ceiling with a flowery flowing paper, its walls bare and white-washed, the doorway or entrance opens from a large platform, and occupies much of the side of the room.

Immediately opposite to it is a large sofa,

at the back of which a Venetian window, looking out on to the square we came across, and down upon the guards who are seated beneath. On either side are smaller ones, with sofas in front of them. At each end of the room is a chest of drawers, and above them springing from the walls, glass candle shades. The Resident and the Captain have seated themselves on the sofa with the Pacha; and in the row of arm-chairs extending across the room from the end of the sofa are the rest of us. The Pacha is a middle-sized man, about fifty years of age, has a pumpkin-shaped head, a sensual fleshy face, broad cheek-bones, a large nose, and callous weak mouth covered with moustache, a squat bull-neck with large appendages of fat, a long body, projecting stomach, short legs, and large gouty feet. A snuff-coloured coat, a dirty shirt, unclean socks, and greasy pyjamas, clothe this despot, this slave-ruler; with hair uncombed, and face and hands strangers to soap and water; we found him, what we expected, dull, heavy, shallow, and conceited. Behold the seven of us smoking, —smoking amber mouth-pieces, encircled with diamond rings, drawing the smoke up through

stems of jessamine and cherry-wood, from a small gilt red clay bowl about six feet off. Salaams have passed between all parties, much smoke blown to the winds, some little talk between the Captain and the Pacha; and, to judge from the laughter that convulse the Resident and Pacha, a joke has been told and enjoyed. Our eyes have wandered round the room, counted the different colours of the carpet, the flowers of the ceiling, and stared at those blank walls across the court-yard,—the harem. Seven servants all dressed as the seven who presented us the pipes, in loose white trowsers, and closely buttoned blue military frockcoats, stockingless and shoeless, appear at the doorway, bearing small china cups of coffee; they abjectly bow, and present one to each of us with a damask napkin; we have drunk, our mouths have touched the linen, again they abjectly bow and leave. The Pacha smiles and says salaam to us individually, claps his hands, and lo! seven more servants bearing fresh pipes rush in, stoop and hand them; we are all again smoking. Eight servants now appear, one bearing a large tray, on which are seven different coloured

tumblers with glass covers. The two looking more important than the rest are handed to the Resident and the Captain; the Pacha's, like ours, is a plain cut glass tumbler; but the gold about the two first selected, and the crown-like knob that surmounts their covers show them to be the cups of the honoured. They all contain sherbet, cool and delicious after the bitter coffee and scented smoke. Again salaams have passed between all and the Pacha, who seems as fond of salaaming as he is of beating his large right foot, which he nurses on his left knee, with a short piece of cane. He informs us that tiffin will be ready immediately; but we decline the honour, for the day is hot, and our close fitting regimentals make us none the cooler; so, bowing our adieus, we pass from the presence of the two-tailed Pacha, the lord of slaves, the king of ruins, and the monarch of dirt.

Before quitting the city of ruins and dirt, we visited the unfinished magnificent bazaar, the boast of Bussora; and for height, capacity, strength, and elaborate finish, superior to any in Cairo or Alexandria. Here beneath its groined

and fretted roof, we saw cargoes of rice and sugar ; knives and cutlery from Birmingham ; cottons and chintzes from Manchester ; carpets, tobacco, and turquoises from Persia ; antiques from Babylon and Nineveh ; muskets from Bengal ; spices from Ceylon ; pearls from Barhen ; gold and silver stuffs, shawls, turbans, and indigo from Surat ; coffee from Mocha ; water vessels from Baghdad ; teas and silks from China ; iron and lead from England ; and Asiatic indolence everywhere ;—in fact, everything was to be had here, from a tin whistle to the Koran.

It was melancholy to meet so much squalor, destitution, poverty, and pride, as we did at every turn. Everywhere we saw mounds of buried ruins, deserted streets, crumbling houses, desolation, and filth ; and we thought of “The City of the Caliphs,” the once proud Bussora, with its thousand streets, its thousand rivers, its thousand mosques, its thousand gardens, and thousands of playing fountains. Bussora is said to have been founded by the Arab Chief Alabah Ghuzwan, and built by the command of the Caliph Omar, in the twentieth year of the Hegira

(A.D. 640), "for the sake," so says an old writer, "of carrying on more commodiously an extensive commerce between the Syrians, Arabians, Persians, and Indians." The Abbé Reynal, in writing of Bussora, valued the merchandise "annually brought to it at 525,000*l.*, of which the English furnished 175,000*l.*, the Dutch 87,000*l.*, and the Moors, Banians, Armenians, and Arabs furnished the remainder."

Bussora is situated about midway between the Island of Korna (where oriental traditions place the Garden of Eden) and the Persian Gulf, or that part of it anciently called the "Bay of Basrah." It stands on the west bank of that noble stream, the Shat-al-Arab—which is navigable for ships of large burden—and is surrounded by a high clay wall, said to be six miles in circumference, and mounting many cannon.

The city, as its name imports, is built on a thick stony soil. It is inhabited by about 60,000 souls, a mixed population of Armenians, Jews, Turks, Arabs, and Persians. The land extending between Bussora and the sea, a distance of sixty-five miles, is held by the Arabs to be "one of the most delightful spots in Asia,

and one of the most beautiful gardens in the world." The city, unfortunately for its inhabitants and commerce, has often changed masters, and been alternately exposed to the irruptions of the Turks, Arabs, and Persians. It was taken possession of by its present governors, the Turks, in 1688.

"Tut, tut, man," said the purser, to whom I was bemoaning the decline of Bussora, "it will yet arise like the Phœnix from its own ashes, and become again what it was once, a rich emporium."

"Yes," I replied, "when Bussora is the terminus of a railway, and the shipping port of a line of steam-vessels."

"And why should it not be? Will Argus-eyed Commerce allow, think you, the annual waste worth a dozen kings' ransoms ever to be lost on the shores bordering the Tigris and Euphrates? As well think of keeping back the tide, as of staying the progress commerce is fated to make in these lands; and how will she do it save by sail and steam?"

"You shall be elected resident manager with a large salary payable quarterly," I answered,

as I stepped from the steamer's ladder into the bellum, with the gun on my shoulder, intent on killing a few of the many snipes and partridges I had seen the day before ; but, unfortunately for me, and, fortunately for the game, a flock of wild ducks flew over my head as I was nearing the bank, and on rising suddenly to bring my gun to my shoulder, I lost my balance and fell out of the canoe, head foremost, into the mud and water. It was a duck, indeed !

Daily some portion of the crew, during the steamer's stay at Marghill, a period of six weeks, found amusement in wild boar shooting ; and when I inform my readers that eighty-six were either eaten or salted down on board, and one hundred and thirty killed and left for the jackals, they will be able to form some small idea of the number of gruntes we must have seen. The meat of the wild pig is delicious, its food being dates, and the root of the liquorice plant, which grows everywhere in the greatest abundance. So fond is the wild pig, and such a good judge is he of dates, that he may be seen on moonlight nights swimming across the rapid Shat-al-Arab to the best plantations, rubbing

his back against the trees, shaking them down, and devouring them.

My last day's adventure against the unclean animals I will record here. A party of six left the ship about half-past two o'clock in the morning, having agreed over night to pull about three miles up the river and try some new ground. Half the distance was accomplished when we perceived three dense columns of smoke ascending from behind some rushes at the bank side. Thinking it might arise from the fires of an Arab encampment—to strangers in these parts a thing to be avoided—we ordered the bellum men to pull over to the other side, pointing to the smoke, and endeavouring to explain why ; at which they both laughed, and informed us it was not smoke, but myriad flocks of mosquitoes ; we determined, consequently, to pull through them, and did so to our cost—eyes, nose, mouth, ears, every place was filled with them, and delighted were we when we found ourselves clear of the swarm.

The ground was reached at five o'clock, and bravely we had to battle with rushes, mud, and water a full hour before we found anything ;

when, hark ! it is the click of the lock : there's a crash in the reeds. Bang ! he is hit. Bang ! he charges. Bang ! he hath fallen ; and rolling, grunting, struggling, bleeding, lies a huge wild boar. A broken leg, a hit in the back, and a ball through the shoulder, brought thee to the ground, thou monster !

Hurra ! our fellows gather round ; he is the first that hath fallen, and the day has begun well.

“ Whose pig is it ? Who killed it ? ”

“ Jones fired first and broke its leg, so he charged ; Noland hit him in the back, so he about ship and wanted to make mince meat of him for his trouble ; when the Doctor sent a shot through his shoulder, and he sprawled,” coolly replied the boatswain's mate, as he was cutting the animal's throat, to the numerous inquiries.

Away we go again, out of the rushes, across the rough country, through dykes, nullars, rivers ; and we are tired, for it is twelve o'clock, and have had six hours' running, jumping, wading, screaming, walking, bramble fighting, and have killed only four pigs since the beauty in the morning. So, gathering ourselves together

beneath a handful of shade, we open the basket the boatmen have brought up from the bellum, experience having taught us not to eat dates and buttermilk, when we could carry our own supplies, which consist of cold pork-pasties, and weak tea. To my especial friend Soliman, the greatest of rogues and prince of beaters, who appeared not to enjoy the dates and milk we had given to the Arabs, I offered a pork-pie, little thinking the good Mahomedan would eat it ; down it went, and I gave the fellow a second, which quickly followed the first ; so, patting the fellow upon the back, I asked him what he thought the author of the Koran would say to him.

“ Master,” he replied, “ if Mahmood see every little thing, he have big eye. I no think him have big eye, I think him eye all same as that,” poking his finger into the eye of the dead boar I was sitting on.

A small difference, I thought to myself, between your devotion to Islamish and that of the Nubian bellum boy, Mahmood, who, a week since, after having swallowed a cake given him by one of the officers, when informed it was

made with pig's lard, was in great distress, until, by repeated thrusting of his fingers down his throat, he succeeded in emulating the Roman epicures after their feasts, and rejected that which was condemned by his religion.

Having discussed pork-pics, pipes, pigs, and weak tea, we gathered ourselves up and proceeded, spreading out in line, with a beater between two of us. I was slightly in advance of the line, walking on the outer edge of a large cover of brushwood and rushes, when I heard bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, and saw springing over a ditch and wall a boar and three sows. Down rolled the boar on the opposite side, for my gun was true to my eye, and though the distance was eighty yards, my bullet had found its heart. One of the sows was also hard hit with my second barrel, but went away, pursued by the purser, who suddenly vanished, as if swallowed up by an earthquake. We hastened up to the spot, and found our friend out of his depth, sprawling and struggling to release himself from an empty corn-pit into which he had fallen. After having enjoyed our laugh, we helped him out, and form line again, this time

thirty yards apart. Scarcely have we entered the rushes, when our ears are greeted with a welcome grunt.

“Here, here!” sang out Johnstone, the quarter-master;—bang. “Help, help, help! by George! he is on me.” Whack, whack, whack. “Here, here, here; help!” Whack; bang! and my bullet is through the brute’s brain; an upward spring, and down he falls, quivering in the mud.

“Thank God! sir,” said the quarter-master; “I thought he would have done for me; he has got such a cursed thick brain-box. I hit him three times with the butt-end of my musket, and broke it on his head, sir.”

“What! did it charge?” I asked.

“Indeed, he did, sir; and when he made up his mind to do so, he looked so fierce, I thought he was the devil coming at me. You should have seen him when he first showed his grinders, and took a fancy to my leg; all because I shot him in the hind-quarter. He looked as if he had not had a dinner for a week.”

“He has not scratched you, I hope,” I said, as I saw some blood staining his trowsers, which were torn a little above the left knee.

“Just a slight graze, sir, as he was a-giving me when you shot him. I thought to keep him away with the bayonet, but he snapped it off like a bit of ’baccy-pipe between his ivories, and only shook his head a little when I gave him the butt-end, as if there were a fly on the tip of his ear, sir ; and I do believe he gave a wicked leer when he saw the stock break ; but that bullet of yours was a disgester for him. Well, I hope to be cooked if ever I comes a pig-shooting again and fires at random at their sterns, sir ; this ’ere’s a lesson I shan’t forget for a week of Easter Sundays.”

Ten grunTERS rewarded us for this day’s work, and we returned, as the evening drew around us, to our ship with light hearts and merry voices, singing the well known boar-hunting song, especially the following verse :

“Life’s daring spirit, manhood’s fire,
Fierce hand, and eagle eye,—
Must he acquire, who dare aspire
To see the wild boar die.”

In all our excursions we found the Arabs of the villages civil, and even willing to offer dates and buttermilk, or any assistance in their power. To these a few charges of coarse gunpowder was

a great boon and ample payment. It was curious to observe how much the necessity for self-defence manifested itself. From the grey-bearded sheik to the youngest child, all were armed; those who could carry guns had them, and did so, while in their belts would be stuck ugly-looking long knives, in close companionship with blunderbus-looking pistols; and the boy, unable to carry a matchlock, mastered a pistol; and the child, unable to master a pistol, carried a knife. Great truly was the need for such arms, as we met everywhere bands of marauding Arabs, who eyed us longingly, wistfully, and with robber-like glances. Not only eyed us, but in many instances threatened, and many were the matchlocks they cocked and presented, and many the laughs with which we disarmed their menaces and lowered their guns. (I write we, because the uncertain state of the country made it necessary for the authorities not to allow a smaller party than six to leave the ship.)

In my catalogue of arms I must not omit mentioning the long light spear that almost every Arab carries, fit instrument for hurling or thrusting. One of the roving rascals had the

impertinence to draw his sword on one of the men, who caused him to measure his length on the earth by the butt-end of his musket. I ordered the rascal to be picked up and receive a stripe on his back from the belt of each of my men. It was rather a whining tone with which he kept time to the lashes ; and he left us with the impression that John Bull was a slightly awkward customer, and one not to be trifled with.

The dress of these freebooters and of the villagers is primitive. Shoeless, stockingless, trowserless, a loose sack or bernouse, woven of camel's hair and wool, covering the shoulders, leaving bare the arms and legs, and reaching to the knee, is the dress they wear. The part above the waist, which is confined by a turban-cloth or horse-hair belt, serves for a pocket. Occasionally they have no covering on their heads, but generally their long black plaited hair hangs in loops from beneath a shawl bound to the head with a camel's hair puggrie.

The earth is their bed, its waters their drink and looking-glass, the sun their clock, heaven's stars their compass, and they measure distance

by the day's march ; mankind is their enemy, for their hand is against everyone, and everyone's hand is against them. Such are the inland tribes, who come down in hordes to rob their weaker brethren and levy toll from the traveller. If these lords of the soil are thus low in the scale of civilisation, what, we naturally ask, must their women be ? for the higher in the social scale man is, the higher, more civilised, more lovely and compassionate, is woman. Throughout the whole of Turkish Arabia, where man is barely above the grade of slavery, woman in mind and morals is degraded. To the slaves are they slaves, doing their drudgery, and labour's work, and satisfying their passion. Drawing water, fetching fire-wood, and tilling—wherever it is tilled—the land, are their daily occupations ; while their husbands and masters, in idleness and filth, sipping coffee and smoking, from sunrise to sunset, from youth to age, pass their life and day.

During our stay at Marghill we had an opportunity of seeing and visiting many of the pilgrim boats, with their living and dead

cargoes. The former were generally packed so close that it was impossible to put a hand between them—men, women, and children were huddled together like so many pigs in a pen; the latter enveloped in serge cloth, looking like elongated bundles of old rags, were hung ten or a dozen on each side of the boat. As they passed to windward of us, or we of them, the scent that came floating on the breeze was anything but odoriferous, and it was difficult to say whether that imparted by the dead or by the living was the most fragrant. In long narrow boats, with high prows and raised sterns, with a reed cabin, the abode of those holding first-class tickets, the Sheah [pilgrims travel; from a hundred to a hundred and fifty souls, and twenty-five dead bodies, usually occupy a space, forty feet long by twenty broad—close packing in a hot climate! The boats are shallow, and boast generally one rather tall and very stout mast, which projects forward, and supports a long light yard, from which spreads the large white sail of cotton canvas, used whenever the wind is favourable. At other times from the end of the mast proceeds the tow-rope used

by the crew in tracking the boat against the stream. As the evening approaches they anchor at the bank side, in those parts of the country where they feel secure ; in other places, where they are subject to the attacks of prowling Arabs, they anchor in the middle of the stream. These bands of Arabs not only rob the living whenever they have an opportunity, but hold the dead in pawn till the price they set on the body, is paid by the sorrowing children, who believe that their father's and their own souls will never reach the bosom of "Malmood" unless they visit the tomb of Hoossein, at Kerbelah. They willingly pay the ransom.

Did our space allow, we might tell how we spent a pleasant week on the borders of the great desert in an Arab tent ; how we rode over the site of the ruins of old Bussora, were surrounded by a cloud of flying Arabs, who, instead of stopping and robbing us, saluted our cicerone, the Resident, and gave us coffee and pipes. We might describe the city of Zobeir where we spent some few days with Mahomet, prince and priest, and lineal descendant of the

prophet ; we might describe the nightly feasts he gave to between two and three hundred Arabs, and tell how he enjoyed his dinner and sherry on board the steamer ; we might tell of numerous adventures by stream and land, with Arab, Turk, and Persian, but we could never sufficiently do justice to the hospitality of our friend and host, John Taylor, Esq., of Marghill.

CONCLUSION.

It is eighteen years since the celebrated expedition to the Persian Gulf—designated by Mahomed Shah, “a few rotten Hindoos”—was sent against the Persians, who were at that time attacking Herat. Herat is still the bone of contention. An independent province between Persia and Afghanistan, hating the Shah, free from its Candahar and Afghan neighbours, various in religious faith from Persia, “the gate of India,” Herat remains the apple of discord ; desirable as a possession in the eyes of Persia, a stronghold against Afghan and Candahar ; desirable in those of Russia as a stepping-stone to our possessions in India, a means of undermining the power of her greatest enemy, England, and of despoiling her of the finest and most brilliant gem in the crown of her Queen ; and

consequently, in our eyes, most desirable to preserve intact, a post from which it behoves us, as we value our peace and safety in Western India, to thrust Russia, in any form of aggression.

Persia has ever been weak in itself, filled with internal dissensions, and cunning and treacherous in policy, so that she has never been formidable to the English power ; but, joined with Afghanistan, and backed by Russia, she would inevitably become so ; and it has been, and is, our policy, to preserve her within her own boundaries, unsupported by either of the above-named powers, and friendly to ourselves. Hitherto we have considered her of scarcely sufficient importance, to make any great efforts to win her love, or excite her fear ; but now that Russia has done with Turkey, and has leisure to renew her insidious relations with Persia—whom she has been cunningly enclosing in a web of diplomacy during the Crimean war—it is time that we began to act with more vigour, demonstrate our power, and assert our will ; showing to Persia, that it is for her interest, to hold to her treaties with Britain, who otherwise both can,

and will, bring her to her senses by the arguments of iron and steel, which are neither to be disputed, nor evaded, even by Persian hypocrisy; and which must, at the same time, cripple our old foe (and the Shah's secret instigator), Russia; so forming the most important war, in which England has been engaged for many years.

During the whole of the present century, our relations with Persia, have been of a somewhat undefined policy, highly diplomatic, and not always to be defended, on the score of perfect integrity; but the tendency has been, to keep the Persians quiet, as regards aggression on our Indian frontier; to let them fall out with their neighbours of Afghan and Candahar, as may best please them, and get out of it, as they best may, so as they do not coalesce with those powers, and thus become formidable neighbours to us. Various treaties have been entered into, of an offensive and defensive character, but with a spice of Irish "reciprocity" in them, "all on one side,"—in which Persia engaged to defend us from any attacks on our territory, and to oppose any European force, passing through Persia, en route to India; whilst we undertook, to protect Persia

from European attacks, by forces or a subsidy, unless she commenced the aggression, in which case, we were to be held exempt from the subsidy ; we were to mediate for peace, between Persia, and any European foe—being an ally of our own—and undertook the same pacific office, in case of Persia being at war with Asiatic powers, provided the belligerents all desired us as mediator. That England has not held to her side of these treaties with perfect integrity—which we could demonstrate if it came within the province of this chapter—is very much to be regretted ; for any departure from perfect honesty—in nations as in individuals—is, in an equal ratio, a departure from strength. That “right makes might” is as high in established fact, as it is in morals, and it is unfortunately the case, that the English character does not stand as high, in the estimation of the court of Teheran, as could be desired. That the Persians have used infinitely more finesse, and treachery, than the English, is no excuse for us ; but it is bad policy to attack them with their own weapons, since it is to be hoped that we shall never be as skilful in their use, as the wily Asiatic.

The history of the first thirty-five years of this century, respecting Persia, has been one of dark design, and treacherous breach of treaty, on the part of Persia ; efforts on her part to annex Herat—on ours, to prevent her effecting her purpose. Without mixing ourselves up, with the petty dissensions of the states between Persia and Western India, to prevent their coalescing, especially to prevent the capture and occupation of Herat by Russia, has been our object. Persia has striven, to prevent the English, from making common cause with the Afghan, or any of the above-mentioned states, since such a junction of forces, would be fatal to her, more so, than that of all the other states combined.

Internal dissensions, have kept the Shah's government weak, and have constantly delayed the much-desired capture of Herat ; he, however, laid siege to it in 1837. The siege lasted about ten months, and one main cause of failure was, that—like Æsop's bundle of sticks—they were disunited amongst themselves. It was at the end of this siege, that the expedition in the Persian Gulf (alluded to at the beginning of this chapter), took place ; which, though small in

itself, attacking the Shah's southern border, was sufficient to effect its purpose, and compel him to abandon Herat. Intrigues continued on the part of Persia, having for their object the long-desired footing in Herat, till, by their own confession, in 1852, they were determined to consider it a part of the Shah's territory. This declaration was followed, by a pretty stringent intimation from the home government, that friendly relations between ourselves, and Persia, depended on her immediately evacuating Herat, even to the withdrawal of all Persian influence, or interference, in its affairs. The Shah demanded a like promise of non-interference on the part of England. During the whole negotiation, the slippery Persian policy was strongly exhibited, a disposition to secede from every previous engagement; and in 1853 Colonel Shiel's convention was drawn up.

This convention, with various other conditions, bound Persia to abandon all interference in Herat, its politics, external and internal. That Britain was to abstain, in like manner; and, in case of her breaking such engagement, Persia was to strive, by friendly mediation, to preserve

the integrity of independent Herat. This convention was ratified by Persia. Before the year was over, Persian subtlety was again at work, striving, by wily devices, to slide out of her engagements, and, ignoring honour and good faith, to make excuses to annex Herat. Insults and indignities were put upon the English embassy ; and, though a kind of apology was offered, it was generally believed, and whispered in Indian circles, that a demonstration would be sent to the Persian Gulf, with troops to occupy the Island of Karrack ; steamer after steamer was despatched thither, from the Indian navy ; now with a goodly array of stalwart artillerymen, producing a crowded appearance on deck ; now blazing powder in salutes, before the towns on the seaboard, astonishing the natives by the report, and teaching them, by inference, the weight of our metal ! Suddenly these ceased. And the first of these expeditionary vessels, " the Ajdaha," was despatched by the Bombay government, at the end of November, 1854, to Suez ; placed at the disposal of her Majesty's envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, at the court of Tehraun, " the Ajdaha "

waited there the arrival of the Honourable Mr. Murray, who did not appear until the 26th of December, with his multitudinous baggage; his horses and dogs having been detained, according to the "on dits" of the place, by the non-arrival of his carriage-wheels, with which he was to make a grande entrée into Tehraun.

At this time the war was raging in the Crimea. It appeared to be our best policy, to persuade Persia to preserve a strict neutrality, and, if possible, to keep good faith in so doing; which, however, was hardly to be expected from so false a government. It was evidently the policy of Russia to hold her in amity, and keep her in play, till the war in the Black Sea should be ended, when Russia might (as she has since done) gather her forces into the southern waters of the Caspian, and occupy Astrabad, en route, as all the world supposes, to Herat. The policy of Persia, as she conceived, was to preserve her neutrality, certainly, yet not with good faith (as we would have persuaded her), but with Asiatic, Janus-like diplomacy, having a smile for England on the one side, and a smile for Russia on the other; playing with both, till she

should see who might get the upper-hand, in the European struggle, and range herself on the winning side.

Accordingly, affairs were in a more than commonly quiet, and favourable state, when Mr. Murray arrived at the court of Tehraun, in the beginning of 1855 ; but these appearances were false, it was the calm preceding the storm. That Mr. Murray was distasteful to the Persian government, we have before intimated, (being at the time well acquainted with those events and reports which have since become patent to the world as causes of dissatisfaction and distrust,) on the part of the Persians ; that he consequently was able to effect but little, if any, good in his diplomatic mission, is too well known to need repetition here ; whether the most skilful and popular of ambassadors, and diplomatists, could have done more, it is impossible to decide. For it is evident, that under the outward friendly calm, preparations were making, delays, correspondences, a mission to our consul at Constantinople, and friendly seeming kept up, in order to gain time, and deceive England as to the real designs of Persia. Herat was the object ; to

Herat, a Persian army was marched; at first, under pretext of protecting it from the Afghans, soon becoming an army of occupation, plundering, devastating, ravaging the country, rendering the Persian rule, long dreaded, and ever hated, and resisted, by the Heratians, still more hateful. Herat subsequently raised the British flag on her walls, in anxious resistance of Persia, but all to no purpose, with insults to the British government (for the expedition was headed by Prince Sultan Moorad, who had insulted the name of our Queen), with contempt for her treaties, and engagements, for all were recklessly broken. Herat was openly attacked, and spite of brave and determined efforts on the part of the besieged, it fell into the hands of the Persians, 25th October, 1856, and on the first of the next month, the following declaration was issued by the Governor-General of India.

GOVERNMENT GENERAL ORDERS.

WAR WITH PERSIA.

PROCLAMATION.

Foreign Department, Fort William, Nov. 1, 1856.—
The Right Hon. the Governor-General of India in Council having, under instruction from her Majesty's

Government, directed the assemblage of a British force at Bombay for service in the Persian Gulf, deems it proper to make known the reasons which have rendered this measure necessary.

In the month of January, 1853, certain articles of agreement were concluded between Lieut.-Colonel Shiel, Her Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of the Shah of Persia, and his Highness the Suder Azim or Prime Minister of the Persian Government.

By those articles the Persian Government engaged not to send troops to Herat on any account, unless foreign troops—that is, troops from the direction of Cabul, or Kandahar, or other foreign country—should invade Herat. In the event of troops being sent, the Persian Government engaged that the said troops should not enter the city of Herat, and that, on the return of the foreign troops towards their own territory, the Persian troops should be immediately withdrawn from the neighbourhood of Herat to Persian soil.

The Persian Government also engaged to abstain from all interference whatsoever in the internal affairs of Herat, whether “in taking possession, or occupying, or assuming the sovereignty, or governing, except in so far as interference existed between the two parties during the lifetime of the late Yar Mahomed.”

And, lastly, the Persian Government engaged to relinquish all pretension to, and demand for the coinage, or the reading of the Khootbeh, or any other acknowledgment of allegiance or subjection, on the part of the people of Herat to the Government of Persia.

It was at the same time stipulated that so long as

there should be no interference of any sort whatever, on the part of the British Government in the affairs of Herat, the engagements contracted by the Persian Government, as aforesaid, should remain in full force and effect. On the other hand, it was agreed in the name of the British Government that, "if any foreign powers, such as the Afghans or others," should wish to interfere with, or to take possession of Herat, the British Government, on the requisition of the Persian ministers, would not object to return such foreign power by friendly advice, "so that Herat might remain in its own state of independence."

While the British Government has faithfully and constantly adhered to the obligations which it accepted under the agreement of January, 1853, the Government of Persia has manifested a deliberate and persevering disregard of the reciprocal engagements by which at the same time it became bound, and is now endeavouring to subvert by force the independence of Herat, which was the declared object of the agreement in question.

So far back as December, 1855, the Persian Government, by an article in the Tehran official *Gazette*, announced its intention of despatching a force to Herat, alleging that the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, the ruler of Afghanistan, had been instigated by his "neighbours" to possess himself of Kandahar, that having with their assistance succeeded in that enterprise, he meditated an advance upon Herat; and that an armed demonstration in the direction of Herat was required for the preservation of tranquility in Khorasan.

This assertion that the ruler of Afghanistan was instigated by his "neighbours" to occupy Kandahar,

or that he was assisted by them in possessing himself of that city, or that he received advice or encouragement from them to advance upon Herat, was—if by those “neighbours” the British Government is indicated—wholly untrue. No such instigation, or assistance, or encouragement (direct or indirect), had been given by the British Government; nor, so far as the British Government is informed, had there been, when the assertion was made, any act on the part of Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan evincing a design to advance upon Herat.

Nevertheless, the Persian Government has executed its intention. Not only have Persian troops invaded the territory of Herat, although the contingency which alone could justify such an act has not come to pass; but they have laid siege to the city, and have interfered in its internal affairs; while the Government of Tehran has not only assumed the right to nominate the ruler of Herat, but in addressing the present chief of the city has declared Herat to be Persian soil.

The siege of Herat has now been carried on by the Persian army for many months. Before its commencement, and during its progress, the unfriendly sentiments of Persia towards the British Government have been scarcely veiled; and recently the movement of troops, in different parts of Persia, have indicated a determination to persist in an aggression, which is as unprovoked as it is contrary to good faith.

The conduct of the Persian Government has been pronounced by her Majesty's Government to constitute an act of open hostility against Great Britain. Reparation has been sought, but without success. The withdrawal of the Persian troops from the neighbourhood of Herat

to Persian soil has been demanded, as a preliminary to the adjustment of differences to which the acts of Persia alone have given rise; but the demand has been evaded, and, according to the most recent accounts, a Persian army still invests Herat.

Friendly remonstrance having failed, and a reasonable requisition having been rejected or put aside, it becomes incumbent on the British Government to take measures by which the Persian Government shall be convinced that solemn engagements contracted with Great Britain may not be violated with impunity, and by which effectual guarantees against continuous breach of faith shall be secured.

To this end a force has been directed to assemble at Bombay, and will embark as soon as the necessary arrangements shall have been completed. The further operations of the force, after it shall have reached the Persian Gulf, will be guided by such instructions as the progress of events and the policy of the British Government may demand.

By order of the Right Hon. the Governor-General of India in Council.

(Signed) G. F. EDMONSTONE,
Secretary to the Government of India.

PROCLAMATION.

Foreign Department, Fort William, Nov. 1, 1856.—The Right Honourable the Governor-General of India in Council having, under instructions from Her Majesty's Government, directed that hostile operations against Persia shall forthwith be undertaken, is pleased to order, and it is hereby ordered, that Persian merchant-vessels

which, at the time of the publication of this order, shall be in any ports or places in Her Majesty's Indian Territories under the Government of the East-India Company, shall be allowed thirty days, from the date of the publication of this order, for loading their cargoes and departing from such ports or places; and that such Persian merchant-vessels, if met at sea by any of the ships of the Indian navy, shall be permitted to continue their voyage if, on examination of their papers, it shall appear that their cargoes were taken on board before the expiration of the above term. Provided that nothing herein contained shall extend, or be taken to extend, to Persian vessels having on board any officer in the military service of the Persian government, or any article prohibited or contraband of war, or any despatch of or to the Persian government.

And it is hereby further ordered by the Right Honourable the Governor-General in Council, that any Persian merchant-vessel which, prior to the 1st day of November, 1856, shall have sailed from any foreign port bound for any port or place in any of her Majesty's Indian territories, shall be permitted to enter such port or place and to discharge her cargo, and afterwards forthwith to depart without molestation; and that such vessel, if met at sea by any of the ships of the Indian navy, shall be permitted to pursue her voyage.

The Right Honourable the Governors in Council of Madras and Bombay, the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal; the Governor of the Straits Settlements, the Commissioners of Pegu and of the Tenasserim and Martaban provinces, and all officers and authorities whom it may concern, in her Majesty's Indian territories

under the Government of the East-India Company, are required to give the necessary directions herein as to them may respectively appertain.

By order of the Right Honourable the Governor-General in Council.

(Signed) G. F. EDMONSTONE,
Secretary to the Government of India.

PROCLAMATION.

Foreign Department, Fort William, Nov. 1, 1856.—

The Right Hon. the Governor-General of India in Council being desirous that the hostile operations now about to be undertaken against Persia, should be attended with as little injury as possible to individual interests, is pleased to notify that all subjects of the Shah of Persia residing within her Majesty's Indian territories under the government of the East-India Company, and not being consuls, or consular agents in the service of the Persian Government, may continue to reside therein without molestation in respect of their persons, their property, or their lawful avocations, and that they will enjoy protection so long as they shall abstain from all acts hostile to the British Government, and shall observe due obedience to the laws under which they live, and to all resolutions or orders of the Governor-General of India in Council.

By order of the Right Hon. the Governor-General of India in Council.

(Signed) G. F. EDMONSTONE,
Secretary to the Government of India.

(True copies.)

H. L. ANDERSON,
Secretary to Government.

On the 4th of December, 1856, after an absence of eighteen years, the British flag was again hoisted on the island of Karrack, the guns of the Feroze, boomed the intelligence over the sea, and the first blow directly at Persia, and indirectly at Russian intrigue, was struck ; or, as the gunner's mate remarked to Lieutenant Trollope, of the Honourable Company's steam frigate "Ajdaha," "There's a dig in the side for Russia, sir," as he fired the first gun from the deck of that vessel in Halliba Bay, on the morning of the 7th, bearing its message, cased in shrapnel shell, to a group of Arabs with matchlocks, that had collected beneath some date trees, to oppose the landing of our troops. On the afternoon of the same day the disembarkation commenced, protected by the gun-boats that the previous evening had been anchored in shore. All honour to the 20th regiment of Native Infantry—the first corps landed—all honour to its brave young officers, Utterson and Warren, who fell fighting for their country on the following Tuesday, while leading the attack on the old Dutch fort of Reschire, whose ancient temple was built in the time of Sennacherib.

Here, about eight hundred Arabs, composed of the tribes from the districts of Deshtestan and Tengestan, made a resolute stand, and determinately defended their earth-works, at the storming of which, fell Brigadier Stopford, with the words, "Forward, Sixty-fourth!" on his lips, his sword waving in emulation of his words. Here, for sparing the life of a fallen foe, by the saved miscreant was the gallant Mallet shot. Here also fell, severely wounded, Captain Wood of the 20th. Here, General Stalker's thumb was grazed by a musket-ball, Captain Finnimore's sword was shot away, and Brigadier Trevelyan, received a bullet through his coat. Gallantly the 20th Native Infantry (enraged at the fall of its officers) emulated the courage displayed by H.M.'s 64th, and 2nd Bombay Europeans, drove home the bayonet with such goodwill, that the Perso-Arab discovered, how groundless was his national, and religious contempt for the Hindoo soldier. Fifteen miles—now, ankle deep in sand, now, contending with broken, rough, uneven ground, with three days' rations in their havresacks—did our men march to Bushire, on the 10th. It surrendered on the

appearance of our troops before it on the afternoon of the same day. Doubtless (as Major-General F. Stalker remarks in his dispatch), "The lesson the enemy received at Reschire, together with the bombardment of their works, the imposing appearance of the troops in line, and of the fleet, was doubtless the cause of their want of spirit in surrendering the strongly fortified town of Bushire, in which we found fifty-nine guns, with large quantities of ammunition and warlike stores." Thus surrendered the garrison of two thousand men, who grounded their arms in front of our lines ; as many more, with guns, &c., were allowed to escape, we can scarcely use a milder term, when Sir Henry Leeke might (with a proper disposition of a few gun-boats in the neighbouring creek) have cut off their retreat.

The affair of Bushire, especially as its surrender was owing mainly to the persuasive eloquence of the many-mouthed fleet, and much to the determined energy of Captains Young and Rennie, in the "Semiramis" and "Feroze" (which ships bore the brunt of the action), we give in the words of the Admiral's dispatch,

Well directed and successful as the efforts of the fleet have been, under the able management of Sir Henry Leeke, to whom all honour is due as a skilful admiral, we cannot refrain from saying, that his part was not here, but (as Commodore Superintendent of the Indian Navy) at its headquarters, Bombay. Much as we admire the spirit and energy of his conduct, in this expedition, we cannot but feel that the laurels were won at the expense of Commodore Ethersey, to whom was justly due, from his position of Commodore in the Persian Gulf, from his intimate knowledge of its shores and waters, and long service in the Indian Navy, the honour and distinction, of commanding the fleet in this expedition. The skill exercised by Sir Henry Leeke, and the success of the result, cannot disguise the fact, that he was out of place ; but the Admiral must not be kept longer waiting, as he is anxious to tell us how Bushire was won. He says :—

“ At day-light this morning (December 10th) seeing the Persian army drawn up near the wells (their centre supported by a high fortified tower and redoubt), it was my duty to dislodge them ; and for this service I ordered the vessels (*Falkland*, sloop, *Ajdaha*, steam frigate, *Berenice*, and *Victoria*, steam sloop) under the command

of Lieutenants Tronson, Worsley, Chitty, and Giles, and eight heavy-armed gun-boats under Lieutenant Stradling, to place their ships in position to attack it. This was done in a most gallant way, and in the course of an hour I had the satisfaction to see the whole of the Persian troops in full retreat to the town, but in perfect order and with great coolness, supported by their artillery. A boat, with a white flag, was now seen approaching the ship, and on one of the chiefs arriving on board, a request was made by the Governor of the town for a delay of operations for twenty-four hours, to offer terms. This I instantly refused, in consequence of his having fired on one of our small steamers, bearing a flag of truce, the day before. Half an hour was given him to get out of the way of our shot; and the ships having been placed in line of battle, my flag-ship in the centre, the action commenced and continued on both sides for two hours, when, observing two batteries outside the town, one a kind of miniature Malakhoff, harassing the *Semiramis* and *Feroze*, I directed our fire towards them, and in three hours they were perfectly silenced, and the guns dismantled. A tower on the north-west angle of the fort, and a masked battery below the Residency Flagstaff outside the walls, kept a constant and steady fire upon the *Semiramis* and *Feroze*. It was necessary to silence them also; and seeing that both ships were much damaged by their steady aim, the foremost guns of this ship were ordered to be directed towards them, and in the course of an hour both batteries ceased firing.

“I was now anxious to make an opening in the wall of the town, that the troops might have nothing in their way, if General Stalker, on his arrival, determined upon car-

rying the place by assault. Our fire was, therefore, directed by the south-west angle, and the breach commenced by knocking down a part of the tower and the embrasure in which a gun was mounted, as well as the lower part of the wall. The fire from their batteries at this time gradually slackened, and at this moment the flagstaff in the town was pulled down in token of submission, and the place surrendered.

“The army was by this time close to the town, and it was a source of the greatest pleasure to me to feel that we had cleared away every obstacle that presented itself on their onward march, the more so as they had lost so many gallant fellows the day before when storming the fort of Reshire.

“The ships of the fleet have suffered considerably in their hulls, masts, and rigging, from the fire of the enemy's guns: the *Semiramis* and *Feroze* have some shot through them, but nothing to prevent all being ready for sea in a day or two. I am most happy to add, that no person has been touched, nor has any casualty occurred during the four hours and a half we were under fire; how this happened is miraculous, for the grape shot, which fell at every instant around and abreast the gun-boats, and the round shot over and about our ships, was very severe, and proved that our enemy were more formidable than they were supposed to be, even by those who had known the town years before, there being fifty-nine guns mounted on the batteries.

“It now becomes a pleasing part of my duty to bring to the notice of your Lordship in Council the very great assistance I have received from Commodore Ethersey (who met me off the Island of Khism, and from his knowledge of this place gave me much valuable information),

Captains Jenkins and Young, Commanders Macdonald (in charge of all the transports) and Rennie, and Acting Commanders Foulerton and Adams, the latter the captain of this ship; the officers, petty officers, and seamen of the fleet under my command; nor can I ever forget their gallant conduct in this day's battle, or their cheerfulness and activity in carrying out my orders, and in moving their ships into position abreast of the batteries; and I am sure the Government will think with me that this was no easy task to perform, for most of the vessels drew from fifteen to sixteen feet water, and we had to take them (at high water) some way through soft mud to get near enough to the forts, and this under a heavy fire.

“Where all have so ably and gallantly performed their duty it is difficult to particularise individuals; but I desire to express my warm thanks to Captain Griffith Jenkins, the first captain of this ship, for the very great assistance he has afforded me throughout the whole of the operations, and particularly during the action. He was the first officer, assisted by Major Hull, of the Engineers, and Lieutenant Clarkson, the first lieutenant of my flagship, to enter the town and hoist the British flag.

“I trust, my Lord, it will not be taking too much upon myself to express my admiration of the gallant conduct of General Stalker and his brave army, the more so as I have had the honour of being associated with them for many weeks, and I have been an eye-witness of all their proceedings from the day of landing, as well as on their advance to the town. In doing so I offer the humble tribute of a British admiral to the brave general, his officers and soldiers, whose dashing conduct on the day of storming of the Fort of Reshire, can never be forgotten.

“ In conclusion, may I again request your Lordship’s notice of the gallant officers who have given me so much assistance and support during the time I have been fitting out the Persian Gulf Expedition? By their exertions nearly 10,000 persons, with all their camp equipage, provisions, guns, and stores, and 1100 horses, have been landed on the shores of Persia, without the slightest accident, and, with the exception of five horses, without a casualty of any sort; and by to-morrow evening the troops will have their tents pitched, cooking things ready, and every arrangement to give them comfort and shelter from the cold weather and rains of the winter. The Indian navy being a service of seniority, precludes promotion, and unlike their brethren of the army, they can gain nothing of advancement to a high rank; but if, in bringing to the notice of your Lordship in Council their good and meritorious conduct upon this as well as every other occasion, I have the good fortune to render a service to those who have so thoroughly done their duty, it will be a source of the greatest gratification to me.

“ I have the honour to be, my Lord,

“ Your Lordship’s humble and obedient servant,

“ (Signed) HENRY J. LEEKE, *Rear-Admiral R. N.*,

“ *Commander-in-Chief I. N., and Commanding the Naval Force, Persian Gulf Expedition.*”

A true British cheer rent the air as the English flag, at five o’clock p. m., unfolded over the city: may our policy teach us to keep it floating! On entering the fort we found several guns commanding the spot where our troops would have

entered, loaded almost to the muzzle with grape, the largest of them being an eighteen-pounder. In all fifty-eight pieces of ordnance were found in the fort of Bushire; their descriptions and character being somewhat interesting as tabletted by our friend Captain Finimore, we give :—

RETURN OF ORDNANCE FOUND IN THE FORTRESS OF BUSHIRE,
AFTER ITS SURRENDER ON THE 10TH OF DECEMBER, 1856.

No.	Description.	Mark.	Country.	Vent.	Calibre or Weight of Ball	Length
1	Iron Gun *	Erased.	...	Bad	18 pdr.	ft. 8 7
2	Brass How.	4 E. I. C. 1805	English.	Good.	12 "	3 9
3	" Gun.	Pers Ins	Persian.	Bad.	12 "	6 2
4	" " †	"	"	Good	1½ "	4 0
5	" " †	No mark.	"	Enlarged.	6 "	2 1
6	Iron " †	Erased.	"	Bad	18 "	8 7
7	" " †	No mark	"	Enlarged	9 "	3 7
8	Brass Mor- tar. §	Pers. Ins.	"	"	8-inch	1 10
9	" "	"	"	Good.	5½ "	1 5
10	Brass Gun §	"	"	Enlarged.	6-pdr.	4 9
11	Iron "	No mark.	"	"	18 "	8 7
12	Brass "	Pers Ins	"	"	9 "	4 9
13	Iron "	No mark	"	"	18 "	8 7
14	Brass " †	Pers. Ins.	"	Good.	6 "	4 9
15	Iron " †	"	"	Enlarged	12 "	3 8
16	" " †	No mark	"	Bad.	9 "	3 7
17	" " †	"	"	"	12 "	3 8
18	" "	"	"	"	12 "	8 2
19	" "	"	"	"	12 "	7 6
20	" "	"	"	"	12 "	7 3
21	Brass Gun †	Pers. Ins.	"	Good	12 "	6 2

All these are mounted on wooden travelling carriages, the wheels and bodies of which are so shaped and out of repair, as to be quite unserviceable for field purposes.

* Honey-combed.

† With dolphins.

‡ Entrance of bore cup-shaped.

§ Mounted on platform-carriage, with elevating screws.

THE ENEMIES' GUNS.

229

No.	Description.	Mark.	Country.	Vent.	Calibre or Weight of Ball.	Length.
22	Iron Gun.	Erased.	Persian.	Bad.	24-pdr.	9 0
23	" "	"	"	"	18 "	8 7
24	" "	"	"	"	18 "	8 7
25	" "	"	"	"	18 "	8 7
26	" "	"	"	"	18 "	8 7
27	" "	"	"	"	18 "	8 7
28	" "	"	"	"	12 "	5 8
29	" "	"	"	"	12 "	5 8
30	" "	"	"	"	12 "	5 8
31	" "	"	"	"	12 "	5 8
32	" "	"	"	"	12 "	5 8
33	" "	"	"	"	12 "	5 8
34	" "	"	"	"	12 "	5 8
35	" "	"	"	"	12 "	5 8
36	" "	"	"	"	12 "	5 8
37	" "	"	"	"	12 "	5 8
38	" "	"	"	"	12 "	5 8
39	" "	"	"	"	9 "	5 7
40	" "	"	"	"	9 "	5 7
41	" "	"	"	"	9 "	5 7
42	" "	"	"	"	9 "	5 7
43	" "	"	"	"	9 "	5 7
44	" "	"	"	"	9 "	5 7
45	" "	"	"	"	9 "	5 7
46	" "	"	"	"	9 "	5 7
47	" "	"	"	"	9 "	5 7
48	" "	"	"	"	9 "	5 7
49	" "	"	"	"	6 "	6 4
50	" "	"	"	"	6 "	6 4
51	" "	"	"	"	3 "	6 0
52	" "	"	"	"	3 "	6 0
53	" "	"	"	"	5-inch	8 0
54	" "	"	"	"	5 "	8 0
55	" "	"	"	"	4 "	7 0
56	" "	"	"	"	4 "	7 0
57	" "	"	"	"	1½ "	3 6
58	" "	"	"	"		

All these are dismounted, some are buried in the mud, others are in the sea; many of them, therefore, could not be correctly measured; the apparent length is given in such cases.

(Signed) B FINNIMORE, Captain,
Commissary of Ordnance.

On the 11th of November, the expedition which has occupied Karrack, destroyed Reshire, and taken Bushire (composed of twenty-five transports, ten war steamers, and two sloops; and an army of five thousand men, with their baggage, artillery, and horses) left Bombay, traversed upwards of twelve hundred miles, called *en passant* at Muscat, rendezvoused at the once famous emporium—the Island of Ormuz (now a barren rocky island and howling wilderness), watered at Bassadore (which our readers have already learned, has been in our possession since 1826), and bombarded Bushire, exactly one month after leaving Bombay. We are now entrenched before Bushire, our camp pitched in the form of a horse-shoe, with the 3rd Cavalry on the right, the General and staff on a rising piece of ground in the centre; and the 3rd troop of Horse Artillery, Her Majesty's 64th, the 2nd Bombay Europeans, Gibbard's and Hatche's batteries, the 2nd. Beloochees, the Rifles, and Poonah Horse, on the left (the only point of attack the enemy can possibly avail themselves of—may they come!), whilst the gallant 20th regiment of Native Infantry, garri-

son the fort. Since our occupation of Bushire, the town has become a bustling place. The Armenians, who had vacated it on the declaration of the war, have returned ; they are its principal merchants and wealthiest inhabitants.

They have returned with joy and thankfulness that the British have taken Bushire. Two Protestant churches have been established in that portion of the fort, now called "Victoria City," a race-course and railway have been called into existence, the former for public amusement, the latter for general utility and expediency. Vast is the difference between Bushire under the government of the Déryâr Bey and its present occupants ; a dirty, sleepy seaport has become a bustling city, far advanced on the road to become a flourishing emporium. Here the question naturally suggests itself, What is to be our policy, and future in this affair ? To which we answer, Persia *per se*, disunited and bankrupt, is almost too contemptible to cause us a moment's anxiety, and will yield to the blow already struck ; but Persia, the pliant tool and willing slave of the daring and ambitious Moscovite, must be wrested from her degradation,

and have her integrity restored. We have drawn the sword and thrown aside its scabbard, and we must not return the one to the safe keeping of the other, until the integrity of Persia has been restored, our influence established, and Russian intrigue destroyed. Persia must be the barrier, against which the northern wave may chafe, but which it cannot pass ; she must be preserved intact, a foe formidable to Russia, a friend valuable to us, and in our well-being acknowledging her own. The fact is undeniable, that Russia has advanced, and is advancing, steadily, and stealthily, towards India, and she will advance, if we stay her not, through Persia. The Shah, the nominal head of an almost dead, a decaying empire, a mere puppet in the hands of intriguing Russia, must be set free, and placed under such a wholesome dread of English power, that the fear shall produce a wholesome rule in him. He must no longer be permitted to be the pliant tool of the Czar, but be taught that his welfare is the stronghold of British India, and our welfare his. Persia, at present contemptible, impoverished, and bankrupt, with the fairest jewels in her diadem, the

provinces of Ghilan and Mazenderan mortgaged to Russia, must be taught to maintain her integrity, and if circumstances push, to repudiate her Russian debt, and come forth the ally of England, not seeking, but commanding respect.

Through Persia we must disabuse the mind of the Asiatics, of the idea, that there are two European powers, England and Russia; and must teach them the fact, that there exists for them but one, England. Thus must we, should matters proceed, and a baseless peace not be patched up, determinedly grapple with Persia, because through her, we must stay advancing Russia.

The Russian steppes, the Caucasian defiles, and the mountains and plains of Georgia, are difficulties long since deprived of their formidable aspect. The arsenals of Astracan, fed by those of St. Petersburg, with the vast steam fleet of the Caspian, can vomit forth at Astrabad; and the conveyance of an army from Astrabad, to Herat is no impossibility, but a probability daily drawing nearer its fulfilment. Happy would be the army in that delightful and fertile valley, where Mahomed Shah, with a force of upwards

of forty thousand men played the enemy for nine months. Formidable would be the position of an army that could avail itself of the engineering skill so ably displayed in the Crimea, and bring it to bear on the Heratean mound, whose circuit is four miles, and height ninety feet. "In this girdle, (an able writer says) are cut two trenches parallel to each other, which may be considered covered ways. A citadel commands the city, an invading army would here take up a new base ; here would its magazines be established ; in this strong position, preparations would be made, to receive the retreating invaders, should they encounter a reverse. All circumstances combine, to give value to this formidable military position—a strongly fortified town—water in abundance—fertility unexampled, and a fine climate." Herat, in the hands of an ally, is a safe-guard ; but Herat, in the hands of an enemy, delightful in its fertility and resources, and formidable for its military position, would be dangerous to the liberties of Afghanistan, the road to India ; for if Herat be the key of Afghanistan, India's key, Candahar, like the rods of the magicians of Pharaoh, would be swallowed

up by that of Herat. Herat therefore must be established, its ruler must be one whose interest it shall ever be, to oppose Persian encroachments, and to maintain terms with us ; one accessible to, and convinced of, our powers. The expedition to the Persian Gulf, its occupation of Karrack and Bushire, is the first move in a mighty game, that expediency may call upon us to play ; and one which the high spirit and ready intelligence of our civilians and soldiers in the East, will maintain with honour ; well knowing that on the boldness of their action hangs the chance of their success ; their *prestige* lies in their daring and energy. Our policy, therefore, is to restore the integrity of Persia, to un rivet the chains which Russian influence has been binding around her, to make her our ally, and a strong, neutral, and independent nation between British India and Russia. If ever occasion called for a skilful pilot to conduct our relations with Persia, one who is well acquainted with the affairs of both sides, it is the present. Such a one is to be found, in Sir H. Rawlinson, who, from his knowledge of the country, its wants and resources, his mastery of its past and

present history and language, his known powers of judgment and diplomacy, would not fail in such a position to carry with him the confidence, not only of his own countrymen, but of the Persians also; as exemplified by an anecdote current in Persia not a year since, and related to me by our friend Ally, a saying of the Shah, that the presence of Colonel Rawlinson, at the court of Teheran, is—"All the same as an army of Sepoys, Master."

THE END.

