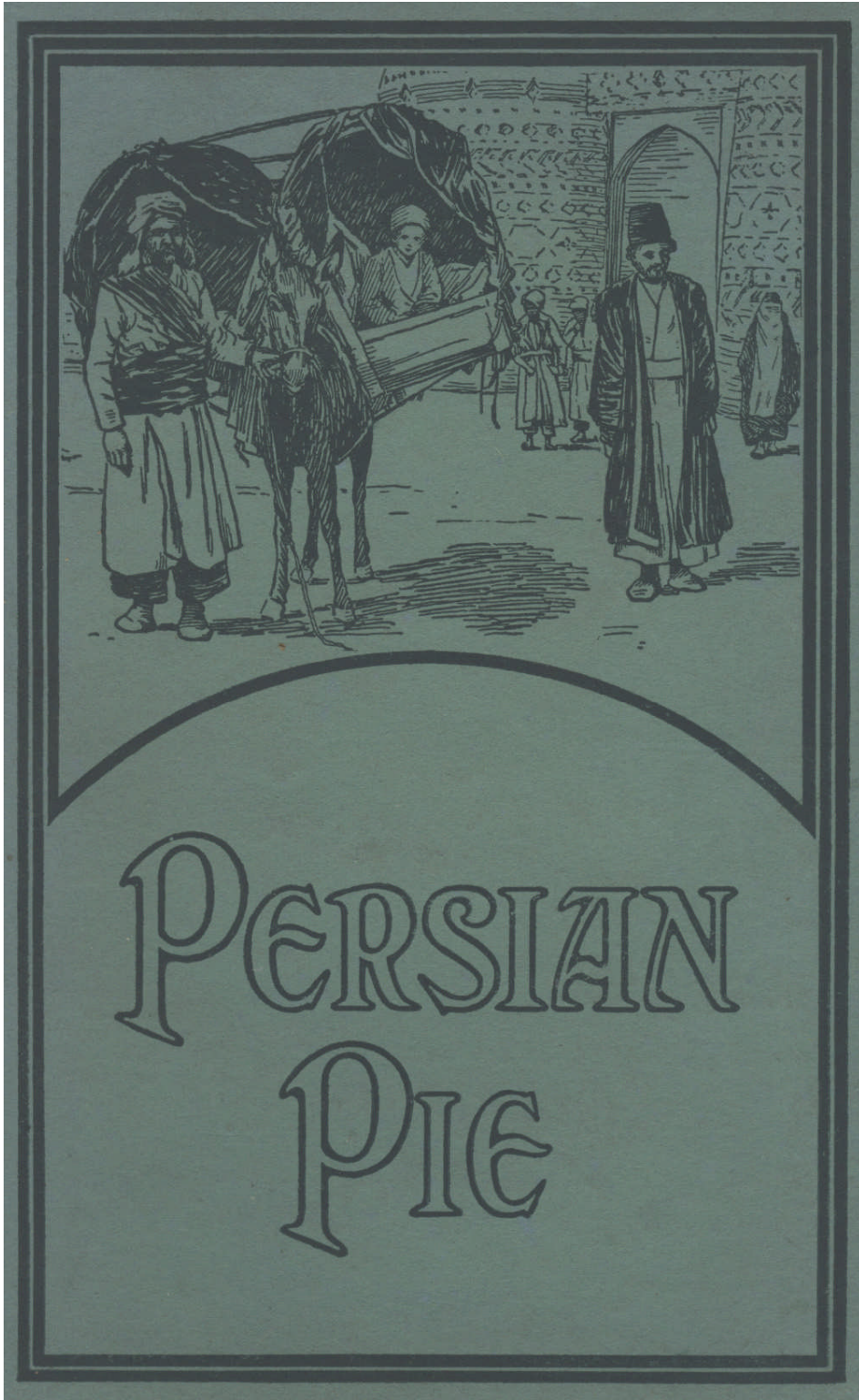


Project Canterbury



## PERSIAN PIE

### STORIES AND ARTICLES BY PEOPLE WHO HAVE LIVED IN PERSIA

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[\* Transcriber's note: These chapters are short stories by missionaries who lived in Persia (including one by Bishop Linton, the Bishop of Persia from 1919-1935, and another by W. J. Thompson, his successor). They are for children, illustrated with many small drawings which I have chosen not to reproduce with this transcription.]

### **A WEDDING, AND AFTERWARDS** **By MRS. W. A. RICE**

#### CHAPTER I NOSRAT'S ARRIVAL

IN a cloud of dust two men and two donkeys were trudging across the great stretch of desert leading towards the ancient city of Isfahan. One man, who was walking on in front, occasionally exchanged a word or two with the other man who was prodding on the donkeys. On the back of one donkey there was a showy-looking trunk, covered with green velvet, with brass corners, and little legs sticking out at the bottom. The second donkey was carrying an odd-looking load, something wrapped in a dark blue and white check sheet, small at the top and large at the bottom. Sometimes this bundle seemed to quiver and sway, but no sound was heard.

Many other travellers were on the road. Long strings of leisurely camels walked mincingly along, with compact, heavy loads. The mule and donkey caravans raised a great deal of dust and made a great deal of noise with their jingling bells and loosely packed loads. The high mountains and vast plains made those who traversed them look like flies.

About five miles from the city the many roads over the desert and foot-hills at last emerge into a fine wide road, which runs through a picturesque village. At this point the two men and the two donkeys, one with its mysterious load, turned off to the right by a path which skirted the desert and led to two other villages. Several villagers, after greeting the arrivals, said: "May it be blessed," and passed on. Presently others gave the same greeting.

For this was a wedding procession, and the bundle was the bride.

[4] The little party turned away to the left into a narrow road with high walls on either side, which, after several twists and turns, came into the long, wide, village street; a few men were standing or sitting about, and the little shops seemed busy. One or two bundles shuffled silently along and disappeared, as did the new arrivals, down a narrow lane leading from the main street. Here two men were having a noisy quarrel about the water, one saying that it was time it was turned back from his neighbour's field and allowed to flow into his. The neighbour said his field was quite dry, and that everything was dead because it had had no water. The travellers pushed past and made for a door at the end of the lane.

It was a fine-looking door with a big knocker, the sound of which awoke echoes and voices, while a noise of feet hurrying along in loose, heel-less slippers forecasted the opening of the door. The bundle was precipitated among the crowd, and the trousseau box was untied and carried in. This was followed by a great deal of haggling with the donkey-man, who demanded much and got little.

[5] The bundle, amid much shouting and laughing, was taken into a room in a corner of the compound. When the outer covering was taken off, a pretty girl of eleven, with long black hair and dark eyes like bottomless pools, looking very tired and very shy, stood before her new and inquisitive relatives. She wore long white trousers, a very full frill of pink satin, about ten inches deep, around her waist, a white shirt, and a gay pink coat. Her hair was elaborately done, tiny plaits like a network over her head, and twelve other plaits reaching to her waist. She had a muslin square, embroidered with silk and tinsel, folded corner-ways over her head, and pinned under her chin with a little bead pendant. Her eyebrows had been painted so as to meet in a point over her nose; her cheeks and even her forehead were heavily rouged and her hands and feet were dyed with henna. Some large gold earrings peeped out from the sides of her veil. Under her arm, neatly folded in a printed cotton square, was her "prayer *chadar*," the long, circular, muslin drapery worn by Persian women and girls in the house. This was white with a pattern of blue flowers upon it. [5/6] Her mother-in-law covered her with this, and told her to sit down.

Every one was excited but the bride; she neither smiled nor spoke, and was apparently oblivious to all that was going on. Some one offered her a tiny glass of tea, and sweets and nuts were put in front of her. Every item of her appearance and toilet was discussed, and many of them belittled.

Poor little Nosrat! Beneath her immovable exterior her heart was like a caged bird. Added to the regret at parting with her mother and little sister and brothers, there was fear of the big, stern man who had carried her away, dislike of all these people alternately smiling and frowning upon her, and dread of what the future might bring.

## CHAPTER II THE SWEET EATING

NOSRAT dimly remembered the time, about two years before, when she first saw Rahiem Khan. Her mother had been busy making new clothes, and large trays of sweets and clothes had been brought to the house. When Nosrat had asked what all the gay clothes and sweets were for, her mother told her that she was soon going to be married.

"But I don't want to be married, Mother," she said. "I want to stay with you and Father."

"Nonsense," replied her mother, "every girl must be married, and your age is the best of all."

"Why is my age the best?" asked Nosrat.

"Because His Excellency the Prophet (Mohammed) set us the example in marrying a wife who was nine years old, and giving his own daughter to be married when she was nine. Peace be upon him."

"Well, I don't want to be married; let me wait a little longer," she pleaded.

"You shall not be married for a long time," her mother said.

[7] Next day Nosrat went to the public bath in the village with her mother and aunt and three other women. After several hours spent in the hot, steaming atmosphere of the bath, instead of the old but clean garments which Nosrat usually put on after her bath, she was dressed in grand new clothes. When the reason of this came to her she burst into tears and said: "I don't want a husband!"

The women were prepared for this and lied accordingly, stuffing her with sweets to stop her cries and carrying her quickly home. Arrived there, she heard music and strange voices. She was taken into her mother's room and put to sit on the floor in front of a looking-glass; lamps and candles were lighted, and there was a tray of sweets and nuts and a vase of narcissi. Nosrat was covered with a beautiful veil and told she must listen to what the mullah (Mohammedan priest) asked her and say: "Yes."

"But I don't want to be married," she said.

"This is only a 'sweet eating,'" said a sympathetic girl, a wife of a few years. "Don't cry, eat some sweets."

Presently a voice from an adjoining room asked: "Are you ready?"

[8] "Yes, Aga," replied several voices.

The voice then proceeded to tell Nosrat Khanun that Rahiem Khan wished to marry her, that he would pay the usual dowry and give her various things. Was she willing to marry him?

To this Nosrat promptly replied: "I don't want to."

Her mother and the other women were angry, and told her that she must say "Yes." Again the mullah asked the question, and this time, amid a chorus of: "Say 'Yes,' you must say 'Yes,'" she said: "I won't."

A third time all the attractions of the bridegroom were set out before her, and after an overwhelming chorus of "Say 'Yes,'" she falteringly did so. The mullah then asked to have this verified, and said that the marriage was legal and binding. Then followed congratulations, handclapping, and music. Presently it was whispered that the bridegroom wished to come in to see the bride. All the women veiled while a middle-aged, hard-looking man came in and sat on the floor beside the bride, looking at her in the looking-glass for the first time. He neither spoke nor smiled; he merely drank some tea, took a few whiffs from a pipe, and left the room.

This was two years ago, and seemed as a far-away dream to the child. During this time she had lived with her parents, but now she had been brought to her husband's house. What was happening now was reality! Custom forbade her to speak; she dare not cry; she could only accept her lot.

### CHAPTER III IN HER NEW HOME

AFTER the first shock and strangeness of everything, Nosrat settled down to her new life bravely. Her husband was fond of her, and she had jewels and pretty clothes. Her new home was a better-class village house, built round three sides of a square, with a paved court in the middle. In the largest room Rahiem Khan and his brother entertained their friends. Here there were some [8/9] good Persian carpets on the floor, and cushions on which to sit. There were no chairs or tables, but on either side of the room, and at the end, were shelves cut out of the thick wall, on which were showy lamps and vases. On one shelf there were cups and saucers and a teapot, and on another a samovar, or urn for boiling water, and a water pipe; there were also three clocks. Rahiem Khan had a boy who prepared the samovar and the pipe when he had visitors, and this boy went with him on his long caravan journeys. The rest of the work of the house was done by his mother, Sultanat, and her widowed daughter, and her daughters-in-law. This big room had doors opening on to the veranda, also a door at either side opening into other rooms. Sometimes the women would sit in one of these adjoining rooms with a curtain across the doorway, and listen to all that was going on in the men's apartments. Sometimes they not only heard, but were able to peep through and see what was happening. Village people are not so strict about separate parts of the house for the women as are the upper-class town people.

Persians as a rule get up with the sun, which means about 5.30 in the summer and 7.30 in the winter. Time is generally calculated by so many hours after sunrise, or before or after sunset, or before or after noon. For breakfast they have very sweet tea and bread. The midday meal in the summer often consists of bread and grapes, melon, or mast (junket), and in the winter of a kind of sweetmeat made of linseed and honey, though they sometimes eat the food left from the previous night's dinner. During the afternoon very sweet tea is again drunk several times.

The most important meal of the day is the evening one, and this all the family eat together. A coloured cloth is spread on the floor. There is always a very large dish, or tray, of boiled rice, generally snow white, but sometimes a little very strong infusion of saffron is mixed with some of the rice, which makes it a beautiful yellow, and this is sprinkled over the rest of the rice; stews of various kinds, [9/10] made of meat mixed with cucumbers, or eggplant, plums, or pieces of quince are eaten; curry, too, is a favourite dish. Persians eat very quickly and talk very little until they have finished. Like most Eastern people, they sit on the floor.

There is much less work to be done than in English houses, for there is very little furniture. The mattresses and wadded quilts and pillows which form the beds are rolled up in the morning and piled up in a recess. People leave their shoes outside the door of a room, so that dirt is not brought in on to the carpet. Washing is generally done in a stream outside the compound, and only tailors use irons. The women spend a great deal of time in gossiping and smoking and eating arjeel (a mixture of nuts, dried peas, melon seeds, and raisins). Their clothes are very simple to make, and only three women in a thousand can read or write. The complaint that there is nothing to do is much more common than that there is too much to do.

#### CHAPTER IV OTHER GIRL-WIVES

AMONG the women who scrutinized Nosrat on her first arrival was one who seemed to bear her a grudge, and as time went on she took every opportunity of showing it by word and act. It was Nosrat's work to clean and boil the rice for the evening meal; if Sachini ever found a stone in it she made a great fuss, or would grumble that there was not enough butter in it, or too much salt. She envied the bride her pretty clothes, and the attention of her husband.

At first Nosrat could not understand Sachini's attitude, but one day it came upon her in a flash. Yes, this woman was also Rahiem Khan's wife, but she did not please him. The husband often went away on business, and from scraps of conversation Nosrat learned that he had another wife in Shiraz. Poor girl! she scarcely understood, but her mother-in-law had daughters of her own, and tried not to let things be too hard for her.

[11] Except for the fortnightly visits to the public bath—which Nosrat thoroughly enjoyed—she was not allowed to go beyond the small compound of the house. On one side the wall was not very high, and she was able to see what was going on next door. In this house also there was a girl-bride, a few years older than Nosrat. Her name was Mahsumeh. She had a baby boy of six months old, and so was popular in her husband's family. She had come from the town, and her people, who were lax Moslems, had allowed her to go to school for two or three years. She could read fairly well. Strict Moslems do not allow their girls to be educated, nor do they think it right

to let them work for the up-keep of the house. But they think it right to marry them when they are children and keep them in seclusion. They are allowed no share in the life of their country, and only one girl or woman here and there has any idea that she might help her country to a better place in the world.

Mahsumeh sometimes came in to stay with Nosrat when the elder women were out. These were great times, and Nosrat listened eagerly to all that she heard of Mahsumeh's school life and about the wonderful things that were to be seen in the bazaars—silks and muslins of all colours; sweets, biscuits, and fruits; rings, charms, and foreign china and glass. How she would like to go and see it all for herself! Perhaps some day when she [11/12] was older, dressed in a long black garment and her face closely veiled, she might be allowed to go, but that would not be for a long time yet. Usually the days seemed very long.

Her old home was nearly thirty miles away—more than a day's journey. How she longed to see some of her own people again! When she was specially downhearted she would say: "It is kismet"—i.e., "that which has been granted"—and determined to struggle on.

## CHAPTER V A MYSTERIOUS ILLNESS

THAT year the fasting month of Ramadan fell in the autumn. Great preparations were made for the nightly feasts which lasted from sunset to sunrise. During the day all the grown-up people fasted, and now that Nosrat was married it was necessary for her to keep the fast. Rahiem Khan told Sachini that she was to look after Nosrat, as he would be out a good deal. This gave the despised elder wife the chance for which she had been waiting for months.

Late one afternoon, just before the time for the firing of the gun, which indicated that the day's fast might end, Nosrat complained of feeling ill; she had felt ill all day, but had been afraid of disturbing the slumbers of the older women. Every one else was eagerly waiting to smoke a pipe and then drink a glass of tea, and little notice was taken of her. Sachini said: "It's nothing; lie down and go to sleep." The poor child went into the courtyard and sat down. Soon her moans brought her friend Mahsumeh to the low wall dividing the compound. "What is the matter?" she asked.

"I am ill," was the answer.

"Why are you by yourself? Can I help you?" she asked.

Receiving no answer, Mahsumeh quickly put her chadar on, left her own compound, and knocked at the door. Sachini called out: "Who is there?"

"Open; I am Mahsumeh," she said.

[13] "What do you want?" asked the woman, as she slowly unlocked the door.

"Nosrat is ill. Can't you do something for her?"

"For that child, my rival! How can you ask me?"

"Surely you are sorry for her. She is so young."

"I, too, am young, and no one is sorry for me," said Sachini. "You had better do something for her yourself." Mahsumeh was soon by her friend's side. "What is the matter, darling?" she said.

"I don't know, I am very ill."

"What can I do for you? Will you have some tea?"

"I don't want any," she said.

By this time the other women in the house had come to see what was happening. Her fellow-wife was busy elsewhere. Some one broke off a piece of mud from the wall, and, dipping it in water, held it to her nose, thinking it would revive her. Some one else began to fan her, and they all crowded round as closely as possible. Rahiem Khan was out, and perhaps would not come in until morning; he was enjoying himself, as he always did, during the nights of the fasting month.

"What can I do?" said his mother. "My son will be angry because his wife is ill. He will blame me. What evil eye can have rested upon her? Where is Sachini? Sachini, come here. Go to the seller of drugs and bring some medicine at once for the bride."

By this time the girl was in a heavy sleep. She was half dragged, half carried, into the room, and the household went on as usual. After a time Sachini came back and said there was no medicine to be had. During the night of feasting Nosrat slept, and when she awoke she was better. No one troubled to think of the cause of her sudden and strange illness. They all slept on until midday after the night of feasting.

Mahsumeh looked over the wall more than once, and at last saw Nosrat sitting on the veranda. She beckoned and they were soon talking over the wall.

"Are you better this morning?"

"Yes, but my head is giddy, and I am tired."

[14] "You must lie down and go to sleep again. Have you had any tea this morning?"

"No, they are all asleep. I drank some water before the gun was fired."

"My baby's eyes are very bad," said Mahsumeh. "I want to take him to see the English lady doctor in the town, but no one will go with me. They say he will get worse if I take him. My mother-in-law wants me to take him to the mullah and get a prayer to sew on his cap; she says that will be better than medicine."



"When my brother was ill," said Nosrat, "my mother bought a long prayer and sewed it down the back of his coat; but it did no good."

"I am not going to take my baby son to the mullah. He might even make him worse. I heard of one doctor who cut a hole in a girl's arm and put in two blue beads and then sewed it up. The arm got very bad, and at last the mullah said that he could not make it better unless she paid a great deal of money. As she was poor she went to the English hospital, and they made her arm better for love; and now she often goes to see the ladies there, and she loves them too."

"Will they cure anybody who goes to them, or must you know them first?" asked Nosrat.

"I have heard that they are ready to help any one they can; they have many rooms full of beds where those who are very ill can lie."

"I don't know anything about foreign people and I should be afraid to go," said Nosrat.

"My brother went to the foreign school," said Mahsumeh, "and he says they are very clever people and very kind. They always speak the truth. I will tell you more about them another day. I must go in now; my baby is crying. You must go and lie down."

The day was, as usual, long and lonely for Nosrat, but she had a lot of new things to think about. Would she ever see these foreigners? If only she could read like Mahsumeh! When would her mother come to see her?

## CHAPTER VI AT THE MEDICINE HOUSE

[15] A FEW weeks later Nosrat was ill again. This time her husband was at home. He was really fond of his little wife, though of course if she died he could easily get another one. All the same it would be a pity if Nosrat died, and he told his mother to look after her.

Nosrat quickly got worse and worse, and Rahiem Khan said: "I shall ask the English doctor lady to come and see her; perhaps she could give her some good medicine."

"The foreign doctor is an infidel," said his mother. "Far better that a daughter of the Prophet should die by herself with her face to Mecca (Mohammed's birthplace). No foreigner shall come into my house."

"The house is mine," said her son, "and I am going to the English medicine house for some medicine. Take care of the child till I come back."

His mother was surprised and angry, but silent.

Rahiem Khan borrowed a neighbour's donkey, and leaving his village trotted along by a wide stream and then through the Armenian village of Julfa down to the "Living River." Here the river bed is very wide, but in the autumn the river is scarcely more than a narrow stream which he was

able to ride through, and quickly reached the mission hospital on the outskirts of Isfahan. The doctor was very busy with operations, but he saw an Armenian nurse and asked her for medicine.

"What is the matter with the patient?" asked the nurse

"I do not know, but she is very ill. Will you give me some medicine?"

"What illness is it?"

"I don't know, but the patient is very ill; she must have medicine. Will you ask the doctor?"

"I cannot at present. You must bring the patient here, then the doctor will know what treatment will be best." "It is too far, and she cannot walk."

"But you have a donkey, bring her on that."

[16] "It is very difficult! She never goes out," said the man. "Can't you give me some medicine?"

"Not until we know what the illness is."

"Is it possible for the English lady to come and see the patient? I have seen the lady on her two wheels (bicycle) in the town, going to see sick people."

"Yes, she often goes to see patients, but she is too busy to go to your village to-day. Try to bring the sick person here," said the nurse. "The doctor is so clever and so kind."

When Rahiem Khan got to his house, Nosrat was much worse, and his mother was crying.

"Put her chadar on; wrap her up in a blanket. Put your own chadar on, too—I am going to take her to the English medicine house."

"She will die if you take her there," said his mother.

"Be quick," was the answer, "or she will die here."

Nosrat was carried out and deposited, like a real bundle this time, on the donkey, her mother-in-law sitting behind to hold her on. The three miles seemed very long, but at last they reached the hospital.

The doctor looked at Nosrat and asked a few questions, and then said: "She has been poisoned!"

Rahiem Khan looked very angry, and his mother was much afraid. Nosrat was past answering any questions. She was at once put into a bed in a comfortable little room. [16/17] Rahiem Khan was told to go home, and to come again in the morning.

When Nosrat came to herself she could not tell what had happened. She was afraid of falling from the high bed, and so lay very still. Presently a nurse came in, and said cheerily: "You are much better this morning?"

"Thanks be to God," said Nosrat. "Where am I?"

"You are in the medicine house. I hope you will be very happy here and soon get well."

"But my husband and my mother-in-law will be very angry; they don't like the foreigners. Did Mahsumeh bring me here? Oh, they will beat me, and perhaps I shall be divorced." Here poor Nosrat burst out crying.

"Your husband and his mother brought you here," said the nurse. "Just take this medicine, and then go to sleep again, and in half an hour I will bring you some milk." Comforted, Nosrat closed her eyes.

## CHAPTER VII NOSRAT AND MAHSUMEH

BOTH mother and son thought deeply about the poison, he on his way home, and she as she sat outside Nosrat's room in case she was wanted. He was going to his house to make a row about it, and she was devising a plan by which she thought she could discover the offender. Her plan was to get half as many eggs as there were people in the house, and for each person to put his or her mark on one side of an egg with charcoal. After this, she planned to put all the eggs, large end down, in a brazier of hot charcoal, and the mark which had a crack through it first would be the offender's. Yes, she would do this as soon as ever she got home. Meanwhile, what a strange place she was in! There were several small rooms with one bed in each, and four large rooms with many beds. Who could all the people be who were in these beds? Infidels (people who did not believe in Mohammed), she supposed. She noticed that [17/18] the people who came out of the big rooms, to fetch food and water for the sick people, were many of them village women, just like herself. How comfortable and happy all the patients looked, even though they were so ill, and how wonderful it was that they did not fall off those high beds! And the English ladies looked kind, and spoke Persian.

When the doctor came round she said that Nosrat was much better, but that she must stay there until Monday morning. It was then Friday. The doctor talked to the mother-in-law about the poison, and said how wicked it was, and that it would not be safe for the girl to go back unless it could be found out who had done it.

At that moment Rahiem Khan appeared, saying: "I have found out that bad woman. Sachini has tried to kill her rival, so I have divorced her, and sent her away. I was so angry, I thought at first that I would kill her, but she will perhaps suffer more if she lives."

The following Tuesday, Mahsumeh and Nosrat were having another talk over the wall. This time the younger girl had much to tell.

"They were all so kind to me, and no one said anything against me because I was a Moslem. On Sunday afternoon there was a majlis (meeting) in one of the big rooms, and I was well enough to go. A great many people were too ill to walk, so they all stayed in their beds, and lots of other women and girls came in and sat on the beds and on carpets on the floor. Then five of the nurses came in, and some of the girls from the school which is next door, and they all sang when the English teacher-lady played the organ. Then the doctor-lady came and said some prayers and read from a book, not our Koran, but they were very good words. Then she told a story about His Excellency, Jesus, and how He healed the daughter of a stranger because she came and asked Him to help her. Then the doctor-lady said a great deal more, but I was tired and her tongue was strange to me. When I came away the nurse said I could go again any Sunday I liked to the majlis in the prayer-house. I wish my husband would let me go."

[19] "When Abbas Ali is a big boy I shall send him to the mission school. His father says he may go, because he sees how much better my brother is than boys who go to Persian schools. He says, too, that I may take Abbas Ali to the medicine house to-day and get some medicine for his eyes. Rahiem Khan has told him that it is quite safe for me to go. I wonder why these English people are so kind to us? They ask rich people to pay, but if you are poor they do everything for love. Moslems don't do that."

"I know very little about it," said Nosrat. "But I heard some one say when I was in the medicine house that the religion of these people has Jesus in it and ours hasn't, and that makes all the difference."

Mahsumeh took her baby boy, and the doctor said she must stay in the hospital with him while his eyes were treated. She was glad to stay because it gave her a chance of learning about the religion which "has Jesus in it." Ten days was not a very long time in which to learn, but her "eyes were enlightened," and a great hope filled her heart. When she came back to her village with her baby boy she brought a thin red book, which she hid away carefully in her green velvet-covered wedding-trunk.

Some day the story may be written of this thin red book and the change it brought about in the lives of Mahsumeh and Nosrat.

#### A DIAMOND PUZZLE

(The answer is a large town in Persia, where the Church Missionary Society has a hospital and a school for boys.)

1. A vowel. 2. An animal. 3. A weapon. 4. A town in Persia. 5. One of the Minor Prophets. 6. Not good. 7. A consonant.

#### DOUBLE ACROSTIC (1)

(My initials will give you the name of the place where the first C.M.S. missionaries worked in Persia. My finals form the title given to the rulers of Persia.)

1. God's ancient people. 2. A king of Judah. 3. A girl's name. 4. Belief. 5. A town in Asia Minor visited by St. Paul.

(For answers see p. 61.)

**A PUZZLE STORY (1)**  
**A BRAVE WOMAN**  
**WHAT WAS HER NAME?**

[20] THE first time she was seen by a European was in the mission dispensary at Julfa. She came with her aunt, who was ill. She hated coming, but the foreigners' medicine was much better than that prescribed by the Persian doctors. She did her best, without success, to get the medicine before prayer time, so as to avoid hearing the name of Jesus, for she was an earnest Mohammedan. But she had to wait for the medicine, and gradually the Gospel of love touched her heart, and in spite of her resolve she listened. After her aunt's recovery, she even made excuses to come back and hear more!

The following year (1894) she came for treatment herself. Though quite young she was married; her husband had been unkind to her, and his cruelty had made her ill; and because she was ill he had divorced her, for often a Mohammedan will not trouble about a sick wife. On these visits she was eager to hear more of Christ and His love. She kept this longing a secret from the other patients, until on Good Friday morning at the Bible lesson she quietly but suddenly said that she would like Christ to be her Saviour.

What a storm arose! Every patient looked at her in pious horror, and many abused her. So angry were they that she had to leave the dispensary at once. When her father heard of it he beat her cruelly. How dare any of his family even think of joining the Christians?

But she seemed determined to learn more. The missionaries warned her that if she became a Christian she would have to suffer persecution, but she replied that she was not afraid, and was willing to be killed if necessary, and on Good Friday, 1895, she with her baby boy was baptized. She was full of joy, and could not keep to herself the good news of a Saviour's love, and she began to talk of Christ Jesus to her family and neighbours.

The news that she was a Christian began to spread. In the streets she was pelted with mud and stones, hooted at, and called infidel, Nazarene, and Christian dog. One Saturday at the public bath a woman noticed that she was wearing no Mohammedan charm, and charged her with being a Christian. At first she was afraid to reply, then answered "Yes." At once she was cast out, and the place declared defiled by her. She was followed down the street by an angry mob and beaten with a chain used for whipping donkeys. The following Sunday her mother warned her that her enemies were watching her, but she bravely said: "It does not matter if they kill me, but I hope they will not kill my baby." No harm came to her that day, but the following night she was cruelly beaten with a chain by her uncle, and much bruised and cut; but she was not the least daunted.

One night a mob surrounded the house, threatening to take her life. Her brother-in-law got her and the baby over the village wall into the desert, and brought her to the mission house. The young mother was unnerved, but even in her distress kept on repeating: 'I have not denied Christ; I want to live and die a Christian.' A day or two later her mother and a friend came to persuade her to renounce Christianity. When she refused, her mother turned against her and, [20/21] after using bitter language, left her without the usual salutations and blessings—which hurt sorely.

The missionaries learnt that representatives had been to Isfahan for an order to have the Christian convert given up to them, and, failing to obtain it, had been advised by the mullah (Mohammedan priest) to rouse the villagers and return en masse. When the trumpets were heard, accompanied by shouts of "For Ali and God's sake!" the young mother asked:

"Are they after me?"

"Yes. Are you afraid?"

"No," she replied, "if you asked me to go again now to be baptized I am ready. I love Jesus more to-day than I did then."

The mob was at the doors, bent on murder. But when the last hour seemed to have come, God answered the missionaries' prayers by putting it into the heart of the Prince Governor to send an order that the woman and her boy were to be given up to him. He promised that they should be protected. At first she refused to go. "Let me be killed here" she said. But that did not seem right. The missionaries told her that they believed that the Prince Governor's order was God's answer to their prayer; she took her baby boy in her arms and went out calmly into the courtyard, where the Persian officials were waiting for her.

The woman became a servant in the Prince Governor's house. For two years she was not allowed to see any missionary, or to write to them, or they to her. Once a serving-maid who came to the mission dispensary was asked if the prisoner-maid was still a Christian. She replied that she did not know: they were forbidden to talk with her about religion; but she added: "\_\_\_\_\_ is not a Mohammedan; she is not one of us, for she does not lie, and we all do."

After some years the woman was released, and able to live a quiet and obscure life as a Christian. Who was she?

(See Answer 1 on page 61.)

### **HOW OIL COMES TO US BY THE Y.P.U. "OWN MISSIONARY" IN PERSIA**

[22] THE great round world on which we live is like a huge storehouse full of all sorts of precious things. Many of the things which we use every day have had to be sought for and dug out of the ground. If you were to write down a list of all the things you see or use which have been brought up out of the ground, you would be surprised what a long one it would be. It would

include coal, gold, silver, oil, salt, diamonds, etc. Like everything else which is worth having, these things take a great deal of time and trouble to find.

Persia is very rich in oil, and a lot of the oil used in England comes from that country. You must not think that oil necessarily comes from a beautiful district. Often the most precious things are not attractive on the surface. One place in Persia where oil is found is nicknamed "the open sore of the world," because it is such an ugly place and the smell of the oil is so bad. Generally there are few trees near the oil-fields, and no grass.

Now the oil you use in your lamps at home may have come from Persia, but it did not come out of the ground exactly as you see it. Ask your father, or a friend who has a motor-car, to show you the thick black oil which he uses for his car, and you will see what the oil looks like as it comes out of the ground. It looks, but does not taste, rather like black treacle!

It takes a very clever man, whom we call a geologist, to know whether oil will be found beneath the soil. It is generally a long way down, sometimes a mile under the surface of the ground, though in Persia the oil is usually not more than half a mile down. Imagine a well half a mile deep!

There are some rocks which are just like sponges, and away down in the heart of the earth the oil soaks through these rocks. At last it comes to some rock which won't [22/23] soak it up; this rock is called a "cap." The oil gradually collects until there is something like a huge lake of oil under the ground. Then when the engineer comes along he cuts through the earth, and the oil rushes up through the hole which is made.

Of course, it is not an easy thing to make a hole half a mile deep into the ground. You would find before you got very far, as you do when you are digging in the sand on the seashore, that the sides of the hole are always falling in; and so the well is made by sinking a great long pipe into the ground, and as they dig out the earth from the inside of the pipe, it sinks lower and lower until it disappears right into the ground; then they fit on another length of pipe, until at last they get down far enough to reach the oil. You can imagine how difficult this is, and what a lot of tools are needed to be able to work a way through the inside of these pipes. It takes months, and sometimes years, to finish one well. But at last their work is rewarded: the oil-field is reached. The oil, glad to be free again, rushes up the pipe at a great rate. The engineer has to use great caution, for unless he is very careful, the oil will burst right up into the air. Once in America the oil shot up out of a well 600 feet into the air (higher than St. Paul's), and it was a long time before they could control it.

When a well is finished the oil is led away in pipes down to huge tanks, where it is stored until wanted. In Persia there is a great pipe over 100 miles long, which leads the oil from the wells to the tanks. This pipe would reach farther than from London to Bath.

It has been found that this thick, black oil is a mixture of all kinds of things, and so before exporting, the different substances are separated one from another. Some of the most important of these are petrol, paraffin, and benzine, and when all the liquids have been collected there is

left a kind of wax which is also very useful. These various things are filled into tins, and sent off to England and elsewhere for the benefit of you and others too.

During the war, a great deal of Persian oil was used by our Navy—the ships which protected our homeland and helped to win the war. They could not have got on without it. And so you see that we have got from Persia not only what helps to make our homes comfortable and bright, and speeds up our road transport, but precious oil which was of essential use for the protection of our country. We ought to be grateful to Persia, and I want you to think of the people who live there and who work to get this oil for us. Nothing is at present being done to teach the oil-field workers about Jesus Christ, Who loves them just as much as He does you and me. Nothing is done to make their lives bright and happy. Do not forget them when you use the oil which they have sent you. Would you not like to thank them by helping to make their lives happier?

W. J. THOMPSON.

**PERSIAN BOYS AT PLAY AND AT WORK**  
**BY THE REV. W. HOLMES WALKER**

"MUCH work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." So runs the proverb, with the result that some British boys go in for "much play and no work," so anxious are they to escape dullness. The proverb, however, is not always true, for the Persian boy cannot be said to be altogether dull, though he has small idea of play.

We have to remember that the Persian is sedate and dignified; he thinks that it is strange to run if walking will do, and cannot understand the hurry of the European. Then the heat of Persia does not conduce to speed; it is easier to be quiet and restful, so games seem to be out of place. Another thing is that the Persian is seldom joyful; his religion does not help him in that way, whereas [25/26] the Christian, if he truly believes in Christ Jesus, cannot help being joyful; games form a part of his happiness and help him to express it.

The playtimes of Persian boys are rare. At special seasons, just as English children bring out their spinning-tops or skipping-ropes, so the Persian boys, on new year's day and on what we should call saints' days, take out their teas into the fields and practise their few games. Fields, I say—but absolutely bare of grass, as bare as Mother Hubbard's cupboard was of bones, are the desert places by the river which they choose. One game they have is played with a small piece of stick and a larger one. The striker holds the cudgel, and the small stick is thrown towards him, which he hits as far as he can. He is allowed three attempts, and if successful the thrower must see how few strides he can take to the stick, and the number counts to the striker. A similar game is played with a hard ball made of rags. Neither game is particularly entertaining. One thing that strikes you is that a girl is never seen at play. She will dress up in her coloured robes and accompany her mother to the riverside, and help to make the tea, but she would be surprised if invited to play.

In the mission schools we try to teach the Persian boys and girls to play. The swing in the girls' playground is a great favourite. Some of the boys become quite clever at football, though they do not think much of cricket. At first it was very amusing to see them insisting on playing football



in their long coats, which got in their way dreadfully; but gradually off came coats, or they were tucked into the belts, and trouser bottoms were turned up. Our first game had to be played with closed gates, and the sandy field had high walls all around; so the players could not be overlooked and thus lose their self-respect!

The Persian boy at work is an interesting study. At an early age these little men will be in the fields, ploughing, irrigating, and making the channels for the water-streams to flow all over their masters' gardens. [26/27] You will see them assisting in the carpenters' shops, or bread shops, and in other places. They look quite happy, and they learn all the tricks of the trades—how to buy and sell, and to lie at all times about prices. You will see boys—and girls, too—making carpets, very deftly, using their little fingers; and some sad sights, too, described elsewhere (p. 41), of crippled girls at their carpet work. But you must not think that all carpet-making is sad. You should hear the workers at the out-of-door looms in the villages sing at their work sometimes!

[\* The following appears alongside a small illustration on this page: Here is a Persian boy with his Mohammedan master. He is expected to learn by heart long portions of the Koran, the holy book of the Mohammedans. The Government schools have added English to the subjects they teach, and, thinking that the Stuart Memorial College at Isfahan (see page 39) would be sure to have the best English reading-books, they bought some. Several of the lessons are on the life of Jesus, so boys in a Mohammedan school are reading of Christ. That's something to be glad about, isn't it? Here is one result. Two Government-school boys bought a Bible so that they might read more of the Jesus of Whom they had learnt something in their reading-books. Then they went to a missionary and asked to be taught more of Him. After a time they were baptized, and one of them has been to India for further training, and hopes soon to be a master and teach in a mission school in his own land.]

I would like to tell you of a small boy and his brother who came to do a job for me once. He was quite a little chap, yet no mean assistant to his slightly elder brother. They had come as pan-whiteners. The pans of a kitchen are made of solid copper, which you buy by weight, [27/28] and before these can be used for cooking they need to be whitened with tin—not the tin you know as tin, which is really iron sheeting with a thick surface of tin over it, but a thin surface of pure tin; a rather expensive article, but by no means an unnecessary luxury. After a short time of regular use these tin-whitened copper vessels begin to show the copper through at the bottom and need replating. Now, the Persian cooks do not care for their masters or mistresses pottering about their kitchens. However, it sometimes happens that the happy-go-lucky cook-boy thinks that your inside is as strong as his own, and that you can digest anything, even soup made in a copper saucepan; but you find you cannot, and therefore you go occasionally and inspect the pans.

Hence the arrival of the two boys who were kicking their heels in the yard. I heard this kicking and made inquiries, and found that the whitening was to be done on the spot. The old tin surface was deftly rubbed off with sand and they prepared to put on the new. They needed a fire, so proceeded to make one (think of all the trouble workmen give in your house when they want to heat their tools or material). They dug a hole in the yard and made a little tunnel. At one end of the tunnel they placed a piece of lighted charcoal, which they had first made to glow by swinging it in an iron cage in the air; at the other end large impromptu bellows made of skin were adjusted,

and by continually adding bits of charcoal they soon had quite a respectable fire. The pans were quickly heated and a fine tin surface was put on to each. The larger pans were smoothed out with their feet. (The Persian is very clever with his feet—he stamps the dates into the crates with his feet; in brick-making he mixes the chopped straw into the mud with his feet.)

The pan-whiteners were satisfied when they could see their faces clearly in each pan. Then came the bargaining as to the price to be paid, which took longer than you would think, but at length the young workmen packed up and departed.

Now the religion of these young Mohammedans is very much like the copper vessels. It works for a while and then fails, with evil results. It has much good in its composition, but has no power to help a man in his daily life, and keep him from sin. If you believe that your religion can help them more than their own, and that the Lord Jesus is more help in daily life, both in work and play, than Mohammed, then do your best to send them the good news and give them a place in your prayers.

### **PERSIAN HISTORY IN A NUTSHELL**

THE Persian Empire was founded about 600 B.C. The legends of the Persians go back to the days of Abraham.

Some of the ruins in Persia date back to Cyrus and Darius. The supposed tomb of the former bears an inscription in three languages: "I am Cyrus the King, the Achaemenian."

At Persepolis there are some of the most interesting ruins in the world, the inscriptions proving them to be the remnants of the once splendid palaces of Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes.

The prominent religion of Persia in primeval days was the faith held by the Zoroastrians (fire-worshippers) or Parsis, supposed to have been taught by Zoroaster, one of the world's great teachers. Probably the three wise men were some of his followers (St. Matt. ii. 1). (For more about the Parsis see p. 58.)

On the Day of Pentecost there were present in Jerusalem Parthians and Medes and Elamites and dwellers in Mesopotamia (Acts ii). It is more than probable that some of these people carried the Gospel into Persia.

Tradition says that Thaddaeus and Simon the Canaanite preached and taught in Western Persia.

Christianity spread rapidly in Persia in the second century.

In the third century a terrible massacre of Christians took place. It is computed that in the course of thirty-five years 16,000 Christians were put to death.

At the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325), one of the bishops was "Johannes, Metropolitan of Persia and the Great India."

[30] In A.D. 638 the Arabs invaded Persia, and after a struggle of ten years succeeded in establishing themselves in the country.

The Arabs were Mohammedans. They believed in one supreme God, but followed the teaching of the prophet Mohammed, who was born in Arabia in A.D. 610. They considered Mohammed to be greater than Jesus Christ, Whom they despised.

The Persian Christians were persecuted by the Mohammedans, and the Christian Church was overwhelmed and swept away.

The Persian Christians did not possess the Word of God in their own language. In public worship the Scriptures were read in Syriac and then explained by the clergyman in the language of the people.

For centuries after the Mohammedan conquest of the land nothing was done to try to win Persia for Christ.

Shah Abbas the Great, who was ruler of Persia at the time that Queen Elizabeth was on the throne of England, brought several thousand families of Armenian Christians to Persia and settled them at Julfa, a suburb of Isfahan. The Armenians were noted for their trading capacity and for their skill in arts and crafts, and the Shah wanted them to help to improve Persian industries. But the Armenians have always been oppressed.

Henry Martyn, chaplain in India, who had been senior wrangler at Cambridge, went to Persia in 1811, and was able to translate the New Testament and the Psalms before he died in the following year at the age of thirty-one.

A copy of the first complete Persian Bible was presented to the then Shah on his accession to the throne in 1848.

In 1869 the Rev. R. Bruce (afterwards the Rev. Canon Bruce, D.D.), who had been a C.M.S. missionary among the Mohammedans in India, went to Persia, and lived and worked at Julfa, the Armenian suburb of Isfahan.

In 1870 the first Mohammedan men won by the efforts of C.M.S. workers were baptized; the first woman convert from Mohammedanism was baptized twenty-five years later.

As in all Mohammedan lands, the laws are against Christianity. In accordance with the teaching of the Koran, the statute book lays down that for a Mohammedan to become a Christian is punishable by death.

Yet there are now 275 Christian converts. Hundreds of Mohammedans in Persia are known to be reading the Bible. Perhaps the stories in "Persian Pie" will show the cause of this.

## INVITATIONS

**BY THE RIGHT REV. J. H. LINTON,  
BISHOP IN PERSIA**

[31] A BRITISH doctor was travelling up through Persia to Isfahan. When near Shiraz a messenger arrived with a letter for him. The letter was from Soulat ud Douleh, the chief of the Kashgais, who said that he and many of his people needed medical treatment, and asked whether Dr. Carr would kindly break his journey and spend a few weeks among the tribes-people. But the doctor had urgent work waiting for him at Isfahan, so he was obliged to say No.

It was very tantalizing. There were many rumours as to the wonders of the Kashgais. They live in tents. In summer their 30,000 tents are pitched upon the hills, and in winter they move down to the plains. Every man Kashgai carries a rifle, and many of them are crack shots. No one dares to venture on the Kashgai hills without the permission of the chief. Do not imagine a great band of armed ruffians! The Kashgais have very old customs and manners of which they are proud. But the chief keeps up to date; he takes in the "Times of India," and has it translated and read to him, and he passes on points of interest to his under-chiefs, and instructs them to tell the people. He lives in royal style, offering his guests tea in tiny glasses held in solid gold mounts and handed round on gold trays; but he is a very democratic chief for all that. The war was in full swing at the time of which we write, and in spite of bribes Chief Soulat had declined to join hands against the British.

Altogether it was interesting to have had an invitation from the chief of such a tribe, and very annoying to have to say No, especially to a doctor-missionary who would have loved to have helped the Kashgais with his medical skill, and above all to tell them of Christ Jesus their Saviour. [31/32] It is always hard for a missionary to refuse any request, but he explained as well as he could, and sent a message that if the chief still wanted him when the tribe had reached their summer quarters, he would either go himself or send another doctor.

Months passed by and nothing more was heard. Then one morning, early in August, a few men and women arrived at the hospital in Isfahan. Their speech showed that they were not pure Persians. The women did not cover up their faces as the townswomen do. The men wore massive "cummerbunds" and low hats of a peculiar shape, which marked them out as Kashgais. They were a splendid lot of fellows, with their fine, easy swing and their commanding presence. They were followed by a letter from the chief asking Dr. Carr to go up to the tribe, and offering to provide mules, tents, etc., for him and his assistants, and generous payment for all the medical work. It was not easy to get away from the hospital, but Dr. Carr of course kept his promise and made preparations to go, and he asked me to go with him so that every opportunity might be taken of teaching the Gospel.

Most of the way we rode on the mules which the chief sent for us, and the first day over the mountains we covered seven and a half "farsakhs," each farsakh being 12,000 paces. We were travelling just seven hours and a half, and got to Panjegan tired and ready for a good meal. A lamb was killed and we had most delicious "kabobs." (It is sometimes thought that Abraham must have set very tough meat before the angels when he killed a calf and roasted it straightway; but he who tastes Kashgai "kabobs" will hesitate ere he makes that charge!)

Next morning we were off before daybreak. Up and down mountains we went, sometimes very steep; there was no sign of a road anywhere, nothing but mule-tracks. Up every valley were to be seen the black goat-hair tents of the tribes-people. Herds of cattle and flocks of sheep and goats roamed all over the countryside. [32/33] At last, after riding nine more farsakhs, we came to the chiefs encampment at Nokhudan, a place which means "peas." Once it really was a great centre for pea-growing, but now there are no peas at all to be seen. It was dark when we arrived, and very welcome was the sight of the black tents and the fires blazing outside them, for, though it was August, the mountain air was distinctly cold at night.

We found a magnificent white tent ready for us, complete with sitting-room, dining-room, and bedroom, and a carpet on the ground. Soon after our arrival the chief came in to see us and had a long chat. Then followed a welcome meal of partridges, rice, sweetmeats, and tea. After this we were glad to get to bed, but not until Dr. Carr had attended to a very urgent case.

[\* The following appears beneath an illustration on the adjoining page: An Encampment of Tribes people. The tent is made of goat's-hair cloth. On the tripod hangs a goat skin full of milk, which is swung to and fro to churn the milk into butter. There are several tribes of wandering people besides the Kashgais of whom Bishop Linton writes. One of the largest are the Bakhtiaris. The Bakhtiaris as well as the Kashgais have asked and are waiting for Christian teachers.]

[34] In the morning we were sent for to go and call upon the chief, who is quite a young man. When we entered the tent we found him awaiting us. He was dressed in a flowing white robe and held a long staff in his hand. The floor of his tent was covered with priceless Persian carpets made by the women of the tribe. Tea was brought to us in glasses on the gold mounts and trays of which we had heard; the spoons, too, and sugar-basins were of gold. It was the chief's eyes which were causing him trouble, and soon after our arrival, of course, Dr. Carr examined them; he found that a small operation would be necessary on one of them.

The doctor had crowds of patients. Early in the morning about daybreak we heard the people beginning to gather around our tent. We began work about seven o'clock and went on, sometimes with hardly time to eat, till late at night. The doctor saw the sick people in a private part of the tent, and naturally there were nearly always a number of them waiting for their turn to go in. So day by day I sat among the patients and told them "the old, old story of Jesus and His love." It was the very first time in their lives that they had ever heard it! Dr. Carr preached too, not so much by what he said as by what he did; and I think that perhaps the suffering people understood his sermon best of all. For his tender work of healing was a sort of acted parable of the wonderful love of God.

For fifteen days we stayed among the Kashgais, preaching the Gospel and healing the sick. Sometimes when we were so tired with talking that we stopped, they said: "Please do not stop, we want to hear more." One or two came to the tent day after day for more regular teaching. We took up a stock of Bibles and gospel portions sufficient to last, as we thought, for the whole time, but they were all sold out on the fourth day!

The chief has three sons, jolly fellows full of fun and frolic. The eldest, though still quite a schoolboy, is a crack shot with his rifle and shot-gun. [34/35] Several times he sent us presents

of partridges for dinner. One day the chief asked me to examine this boy in English, for he was having English lessons from a Persian Mohammedan tutor. So I handed him a copy of St. Mark's Gospel in English, and, pointing to the part about Christ blessing the children, told him to translate these verses to his father. "Tell me," said the chief when the reading was done, "what story is that? It is certainly very beautiful." Neither father nor son had ever heard it before.

Towards the end of our visit the day came for operating on the chief's eye. This was done in the chief's tent, and the three boys were present to watch what the doctor did. Dr. Carr explained to the onlookers that it was always our custom to ask God's help and blessing. So a prayer was said. This seemed to make a great impression on the boys' minds, for they went off afterwards and told their tutor all that the English doctor had done, and especially about the prayer.

Again the chief sent us an invitation to come to his palace tent. Sitting around him were some of his most trusted under-chiefs. There were two important matters which he wanted to talk over with us. One of them was about the spread of consumption in his tribe. What was he to do? Dr. Carr explained to him what caused consumption, how it could be detected at an early stage, and also what steps to take both for its prevention and its cure. The chief was much interested, and afterwards told his under-chiefs, and they in turn told the people under them.

[37] "But, Doctor Sahib," the chief said, "there is another matter that I also want to talk about. In this tribe are 30,000 tents, every one of them numbered and registered. There are, on an average, six or seven people in each tent. We reckon that there must be altogether 200,000 people in our tribe. But we have no doctor and no teacher and no schools for them. Now, Doctor Sahib, if you will send us a doctor I will build him a hospital down where we live in the winter, and I'll put into it just whatever you order—beds, medicines, and all the rest—and I'll give him a camp hospital to use when we are travelling about. And if you will send me a teacher I'll build him a school in our winter quarters. I'll get everything you say is necessary for it—desks, books, maps, and so on—and I'll give him a camp school for the time we are moving to our summer quarters. I make only one condition. It is this: Whoever you send must be one of yourselves—that is, a Christian."

"But you know, Chief," we said to him, "if we came up here it would not be merely to heal the sick and to teach English; we should come to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

The chief turned to the doctor and said: "Doctor Sahib, you may preach the Gospel as you will. I give you a free hand."

With the war on we could not promise anything. But now what is to be our answer? The Kashgais are still waiting. How long are we going to keep them waiting?

#### A RIDDLE-ME-REE

My first is in treacle, but not in rice;  
My second's in shed, but not in mice;  
My third is in holidays, as well as in school;

While my fourth's not in donkey, but 'tis in mule!  
My fifth is in carpets, but not in Kerman;  
While my sixth's in both school and Isfahan;  
My seventh is in poultice, but not in pill;  
My last is in mountain, but not in hill;  
My whole is the name of a man well known  
In Persia and Mesopot, as well as at home.  
(For answer see p. 61).

### THE MAN AND THE CHILD

[38] THIS Persian man (small drawing on facing page) is a poppy grower. He grows poppies because of the opium which is found in the seed-pods when the handsome petals have fallen. Opium is a dangerous drug which is smoked by people in Persia and in some other lands. At first, smokers find it pleasant and it makes them sleep, but very soon the drug gets such a hold upon them that they are constantly raving for it. If they give way to the longing they become ill and useless, and in time they die from the effects of the drug.

Why do the Persians grow such a fatal drug? Well, there is money in it, and the typical Persian does not understand that there is any wrong in ruining his neighbour when he can make something for himself. Many carpet-factory masters see no shame in keeping young girls working for such long hours that they become so crippled that they cannot walk (see page 42). Besides, are they not girls, and of what account are the women and girls except to be useful to the lords of creation! There is no harm in cheating—it is just clever, a Persian would tell you; and as for stealing—well, that's good sport, the other man must look out for himself! You see, a Mohammedan does not know what it is to play a straight game; he knows very little of what we call "honour" and "chivalry."

Are the boys, like the little fellow on the opposite page, [38/39] going to grow up like most of the Persian men? The answer lies largely with you and with me. There is one school in South Persia where the pupils are taught that cheating, robbing, and profiteering are dishonourable and wrong in the sight of the holy God Who sent His Son Jesus Christ to suffer and to die for sinful men. This teaching is contrary to what the boys' fathers have always believed, and they do not want their boys to become Christians, but they gladly send them to the Stuart Memorial College because it is a good school, and the boys get a good education. What effect has the teaching on the boys? Let me tell you a story. A class had had a lesson on the parable of the Good Samaritan, and it made them think: "What does this mean to me? how does it work?" It was winter, and snow was heavy on the ground. Down one of the streets, almost buried in snow, there lived a poor widow with three sick children, and little or no food or firing. The boys told the widow that they would give her some food if she would come to the school at a certain time. She did not believe them—whoever heard of a boy giving anything to a poor woman! She felt that there must be some catch in it; but her need was desperate, so she went on the chance, and to her joy and surprise she was given food to take home. The boys told her to come again at the same time next day. She came, and day after day those schoolboys took it in turn to give up their dinners for the widow and her children, and so they helped her through the severe weather. Those boys are

growing up. Their ideas are changing, and they will want to make their Persia a better Persia. They are learning the Christian's idea of "playing the game."

[40] Do you see where our answer comes in? You will notice that we said: "There is one school." Of course, there are hundreds of towns in Persia and many thousands of boys miles and miles away from Isfahan, and those boys haven't a chance at present. But I believe that we can help the young ones before they grow too old to be schoolboys—if we begin at once. What do you think of this scheme? Some of the boys in the one school I mentioned—the Stuart Memorial College at Isfahan—are now Christians. Let us ask God that many more of them may become Christians, and then that the head master may be able to train them to be schoolmasters. Just think! Suppose that school could send out fifty young Christian school teachers to different towns, what a difference it would soon make to Persia—fifty places where the boys would know that it is dishonourable to cheat, bribe, lie, and steal, to be cruel to animals, and thoughtless and unkind to girls and women!

Some of you know the head of that, as yet, one Christian boys' school in South Persia—the Rev. W. J. Thompson, the "own missionary" of the Young People's Union. He looks to boys and girls at home for other help as well as prayer and interest. A missionary needs money. Of course the boys pay school fees; but when a boy becomes a Christian the father is not pleased; he considers it a disgrace to a Mohammedan family, so he is not inclined to pay any more money for him to stay at a Christian school; and if he does not stay at school he can not be trained to become a teacher! So Mr. Thompson wants us to help him to provide some £10-a-year scholarships.

When we are working to earn money, and saving money towards a scholarship, do not think only of the one boy. Imagine a whole school of boys whom we hope he will one day teach, and we shall have a vision of a better Persia through God's blessing on our prayer and work.

### **A MERRY CHRISTMAS**

"COME along, you youngsters; it won't be tea-time for another half-hour yet. Don't rampage and make your mother's head ache. Come Jack, Doris, Cecil, and Kate, and my own G.O.C."; and as Colonel Symes spoke he seized a delightful young man of five, whose name was Ted, and tossed him up on to his shoulder. Christmas holidays were in full swing at "The Oaks," and the short days and long evenings were full of every sort of fun, and how it added to the joy of it all to have Daddy home again.

"My Daddy's a diplomat," young Cecil had proudly explained to his schoolfellows, "and he's gone to Persia on a Government mission." He didn't know what a Government mission was, but he felt sure that his father could do it better than anyone else.

Colonel Symes had been in Persia eighteen months, and had reached home just a week before Christmas. On this particular afternoon he and Mrs. Symes and all the children had been for a glorious climb up The Rack, a fine hill which rose about a mile from their house, for the weather was bright and frosty, and the country lanes dry and clean. How cheerfully the library fire roared and crackled, as they all drew up round it! Coal shortage did not trouble the Symes family. They had enough logs stored to last them "a century nearly," Jack, the eldest, used to say.



"Daddy," said Doris, as she sat on a hassock at her father's feet with her hands clasped round her knees, "did you have any Christmas parties when you were in Persia last year?"

"Yes, several, and the one I liked best was attended by a good many grown-ups (none of them very old though) and several little girls, just your age, and younger." (Doris was nine.)

"Were they all girls? Didn't the boys get invited?" asked Cecil.

[42] "Yes, there were one or two boys, but not many boys in Persia qualify for that sort of party."

"Qualify!" exclaimed Jack, who was lying on the rug. "What sort of a party was it then?"

"It was a party for patients and old patients of the C.M.S. hospital. The little girls were all cripples, for they were carpet-weavers from famous old Kerman."

"Are all the crippled girls taught carpet-weaving because they can't do anything else?"

"No, they have become cripples through doing the weaving."

"How dreadful! But how can weaving cripple any one? They don't do it with their feet, do they?"

"If Kate will fetch me that new drawing block of hers and a pencil, I will show you how they do it."

Kate, a slim girl of twelve, with long fair curls that never got untidy in the wind, jumped up.

"Be quick!" called the others after her, for the Colonel's lightning pencil sketches were a constant delight to his children. Peter the black cat, who was snoozing by Jack, rose, drew his four feet together, arched his back, stiffened his tail and yawned. Ted, sitting on his father's knee, said: "Come up here, puss"; but puss took no notice.

"Here you are, Dad," said Kate, bringing the block; "and here's a lovely soft pencil."

"Now then," began the Colonel, "those beautiful Persian carpets, like your Uncle Henry has in his house, are all made by hand. First of all—here's the workshop where they are made. The door is so low that none of you but Ted could go in upright. Here, look, is a round hole in the roof, for this workshop is only a big hut, with a dome-shaped roof. This soft pencil shades in the dark and leaves the light AI."

"But where are the windows?" asked Cecil.

"There are no windows."

"What light do they weave by? Oil?" asked Jack. They have no light except what comes from the hole in the roof and the little low door.

[43] "But how do they see? I thought hand weaving was rather close work."

"So it is; there is no finer work done than these Persian carpets, and in doing it in poor light the little weavers sacrifice their eyes. If a visitor goes in and they stop work for a moment they are always seen to rub their eyes. That's the workshop, or factory, then—Sketch I.

"Now for Sketch II"; and the Colonel detached the sketch from the block and began on a fresh piece of paper. "This is the loom. Here is a heavy roller at the bottom and a stout beam at the top. From top to bottom hundreds of fine, strong threads are stretched, straight and taut. The carpet, in beautiful soft colours and lovely old designs, is woven from the bottom upwards. Part of this one is done"; and the Colonel quickly filled in the lower part of his sketch to show a half-woven carpet.

"How is it done, Dad?" inquired Doris.

"Each stitch is formed by a length of coloured wool, or thread, being passed round one of these upright threads, and given a peculiar twist—not really a knot, though we call it so—which keeps it from slipping out. When a whole row has been done, a strong thread is woven in and out above the knots and the whole is pressed firmly down with a sort of iron comb, and the next row is ready to be begun. The finished rows are all cut even with scissors."

"It sounds rather difficult and tiring. Why do children do it?" asked Jack.

"Because little children get the knack of the twist better than grown-up people, and beginning at five years of age—five, my Ted, think of it!—they soon become wonderfully quick and clever at it."

"Do they copy a pattern?" asked Kate, who was the artist of the family (after the Colonel).

"No, a man, or elder boy, sings out in a sort of chant the colours they are to use, and all the little girl weavers chant it after him, in a low, sad tone, like this: 'Five black, two green, three blue, four black, six green, three brown.' The man sometimes has a book or a picture [44/45] to go by, but many of the patterns are like your mother's Christmas pudding—a family recipe handed down by memory from year to year."

"But, Daddy \_\_\_\_ began Doris. "Well, my little inquirer?"

"Of course, it is very sad for such little children to be at work hurting their poor eyes in the dim light; but I don't see how it makes them cripples."

"Sketch III," said the Colonel, tearing off another sheet, "will make that clear. The little weavers do not sit on chairs, but on a narrow plank, or bench, fixed high up in front of the carpet. Their feet cannot rest on the ground. On this cord which I am now drawing, a little way above their heads, hang balls, or hanks, of the different coloured wools for them to use from. To keep their balance on these narrow planks they double up like this, or like this" (drawing two little figures

as he spoke), "and if you spent twelve hours a day in that position you would feel a bit cramped, wouldn't you?"

"Twelve hours!"

"Every bit, I assure you."

"Oh, how cruel!"

"It is, and little people's bones being softer than big people's, they get bent into queer shapes, and their poor legs become nearly useless."

Five sober faces gazed silently at the sketch.

"I'm going to do you one more sad picture," said the Colonel, "then I'll do you a happy one to finish with. Sketch IV. Our little friends have done their day's work. Very stiffly and painfully they have climbed down [45/46] from their plank, many of them crying with pain as they try to straighten out their cramped limbs. But poor Shirin, who is named after a beautiful Queen of Persia, who lived long ago, still crouches on her plank."

"Why, Daddy, why? Say quick!"

"Because she can't get down. She can't walk, can't stand. She is too badly crippled. Presently her father, old Yusuf, will come and lift her down and carry her home. He is not a good father. He is an opium-smoker, and though poor little Shirin is dying, he still carries her to work every day so that she can earn money for him to spend on opium."

"But can't anything be done?" asked Jack, indignantly.

"Well, the greatest thing to do is to try and win the Persians to believe in the Saviour, Who loves little children and Who came as a Child at Christmas."

"That's what our missionaries are doing, aren't they?" asked Cecil.

"Yes, and it is very hard work, and there are so few of them to do it. The C.M.S. has a hospital where some of these small cripples are taken in; they have a good rest and good food, and their legs are put in splints, or treated in other ways, to make them straight and well again. Every day in the hospital they hear of Christ and His love, and are taught hymns and texts in Persian, and when Christmas comes they have a really merry Christmas for the first time in their lives. Now I am going to do Sketch V. This is little Bibi Tan. Her life before she came to the hospital was like the great Persian desert of Lut—cruel and monotonous and dull and ugly. She never had time to play round the great ruined forts on the hills outside Kerman—what [46/47] romps you children would have there! She could never enjoy the roses in the gardens. Oh! those Persian roses, how the mother would love them! But when she came to the hospital, why she thought it Paradise, though she had to suffer a lot before she got well. She is still a little lame, for as the Persian

proverb says: 'A cut string may be joined, but the knot always remains!' This is what she looked like at the party I spoke of."

"What a pretty frock!"

"Is that a doll she has?"

"Yes, a doll dressed and sent out for her by an English girl."

"I'll dress one for some little Persian girl next Christmas, if you'll tell me where to send it," exclaimed Kate.

"Tea is ready," said Mrs. Symes at this moment, opening the door and looking in.

"I'd forgotten all about it," said Cecil; "but now I think of it, I am hungry!"

"I am hungry!" echoed Ted.

"Father," said Jack, as they all got up to go to tea, "when I'm a man I'd like to go to Persia and start a carpet-factory on my own, with model buildings and recreation-rooms, and no workers under twelve (if one must have kiddies), and make their lives happy and healthy, and turn out carpets that would beat those old opium-smokers to smithereens!"

"I hope you may live to do it, my son. Thanks to the influence of the missionaries and other Christian residents in Persia—bankers and army men—some of the enlightened factory-owners are making considerable improvements. But the only sure hope of true reform lies in their knowing and loving Christ. Profiteering at the expense of the defenceless and the poor is against the principle of any true Christian, whatever nation he belongs to. Well, Jack, see how many fellows you can interest in Persia next term, and whether you can make anything, or give anything, to help a few more Kerman carpet-weavers to a merry Christmas next year."

"I will!" replied Jack. And he meant it.

A.W.F.

**SUNSHINE AND SHADOW**  
**By Miss ALICE VERINDER**

[NOTE.—The story of the dervish, as well as that of the sisters, is true in all important matters. It has been thought best, however, partly for convenience, but chiefly lest those concerned should needlessly be exposed to persecution, to use fictitious names throughout, and to make slight alterations in details, at the same time blending the two stories into one.]

CHAPTER I  
A STRANGE MAN BRINGS STRANGE NEWS

ONCE upon a time—for the land of which I write is one so full of Eastern wonder-tales that it seems unnatural to begin in any but the good old-fashioned way—once upon a time a traveller, weary and thirsty with his long tramp through a Persian desert, came upon a little oasis village, and paused to ask for rest and refreshment at the house of Haji Hosein Ali. Full of that delightful hospitality that one so often finds in an Eastern home, Haji gave a ready welcome to his guest, especially when he saw that he was a dervish—one of the so-called "holy men" who travel from place to place, begging their food, and in return singing songs full of such news or folklore as they can gather on their journeyings.

The story that this man told was strangely unlike those of all other minstrels who had come that way. He sang of how, while, on his wanderings, sickness had fallen on him and he had crept (to die, he thought) into a doorway in the distant Town of Many People. It would take too long to tell his story fully. Let it suffice to say that the doorway in which he had lain was that of the mission hospital. Instead of dying he had been restored to health by the skill and tenderness of foreigners, and, better still, he had learnt to use his gift of singing to bear to those to whom his [48/49] travels led him the glad news of a God Who gave His Son to die, that He might bring new life to men.

Now it happened that Haji's wife was sick of a strange malady, one which had sorely puzzled the village "doctor," for in spite of all his remedies she steadily grew worse. So, although the story of God's love fell on unheeding ears, the stranger was questioned eagerly concerning the hospital and those who worked there.

Then he told of another house, a place where women and their little ones might safely go, for the doctor there was a foreign woman, one with much skill, and she received any woman or child who needed her help.

Next morning the traveller set out again, anxious to carry his good news to other villages; Haji's house was all astir, for he had decided to send his wife, with Sunshine, her eldest child, to tend her, to test the foreign doctor's skill.

## CHAPTER II SUNSHINE TELLS HER SISTER

THE months passed by, and great was the disappointment in the heart of Haji Hosein Ali when, in spite of three visits to the foreigners, Bibi, his wife, failed to regain her health. True it was that each time on her return she had been free from pain or discomfort, but a few days in her home brought back her troubles. Loath as he was to do so, her husband was at length obliged to own that the [49/50] doctor lady's words were true. There was no cure for this sickness, though it could be fought and kept at bay, perhaps for years, if under constant treatment such as could only be given in the hospital. The doctor had offered to take Bibi in, giving her food, a bed, and a small payment in return for certain duties, so that she should be always at hand when remedies were needed.

"A wife who is always ill and so unable to perform her household duties is but a burden and expense," thought Haji; yet he scarcely liked to let her make her home for any length of time

with those whom he looked upon as blasphemers and infidels. However, at last he yielded, having satisfied himself that her faith in Mohammed still remained unshaken, and that she always turned deaf ears to all that was taught concerning Him Whom the Christians called the Son of God.

Strangely enough, carefully as he had questioned and warned his wife, he hardly gave a thought to the little daughter who accompanied her. So Sunshine was left undisturbed to treasure in her heart the much-loved stories that had filled her with joy and wonder. She felt instinctively that she would get no sympathy from either parent, but she found a ready listener [50/51] in Shadow, her little-sister. Sometimes the children would wander for hours in their father's barley fields, talking of nothing but the Friend and God Who loves, and Sunshine would teach the younger child some prayer or hymn she had learnt in the hospital.

All too soon for Shadow, her mother and Sunshine started for the town. To Haji their departure was almost a relief, for now there was no invalid to fret him. His old mother was glad enough to take up her undisputed reign in the house again, and willingly prepared his food, while the little son—the light of his father's eyes—trotted by his side and brightened the hours of labour.

But for Shadow the days were empty and sad indeed. As weeks lengthened into months, and still no hope was given of the return of the mother whom she loved and longed for so incessantly, the lonely child determined on a desperate adventure.

### CHAPTER III SHADOW'S ADVENTURE

IT was early on a wintry morning when little Shadow crept unseen from her father's house and gazed, rather fearfully, at the huge expanse of desert that lay before her.

The child had never been beyond the outskirts of the tiny village, but she had heard that the stream which flowed through her father's fields ended its journey at the Town of Many People, and she hoped that it would guide her to the place where her mother lived. No one had thought to tell her of the tunnels under the desert sands, in which the stream is hidden for most of the many miles through which it travels to the town.

[52] At first she trudged hopefully beside the water, then, to her horror and amazement, it vanished underground. Her guide had failed! How could she know which way to turn in that great world of whiteness. The snow, which she had looked on as a friend to hide her footprints, had buried the rough mule-trod track which might have aided her. Gradually fear turned to despair as, after hours of wandering, she saw no trace of habitation, and realized that she was lost in the desert. Her cotton clothes were soaked, and hung, limp and cold, about her shivering form. Her slipper-shoes, proving encumbrances, had been discarded in the snow. She had taken no provisions for her journey, and, as night drew near, the frightened, hungry girl heard the dreaded howl of a distant wolf.

It was then, when hope was almost dead, that suddenly there came to her remembrance a story that she had heard from Sunshine—the story of a Shepherd, and how the Lord would hasten to

the help of wandering sheep. Somewhere near at hand, and ever coming nearer, was the patter of hurrying feet. Could it be a wolf? She dared not turn to look, but, stretching out her hands to the God of Whom she knew so little, Shadow sent up her first real prayer, just a verse of the only prayer-hymn that she remembered.

[53] Almost before the cry to "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild," had left her lips, she knew that God had heard. The pattering footsteps ceased, and a shepherd boy was asking: "Little sister, why are you here in the desert alone?"

#### CHAPTER IV SUNSHINE'S TROUBLE

SHADOW'S venture was not in vain. Touched by the greatness of the craving for her mother that had filled his timid daughter with such desperate courage, the father sent her to the town. Not many days had passed before Shadow had proved so quick and helpful in the hospital that, young as she was, she was allowed to join her sister in some hospital duties.

At first it seemed as though the love of God had found an easy entrance into the hearts of both the sisters. But to give a childish trust and adoration is a fairly easy thing compared with the boundless courage which is needed by those who would keep true to Christ, in a land where Christians are looked upon as worse than outcasts. For several years Sunshine hid, for her mother's sake, the growing faith and love which filled her life. But when the pain of grieving her Lord became unbearable she openly confessed Him, and asked to be baptized. Dreadful days of persecution followed. Pleadings, threats, and many bitter tears from her mother, were added to the taunts and angry words of her fellow-workers. Even Shadow, seeing her mother's grief, joined, for a time, with the persecutors.

Each year, when the hospital was closed for the hottest months and patients and workers returned to their homes, Sunshine's life was almost unendurable. Mother, father, villagers, and friends, were all determined to win her back to Islam. [53/54] Vain attempts were made to force a marriage with a Moslem man, or to induce her to take part in the fast of Ramadan. Yet Sunshine remained steadfast. Though beaten, starved, and upbraided, scorned, and threatened with death, her faith outlived it all.

As time passed on and she became more lovable and loving, and those who watched her began to realize a little of the power within her, and grew less persistent in persecuting, her mother softened towards her, while Shadow learned to give a wistful admiration to her loyal, courageous sister. Patients, who at first were disinclined to heed the foreign teachers, were ready enough to listen to the bright, kind girl who was so truly "one of themselves," and many a bedside talk from Sunshine paved the way for deeper teaching from the missionaries.

Yet once she faltered. The war had robbed her of her friends and closed the mission hospital. Taking advantage of a special time of fear and weakness, her father forced her into marrying a Mohammedan who lived in her native village, at the same time wedding Shadow to a dweller in the Town of Many People.

## CHAPTER V PRESENT AND FUTURE

WHEN the missionaries returned, Bibi and Shadow were again allowed to help in the hospital, but Sunshine was no longer free to come to them. Before her marriage she had told her husband of her love for Christ, and, in spite of all his efforts to dissuade her, she steadfastly refused to deny Him.

[55] Grieving for her one failure, she meekly accepted the greater hardships that her marriage had brought upon her, the only Christian in her village. In a message to the missionaries, she showed something of the greatness of her burden. "The place," she said, "in which my life is set is very difficult. Give me your prayers, that I may be fit to live and witness for my Saviour here."

Shadow still followed "afar off." She was often found teaching hymns to patients in the children's ward, or, when she thought herself unwatched, telling with tender sympathy stories of the life and love of Jesus; yet she was ever afraid to trust Him wholly.

A story that begins with "Once upon a time" should have a happy ending. As I tell of those who are living still, my tale must of necessity be incomplete. We who believe in prayer and know its power may, if we will, help to bring near a time when it can with truth be said that both sisters will (in the greatest sense) "live happily ever after."

Cannot we, like the wandering minstrel, use our powers to carry news of deliverance to some distant town or desert oasis? Are there not some of the young and strong among us whose love for our Lord is real enough to make us obey His call, which bids us "go into all the world and preach the Gospel"?

### **A PUZZLE STORY (2) AN IRISH EXPERT**

HE was an Irishman and lived at Charleville in County Cork. After taking his B.A. at Trinity College, Dublin, he offered himself to the C.M.S. as a missionary and was sent out to North India. He was full of enthusiasm to make Christ known and loved among the hardheaded Mohammedans. It was not easy work. The Mohammedans thought that they had the truth and argued: "We are more religious than the British! They only worship God once a week; and then they do not kneel down to worship Him!" The Mohammedans, as you probably know, are very particular about prayer; wherever they may be, or whatever they may be doing, they stop and worship God five times a day, and the careless manner of some Christians they had seen had struck them as irreverent.

\_\_\_\_\_ soon found that a missionary, like a man of any other profession, if he is to succeed must be thorough; he must be an expert at his job. A missionary must first of all be truly Christian in all he [55/56] says and thinks and does, not a namby-pamby Christian, but a strong, loving, common-sense man ruled by the love of God; but he must also use his brains and think out the best way of convincing non-Christians that Christ is indeed the Saviour of the world.



\_\_\_\_\_ was a man who thought and then acted. He saw that he must more thoroughly understand the Mohammedan and his religion and his ways of thought, and he decided that this could best be done in a Mohammedan land. So he asked to be allowed to spend six months in Persia, on his way back from furlough, studying the Persian language so that he might be able to read Persian Mohammedan books.

The Mohammedans did not want the Christian Irishman, and they made that clear, refusing to allow him to live in such an important place as Isfahan. So he got rooms in the suburb of Julfa, which is separated from Isfahan by a river. The suburb is similar in appearance to other places in Persia, having the same kind of baked-mud houses with flat rooms, and blank walls in front except for the heavy door which alone opens into the street. In the centre of the streets are the water-courses, and trees have been planted here and there, but instead of the blue-domed mosques, in Julfa there are churches; for the inhabitants are Christians from Armenia, or rather their ancestors came from Armenia (see p. 30). For centuries the Armenians had been surrounded by Mohammedan influences, but they had kept faithful to the Christian religion, though they had been handicapped by the lack of education.

The enterprising Irishman found pressing work at hand. The rains failed, the crops were a failure, and the land was in the grip of famine, and as usual the poor Armenians were among the first to suffer. The missionary appealed to the whole Christian world for money for the famine-stricken Christians, and by the generous help of many he was able to help the starving, and to found schools for orphan children. His stay in Persia was prolonged into a year, two years, three years, until eventually it was decided that he should work in Persia (instead of in North India as before).

For some time he was the only foreign missionary in the whole of Persia. While doing all he could for the Armenians, he never lost sight of the fact that he wished to help bring the Mohammedans into the Kingdom of Christ. As soon as possible he revised Henry Martyn's translation (see p. 30) of the New Testament, and bit by bit he translated the whole Bible. The Mohammedans did not want the Christians' Holy Book, and made it very clear. An Armenian named Benjamin, who was soon the missionary's right-hand man, went about selling gospel portions, much to the annoyance of the Government authorities who arrested him and beat him and threatened him with death. But, in spite of all, cartloads of Bibles were imported into Persia and were read in private. At dead of night inquirers visited the missionary.

When he retired, after twenty-five years work in Persia, he had baptized some twenty converts from Mohammedanism. Now the Bible is being read more or less openly by thousands of Mohammedans in Persia.

Who was this pioneer missionary?

#### DOUBLE ACROSTIC (2)

(My initials give something for which Persia is famous. My finals are a place where it is made, and where the C.M.S. has a mission hospital.)

1. To prepare food. 2. To remain. 3. A thief. 4. A metrical composition. 5. A girl's name. 6. A claw.

(For answers see p. 61.)

### FROM THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

[57] OF course Persian kittens (If they are proper ones) come from Persia. But have you ever noticed that Persia itself on the map is like a cat on a cushion? It has its back towards Afghanistan and India, and its head towards Russia. The cushion keeps it from getting its feet wet in the Persian Gulf!

\* \* \*

When, owing to the war, the missionaries were being turned out of Isfahan, they were assured by the Deputy Governor that he would protect the converts. That Deputy Governor was an old mission schoolboy.

\* \* \*

An English bank-manager in Persia said he wanted to thank a doctor for saving his life. This was the banker's story: "In the desert I was taken by brigands. They took me away to their den in the mountain, and at night I heard them consulting how they could put me to death. But two of those brigands had been kindly treated by an Englishman in a mission hospital, and they prevailed on the rest of the robber band to let me go. And here I am alive and well to-day as a result of your hospitals in Persia.

\* \* \*

When Mohammedan residents heard that one of the mission doctors was down with typhoid fever, they prayed for her recovery. Mohammedans prayed for a Christian!

\* \* \*

A traveller was "held up" by brigands. The hills rang with rifle-shots, and several armed men rushed at the traveller. When the chief of the brigands recognized him as the doctor from the mission hospital, he called out that no harm should come to him; but, as they "had some business on," would he go round the corner into the shelter of the wall? He was questioned as to what money he had (£10 just given to him in gratitude). Some of the men would evidently have liked to get at it and at the doctor's watch; but the chief said that not a farthing was to be touched, only he added: "If you happen to have a pistol, it would be appreciated"! The "business" turned out to be the robbing of the mall; the postman was kept bound and helpless while the loot was taken over the mountains. Later, on the open road, the doctor and his assistants were taken for some of the robbers, and were fired on. Fortunately the shooting was not accurate!

\* \* \*

When the missionaries returned to Yezd (after an absence of a year, owing to the war), there was great rejoicing on the part of the inhabitants. Three carriages were sent to meet them in the desert and bring them in in style. The *istigbal* (meeting party) began eight miles out, and became a large crowd as they approached Yezd.

### THE ORIGINAL PERSIANS

[58] THE Parsis are the direct descendants of the Persians of the time of King Cyrus. They lived on as the people of Persia until about 600 years after the death of our Lord. Then, when the Mohammedan conquerors overran the land, many Parsis were slain, while some accepted the Mohammedan religion and others escaped to India. The few Parsis who remained in Persia were harshly dealt with by the conquerors.

The Parsis are still ruled most unjustly in their native land. A "poll-tax" is put on them. They are obliged to live in a special part of the town, called the Parsi Mohullah. They are not allowed to ride in the towns or through the bazaars. The men are forced to dress in ugly dull clothes (grey, buff, or unbleached). They are an industrious people and often gradually buy pieces of land until they own big fields; if, however, a Mohammedan takes a fancy to a field owned by a Parsi, he always manages to get it, by fair means or foul.

Parsi women lead much freer, happier lives than Mohammedans. They go about freely and do not cover their faces. Marriage and home-life are very sacred. They never allow a relative or one of their community to starve or be homeless, and one never sees a Parsi beggar. Generosity is one of their virtues, and at their five great yearly festivals bread, etc., is given freely to all who ask, quite regardless of creed.

They believe in one good Creator, but He seems to them so far away that they cannot worship Him personally, so they worship Him through the beautiful things that He has created. Thus they have gained the name of "Sun worshippers," as the sun, moon, stars, fire, and smoke all have a big place in their worship.

As fire and earth are both sacred they can neither burn nor bury their dead, so they carry them to the towers of silence (built on a hill outside the town) and expose them [58/59] to the vultures. A keeper of the tower is the only one allowed to enter it. He watches the body and is supposed to be able to tell (according to which eye is first attacked by the birds) whether the soul of the dead one is taken to heaven or to hell. The bones fall through a grating into a deep pit, and the keeper of the tower carries the news of the supposed destination of their friend to the anxious watchers beneath the tower.

The Parsis have a great love of reading, and often spend hours in reading (or chanting in a sing-song voice) from old histories or books of legends of their former greatness. In spite of their pride in their ancient history, the Parsis are often eager to leave their native land to seek that strange and happier country—India.

The news that two of the English ladies were preparing to travel southward had scarcely spread through the Persian town in which the writer had lived for some time, before we were petitioned to take under our protection a party of forty Parsis, who wished to reach Bombay, but dared not travel without escort.

A lad of twelve or thereabouts was among the Parsis who joined our caravan. His people called him by a quaint old Parsi name, which to our English ears sounded so like the Persian words for "black date" that we soon thought of him by no other name. He was an orphan, and seemed to have no kinsfolk except an elder brother whom he hoped to discover when he reached Bombay. From the first day he took a special pride in doing everything that he could to help the woman doctor and her friends. His willing hands and ready feet seemed everywhere, and when his work was done he would creep up and ask if we would lend him part of "The Holy Book" which tells about Jesus. When at last we said "goodbye" to him as he left the ship, he said he wished that he could read and hear more about God.

Once, in the desert, walking, by my side, Black Date had talked with me, telling me of his hopes.

"Why are you coming all this way?" I asked.

[61] "Because the war is big and terrible; and if the fighting comes near to our town we all will be destroyed. The Parsi homes will suffer most, you know; it always has been so."

"Where are you going that you think so safe?"

"O Khavanum, don't you know? Bombay of course! Because the King who rules is always just, and oh, so good and true! No one need fear, for no one is unkind; and every one is free and happy there!"

Then, as he saw me smile he suddenly remembered, and exclaimed: "Surely it is your King, the very same who lives and reigns in London!"

What a tribute, when such faith is placed in us! But, alas! we hear that there is no Christian worker in Bombay who knows the Persian Parsi tongue! And we have no missionary in Persia working among the Parsis! (Page 61.—The last sentence of the article should read: "And in Persia the girls' school at Yezd represents the only definite work among Parsis.")

## ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

### DIAMOND PUZZLE I (p. 19)

I  
aSa  
riFle  
ISFAHAN  
NaHaum  
bAd

N

DOUBLE ACROSTIC (I)

JewS  
UzziaH  
LaurA  
FaitH  
AssoS

DOUBLE ACROSTIC (II)

CooK  
AbidE  
RobbeR  
PoeM  
EllA  
TaloN

RIDDLE-ME-REE: Thompson (the Y. P. U. Own missionary in Persia.)

PUZZLE STORY (I)

Sakineh, the first Mohammedan woman convert in Persia. There are now 275 baptized converts in Persia, all of whom have had to run the risk of persecution like Sakineh. The law is against Christians, but public opinion is changing.

PUZZLE STORY (II)

The Rev. Robert Bruce, D.D. the founder of the C.M.S. Mission in Persia. The C.M.S. has now missionaries in Persia, which is as large as France; but you can travel for hundreds of miles, passing through many towns and villages, where there is no one to tell of Christ the Saviour. The mission station of Yezd is farther from Isfahan than London is from York. Kerman is still farther than that beyond Yezd.

**MOLLY, JACK, and PERSIA**

[62] MOLLY does not always look so thoughtful, as you can imagine, or she would not be sitting on the garden wall! She loves the garden; now in the spring when the daffodils are flowering and the fruit-trees in blossom, and later in the year when the fruit is ripe—she does not know which is best. She is thinking of fruit just now, not the fruit which grows in her father's garden, but away in the gardens of Persia—melons, peaches, pomegranates, apricots, and grapes, all the most ripping fruits, tons of it in lovely old-world gardens! She was hearing about them at the meeting of the Young People's Union which she had just joined.

Except for the lovely fruit they had, Molly had no wish whatever to change places with a Persian girl. However nice a garden might be, a girl wants to go somewhere else sometimes. In Persia a girl must stay at home in the house and in the garden day after day; when occasionally she does go out, she must be closely veiled so that no one can see her face, and she must walk sedately in the long chadar which almost completely covers her up. How horrified a Persian father would be to see his daughter sitting on a wall, looking over into a neighbour's garden! [62/63] And yet Molly can go over the wall into Captain Anderson's garden whenever she likes; she has his permission as long as she does no damage. But a Persian girl has no freedom.

Suddenly Molly heard her brother Jack calling her, and with one foot on a step of the ladder she bounded to the ground and ran off.

"What have you been up to, Kid?" asked Jack. He was the only person Molly allowed to call her "kid" without annoyance. But he was a privileged person, just home from his first term at boarding school.

"I've been sitting on the wall thinking a bit—about Persia," she added, for Molly had very few secrets apart from her brother, whom she missed badly when he went away to school.

"And what do you know of Persia, Moll?" he asked in a somewhat patronizing tone, as he linked his arm with that of his young sister.

"I have heard quite a lot about it Jack, at the Y.P.U. meetings," she began enthusiastically. "I'm so awfully sorry for the girls; they do have a horrid time. Do you do Persia in your school geog.?"

"No, not in our form," replied Jack; "but we've been hearing quite a lot about Persia. It started with a bishop coming to give a lecture. He was a good sort, not the kind who think themselves something great; the masters got on with him no end. He told us all sorts of things about Persia. It must be an enchanting place, a 'never-know-what's-going-to-happen-next' sort of land."

"That must have been Bishop Linton," said Molly. "He is the Irish Y.P.U. 'own missionary.'"

"That's him. I remember he said he was supported by Irish boys and girls. I thought it great that their savings should support a missionary bishop."

"We've got an O.M. now—Mr. Thompson. He's head of the Stuart Memorial College. We girls are awfully keen on it as well as the boy members, for you see if the Persian boys are taught better, when they are grown up they [63/64] won't allow the girls to be treated as they are now! It's what our secretary calls 'strategic.'"

"Your wise head has got hold of the right end of the stick," remarked Jack. "It's just the very thing we are aiming at—a rattling good school. So things ought to get a move on. But I say, to support an O.M. will take some doing."

"Yes, it does," replied Molly, "but we've just got to take a long pull together—all the Y.P.U.'s, I mean. I don't want to miss any one's birthday, so I can't save very much out of my shilling a month pocket money. But we are learning to make things at the Y.P.U.—really good, nice things, you know, and then we're going to have a sale and invite every one. I am making a raffia bag with a coloured pattern on the front of it. It will be strong and last for ages, and be pretty too, I think, so I hope some one will really want to buy it."

"It's good luck that I have more pocket money now, for I should not have time to make anything at school; and Uncle Charlie and Aunt Annie each sent me a tip last term, so some of that cash came in all right for Persia. Our school has sent the Stuart Memorial boys a gramophone—a ripping one without a horn, so if the old thing does get a spill off the mule's back, which is more than likely, it won't be useless owing to a cracked horn! Our present will show those fellows that we want to be friends. Next term we want to get enough for a scholarship, so that a Christian Persian boy can be trained as a schoolmaster, and teach other boys. For it's a cert, when Persian boys know about Christ, they will have some new ideas, and Persia will be a happier place for girls, Moll, old girl."

"I am glad," was all Molly could say.

#### **WHAT A VISITOR SAID.**

Lord Lamington, a late Governor of Bombay, when he visited Persia, said that going to the boys' mission school in Isfahan "was like coming to an oasis in the desert."

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