

"February. The heat of summer is not great: and on account of the clemency of the
 "climate all sleep in the open on the roofs, and those who are sick similarly. The Persians
 "have few doctors, yet there are many old men among them. Their garb is a long garment,
 "different from that of the Turks: they tie shawls round their waists, and almost all of
 "them go clothed in cotton stuffs of various colours in imitation of the king. Their chief
 "food is rice with meat, and they do not use such variety, nor dainties as in these countries"
 (of Europe): "and they are frugal and satisfied with little food. At their banquets they
 "display great sumptuousness, both in the great quantity of viands, as in the preparation
 "and serving of them: Allah Viridi Khan, captain-general of the king of Persia, in a
 "banquet he gave to certain Kurdish ambassadors, put on the table 3,000 dishes all of
 "gold with lids of the same, as I was informed by some Turks who were present. Almost
 "all of them drink wine: they sit and eat on the ground on rich carpets. The houses are
 "of stone, remarkable inside for the great amount of stucco work ornamenting the ceilings
 "and the walls: so they do not employ tapestries. On the street side they have no windows,
 "so that their women should not be seen: and thus the streets are not attractive, nor is the
 "city fine. The Persians are white (skinned), of fair stature, courteous, friendly towards
 "foreigners and tractable: they set store on nobility of birth, which the Turks do not do.
 "They are very ceremonious and use many forms of politeness after their own fashion.
 "There are some of them, who profess to be philosophers and mathematicians, almost all
 "of them to be poets: and they continually have books in their hands. They have many
 "large mosques, where they go to say their prayers, and they allow any nation whatsoever¹
 "to enter them. . . . Thrice daily, morning, noon and evening, they say their prayers:
 "first they wash, then they spread a carpet or their outer garment on the ground, placing
 "on it a stone . . . and they make many prostrations, calling on God and 'Ali, in which
 "consist all their devotions. They make profession of cleanliness in respect of their bodies,
 "clothes and in everything. They have two kinds of persons dedicated to God's service:
 "one they call 'Mullas,' which is to say 'learned men' or 'doctors' . . . they are esteemed
 "by the lords and the rest, and have mosques in their charge. The other kind of persons
 "devoted to God's service they call 'Darwish,' and they profess to abandon the world
 "more (than the other). They have only one miserable garment, full of patches, over
 "which they wear a sheepskin crosswise over the shoulders: they go barefoot, they profess
 "to disdain money, and some of them will not even take it when given to them as alms:
 "they have no homes, and do not trouble to prepare food for themselves, but sleep wherever
 "night may overtake them and eat whatever be given them as alms. They use some
 "kinds of penances, such as piercing their ears and hanging heavy weights to them: they
 "make a great practice of a rule of life, and in their 'lenten' periods they fast, do not drink
 "wine, make a point of great charitableness, and to practise it in the summertime they
 "stand in the public squares with cold water, which they give gratis to anyone wanting it.
 "Many of them do not marry, and they remain in a community obedient to a superior.
 "These latter have good mosques and pleasant places outside the towns after the guise of
 "our hermits, to which the Muhammadans resort out of piety. They sleep all together
 "in one room on a carpet,² and their sheepskins, without anything else" (as bedding): "and,
 "when they die, they are considered heavenly spirits, and some of them even while alive
 "by the common people, especially if mentally deranged, because then it is said of them
 "that God has deprived them of the use of reason, so that they may be always with Him
 "and not sin. When they come into the towns, both men and women kiss their garments.
 "Nowadays there are hardly any of them who observe that mode of life and, although
 "they may do so outwardly to some extent, in the matter of poverty in particular, they
 "are very sensual and marry, receive money, drink wine, do not observe the fasts, and

¹ Unless in copying the manuscript a negative has been missed and it should read "do not allow," this is strange, because in modern times the Shiah differ from the Sunnis in barring entrance of mosques absolutely to all non-Muslims.

² Compare Shaikh Sa'di's proverb: "Deh darwish ru yak gilim mi-khuspand," etc. ("Ten darwishes will sleep on one mat, a continent will not hold two monarchs.")