

“kiss the door of his palace: and that family considers itself happy which is able to obtain some clothes or shoes of the king or indeed some of the water with which he has washed his hands, using the same (as a talisman) against fever. Not to speak of infinite other things which might be said in this connection, not only the common people, but his sons too and the governors, usually when they speak to him, appear unable to find epithets fitting for such exaltedness. They say to him ‘Thou art our faith, and we believe in thee’. Up to such a degree of reverence do they pay him in the neighbouring towns; but in the villages and places farther off many hold that he (the king), besides having the spirit of prophecy, resuscitates the dead and does other similar miracles; and they say that, just as ‘Ali, their principal saint, had 11 sons, so this king too has received by God’s grace the favour of 11 sons.

“It is true that in the city of Tabriz he is not held in such great veneration as in other places: and for that reason it is said that he left there, and went to remain at Qazwin, seeing that he was not esteemed according as he desired.”

But compare B for a reason for the change of capital less inconsequent, and more sensible:

“. . . and because Qazwin, a town of his kingdom with a district 18 leagues in length by 13 in breadth is situated in the centre of the kingdom in a very strong position between high mountains, on which the snow lies continually, and for that reason it appeared to him a secure and strong place, he chose it for his chief residence: and from the township of ill fame it had previously been (because in it were confined criminals who had not been put to death, as the etymology of the name denotes, for Qazwin means ‘place of punishment’) it has become a very noble town adorned with very large buildings and gardens, on which much expense has been incurred, among them one belonging to the king himself which is 3 leagues in circumference, and from its beauty is called Bihisht (in our language ‘Paradise’). This town is very populous, and they say that whenever the king summons them he can always have 3,000 horsemen ready. It is about 3 leagues round.”

“With regard to the city being split into two factions, one of which is called Hamidlay [*sic*] the other Emicardurla [*sic*], there being nine heads of wards in them, five in one faction, four belonging to the other, to which all the citizens—who may be 12,000 in number—appertain, there have been many quarrels between these factions in the past, when they slew one another, and neither the king nor anyone else was able to remedy the state of affairs, seeing that there was a 300-year-old hatred between these two parties; and it may be definitely asserted that the heads of the wards were the lords of the town rather than the king himself.¹ Now they are at peace with one another and united. But in that connection I do not wish to omit to tell Your Highness that, as at the beginning of their month of fasting the price of meat had risen a little above the ordinary, these heads of the wards sent to the governor’s palace and killed all the governor’s underlings, and if the governor had taken any action he would also have been put to death; while those officials who were absent, they (the heads of the wards) went to their houses and pulled down their houses, and killed them, and bore their heads to the public square, not minding whether they did such deeds by day or by night; and nothing could be done in view of their being united. It is true that nothing disreputable has been learnt about these men in regard to their treatment of private individuals, but in the past they have killed governors merely in order to preserve a certain public liberty of action and ancient privileges

¹ Up till the World War, 1914, the enmity between the inhabitants of the various quarters, or wards, in towns of southern Persia (at any rate—and possibly over the greater part of the country) between the Haidari and Nai’mati sections, or however named—for instance, between Bihbihan and Qanawat, separated only by a narrow street, or in Bushire or in Jahrum, Kazarun and elsewhere—was such that on days of processions, during festival times, or when some quarrel embittered relations, the inhabitant of one ward could not pass into the other without risk of attack: and at times fierce fighting and shooting would break out between them.