

heart, and the vivid blue domes of its oasis towns, and the pale-green poplars of the Elburz.

Like the connection between England and Italy it is a liaison of opposites--of sober reticence with bubbling effervescence, of cloud and mist with bright sunlight, of practical orderliness with wild individuality, of quiet understatement with loud bravado. The Persians take us to their hearts with their zest for life and open-mindedness, and they infuriate us with their intriguing and squandering and feckless promises. In a world of militant republics pride in the age-old Persian monarchy remains. Many criticize it. Many do not see why the Iranians should be loyal to their Emperor, forgetting that we ourselves PRINT!D IN GREAT BRITAIN are loyal to our Queen. Yet it is another tie-the feeling for

BY EBENEZER BAYLIS AND SON, LTD.

THJI TIUNITY PRIIIIS, WORC1!8TER, AND LONDON
monarchy-that links us with the Persians.

In spite of this, there have been few books about Iran in

THE ROAD TO FARS

124 THE HEART OF IRAN

Shiraz. History repeated itself with the aerial descent of quarter of a century ago. From it the road leads downwards German saboteurs on Fars to work on the grievances of the tribes. But through an avenue of trees as straight as a die to the Vakil it was not until after the departure of the Indian Army that Mosque at the bottom of the slope. There it levels off into a serious tribal disturbances took place. This was dur- ing the plain before rising, a mile or tw~ b~yond, to th~ next moun- tribal rebellion of 1950, when at times it was impos- sible to tain range. On either side the bmldmgs of the c1ty_are spread sible to leave the town without running the gauntlet of armed hold-ups on out, interspersed with the domes of mosques and Imamzades the road.

and the trees of the avenues and gardens. Talking about these things with the desk clerk I came to feel that I The bus took us down to the Khiaban-e Zand, the broad was strong. was now in regions where the British connection was strong. Shiraz looks south towards the Persian Gulf and India as on the same axis as the mountain ranges, then turned into a well as north towards bustling Teheran. The oil-rich Bedouin, caravansarai to deposit us. There I left my companions of two like millionaires by a chance turn of the wheel of fortune winners of football pools, come to Shiraz to hawk and hunt in the to me. It proved to be a fine. bui~ding, decorated with blue coolness of the hills. With their musicians playing

kashi and mirror work, standing in a handsome garden, but monotonous
 thin music on the pipes, they entertain their
 when I entered my heart sank. The venerable building echoed guests and
 retainers in the big new tourist hotel.
 with emptiness, the narrow rooms were bare, there was no hot Later I
 went out into the Khiaban-e Zand, where the
 water, and two apologetic servants advised me to go to the three creepers
 trained to climb up the lamp posts lent a peculiarly
 star tourist hotel, since discomforts tolerable in a peasant's tropical
 appearance to the scene. After I had been walking a
 cottage are not to be supported in a town hotel. few minutes
 a schoolboy accosted me.
 The aged desk clerk welcomed me to Shiraz and talked to "What is
 your name?" he asked.
 me in gentle tones about the South Persia Rifles of the First
 "Forbes," I said. "What is yours?"
 German War in which he had served as quartermaster. This
 "Abbasian. What are you doing here, please?"
 force originated in a small detachment of Indian troops sent
 "Nothing."
 to Bandar Abbas from India in 1916, under the command of "You are
 an explorer?"
 Sir Percy Sykes. Its main purpose was to check the influence "No."
 of the redoubtable German agent, Wassmuss, who had suc- "I am
 ceeded in stirring up the tribes against a government friendly "I see."
 to the British. "I am
 also a Bahai. I am not an ordinary Moslem, you see.
 In Iran, by means of recruitment from the gendarmerie, I am a Bahai.
 We Bahais have our headquarters in Israel and
 whose Swedish officers had sided with the Germans, and from we have our
 holy book also."
 other sources, Sykes increased his strength to eight thousand, "I see.
 And who wrote your holy book?"
 and then marched through hostile tribal territory to Shiraz. "I do
 not know, Sir. Please, have you no job here?"
 The occupation of the town was relatively peaceful until 1918, "No.,,
 when the tribesmen, believing that Britain was going to lose "Then
 you must be an explorer. You are Albanian?"
 the war, invested Shiraz with about six thousand men against "No.
 English."
 the garrison of some two thousand. With some difficulty they "I see.
 Can you answer me a question, please. How far is it
 were beaten off. from here
 to London?"
 Not only the desk clerk, but several others of the elder "About four

thousand miles, I think. More or less."

citizens of Shiraz were to testify to the considerable impress10n "Are you certain?"

this force had made on the region. It was active, not only in "Yes."

pacifying the tribes, but also in con_verting camel t~ack~ to "And how

much does it cost to live there?"

wheeled routes, surveying and openmg up commumcat10ns "For you or for me?"

generally. "Let us say, for me."

In the Second German War also, the Indian Army was in THE HEART OF IRAN

"You might live on twenty toumans a day, but it would be difficult."

"Thank you. I will write that down."

"You are thinking of going there?"

"Perhaps I will go there, if it is possibl~." . I left him writing down the answ_ers m _his no~e book, and thought about the Bahai a_nd their ~unou~ history. The~ originated in this same city of Shiraz with Sayyed Ah Mohammed, who called himself the Bab or "gateway",

The Gardens of the Poets

through which men must communicate with God. H~ preached that he himself, was the Twelfth Imam, or Mahdi, I HAD NOT been in Shiraz for many days before the spell of the returned to earth for the salvation of mankind, and gained an poets fell on me, for the Shirazis love their poets, know them, and as enthusiastic following. But in 1850 he was taken to Tabriz and and as convincing proof of their devotion, can quote them at executed on the orders of Nasser-ud-din Shah's vizier. They say length on any suitable occasion.

that when he was shot by the firing-squad, the bullets cut the I went first to visit the mausoleum of Hafez, which is situated in the place rope with which he was bound without hurting him, and that in the place known as Mosalla. As I walked down the avenue, with the high he escaped and had to be caught an~ shot a second time. station-wagon brick wall of a hidden garden on my left, a large station-wagon On the death of the Bab a certam Baha-Ullah of Mazan- drew up alongside me.

deran announced that he was the appointed successor, and was "Can I take you anywhere?"

a greater man than the Mahdi himself. This ~as heresy, and "Thank you very much, but I am just taking a walk."

he was banished. But the followers of the Bab and of Baha "Let me show you some of the sights of Shiraz."

refused to be repressed, and as a consequence the Shah order~d "Don't let

me trouble you."

a general massacre at Zenjan, between Teheran and Tabriz, "It is nothing. I have plenty of time. Please."

at Yazd and at Niriz, to the east of Shiraz. Bahá'ism continued well. Thank you very much." "Very

underground, however, and because of its unorthodox beliefs So I climbed into the station-wagon and the Member of

became liberal in outlook and unsettling to the established Parliament for Abade introduced himself. "I am a Member

Moslem dogma. Some called it an invention of the English, of Parliament," he said, "but unfortunately now we have

because the British offered sanctuary to the Bahá'is in their no parliament, so I am now just looking after my lands."

colonies. Bahá'ullah, himself, went to Palestine, where the vVe reached the mausoleum, which in Hafez' day was well

temple of Bahá'ism was set up on Mount Carmel. His brother outside the town, in the groves to the north, but has now been

went to Cyprus. caught up by the development of the municipal stadium and

Today there may be as many as three million Bahá'is throughout the Faculty of Letters of the University. It is still a delectable

out the world, including many educated men and women. garden, however, which was completely modernized in 1936,

They persevere in their liberal beliefs, which include equal after it had been closed to public burials. As one enters one

pay and rights for women, a fair average income for all, men? faces palm trees as well as pines and poplars, reminding one

free intercourse between all races. The book of the Bahá'is that this is the deep south, not far from the Persian Gulf. In

called Iqan, meaning "certitude." front, a long colonnade, inscribed with lines from the poems

Happy are the Bahá'is, if they have certitude. on a blue background, acts as a facade to the interior garden,

in which the tomb itself is situated under a domed roof, supported by more columns.

The inner garden, which is interspersed with the graves of those who have sought to capture something of the aura of the

poet by being buried near him, is planted out with orange trees and mulberries, with roses and geraniums below them.

,127