

*merian of distinction . . . transl. from the original Persian, by Francis Gladwin . . . Calcutta, 1788, 8vo, p. 36.)—H. C.]*

Yezd is still a place of important trade, and carries on a thriving commerce with India by Bandar Abbási. A visitor in the end of 1865 says: "The external trade appears to be very considerable, and the merchants of Yezd are reputed to be amongst the most enterprising and respectable of their class in Persia. Some of their agents have lately gone, not only to Bombay, but to the Mauritius, Java, and China."

(*Ilch.* I. 67-68; *Khanikoff, Mém.* p. 202; *Report by Major R. M. Smith, R.E.*)

Friar Odoric, who visited Yezd, calls it the third best city of the Persian Emperor, and says (*Cathay*, I. p. 52): "There is very great store of victuals and all other good things that you can mention; but especially is found there great plenty of figs; and raisins also, green as grass and very small, are found there in richer profusion than in any other part of the world." [He also gives from the smaller version of Ramusio's an awful description of the Sea of Sand, one day distant from Yezd. (Cf. Tavernier, 1679, I. p. 116.)—H. C.]

NOTE 2.—I believe Della Valle correctly generalises when he says of Persian travelling that "you always travel in a plain, but you always have mountains on either hand" (I. 462). [Compare Macgregor, I. 254: "I really cannot describe the road. Every road in Persia as yet seems to me to be exactly alike, so . . . my readers will take it for granted that the road went over a waste, with barren rugged hills in the distance, or near; no water, no houses, no people passed."—H. C.] The distance from Yezd to Kermán is, according to Khanikoff's survey, 314 *kilomètres*, or about 195 miles. Ramusio makes the time eight days, which is probably the better reading, giving a little over 24 miles a day. Westergaard in 1844, and Khanikoff in 1859, took *ten* days; Colonel Goldsmid and Major Smith in 1865 *twelve*. ["The distance from Yezd to Kermán by the present high road, 229 miles, is by caravans, generally made in nine stages; persons travelling with all comforts do it in twelve stages; travellers whose time is of some value do it easily in *seven* days." (*Houtum-Schindler, l.c.* pp. 490-491.)—H. C.]

Khanikoff observes on this chapter: "This notice of woods easy to ride through, covering the plain of Yezd, is very curious. Now you find it a plain of great extent indeed from N.W. to S.E., but narrow and arid; indeed I saw in it only thirteen inhabited spots, counting two caravanserais. Water for the inhabitants is brought from a great distance by subterraneous conduits, a practice which may have tended to desiccate the soil, for every trace of wood has completely disappeared."

Abbott travelled from Yezd to Kermán in 1849, by a road through Báfk, *east* of the usual road, which Khanikoff followed, and parallel to it; and it is worthy of note that he found circumstances more accordant with Marco's description. Before getting to Báfk he says of the plain that it "extends to a great distance north and south, and is probably 20 miles in breadth;" whilst Báfk "is remarkable for its *groves of date-trees*, in the midst of which it stands, and which occupy a considerable space." Further on he speaks of "wild tufts and bushes growing abundantly," and then of "thickets of the *Ghez* tree." He heard of the wild asses, but did not see any. In his report to the Foreign Office, alluding to Marco Polo's account, he says: "It is still true that wild asses and other game are found in the *wooded spots* on the road." The ass is the *Asinus Onager*, the *Gor Khar* of Persia, or *Kulan* of the Tartars. (*Khan. Mém.* p. 200; *Id. sur Marco Polo*, p. 21; *J. R. G. S.* XXV. 20-29; *Mr. Abbott's MS. Report in Foreign office.*) [The difficulty has now been explained by General Houtum-Schindler in a valuable paper published in the *Jour. Roy. As. Soc.* N.S. XIII., October, 1881, p. 490. He says: "Marco Polo travelled from Yazd to Kermán *viâ* Báfk. His description of the road, seven days over great plains, harbour at three places only, is perfectly exact. The fine woods, producing dates, are at Báfk itself. (The place is generally called Báft.) Partridges and quails still abound; wild asses I saw several on the western road, and I was told that there were a great many on the Báfk road. Travellers and caravans now always go by the eastern road *viâ*