

thoroughly examined and described by a competent student of Near-Eastern art, Dr. E. Diez, a mere reference will here suffice.¹

Memories of
Turkomān
raids.

All the way to Farīmān and over much of the country beyond, it was easy to recognize traces of the ravages to which the peaceful Persian cultivators of this portion of Khorāsān had long been subject, owing to the slave-raiding and plundering inroads of their Turkomān neighbours in the north, before the Russian conquest of Trans-Caspia. The effects of this ancient scourge were plainly visible, on the one hand in the limited extent to which the available fertile land, here largely independent of irrigation, was actually under cultivation, and on the other in the many towers still standing in the villages or scattered among the fields. They had served as places of refuge to be hurriedly sought when Turkomān raiders, sweeping across hills and valleys, would make their sudden appearance. It was accordingly with considerable interest that I welcomed, as a quasi-historical relic of those raiding times, sturdy old Mīr Muḥammad, a Tekke Turkomān (Fig. 469), who under orders from the Consulate joined me at Farīmān for a couple of marches. He was one of some two dozen fellow tribesmen who, after the Panjdeh fighting of 1885, had thrown in their lot with the British and left what became Russian territory. Along with six others among these exiles, he was now employed as Dāk-rider to carry from Herāt the weekly Consular mail, which was being sent there for Meshed through Afghān territory from the Indian railhead at Chaman. He had taken part when young in many a *chap* or raid, and would readily talk of the 'bags' of slaves he had helped to carry off and the long night rides that preceded such exploits.

Methods of
Turkomān
raiding.

The details I learned from him of the methods of carrying out these raids explained both the extraordinarily great distances over which the raiders travelled and the secrecy upon which their success depended. Rations for men and horses used to be carried by these raiding parties only for the first three or four days required for the passage of that belt of hills on the border which owing to its vicinity to the Turkomān grazing grounds was altogether uninhabited. Subsequently supplies were obtained at prearranged points from Persian villages, which were spared on condition of maintaining absolute secrecy as to the raiders' movements, complete surprise being an essential condition of success. This careful planning, combined with the exceptional fleetness and staying power of the Turkomān breed of horses, makes it possible to understand such remarkable feats as the famous raid that extended as far south as Sīstān and was rewarded with abundant booty. It interested me to see, manifested in Mīr Muḥammad's quiet air of superiority, his pride in belonging to a race which, for centuries, had inspired dread in the Irānīs. At the same time his fine, wholly non-Mongolian, features illustrated clearly enough that thorough infusion of Iranian blood which the whole Turkomān race has undergone, as have so many other Turkish invaders of Western Asia. In my Turkomān's pleasant company I found it easy to realize that the 'Turanians' of Persian epic tradition, the Tūiryas of Zoroastrian religious texts, may well have been essentially of the same stock and speech as their settled neighbours cultivating the fertile oases of Irān, who hated and feared them as their hereditary foes.

Semi-
nomadic life
of Hazāras
and Balūch.

The next two marches took me by the pass of Kalla-mīnār ('the tower of skulls') across the hill range to the south. Its opposite slopes are occupied by Mongolian Hazāras and Balūch tribesmen, respectively. Their ways, still partly those of herdsmen, served to illustrate the slow process by which the Persian population of settled cultivators has again and again managed to digest and absorb invaders of originally nomadic character. The large valley of Bakhārz, through which we then passed, receives plentiful water from the range to the south. The villages of Himmatābād, Kala-i-nau, Abnia, which our route traversed on November 15th, lay all ensconced among orchards, and looked more attractive than any that we saw on the way to Sīstān.

¹ See Diez, *Churasanische Baudenkmäler*, 1918, pp. 52 sqq.