

form of two cylinders connected by a handle, and thus the Persian songs are accompanied by rattling rolls of the drum and vibrating strings. It is quite twenty years since I first listened to this music, discordant to our ears, but still fascinating and dream-inspiring, which, like vine branches in their trellis, was interwoven in a net of memories from bygone years. *On revient toujours!*

After a while they passed on to the second act; they played cards, and krans and tumans were soon heaped up in small piles of notes and silver on the mats beside the players. Now and again a small silver coin was thrown to the musicians; it is a winner who will show his generosity, and not to be behindhand I follow the example. Snacks are served, a real *zakuska* which is in fashion owing to the proximity to Russia; there are garlic with finely chopped eggs, thinly sliced fowl, bread, *sherab* or a kind of sweet wine, and first and last Russian vodka. They drink like fishes, these lazy sons of Iran, and in vain I address a pious wish to Allah that their shadows may never grow less, when whole and half measures, pints and quarts, in regular sequence and in crescendo contribute to make these followers of pleasure more and more hilarious and carry them still farther from the sure ground where man is master of himself.

Sujai-i-Nizam is a powerful and respected man. What did it matter to him that the coin melted away at night! He is rich, and owns several villages, which he can squeeze when he wants money. And he maintains two hundred riders with horses and equipment, which are at the disposal of the Shah in case of war. It is considered an honour to be invited to his night festivities, and to him his whole life is a continuous Ramazan night—that was evident; he denies himself nothing, and lavishly shares his abundance with his friends.

Sujai-i-Nizam rises pompously and self-consciously and invites us with the air of a despot to go out into the large colonnade, where we arrange ourselves in a circle on rugs round the pewter dishes, from which, when the covers are lifted, a warm aroma from the choicest productions of the Persian cuisine titillates our olfactory organs and our