

At the audience a prince of the Kajar house acted as interpreter, but during the conversation the Valiad put various questions in French himself. He asked what I thought of Persia, and which parts of the country I had visited before; whither I proposed to travel from Teheran, and in what languages my former narratives of travel had been published. He read with great attention a letter from Mirza Riza Khan, in which was mentioned my intention of visiting Tibet, and this remark led us to speak of the land of the lamas. And with this the audience came to an end, and I bowed myself out of the room.

Ali Muhamed Mirza had not long to wait before the throne of the Kajars became vacant. His father died on January 7, 1907, at the age of fifty odd years, having lived just long enough to open the first Persian parliament. The new Shah had to pass through bitter experiences at the very beginning of his reign, and found that the imperial crown was not so easy to wear as it had seemed desirable to gain. One cabinet fell after another, and a restless ferment agitated the country and soon developed into a revolution. The young Shah hung over the edge of a burning crater, in constant fear of losing his throne and his life. He tried, indeed, as Abdul Hamid was doing, to make a stand against the men of the new era, and showed himself implacable and severe towards his adversaries. Moreover, in August 1907 England and Russia concluded a treaty which, as regarded Persia, aimed at securing the integrity and independence of the country; but Ali Muhamed's days as Shah-in-Shah—"king of kings"—were numbered; the rising forces ripened and grew up over his head, and in the summer of 1909 he was obliged to abdicate and pass the rest of his life in exile, far from the house of his youthful dreams, on a small pension from his father's kingdom. Now it is his son, a child, who wears the crown of the Kajars, and, if all signs speak true, it will surely be his coat-of-arms which will one day be broken on the grave of Ahasuerus.

From the Valiad I betook myself to Nizam-ul-Saltaneh, Governor-General of Azerbeijan. His native land was Arabistan, in Southern Persia, but as his influence was