

up all the narrow passage. The bazaar is exceedingly picturesque and thoroughly Oriental, with its old-world booths and workshops in grotto-like recesses on both sides, each with its vault where shimmering rays and a scanty illumination produce pleasing effects against the dark background. Here copper-beaters hammer out pots and pans, here sit potters moulding clay on their revolving slabs, here, again, men are turning and planing in a carpenter's stall, and here bargaining and haggling where Russian cotton cloth is sold. Six men stand round an anvil in a smithy, and beat out the glowing iron with their sledge-hammers, each delivering his blow in regular time and order, and produce a rhythmical ringing melody, a carillon in iron. There loiter beggars and women, and outside the drug-shops great ladies are buying pistachios, kishmish, and henna. There is an odour of the East in these old corridors, where so many hours are spent in a *dolce far niente*, and all the noise and murmur that fills the arcade is a chord expressing the sleepy and dilatory life of the Orient.

Ekber drives on, calling out "*Haida!*" to those who do not take care of their feet; and we emerge again into daylight and soon stand before the Ala Kapu ("high gate"), the residence of the Mehdi Khan, the governor, the Vezir-i-Humayun. I am conducted by a hundred servants in a procession to a rug-strewn saloon without furniture, and am requested to wait a moment, for His Excellency is in the bath, but will appear immediately. He comes, Mehdi Khan, a high official with a self-conscious and dignified demeanour. He is a man of forty years, who accompanied both Nasr-ed-din Shah and Muzaffar-ed-din Shah on their European tours, and he takes great delight in overwhelming me in my dusty dress with a whole whirlwind of his knowledge of European affairs. Among his adherents is his house-physician, Dr. Yonan, a Chaldee from Urmia, who has studied in Chicago, and interlard the conversation with a startling profusion of American learning.

However, I have more inclination for not too remote realities, and I request to be informed how many inhabitants Senjan has, and am told 50,000, a considerable