

to go home to Italy. The pleasure of re-meeting was clouded over with melancholy, for everything had changed during those twenty years. When I came out as a happy callow student of twenty years and my friends were comparatively young, life presented itself to me in bright colours, blooming as roses in Shiraz; but now everything was tame, the sky of Teheran was grey and heavy, the rosy hues had faded, and even the sun in the ancient coat-of-arms of the kingdom seemed ready to sink behind the lion's back. But that is always the way with places one sees again after long years. One leaves them in sunshine and light, one decks their remembrance in a robe of fictitious beauty, and one comes back to the dismal reality in rainy weather and beneath leaden clouds.

One of my old friends, then general and head of the Persian telegraph department, Houtum-Schindler, whom I met at Bushir in the Persian Gulf in 1886, was now Swedish consul-general in the land of the Shah, and I need not say that he overwhelmed me with kindness, and in the most unselfish manner assisted me by word and deed. No one else has crossed Persia in all directions as Schindler has,—it was part of his work at one time to reconnoitre routes for new telegraph lines, and many of these he was the first to traverse. He has written a whole library of learned treatises on Persia, and I venture to affirm with confidence that there is no one at the present time who is better acquainted with the geography of the country than he. He had already offered me his services by telegraph, not only in all that concerned the plan of my journey, but also in all practical matters such as the procuring of camels, servants, and provisions. I visited Schindler daily, and had every reason, as far as I personally was concerned, to be contented with the way in which he discharged the office of a Swedish consul-general. He showed me no end of kindness and hospitality.

For the rest—why I do not exactly know—the Swedes in Persia, that is, Hybennet and myself, were under the protection of the French legation, and therefore it was quite natural that one of my first visits should be to the French *chargé d'affaires*, Count d'Apchier, a genuine,