

highly educated, and polished Frenchman, whom I had once before met in Persia.

At the German legation, over which Count Rex had presided for eight years, I found the same pleasant hospitable reception, and made acquaintance with several eminent Germans, Dr. Herzfeld from Babylon, the physician of the legation, Dr. Loewe, and others.

Among my friends of 1890 was the Russian minister's wife, Madame de Speyer, as agreeable and winning as ever. Russia's interests in Persia, no less far-reaching than those of England, are in charge of M. Somoff, whom I was to see again three years later in the farthest east, in Söul, also accompanied by his very charming wife.

I resisted at first, but soon could not help becoming a kind of lion, without the sun, in drawing-rooms, and, whether I would or not, I was drawn into a vortex of dinners and entertainments which would not have disgraced Piccadilly or the Avenue de Jéna. Colonel Douglas, the British military *attaché*, had travelled far and wide in India and Persia, and gave me valuable instructions and advice, and a large map of the eastern parts of the country. Mr. Preece, who had been for thirty-eight years English consul-general in Ispahan, told me all he knew of the great desert in the east. I also became acquainted with the physician to the Shah, Dr. Schneider, and with the family of the customs minister, Naus, and retain none but pleasant memories of my sojourn in Teheran.

Of Persians, who during my former visits were at the height of power and honour, I found not one; all the old dignitaries had vanished with Nasr-ed-din Shah, and had been replaced by new. But of the new I met several, notably the Grand Vizier, Sadr Azam, who was hated by every one and awaited his fall.

I was burning with impatience to start on my journey, but could not think of it until my luggage arrived, and that turned up at last, badly treated by careless drivers on unmade roads. And all my preparations took time. One day at Christmas time I was told that the King of kings, Muzaffar-ed-din Shah, was ready to receive me,