

have not yet taken to the veil give promise of being beautiful some day, and their features speak of handsome mothers.

On our return home we cross the meidan again, and I watch for an opportunity of taking a view or two. It is certainly smaller than the King's Square in Teheran or Ispahan, and has an exceedingly trifling business compared with that which enlivens the centres of the larger towns; but still the market-place of Tebbes can pride itself on its genuine Oriental character, where not a breath of European influence and not a sign of foreign merchandise disturbs the perfectly uncontaminated sanctity of an oasis which is far removed from the clutches of Christian strangers. Certainly Russian and English cloth, groceries, petroleum, and stearin candles are to be found in the bazaars; and in the houses of the townspeople even chairs, tables, and porcelain lamps which hail from Western lands; but what is this compared with Teheran, where Greeks, Armenians, and other vagabonds do their dirty work, and the Oriental, careless and supine, sleeps and dreams under the influence of the foreign narcotic? No, the meidan of Tebbes is genuine, hither not a single echo of the tumult of the world penetrates, here it is pleasant to stand and watch the life, the potters' and fruit-sellers' booths, and the mats where hardware dealers sit sharpening and selling their knives. And above and without the market's frame of yellow mud houses and shops with projecting roofs of poles and wickerwork an evergreen ring of palms waves in the wind.

In the afternoon Emad-ul-Mulk came to return my visit, accompanied by a large party of gentlemen in attendance, among them a venerable Seid in a green turban, spectacles, and a snow-white beard, and the postmaster of Tebbes. They came trooping into the garden in a slow and solemn procession, so quietly and silently that it might have been a funeral cortège but for the absence of a coffin. As many as could find room were invited into the tent, and for the rest there was space enough on the grass outside. The Governor gave me a pitcher filled with dates, from which the stones had been removed and a quarter of a shelled walnut put in