



Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan Including a Summer in the Upper Karun Region and a Visit to the Nestorian Rayahs

Isabella L. Bird, Mrs. Bishop

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Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan Including a Summer in the Upper Karun Region and a Visit to the Nestorian Rayahs by Mrs. Bishop (Isabella L. Bird), Honorary Fellow of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, author of 'Six Months in the Sandwich Islands' 'Unbeaten Tracks in Japan,' Etc.

In Two Volumes--Volumes 1 and 2, with Portrait, Maps, and Illustrations

Preface

The letters of which these volumes are composed embrace the second half of journeys in the East extending over a period of two years.[1] They attempt to be a faithful record of facts and impressions, but were necessarily written in haste at the conclusion of fatiguing marches, and often in circumstances of great discomfort and difficulty, and I relied for their correction in the event of publication on notes made with much care. Unfortunately I was robbed of nearly the whole of these, partly on my last journey in Persia and partly on the Turkish frontier,--a serious loss, which must be my apology to the reader for errors which, without this misfortune, would not have occurred.

The bibliography of Persia is a very extensive one, and it may well be that I have little that is new to communicate, except on a part of Luristan previously untraversed by Europeans; but each traveller receives a different impression from those made upon his predecessors, and I hope that my book may be accepted as an honest attempt to make a popular contribution to the sum of knowledge of a country and people with which we are likely to be brought into closer relations.

As these volumes are simply travels in Persia and Eastern Asia Minor, and are not a book on either country, the references to such subjects as were not within the sphere of my observation are brief and incidental. The administration of government, the religious and legal systems, the tenure of land, and the mode of taxation are dismissed in a few lines, and social customs are only described when I came in contact with them. The Ilyats, or nomadic tribes, form a very remarkable element of the population of Persia, but I have only noticed two of their divisions--the Bakhtiari and Feili Lurs. The antiquities of Persia are also passed over with hardly a remark, as well as many other subjects, which have been "threshed out" by previous writers with more or less of accuracy.

I make these omissions with all the more satisfaction, because most that is "knowable" concerning Persia will be accessible on the publication of a work now in the Press, *Persia and the Persian Question*, by the Hon. George N. Curzon, M.P., who has not only travelled extensively in the country, but has bestowed such enormous labour and research upon it, and has had such exceptional opportunities of acquiring the latest and best official information, that his volumes may fairly be described as "exhaustive."

It is always a pleasant duty to acknowledge kindness, and I am deeply grateful to several friends for the help which they have given me in many ways, and for the trouble which some of them have taken to recover facts which were lost with my notes, as well as for the careful revision of a portion of my letters in MS. I am indebted to the Indian authorities for the materials for a sketch map, for photographs from which many of the

illustrations are taken, and for the use of a valuable geographical report, and to Mr. Thistleton Dyer, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, for the identification of a few of my botanical specimens. In justice to the many kind friends who received me into their homes, I am anxious to disclaim having either echoed or divulged their views on Persian or Turkish subjects, and to claim and accept the fullest responsibility for the opinions expressed in these pages, which, whether right or wrong, are wholly my own....continued

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Christina Webb:

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