The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan

Moriere James Justinian
THE ADVENTURES OF HAJJI BABA
Hajji bleeds the Banou.—P. 16.

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THE ADVENTURES
OF
HAJJI BABA OF ISPAHAN

BY
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WITH AN
INTRODUCTION BY THE HON. GEORGE CURZON, M.P.

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INTRODUCTION

In the first decade of the present century Persia was for a short time the pivot of the Oriental interest of English and Indian statesmen. But little known and scarcely visited during the preceding century, it suddenly and simultaneously focussed the ambitions of Russia, the apprehensions of Great Britain, the Asiatic schemes of France. The envoys of great Powers flocked to its court, and vied with each other in the magnificence of the display and the prodigality of the gifts with which they sought to attract the superb graces of its sovereign, Fath Ali Shah. Among these supplicants for the Persian alliance, then appraised at much beyond its real value, the most assiduous and also the most profuse were the British, agitated at one moment by the prospect of an Afghan invasion of India, at another by the fear of an overland march against Delhi of the combined armies of Napoleon and the Tsar. These apprehensions were equally illusory; but while they lasted they supplied the excuse for a constant stream of embassies, some from the British sovereign, others from the viceregal court at Calcutta, and were reproduced in a bewildering succession of Anglo-Persian Treaties. Sir John Malcolm, Sir Harford Jones, Sir Gore Ouseley, and Sir Henry Ellis were the plenipotentiaries who negotiated these several instruments;
and the principal coadjutor of the last three diplomats was James Justinian Morier, the author of *Hajji Baba.*

Born and nurtured in an Oriental atmosphere (though educated at Harrow), he was one of three out of four sons, whom their father, himself British Consul at Constantinople, dedicated to the Diplomatic or Consular service in Eastern Europe or in Asia. His Persian experience began when at the age of twenty-eight he accompanied Sir Harford Jones as private secretary, in 1808-1809, on that mission from the British Court direct which excited the bitter jealousy and provoked the undignified recriminations of the Indian Government. After the Treaty had been concluded, James Morier returned to England, being accompanied by the Persian envoy to the Court of St. James, who figures in this narrative as Mirza Firouz, and whose droll experiences in this country he subsequently related in the volume entitled *Hajji Baba in England.* While at home, Morier wrote the first of the two works upon Persia, and his journeys and experiences in and about that country, which, together with the writings of Sir John Malcolm, and the later publications of Sir W. Ouseley, Sir R. Ker Porter, and J. Baillie Frazer, familiarised the cultivated Englishman of the first quarter of this century with Persian history and habits to a degree far beyond that enjoyed by the corresponding Englishman of the present day. Returning to Persia with Sir Gore Ouseley in 1811-12 to assist the latter in the negotiation of a fresh Treaty, to meet the novel situation of a Franco-Russian alliance, Morier remained in Tehran as chargé d'affaires after his chief had left, and in 1814 rendered similar aid to Sir H. Ellis in the conclusion of a still further Treaty superseding that of Ouseley, which had never been ratified. After his return to England in 1815, appeared the account of his second journey. Finally, nearly ten years later, there