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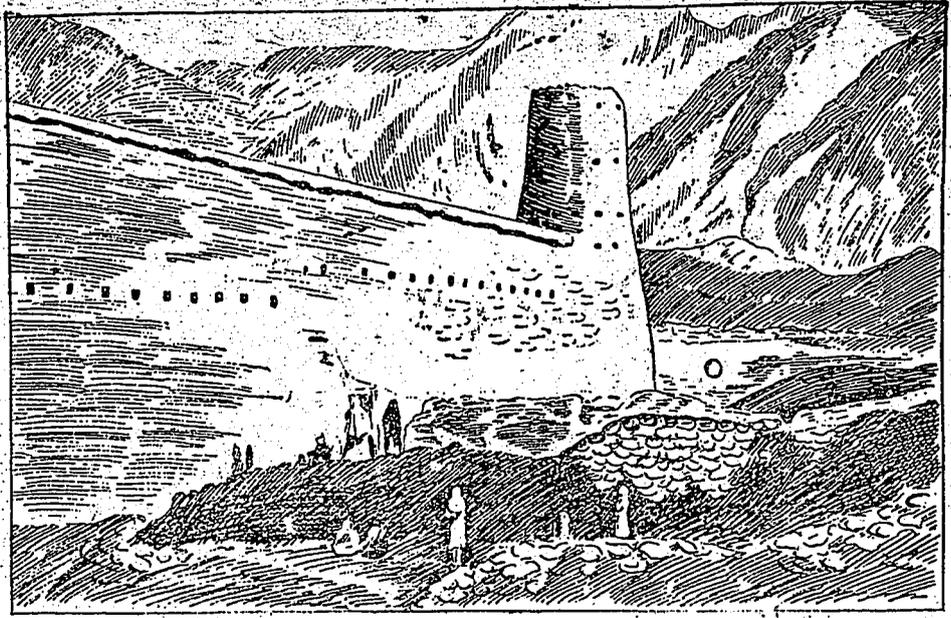
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A Holiday Among the Mountains of Persia.

(Rev. C. H. Stileman, in 'Church Missionary Gleaner.')

For three weeks Dr. Carr and I had been staying with our families at the little mountain village of Soh, about seventy miles distant from Isfahan, and at an altitude of some 7,500 feet above sea level. We heard that there was a very lovely village within a few hours' ride, so determined to go and see it, and try and get an opportunity of giving the gospel message to the people there. With the intention of avoiding the heat of the day we started shortly before five a.m. on August 8, accompanied by a Persian guide, Hyder by name, and Carapiet, an Armenian servant (who was for many years with Dr. Bruce). Our road lay through mountain gorges, for the most part very rocky and barren, ever leading us higher and higher into the mountains, and not a human being did we see, except two shepherds, going in front of and leading their flocks of sheep and goats to the pastures.

At last we reached the top of the pass after a steep climb, and my aneroid made us aware of the fact that we had reached an altitude of a little over ten thousand feet, and certainly a most magnificent view rewarded us for our toil. We were right in the very heart of the mountains, rising in grand masses all around us, with mighty peaks of 13,000 and 14,000 feet towering above us. Looking back, we had a very fine view of the mountains and rocky gorges through which we had passed, while in front of us we could see our path winding its zig-zag course down the almost precipitous side of the mountain, and visible as a narrow streak in the deep valley between 2,000 and 3,000 feet below us. The doctor and I climbed to a projecting point above the top of the pass to drink in the view and rejoice in the wonderful works of God, while our horses were having a little breathing space before attempting the descent, and then we led them slowly down the steep zigzag path for some



PERSIAN VILLAGE, SHOWING OUTER SURROUNDING WALL, WITH GRAVEYARD IN THE DISTANCE.

(Manure in foreground drying for fuel.)

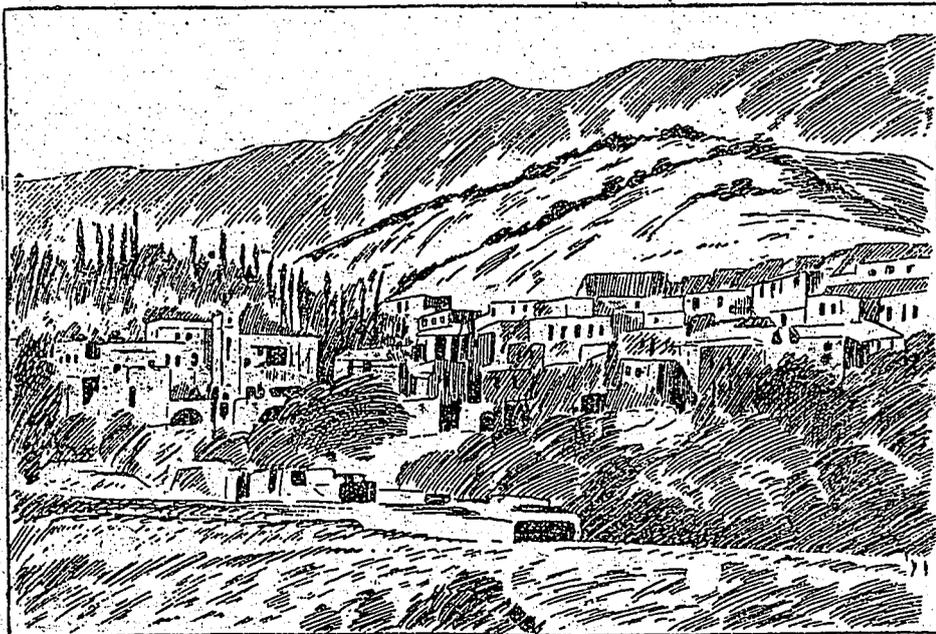
2,000 feet. The road then became less steep, but looking up it seemed absolutely impossible to ascend such a precipice, and almost impossible to believe that we had actually walked down it. From this point we went gradually lower and lower down the winding valley, until we reached a small village called Tarrih, but (as the doctor said) we did not tarry there, as our destination was further on. I, however, left copies of two of the gospels in the village, feeling quite sure that they would find their way to the hands of some one able to read. We could not stay there, as by this time the sun was getting very hot, and we still had many hours' work in front of us. We could now almost imagine ourselves in Devonshire, as we were in a well-watered, fertile valley, everything green around us, with narrow lanes passing between orchards full of ripening apples and plums and other fruit.

At last, about eleven o'clock, we reached our destination, the village of Abiana, and, threading our way through the village, dismounted under some shady walnut trees by

a rapid stream. We took up our position on the flat roof of an old mill, and while Carapiet was making ready our lunch, the villagers, young and old, came thronging round us, full of curiosity, and ready to listen to anything that we had to say to them. After a few minutes' conversation, I read St. Luke xv., and there was very quickly an eager demand and keen competition for all the gospel portions and tracts we had with us. We learned that there were already copies of the two first gospels in the village—perhaps left by Mr. Carless, who visited the place. I believe, four years ago, — and the people were very glad to receive St. Luke, St. John, and the Acts of the Apostles. The tracts, too, (from the Henry Martin Memorial Press, which is under Mr. Tisdall's able management in Julfa), proved to be very acceptable and most useful, and the titles of some of them, viz., 'The Promised Saviour,' 'The Straight Gate of the Kingdom of God,' 'Salvation, the Gift of God,' are sufficient to show that they contain much gospel truth.

Dr. Carr had brought some medicines with him, and had not long to wait for patients, who continued coming in relays all the afternoon.

When our lunch was ready some of the people went away for a time, and the rest sat round in a semi-circle to see the lions feed. They were much surprised that we could eat pressed beef, that had come all the way from Europe in a tin, and could not understand why it did not smell! The use of the knife and fork instead of our fingers, was also of course a mystery to them, and at least forty people were watching every mouthful with great interest, but were exceedingly well-behaved and kept their curiosity well within bounds. When lunch was over, the production of my watch-aneroid and compass brought our friends round us with a rush. They were greatly interested in finding that from the latter instrument I could show them exactly the direction of Mecca, to which point of the compass they of course turn whenever they say their prayers, and this gave an opportunity of pointing out that the Word of God is the



PERSIAN VILLAGE HIGH UP IN THE MOUNTAINS