

Place for the touch of beauty,
 Need for the bloom of days,
 And a house of rest
 Where our sacred best
 Is freed from blame or praise.

Care for the one-essential,
 Claim for the though sublime,
 And a treasured love
 With the God above,
 Safe from the hand of time.

Isa.

IT was in the first Khan out of Bitlis that we met Isa. The Khan was a large stone structure, the ceilings arched overhead. One half the structure served as stable where the mules and donkeys huddled together, their noses in bags. The horses had to be tied, for they were more given to fighting than their road companions. The other half of the Khan was divided into five compartments, a hallway with two rooms on each side. One was a granary. In one the Khanji boiled water and sold sugar, salt, molasses and eggs, but had neither tea nor bread. A third room was occupied by the muleteers—its one window had no panes, the stove smoked, and there was snow outside and a wind. The best room was given up to a young officer, exiled under the old regime but now returning to home and freedom; a fellow foot-passenger; the gendarme who accompanied us; my slow and faithful servant, and myself. We had ordered turkey and rice for supper; after we had waited patiently for over an hour it was brought in and the dish placed on the matting that covered the floor. The officer and I drew up our heavy coats on which we were sitting, crosslegged, on the floor. A pocket knife, two wooden spoons, fingers and an appetite played havoc on the contents of the dish. We ordered it refilled—heaped up and flowing over, and the rest of the party fell to. According to the pleasant custom of this land we—the “honorable” who paid for the food, bid every comer partake, the Khanji, some curious persons at the door and all. Some refused—for you are usually expected to refuse. But Isa was among those who did not refuse.

He was short, clad in the Russian peasant's smock and black fur cap, a Circassian by race, recently returned from Russia where he and his family had lived for years and where he had worked in the Baker oil mines and sent half his earnings to his brother in Turkey and spent the rest on himself and wife and baby boy.

“Who is this fellow, Khanji?” the officer asked.

“He's a poor Cherkey (Circassian), going the same way that you are. He waited for some one to go with him, for he is afraid of robbers.”

“Robbers? There are no robbers now. Don't you know it's liberty. What's your name, fellow?”

“Isa.”