

"Called on one of the chief Mujtehids, Haji Syud Mohsin ; found him in a room full of his friends, most of them learned men and Mollahs. He received me with very unusual kindness for a Mujtehid. He was well acquainted with the New Testament, and spent most of my 1<sup>st</sup> visit in quoting freely from the Gospels and telling his audience stories of Jesus Christ. One interpretation that he put on a saying of our Lord's amused me. He understood 'Shake off the dust from your feet' to mean 'Covet and take away nothing with you.' I presented him with a Persian Bible, and sold three Bibles, one New Testament, and some Portions to his friends. But what surprised and pleased me most was that one of his friends, a rather big Mollah, Sultan uz Zakireen, accompanied me to my lodgings and invited me to his house next day. While there he asked me for a Bible, whereupon I asked him for a Koran in return. He at once got up, took down from the shelf a very nice Koran, with translation in Persian, and gave it to me. The idea of giving the Holy Book into the unclean hands of an infidel, is abhorrent to most Mahomedan Mollahs, and I was greatly pleased. I cannot but hope that the Haji and his friends are not far from the kingdom of God. O that the word of life may be brought home to their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and be made the means of bringing them into the Kingdom !"

Four marches in the same direction carried the travellers past the slopes of Mount Elwend to Hamadan, an important town, healthily situated 6,000 feet above the sea, and the head-quarters of the Jews of Persia. Mr. Bruce's interesting account of Hezekiel Hyém, an influential Jew who was led by the Word of God alone to the conclusion that the Messiah ought to have come and been put to death while the second temple was still standing, has been given in the *Monthly Reporter* for March 1881.\*

"There are here at present forty men and fifteen women who profess to believe in Jesus Christ. Five only have been baptized, and four are regular attendants at the Protestant church and the Holy Communion. The others are afraid to come forward publicly, on account of the injustice of the Government. There are also several others in addition to these fifty-five who believe in secret, but are hindered by their relations from joining the disciples.

"Hyém is a first-rate Hebrew and Persian scholar, and would be very useful for the revision of the Old Testament. He and his wife and two children suffer dreadfully, living in an attic in the house of his rich, unbelieving father and brothers. He has been well tried for five years in the fire of affliction.

"I must bear my testimony to the exemplary character of the Rev. Shimaun, Native Pastor of the Protestant Armenian congregation in Hamadan, and to his zeal on behalf of the Jews. He and his little flock are 'a light shining in a dark place.'"

After five days in Hamadan, Mr. Bruce on November 4th turned southwards to Burugird, where he found accommodation in the caravanserai, in the room of one of his former pupils from Julfa, a Protestant Armenian.

"I was thankful to see that his consistent Christian character was much respected here. I left a supply of Persian Scriptures with him, and appointed him a corresponding agent of the Bible Society."

The next halting place was Nehavend, "a quaint old town on the side of a hill, surrounded by lofty mountains," and inhabited by a wild looking people. The hospitality shewn here was rather oppressive, as their host, the head-man of the Deputy-Governor, did not think it civil to leave them alone, but spent the day in their room with a noisy crowd, and at night entertained

\* This was given in our *Recorder* for April.