# ABOUT RUG BOOKS

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A judge at common law may be an ordinary man; a good judge of a carpet must be a genius.

Edgar Allan Poe: *Philosophy of Furniture.*

## I

WHENEVER we are hard up for amusement—as may happen even in royal Ecbatana, since Alexander went away—we turn over our rug books. Of these we have quite a collection. For the head of the house is himself a man of rugs; and when a new book about them appears, as is sure to happen once a twelve-month, the good people at home send him out a copy. I do not think he ever bought one on his own account—in English. But they help to console him for the fact that only one copy in three of *Life* or *Punch* reaches us. What can we do? Our destiny has given us to know from our youth up a quantity of simple matters which to this day remain dark to most writers of rug books. And man must laugh. At any rate, I must confess that we find it impossible to take these volumes very seriously, not even the fattest and most expensive of them, whose authors' names are pronounced in whispers by all ladies in America. They remind us too much of Babu English, and of what Persians say about our own side of the world.

There are, of course, rug books and rug books. It is not for a light-minded nomad to mock at the famous Austrian folios, at Bode, Martin, or Strzygowski, or even at Mr. J. K. Mumford. Mr. Mumford is by no means infallible. But his limitations are those of opportunity, rather than of good faith. To him alone is due, in our country, the credit of having made some sort of order out of a picturesque chaos. He inquired, he studied, he travelled; and his book remains after seventeen years the most informing that has been published in America. If he pays the penalty, so does he deserve the glory, of the pioneer. And I hereby offer him a humble tribute of respect for having blazed out a way which many followers have done almost nothing to widen.

Having acquitted one's conscience of this debt of honour, one is bound to add that if we take Mr. Mumford down, on those dark days when *Life* and *Punch* fail to turn up, it is chiefly for certain unessential items of information which he lets drop. As for the flock of which he is the spiritual father, I grant that they generally give more practical information, wherever they got it, than their cousins oversea, who love to bring forth sumptuous tomes more enlightening with regard to the myth of the Golden Fleece, or the tomb of Iouiya and Touiyou than to the knots and knottinesses of rugs. But it is hard to escape the conviction that without Mr. Mumford the names of few of these ladies and gentlemen would ever have seen print. What enables them to get away with it, as the saying so expressively goes, is the great interest in Oriental rugs which prevails in our country, and a greater ignorance of the countries from which they come. These authors have, of course, their own regroupings and emendations. But either the literature to which they contribute is a new proof of an old saying about great minds, or one recognises again and again Mr. Mumford's general plan, Mr. Mumford's facts, Mr. Mumford's textile tables, and Mr. Mumford's mistakes, down to his very quotations and turns of phrase. Or was it already an established jargon of the trade to abound in "conceits," and never to fail to say of a border stripe that it "carries" such and such a design? At all

events, whenever I come across a reference to Professor Goodyear, to Owen Jones, or to Sir George Birdwood—he who had the courage to write at the top of a learned sheaf of paper, "The Termless Antiquity of Integral Identity of the Oriental Manufacture of Sumptuary Carpets!"—I cannot help asking myself if the author knows any more of the works in question than he gleaned from the pages of Mr. Mumford. But it is not because any of them ever so much as breathe the name of their ghostly parent. "For fifteen years," says Mr. Mumford in the preface to his fourth edition, "I have persistently 'winked at "Omer" down the road,' and 'Omer' has never once 'winked back.'"

To make a complete catalogue of the misinformation which the rug fraternity hand on from one to another would need "a painful man with his pen, and as much patience as he had, who wrote the *Lives and Deaths of the Martyrs.*" A characteristic if mild example is the name Yürük, applied to a certain class of Turkish rugs and translated with astonishing unanimity by our authorities as mountaineer. Whereas the real word is Yürük; and while some mountaineers are Yürüks, all Yürüks are by no means mountaineers. For the name literally signifies a man who walks: i.e., a nomad. A more complicated case is that of the napless carpets known in Persia as *gilim** and in Turkey as *kilim*. None of the rug books seem to be aware of this simple fact, and their spellings suffer accordingly. They all mention, however, a variety which they call *kis kilim*. I, for one, have never heard of it outside a rug book or a rug shop. One reason, perhaps, is that there is no such word in Persian or Turkish as *kis*. Mr. Mumford explains a *kis kilim* as being a winter covering, thereby leading one to suspect that his informant was a Smyrniote. God has gifted the Levantine merchants of Polycarp's city with eloquent and with ingenious tongues, but not with tongues that are able to pronounce the Turkish language. *Kish kilimi* should be the true term—if it actually exists. But Mr. Mumford's followers, taking a little further counsel, inform us that a *kis kilim* is a girl rug, to which they attach an affecting history of dowries and what not. And they are equally wrong, since the word to which they refer should be *kiz*, with a vowel sound that neither a Greek nor an American can pronounce. You pays your money and you takes your choice.

Not so incorrect, perhaps, but more misleading, is a whole family of words which our authors use in classifying rugs according to their uses. Thus they tell us that the long rugs technically known as runners were originally intended for divan covers; and they make quite a story of the arrangement of an Oriental interior, dragging in the classic triclinium and fixing the places of greater and of lesser honour on rugs of different sorts. I have no doubt that Mr. Mumford has seen Turkish rooms surrounded on three sides by divans, and divans covered with runners; but I doubt very much whether he ever saw anything of the sort in Persia or other parts of the East that are farther from western influences. Nor can the allusion to the triclinium be otherwise than imaginative when the habit of the Near East is to eat on the floor, squatting about little round tables six or eight inches high. The real origin of the runner was probably in the tradition of the tent. In Persia particularly, sets of rugs are quite common, of the same pattern and colour, consisting of one large carpet, of a runner as long as the carpet is wide, and of two more runners the length of the carpet plus the width of the first runner.

*The reader is reminded that the spelling followed in this paper is that of the Royal Geographical Society. The consonants all have their customary English pronunciation, except that *c, g* and *s* never encroach upon the sounds of *k, j,* or *z*. The vowels are pronounced as in Italian, each separately and none silent. Thus the Kurdish towns Sine and Sauj Bulak have two and four syllables respectively. I use accents only to indicate the stressed syllable, borrowing the German *umlaut* for a *u* which does not exist in our language and the French circumflex for a still more unfamiliar Turkish *i*.

Such a set is called, like a team of horses, a *dasté*, literally a handful; and its purpose is for furnishing tents or rooms of different sizes with the same rugs, piecing out the carpet when necessary with the accompanying runners. Mr. Mumford's name for those runners, *makatlik*, has justly been discarded by his successors, who give them their true name, common to Turkish and Persian alike, of *kenari*. *Makatlik* may roughly be translated as sofa covering, and *kenari* as bordering—from *kenar*, edge.

As for the so-called *odjalik* or *odjaklik*, which I would correct and simplify as *ojaklik*, many descant feelingly on its place in Oriental hospitality, though no one attempts to fix its place with relation to those usually mythical divans. It means, if you insist, a hearth rug. But I question if many of them can have been made for that purpose, for the simple reason that nothing is rarer in an Oriental house than a hearth. The cooking is done when possible outside, in the open or in a detached kitchen; while for heating, fireplaces are much less popular than braziers or a device called in Persian a *kursi*, set in the middle of the room and covered with a quilt under which the family stick their legs. The Turkish name for this invention is *tandur;* and if a rug were used in connection with it, the last thing a guest would be invited to do would be to take his place thereon. At night, however, he would be given such a rug to sleep on, and perhaps another to keep himself warm withal. So most of your hearth rugs, good people, are nothing more or less than beds.

The various other words ending in *lik* which Mr. Mumford was the first to introduce are not much more trustworthy. In the first place they are all taken from the Ottoman Turkish language, and therefore do not apply to weaves from other countries. In the second place that *lik* must be accepted with discretion, being a suffix something like our own suffix—ing. *Hehbelik*, for instance, must be accepted with double discretion because it should be *heibelik* and because *heibé* alone means saddlebag—*heibelik* meaning, among other things, the material out of which saddlebags are made. And in the third place the vowel sound of that suffix undergoes variations which this is not the place to explain but which the rug books never indicate. Misleading in another way is the so-called *hammamlik*, or bath-rug; for while rugs may be found in the dressing-rooms of baths, they are never used, as the rug books state, in parts of baths where they come in contact with soap and water. Still more misleading, however, is the term *turbehlik*. It does not mean a grave rug, nor do the people of the Near East leave rugs in cemeteries. What they very frequently do is to leave rugs as votive offerings in mausoleums, which are much commoner than with us and which go in Turkish by the name of *türbé*. Thus the so-called grave rug is really identical with the so-called Mecca rug, which is often a prayer rug, but which the more discerning of our authors recognise as forming no distinct species.

The most serious of this family of errors is the one relating to the word *sedjadeh*—or *sejjadé*, as I would prefer to spell it. Mr. Mumford's disciples have improved upon him in certain minor details, but no one of them has ever yet discovered that a *sejjadé* and what they unidiomatically term a *namazlik* are both one and the same—namely, a prayer rug. This is a case where a little knowledge of Oriental languages is good for writing about matters Oriental. For *sejjadé* is derived from the Arabic root meaning worship, and by no means signifies a carpet of medium size. It may, however, be a carpet of medium size, or of the largest size. Many Turkish mosques contain huge Ushak carpets whose design consists of a multitude of pointed panels. Such a carpet is as much a *sejjadé* as a small rug of one panel. But to say of the latter that every Mohammedan carries one around with him, or so much as owns one, is absurd. If that were true, prayer rugs would be commoner

than any other kind of rug, which is far from being the case.

Of all the gibberish that has been written on this subject, it would be hard to find more crowded into one page than may be read in Dr. G. G. Lewis's *Practical Book of Oriental Rugs* (2d edition, page 321). After the usual remark about every Mohammedan possessing his own prayer rug, the author goes on to say: "By means of a small compass he spreads his rug so that the *mihrab* or niche points toward Mecca, where Mohammed's body lies. Then after removing all money and jewelry from his person, in order to appear before God in the most abject humility, he combs his beard, produces a rosary of ninety-nine beads and a dried cake of earth which came from Mecca. These he places just under the niche and then, resting his head on the earth with his hands outstretched on either side, he performs his devotions. The *mihrab* or niche on which the worshipper places his head represents the door of a mosque and reminds those who use it of the sacred mosque at Mecca." And elsewhere Dr. Lewis propounds the interesting theory that the *mihrab* "is supposed to imitate the form of the *mihrab* in the temple at Mecca" (page 121), and that the so-called comb designed on some Turkish prayer rugs is "an emblem of the Mohammedan faith to remind the devout that cleanliness is next to godliness" (page 108).

Now hardly one of these statements is true. Compasses are sometimes carried by pilgrims and travellers, but so rarely that the different directions in which they pray is one of the stock matters of pleasantry among Mohammedans. Far rarer is that precious cake of dried earth from Mecca; and the preparations for prayer have more to do with running water than with a comb, which most decidedly is not an emblem of the Mohammedan faith. Neither are you ever likely to see a rosary of ninety-nine beads —though you might see one of sixty-six beads. The common number is thirty-three; but the rosary plays no part in the rite of the prayer rug, and when used its place is in the owner's hand. Nor does he remove money and jewelry from his person unless they happen to be of gold and he happens to be extremely orthodox, which is why so many fine Oriental stones are set in silver. As for the procedure of prayer, the devotee first stands, then drops to his knees, and finally prostrates himself, repeating these three positions a different number of times according to circumstances. And the pointed panel of the prayer rug neither represents the door of a mosque nor the *mihrab* of the temple at Mecca. The temple at Mecca contains no *mihrab*, being itself the centre of the axis of the Mohammedan world. Moreover Mohammed, as it happens, is buried in Medina. What the panel of a prayer rug represents, if anything, is the *mihrab* of an ordinary mosque—a niche roughly corresponding to the altar of a church; and the finest of single-panelled rugs were made to put into such a niche. Most devotees content themselves with any kind of carpet or matting to pray on—or even their own coats, if other conveniences lack.

Do you wonder, then, that rug books are capable of affording us a kind of pleasure their authors never intended? On the whole, I think Dr. Lewis is our favourite. He is also the favourite of those who buy rug books, if one may judge from the fact that he went in two years into two editions. And his book would have deserved its title if he had only taken the trouble to make it accurate and consistent. As it is, how can we keep straight faces when he talks about Greek Mohammedans (page 222) or reveals to us that a talismanic triangle is often tattooed on a Turk's body (page 137), or says that green is a favourite colour of Persian rugmakers (page 79), or announces that a dog is considered in the Near East a sacred animal (page 110), or emits such samples of Turkish as she is spoke as *ubrech* and *sechrudisih*—for *ibrik* (pitcher) and *sichan dishi* (rat's or mouse's tooth)? The pearl of this collection, however,

is his statement that *lulé,* of all words the most mystifying to his brothers of the craft, is "a corruption of the Persian word 'roulez,' meaning 'jewel'" (page 349; cf. 163). Some Armenian rug dealer must have stuck a fluent tongue in a capacious cheek when he achieved that etymology—for I would gladly entertain the hypothesis that it did not burst from the brain of Dr. Lewis. So far as I am able to learn, there is no word in Persian which remotely resembles *roulez.* There is a word *lu'lú,* which is a less common word for pearl; and in another place Dr. Lewis provides the form *roules* with that meaning. But *lule* is no corruption of it—nor, as Mr. Mumford avers, of the French *roulez,* though he is on the right track. *Lule* is a word which both in Persian and in Turkish means pipe or tube. And it is applied not only to Bijar but to any smallish rugs which are too heavy to be folded when out of use, and are therefore rolled.

On matters of geography and spelling I am willing to touch the more lightly, knowing how far the East is from the West and how recalcitrant the English alphabet to render its own sounds, let alone those of other languages. But after all, libraries do exist, containing fairly reliable books of reference. And even in New York and Philadelphia, whence emanate most of these instructive works, there dwell orientalists of repute, who might conceivably have information to impart. Yet our authors seem to prefer to consult, if not one another, then the Armenian rug dealer around the corner, or haply some traveller returned alive from what they invariably term "the Orient." Thus we learn from Mr. W. D. Ellwanger of the most accessible region of "the Orient" that "most of the rugs of commerce in this country come from Persia, Turkey, Asia Minor, Turkestan. . . ." (*The Oriental Rug,* page 13). Is a surprised reader wrong in drawing the inference that Turkey and Asia Minor are supposed to have no connection with each other? Of the latter Dr. Lewis informs us that it is bounded "on the south by Arabia, the Mediterranean and Red Seas" (page 342). And Anatolia is usually spoken of as if it existed in some fourth dimension entirely outside the peninsula in question. Whereas the name is merely the Greek one for Asia Minor—from which the Turks derive their Anadol.

It is perhaps not unnatural that the rug-geographer becomes more involved in obscurity as he penetrates farther into "the Orient." Kurdistan, for instance, is to him a constant stumbling block—as indeed it is to most westerners, who do not readily take in the conception of that Asiatic Poland, with its loosely related semi-independent tribes living partly under Persian and partly under Turkish suzerainty, and producing within a few miles of each other such totally different weaves as the Bijar and the "Sehna." Whence does Dr. Lewis find it in him to say that "the southern part of Armenia is called Kurdistan" (page 218)? Of Persia proper I have read astounding things, of which not the least astounding is that no one but Mr. Mumford seems to recognise Iran as the name by which the Persians at this moment designate their own country, whence will appear the true beauty of giving that name, as dealers and rug books love to do, to a certain class of rugs from the province of Irak Ajemi. And even Mr. Mumford opens the preface of his fourth edition with the strange information that "the past decade has witnessed in Persia the downfall of a dynasty, and indeed of the throne itself. The oldest of empires has been for a space the newest of republics. . . ." While elsewhere (page 165) he says "that the Persian of to-day is a transplanted Turk, that the language used over the greater part of the empire is a peculiar form of Turkish, and that the pure Persian, the Iranian, is a *rara avis* in the land whose name he bears." The pure Persian is no doubt as rare a bird as the pure Italian, say, or the pure Christian. But while the reigning dy-

nasty is of Turkoman origin, and while a Turkish dialect is spoken in Azerbaijan and—to a lesser extent—in the neighbourhood of Hamadan, the vast majority of Persians neither understand it nor are transplanted Turks. Mr. Mumford's mistakes, however, usually lie in a too broad application of a particular fact. He would be incapable of announcing, like Dr. Lewis, and of twice repeating, that Laristan and Luristan are identical (pp. 202, 349, 350).

As for Turkestan and the Caucasus, they might as well be Mars and the moon. I cannot deny that the Caucasus is politically a part of Russia—though I would not stake my head on the certainty of its so remaining to the end of time. But no Russian ever made a rug, or least of all a Yürük rug, as Mr. Ellwanger seems to intimate (page 63). Nor, as the rug books inform us with wonderful unanimity, is Kazak a corruption of Cossack, the case being exactly the contrary. And if the Caucasus be Russia, so are the trans-Caspian provinces. To call them so, at any rate, would save the rug-scriveners from the No Man's Land they make of that vast and little-visited region. You would think, to read their classifications, that east of the Caspian one name is as good as another, and that it is all the same whether you say Bokhara, Merv, Khiva, Samarkand, or Turkestan.

In the finer points of orthography the rug book people are not wholly to blame for the fantastic things they do. Englishmen and Americans have always been notorious for the liberties they take with foreign names. But there is more than a suspicion of unscholarliness in the unsystematic spelling of these books, their general failure to give a key to their own pronunciation, and the importance they attribute to variant forms. Dr. Lewis perhaps expresses their general state of mind when he confides to us (page 341, note) that "in the Turkish and Persian languages the vowels are frequently silent and the characters do not stand for single consonants, but represent combinations of sounds as in shorthand, so that the same word is spelled in a great variety of ways when it is translated into English. . . ." Mark that "translated"! It is true that the Arabic alphabet is short of vowels, and that the different races who use it twist it as variously as the long-suffering Roman alphabet is twisted by the different races of Europe. But neither in Persian nor in Turkish are there shorthand combinations of consonants—unless the same thing may be said of Greek and Russian, which are richer than English in having single letters to represent such sounds as *th* or *sh*. The bottom of the matter is that neither Dr. Lewis nor anyone else will take the trouble to find out how a name is pronounced in its own country, and to choose a consistent method of rendering that name in English.

Thus it is that the author of *The Practical Book of Oriental Rugs* encumbers his pages with a quantity of so-called synonyms, which are nothing but variant—and usually very incorrect—spellings he has chanced to pick up. A case in point is the town of Elisavetpol, in the Transcaucasus, whose Tartar name of Ganjá or Genjé has caused fountains of ink to flow. Dr. Lewis calls the rugs of this district Genghis, which he directs us to pronounce Jeń-gis, giving as "synonyms" Guenja, Guendja, and Guenjes. He goes on to state that "authorities differ greatly as to the origin of the name. Some say that the proper name should be Guenja, which was the ancient name of Elizabethpol, from whence they came. Others insist that they should be called Genghis, which is the name of the tribe of Nomads living in the vicinity of Elizabethpol who weave them" (page 267). If Dr. Lewis had thought fit to consult other authorities than his predecessors in the American literature of rugs, one or two of whom relate "Genghis" to the famous Jingiz Khan, he would very easily have found out that the elusive vowel sounds of that Tartar name—which is used to this day by thousands of Caucasians—vary be-

tween *a* and *e*, and that a final *i* is a Persian and Azeri Turkish suffix of origin, equivalent to the Ottoman Turkish *li*—by which Mr. Mumford not too correctly designates a man of Hamadan. A man or a thing from Hamadan is locally termed Hanadani. And so, by a perfectly comprehensive contraction, Ganji, which, about as nearly as can be arrived at in English, is the correct form.

Of Hamadan itself Dr. Lewis gives the baroque "synonyms" Hamadie and Hamidieh. Where in the world he fished up Hamadie I cannot imagine; but Hamidieh is a Turkish adjective made out of the name Hamid, having no more to do with Hamadan than our own adjective Augustan. Diverting as his "synonyms" are, however, it is when we come to the glossary at the end of his book that the rafters of Ecbatana—well, they can hardly ring, because they are neatly encased in mud. And how should the rug-book people know any better, poor dears? Yet why should they voluntarily, and with so little pains at verification or proofreading, throw themselves to the lions? One reason is that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for an Anglo-Saxon to get it into his head that the *h* in Bokhara and Daghestan means something, and that practically every word in his Oriental vocabulary must be accented on the last syllable. To do so, at all events, would save him from such horrors as Af-ghan-is-tan, An-gó-ra, or Fer-a-ghan. Of the last I am happy to recognise that Dr. Lewis does not direct us to sound the *g*. And, after all, it is useless to attempt to reform the Anglo-Saxon world in the matter of pronouncing those two gutturals *gh* and *kh*. They are disagreeable sounds, and one must use disagreeable terms in describing them. The first is the noise you make in your throat when you gargle, while the second is the worst noise you make when you have a cold and set about clearing your throat—if you are ever so impolite as to hawk. But it will do you no harm to remember that those sounds are perfectly distinct from a simple *g* or *k*, and that letters exist to express them in the eastern as in some western languages.

All this, of course, has little to do with the serious part of rug books, which is the description and classification of rugs. And even if we in Ecbatana cannot help an occasional chuckle, we know it is not fair to chuckle too loudly about people who have not been as lucky as we. One expert, however, authoress of *Rugs in Their Native Land*, confesses that "a residence of many years in Turkey, part of the time in the far interior, offered ample opportunity to continue the study of Oriental rugs begun in America." And elsewhere she alludes to her familiarity with the language of the country (page 130). I do not like to seem rude to a lady, but I could hardly help asking myself which of the various languages of the country the lady meant when I saw how she spelled names, and when I read that *khatchli*, alias *katchli* and *hardjlie*, used in describing the so-called Princess Bokharas, is the Armenian name for cross. The Armenian name for a cross is *khach*, which might better be simplified for Anglo-Saxon readers as *hach*. The Turks, lacking such a word of their own, borrow it from the Armenians—to say nothing here of the Greeks—and on occasion add their own suffix of origin, description, or possession, *li*. *Hachli*, therefore, is a Turkish form, meaning crossed, or having a cross.

Truth further obliges me to confide in the reader that I fail to find any particular evidence of Miss or Mrs. Dunn having availed herself of the ample opportunity she mentions. She misses her chance of writing something really first-hand and personal about rugs, even in that limited part of their native land with which she is acquainted, and she repeats many of the stock misnomers which the rug books bid fair to make permanent. Thus she classes the Mosul —Musul, I am told, is the local pronunciation—among Turkish products,

and states that more rugs are made in and shipped from that district than from any other except Smyrna (pp. 86, 100). As a matter of fact, comparatively few rugs are made in the neighbourhood of Mosul, and practically none are now shipped from there—or were before the war. The sole connection that a Mosul rug has with Mosul is that a certain class of small Kurdish rugs were once collected in that city by Jewish dealers on behalf of their principals in Bagdad. Since 1900 this trade has passed to the other side of the mountains, and Hamadan is now the market for "Mosuls." They are small, loosely woven, high-piled rugs of the poorer qualities, partly from Turkish, oftener from Persian Kurdistan, and from the region around Hamadan, extending even as far east as Malayir.

There are other things about the obscure subject of Kurdistan that a lady who has lived in the far interior of Turkey might have told us. But she leaves us to gather—which is far from the fact—that the inhabitants are all of the one Dersim tribe she mentions (page 102). And she lets slip a brilliant opportunity to tell her fellow-connoisseurs what none of them except Mr. Mumford seems to suspect, that the town they oftenest name "Sehna" is purely Kurdish, being —as Sauj Bulak used to be—the capital of Persian Kurdistan, and that "Sehna" rugs are Kurdish and not Persian. With regard to her travels in remoter regions of "the Orient" our authoress maintains a discreet reticence. But we can hardly assume that they include Persia when she makes a distinction between "Kirmansha" and Kermanshah, and asserts of carpets bearing the latter name that they are made in Tebriz. I hasten to add, however, that she is by no means alone in this astonishing belief. Mr. Mumford was the first to give voice to it, and it has been followed more or less faithfully by every one of his successors whom I have consulted except Mary Beach Langton, in her little book on *How to Know Oriental Rugs* (page 78). I might add in passing that the serious student will hardly learn from Mrs. Langton how to know Oriental rugs, but that she shows other evidences of having gone outside the pages of her colleagues for her information. The truth is that Kermans, Kirmans, "Kirmanshas," and "Kermanshahs" are all one and the same. They have nothing whatever to do with either Kermanshah or Tebriz, except that the modern industry in Tebriz was started by weavers from Kerman—or Kirman; I frankly confess that I have been unable to find out which is the more accurate rendering of that elusive vowel sound—who imported their own designs and methods of work. The Tebrizis, in turn, have influenced the modern output of Meshed. As for Kermanshah, it is hardly an exaggeration to affirm that no rugs are or ever were made there. The name grew out of the ignorance or perverted ingenuity of dealers, who knew nothing about so remote a town as Kerman, who were confused by its similarity to the name of Kermanshah, and whose romantic eyes were attracted by the termination of the latter. A "Kermanshah" is merely a better example of a modern Kerman. And when the rug is unusually big, and the dealer wishes to be unusually impressive, he pronounces it, out of the magniloquence of his own Levantine heart, a "royal Kermanshah." A precisely similar case is that of the so-called royal or princess "Bokharas" —which, as it happens, do not come from Bokhara.

Eliza Dunn makes a less pardonable confusion, and one that I do not recollect having encountered elsewhere, when she speaks of "Meshed or Muskabad" (pp. 103, 117). Meshed and Muskabad, or Mushkabad, are, in Persia, very nearly as far as the East is from the West. For Meshed is Meshed, while Mushkabad is Sultanabad—of the better classes. Mushkabad was the name of a town between Kum and Sultanabad which the long-bearded Fat'h Ali Shah destroyed about a hundred years ago, and Sultanabad is its modern successor.

Eliza Dunn might be surprised to hear that most modern Saruks are woven in the latter place.

I am delighted to give this lady the credit of recognising that the so-called Bokhara rugs are really Turkoman. But otherwise she does nothing to dispel the haze of ignorance that makes possible so preposterous a misnomer as "Khiva Bokhara." A Khiva Bokhara rug means just about as much as a Boston New York one, and it is time the rug people had the courage to say so. Our authoress runs the gauntlet of a certain proverb about a little knowledge when she asserts that the Turkoman "prayer rugs are called Tekke from their use in Tekkes or places of worship" (page 132), apparently oblivious to the fact that there are in Transcaspia tribes of Akhal Tekke, Merv Tekke, and heaven only knows how many other kinds of Tekke Turkomans. In the matter of Beluchistan, again, she veers a point nearer the truth than most of her fellow scribes, who outdo each other in moving descriptions of the hot and arid homeland of Beluch rugs. I do not pretend myself to know anything about Beluchistan, or whether rugs are made in any part of it. I do know, however, that most of the Beluch rugs of commerce, if not all, come neither from Beluchistan nor, as Eliza Dunn states, from Kerman, but from Khorasan. They are woven by nomad Beluchis who pitch their black tents in the lower part of that province. The two chief markets for them are Birjand, the capital of that region and now an important centre of rug weaving, and Turbat-Haidari, some ninety miles south of Meshed—not to be confused with another Turbat nearer the Afghan border. In the Asiatic trade these rugs are rightly called Beluch. The other two syllables are added by logical-minded westerners jumping at conclusions.

*(To be concluded.)*