



The LAFAYETTE

A L U M N U S . .



Cooper Hutchison, '18,
Lafayette's new president
see page 4.

•
MAY 1945

Ancient and Fabulous Iran¹ As That Country Is Today

WALTER A. GROVES, '19

TO Lafayette Alumni Iran needs no introduction. Lafayette-in-Perisa, under the leadership of S. M. Jordan, '95, assisted by a dozen other Lafayette graduates over the years, is a tradition which it is hoped may again become a living one. Those who remember Lafayette-in-Persia² will be interested in what has been happening in Iran since that work came to an end in 1940.³

When war broke out in Europe in 1939 Iranians knew that it was only a question of time till her land should become involved. In the early days of the war, under her dictator king, Reza Shah Pahlevi,⁴ she tried to maintain her traditional role of playing Russia against Britain. As long as the Bear was an ally of Germany there was some hope of success, but when, in 1941, Germany declared war against her erstwhile partner such a policy could no longer be continued. Iran's situation was further complicated by the fact that prior to 1939 and following, a great number of German "engineers" had immigrated to Iran. Conservative estimates in June of 1940 placed their number in Teheran, the capital city, at better than three thousand. Such a situation on the borders of India and Russia, particularly in view of the precarious position of the British in Egypt and the Russians at Stalingrad, could not be tolerated so that in the last week of August, 1941, British and Russian troops invaded the country from the west

¹ In the early '30's the Persian Government decreed that the country should be known as Iran. Following the return of constitutional government in 1941 the Foreign Office announced that the name Persia would again be permitted.

² "Lafayette-in-Persia" was, at first, officially known as the American College of Teheran. This was later changed to Alborz College of Teheran, Alborz being the name of the mountains to the north of the city and which formed the beautiful background for the College campus.

³ By the order of the late Shah in the summer of 1939 the Minister of Education was ordered to purchase and operate all foreign schools. Negotiations affecting this royal decree were completed in the summer of 1940 when the Iranian government took over.

⁴ Reza Shah Pahlevi, minister of war 1921-1926, king 1926-1941, died in exile, summer of 1944.

and north, in order to remove this menace of German infiltration from the rear, and also in order to prepare for a retreat into Iran should that become necessary.

The resistance which these troops of Britain and Russia met, could not even be called "token resistance." The Iranian army upon which the king had spent the greater part of the country's resources for twenty years was so saturated with graft, intrigue, and fear that the troops in the field were utterly without instructions, nor could they obtain any, from their headquarters.

This military debacle was a sad blow to many, and yet those aware of the real situation could not have been surprised. The entire military structure, for all the expenditure, consisted of little more than window dressing. One illustration will suffice. The writer knows of a regiment that was issued water canteens which were metal only on the side that hung away from the body, and which was visible on the parade ground. The side of the canteen that hung next to the body was cloth! In such ways did the army contractors and their friends line their pockets. Repeat such an item many times and it becomes evident at once why British and Russian troops met such futile resistance as they did in August, 1941.

Thus the King, not only could not offer any resistance to the invaders, but he was also equally powerless, without foreign help, to enforce the demands that the German "engineers" be required to leave his country. Therefore, within three weeks of the invasion the old king abdicated in favor of his son, Mohammed Reza. This son is remembered as the Crown Prince who married the young Egyptian princess, Fozieh, the sister of present ruler of Egypt, early in 1939.

The new king took steps at once to make the best of a bad situation. With the help of the Allies the Germans were removed, either being forced to flee, or placed under arrest. Constitutional government was restored. A new parliament was elected. Freedom of the press was granted, and newspapers of

all description sprang up all over the place, almost overnight. Embryonic political parties representing all manner of political opinion were organized. At the elections real people actually cast their votes. Some, who had lived in the country for the twenty years prior to 1941, had played a little game for their own amusement trying to find anyone who ever knew anyone who had ever voted in the elections which were reported periodically in the Government-controlled press. None ever got a positive answer. Not only were none found who had ever voted, none were found who even knew a voter. That situation has now been done away with.

The young king, without doubt, is in entire sympathy with this program of his government, and is probably the instigator in large measure. The ten or more important years of his life prior to his twentieth birthday were spent in school in democratic Switzerland. A recent incident in connection with the education of two younger half-brothers at the American University of Beirut indicates his attitude. These lads attempted to presume on their royal prerogatives at this American institution whereupon the King gave the university authorities instructions to see that the seats of the royal pants of his younger brothers be properly heated.

The entrance of Allied troops revealed not only the weakness of the military force of Iran, but with the overthrow of the old king's government the weakness of its economic structure also was revealed. Government expenditures had been increased many fold without any increase in national production to balance against these expenditures.

A serious complicating element was the food situation. Food, always at a dangerous level in Iran, was not sufficient to supply the Allied armies that entered the country. Bread riots began to be reported, the most serious of which occurred in Teheran. From the beginning, however, the new government was determined to bring the situation under control. Dr. A. C. Millspaugh of the Brookings Institute of Washington, D.C., who had done such an excellent job in reorganizing Iranian finances in the five-year period between 1922 and 1927, was invited back again to do a similar job. With Dr. Millspaugh there went specialists in food administration, transporta-

tion, industrial organization, agriculture, irrigation, petroleum, and public health. These men were given unlimited powers so that they would be able to effect not merely stop-gap measures, but lay plans for total reconstruction.

And yet in spite of all for the past three years the cards have been stacked against the people of this ancient land in that the food shortages are continued and serious. As already mentioned a serious factor in the situation is the presence of foreign troops in large numbers. They entered the country originally to eliminate a very serious threat from Germany. But as lend-lease aid from the United States to Russia became a serious factor in the prosecution of the war troops of Britain, Russia, and the United States were necessary to forward this vast quantity of material across Iran. She occupied a "pivotal sector" in the route over which these supplies had to pass. The support of these troops has confronted Iran with its serious problem. That these armies paid for what they used was of no use for their purchases simply increased shortages and aggravated inflation.⁵ For three winters now famine and disease have ravaged the country. Fantastic prices are demanded for ordinary necessities. Nor has the partitioning of the country into zones of influence helped the situation, for the system of controls between these zones has been so rigid that no wheat has been allowed to pass from northern Iran, where most of it is grown to the southern section of the country which includes the capital, Teheran, and the greater area and population. Such a situation has meant that Iran was absolutely helpless to solve her own problem. Fortunately there is the good report which has recently reached this country that these restrictions between north and south have been removed. That should mean relief for the coming winter.

The turn of the war during the present year should also provide relief for Iran in many directions. The Iranian government has taken steps to see that the thousands of American dollars which our troops are spending each month in Iran stay out of the pockets of profiteers.

⁵ The American Army imports every item of its needs from this country, even down to salt and pepper, though the salt mines of Iran could probably supply that article in abundance.

Though the American Army, in accord with its established policy imports all its needs, nonetheless such items as the work of construction, the employment of Iranian personnel, and the soldier's personal expenditures for the usual souvenirs, mean that a sizable amount of American currency is pouring into the country every month. The Army is aiding the Iranian government in the control of exchange to prevent currency inflation by seeing to it that "G.I. Joe" gets the Iranian money that he needs through the regular channels rather than the black markets.

But Iran will not be able to get at a real solution of her basic food problem until additional food is either shipped in from the outside, or until all Allied troops are with-



WALTER A. GROVES, '19, Ph.D.

In March, 1944, Dr. Groves received Iran's highest honorary award, the Scientific Decoration, First Class, for his 15 years of work in education in that country. He served as Missionary and Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Alborz College 1925-1940 and for the last nine years served also as Dean. Two other Lafayette men, Dr. Arthur C. Boyce, '07, and Dr. Samuel Jordan, '95, have received this high honor which has been bestowed upon not more than four or five other foreigners.

Following his graduation from Lafayette with a Phi Beta Kappa key he earned his Th.B. and M.A. degrees at Princeton and returned to Lafayette for two years as an instructor in History and Bible and then studied for a Ph.D. degree which he received in 1925 from the U. of P. On his return from Iran in 1940 he was appointed to the faculty of Center College and after two years became professor of Doctrinal Theology at the Louisville Seminary, a position he now holds.

He and his wife and four children have their home in Louisville. He is a member of many societies and is still keenly interested in Alborz College serving as treasurer of the trustees of that college until the college itself can be reopened.

drawn. The latter is the obvious step. When this is done the work already started by the Government, under the advice and direction of this corps of American administrators is bound to result in a greatly strengthened nation. In addition to the kind of leadership under Dr. Millspaugh already mentioned, Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf, former director of rural police in the state of New Jersey, and a leading authority in this field, has been in Iran now for several years organizing and directing the Iranian Gendarmerie. American Army officers are helping prepare the Iranian army to take over in their country when American, British, and Russian troops leave. The government plans to bring an educational mission from the United States to survey their educational institutions and make recommendations for their recommendation.

Many of these plans are still in the advisory stage, and until the man in the street sees bread for his children and himself, he is bound to regard much of it with doubt and misgiving, yet once the pledge of economic help to Iran made at the Teheran Conference in December, 1943, becomes an actuality those attitudes will change, and there is evidence already that that pledge is being kept.

No one can fail to note the place which America through some of her very able representatives is playing in the reconstruction in Iran. They are there at Iran's own invitation. Nor is this a new situation as the Shuster Mission of 1912 and the Millspaugh Mission of 1922-1927 testify. It is not an exaggeration to say that the main instrument in creating this good will that has caused Iran throughout the years to turn to the United States for friendly advice and assistance has been the college at Teheran where so many Lafayette alumni have worked. Many will be interested in learning that Dr. S. M. Jordan, '95, returned just recently from a visit to Iran, the country where he spent forty-two years of his life as President of Alborz College of Teheran. Ever since the new government came into office in 1941 there has been repeated demand in the press and elsewhere that the College be reopened. It is that question which is now under consideration. This educational job in Iran may prove to be Lafayette's opportunity to assume its share in Christian post-war reconstruction.