The Dawn-Breakers (1970)

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THE DAWN-BREAKERS
NABIL'S NARRATIVE OF THE
EARLY DAYS OF THE BAHA'I REVELATION

"I stand, life in hand, ready; that perchance, through God's loving-kindness and grace, this revealed and manifest Letter may lay down his life as a sacrifice in the path of the Primal Point, the Most Exalted Word."—.BAHA'U'LLAH.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL PERSIAN
AND EDITED BY SHOGHI EFFENDI

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CHAPTER I
THE MISSION OF SHAYKH AHMAD-I-AHSA'I

[1] At a time when the shining reality of the Faith of Muhammad had been obscured by the ignorance, the fanaticism, and perversity of the contending sects into which it had fallen, there appeared above the horizon of the East1 that luminous Star of Divine guidance, Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i.2 He observed how those who professed the Faith of Islam had shattered its unity, sapped its force, perverted its purpose, and degraded its holy name.

His soul was filled with anguish at the sight of the corruption and strife which characterised the shi'ah sect of Islam.

Inspired by the light that shone within him,3 he arose with unerring vision, with fixed purpose, and sublime detachment to utter his protest against the betrayal of the Faith by that ignoble people.

Aglow with zeal and conscious of the sublimity of his calling, he vehemently appealed not only to shi'ah Islam but to all the followers of Muhammad throughout [2] the East, to awaken from the slumber of negligence and to prepare the way for Him who must needs be made manifest in the fulness of time, whose light alone could dissipate the mists of prejudice and ignorance which had enveloped that Faith.

Forsaking his home and kindred, on one of the islands of Bahrayn, to the south of the Persian Gulf, he set out, as bidden by an almighty Providence, to unravel the mysteries of those verses of Islamic Scriptures which foreshadowed the advent of a new Manifestation.

He was well aware of the dangers and perils that beset his path; he fully realised the crushing responsibility of his task.

There burned in his soul the conviction that no reform, however drastic, within

the Faith of Islam, could achieve the regeneration of this perverse people.

He knew, and was destined by the Will of God to demonstrate, that nothing short of a new and independent Revelation, as attested and foreshadowed by the sacred Scriptures of Islam, could revive the fortunes and restore the purity of that decadent Faith.4

Bereft of all earthly possessions, and detached from all save God, he, in the early days of the thirteenth century of the Hegirah, when forty years of age, arose to dedicate the remaining days of his life to the task he felt impelled to shoulder. He first proceeded to Najaf and Karbila,5 where in a few years he acquired familiarity with the prevailing thoughts and standards current among the learned men of Islam. There he came to be recognised as one of the authorised expounders of the Islamic Holy Writ, was declared a mujtahid, and soon obtained an ascendancy over the rest of his colleagues, who either visited or were residing in those holy cities. These came to regard him as one initiated into the mysteries of Divine Revelation, and qualified to unravel the abstruse utterances of Muhammad and of the imams of the Faith. As his influence increased, and the scope of his [3] authority widened, he found himself besieged on every side by an ever-increasing number of devoted enquirers who asked to be enlightened regarding the intricacies of the Faith, all of which he ably and fully expounded. By his knowledge and fearlessness he struck terror to the hearts of the Sufis and Neo-Platonists and other kindred schools of thought,6

who envied his learning and feared his ruthlessness. Thereby he acquired added favour in the eyes of those learned divines, who looked upon these sects as the disseminators of obscure and heretical doctrines. Yet, great as was his fame and universal as was the esteem in which he was regarded, he despised all the honours which his admirers lavished upon him. He marvelled at their servile devotion to dignity and rank, and refused resolutely to associate himself with the objects of their pursuits and desires.

[4] Having achieved his purpose in those cities, and inhaling the fragrance which wafted upon him from Persia, he felt in his heart an irrepressible yearning to hasten to that country.

He concealed from his friends, however, the real motive that impelled him to direct his steps towards that land.

By way of the Persian Gulf, he hastened unto the land of his heart's desire, ostensibly for the purpose of visiting the shrine of the Imam Rida in Mashhad.7 He was filled with eagerness to unburden his soul, and searched zealously for those to whom he could deliver the secret which to no one he had as yet divulged.

Upon his arrival at Shiraz, the city which enshrined that concealed Treasure of God, and from which the voice of the Herald of a new Manifestation was destined to be proclaimed, he repaired to the Masjid-i-Jum'ih, a mosque which in its style and shape bore a striking resemblance to the holy shrine of Mecca.

Many a time did he, whilst gazing upon that edifice, observe: "Verily, this house of God betokens such signs as only those who are endowed with understanding can perceive.

Methinks he who conceived and built it was inspired of God."8 How often and how passionately he extolled that city!

Such was the praise he lavished upon it that his hearers, who were only too familiar with its mediocrity, were astonished at the tone of his language. "Wonder not," he said to those who were surprised, "for ere long the secret of my words will be made manifest to you.

Among [5] you there shall be a number who will live to behold the glory of a Day which the prophets of old have yearned to witness."

So great was his authority in the eyes of the ulamas who met and conversed with him, that they professed themselves incapable of comprehending the meaning of his mysterious allusions and ascribed their failure to their own deficient understanding.

Having sown the seeds of Divine knowledge in the hearts of those whom he found receptive to his call, Shaykh Ahmad set out for Yazd, where he tarried awhile, engaged continually in the dissemination of such truths as he felt urged to reveal. Most of his books and epistles were written in that city.9 Such was the fame he acquired,10 that the ruler of Persia, Fath-'Ali Shah, was moved to address to him from Tihran a written message,11 calling upon him to explain certain specific questions related to the abstruse teachings of the Muslim Faith, the meaning of which the leading ulamas of his realm had been unable to unfold. To this he readily answered in the form of an epistle to which he gave the name of "Risaliy-i-Sultaniyyih." The Shah was so pleased with the tone and subject matter of that epistle that he forthwith sent him a second message, this time extending to him an invitation to visit his court. Replying to this second imperial message,

[7] he wrote the following: "As I had intended ever since my departure from Najaf and Karbila to visit and pay my homage to the shrine of the Imam Rida in Mashhad, I venture to hope that your Imperial Majesty will graciously allow me to fulfil the vow which I have made. Later on, God willing, it is my hope and purpose to avail myself of the honour which your Imperial Majesty has deigned to confer upon me."

Among those who, in the city of Yazd, were awakened by the message of that bearer of the light of God, was Haji 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, a man of great piety, upright and God-fearing.

He visited Shaykh Ahmad each day in the company of a certain Mulla 'Abdu'l-Khaliq-i-Yazdi, who was noted for his authority and learning.

On certain occasions, however, in order to talk confidentially with 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, Shaykh Ahmad, to the great surprise of the learned 'Abdu'l-Khaliq, would ask him to retire from his presence and leave him alone

with his chosen and favoured disciple.

This marked preference shown to so modest and illiterate a man as 'Abdu'l-Vahhab was a cause of great surprise to his companion, who was only too conscious of his own superiority and attainments.

Later, however, when Shaykh Ahmad had departed from Yazd, 'Abdu'l-Vahhab retired from the society of men and came to be regarded as a Sufi.

By the orthodox leaders of that community, however, such as the Ni'matu'llahi and Dhahabi, he was denounced as an intruder and was suspected of a desire to rob them of their leadership. 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, for whom the Sufi doctrine had no special attraction, scorned their false imputations and shunned their society.

He associated with none except Haji Hasan-i-Nayini, whom he had chosen as his intimate friend and to whom he confided the secret with which he had been entrusted by his master.

When 'Abdu'l-Vahhab died, this friend, following his example, continued to pursue the path which he had directed him to tread, and announced to every receptive soul the tidings of God's fast-approaching Revelation.

[8] Mirza Mahmud-i-Qamsari, whom I met in Kashan, and who at that time was an old man over ninety years of age and was greatly beloved and revered by all those who knew him, related to me the following story: "I recall when in my youth, at the time when I was living in Kashan, I heard of a certain man in Nayin who had arisen to announce the tidings of a new Revelation, and under whose spell fell all who heard him, whether scholars, officials of the government, or the uneducated among the people.

His influence was such that those who came in contact with him renounced the world and despised its riches.

Curious to ascertain the truth, I proceeded, unsuspected by my friends, to Nayin, where I was able to verify the statements that were current about him.

His radiant countenance bespoke the light that had been kindled in his soul.

I heard him, one day, after he had offered his morning prayer, speak words such as these: 'Ere long will the earth be turned into a paradise.

Ere long will Persia be made the shrine round which will circle the peoples of the earth.' One morning, at the hour of dawn, I found him fallen upon his face, repeating in wrapt devotion the words 'Allah-u-Akbar.'12 To my great surprise he turned to me and said: 'That which I have been announcing to you is now revealed.

At this very hour the light of the promised One has broken and is shedding illumination upon the world.

O Mahmud, verily I say, you shall live to behold that Day of days.' The words which that holy man addressed to me kept ringing in my ears until the day when, in the year sixty, I was privileged to hear the Call that arose from Shiraz.

I was, alas, unable, because of my infirmities, to hasten to that city.

Later, when the Bab, the herald of the new Revelation, arrived in Kashan and for three nights lived as a guest in the house of Haji Mirza Jani, I was unaware of His visit and so missed the honour of attaining His presence.

Sometime afterwards, whilst conversing with the followers of the Faith, I was informed that the birthday of the Bab fell on the first day of the month of Muharram of the year 1235 A.H.13 I realised that the day to which Haji Hasan-i-Nayini had referred did not correspond with this date, that there was actually a difference of two years between them.

This thought [9] sorely perplexed me.

Long after, however, I met a certain Haji Mirza Kamalu'd-Din-i-Naraqi, who announced to me the Revelation of Baha'u'llah in Baghdad, and who shared with me a number of verses from the 'Qasidiy-i-Varqa'iyyih' as well as certain passages of the Persian and Arabic 'Hidden Words.' I was moved to the depths of my soul as I heard him recite those sacred words.

The following I still vividly remember: 'O Son of Being!

Thy heart is my home; sanctify it for my descent.

Thy spirit is my place of revelation; cleanse it for my manifestation.

O Son of Earth!

Wouldst thou have me, seek none other than me; and wouldst thou gaze upon my beauty, close thine eyes to the world and all that is therein; for my will and the will of another than I, even as fire and water, cannot dwell together in one heart.' I asked him the date of the birth of Baha'u'llah. 'The dawn of the second day of Muharram,' he replied, 'of the year 1233 A.H.'14 I immediately remembered the words of Haji Hasan and recalled the day on which they were spoken.

Instinctively I fell prostrate on the ground and exclaimed: 'Glorified art Thou, O my God, for having enabled me to attain unto this promised Day.

If now I be called to Thee, I die content and assured.'"

That very year, the year 1274 A.H.,15 that venerable and radiant soul yielded his spirit to God.

This account which I heard from the lips of Mirza Mahmud-i-Qamsari himself, and which is still current amongst the people, is assuredly a compelling evidence of the perspicacity of the late Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i and bears eloquent testimony to the influence he exercised upon his immediate disciples. The promise he gave them was eventually fulfilled, and the mystery with which he fired their souls was unfolded in all its glory.

During those days when Shaykh Ahmad was preparing to depart from Yazd, Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti,16 that other luminary of Divine guidance, set out from his native province of Gilan with the object of visiting Shaykh Ahmad, ere the [10]

latter undertook his pilgrimage to Khurasan. In the course of his first interview with him, Shaykh Ahmad spoke these words: "I welcome you, O my friend! How long and how eagerly have I waited for you to come and deliver me from the arrogance of this perverse people! I am oppressed by the shamelessness of their acts and the depravity of their character. 'Verily, We proposed to the heavens, and to the earth, and to the mountains, to receive the trust of God, but they refused the burden, and they feared to receive it. Man undertook to bear it; and he, verily, hath proved unjust, ignorant.'"

This Siyyid Kazim had already, from his early boyhood, shown signs of remarkable intellectual power and spiritual insight. He was unique among those of his own rank and age. At the age of eleven, he had committed to memory the whole of the Qur'an. At the age of fourteen, he had learned by heart a prodigious number of prayers and recognised traditions of Muhammad. At the age of eighteen, he had composed a commentary on a verse of the Qur'an known as the Ayatu'l-Kursi, which had excited the wonder and the admiration of the most learned of his day. His piety, the gentleness of his character, and his humility were such that all who knew him, whether young or old, were profoundly impressed.

In the year 1231 A.H.,17 when only twenty-two years old, he, forsaking home, kindred, and friends, departed from Gilan, intent upon attaining the presence of him who had so nobly arisen to announce the approaching dawn of a Divine Revelation. He had been in the company of Shaykh Ahmad for only a few weeks, when the latter, turning to him one day, addressed him in these words: "Remain in your house and cease attending my lectures. Such of my disciples as may feel perplexed will turn henceforth to you, and will seek to obtain from you directly whatsoever assistance they may require. You will, through the knowledge which the Lord your God has bestowed upon you, resolve their problems and tranquillise [11] their hearts. By the power of your utterance you will help to revive the sorely neglected Faith of Muhammad, your illustrious ancestor." These words addressed to Siyyid Kazim excited the resentment and kindled the envy of the prominent disciples of Shaykh Ahmad, among whom figured Mulla Muhammad-i-Mamaqani and Mulla 'Abdu'l-Khaliq-i-Yazdi. So compelling was the dignity of Siyyid Kazim, however, and so remarkable were the evidences of his knowledge and wisdom, that these disciples were awed and felt compelled to submit.

Shaykh Ahmad, having thus committed his disciples to the care of Siyyid Kazim, left for Khurasan. There he tarried awhile, in the close vicinity of the holy shrine of the Imam

[12] Rida in Mashhad. Within its precincts he pursued with undiminished zest the course of his labours. By resolving the intricacies that agitated the minds of the seekers, he continued to prepare the way for the advent of the coming Manifestation. In that city he became increasingly conscious that the Day which was to witness the birth of the promised One could not be far distant. The promised hour, he felt, was fast approaching. From the direction of Nur, in the

province of Mazindaran, he was able to perceive the first glimmerings that heralded the dawn of the promised Dispensation. To him the Revelation foreshadowed in these following traditional utterances was at hand: "Ere long shall ye behold the countenance of your Lord resplendent as the moon in its full glory. And yet, ye shall fail to unite in acknowledging His truth and embracing His Faith." And "One of the most mighty signs that shall signalise the advent of the promised Hour is this: 'A woman shall give birth to One who shall be her Lord.'"

Shaykh Ahmad therefore set his face towards Nur and, accompanied by Siyyid Kazim and a number of his distinguished disciples, proceeded to Tihran.

The Shah of Persia, being informed of the approach of Shaykh Ahmad to his capital, commanded the dignitaries and officials of Tihran to go out to meet him.

He directed them to extend a cordial expression of welcome on his behalf.

The distinguished visitor and his companions were royally entertained by the Shah, who visited him in person and declared him to be "the glory of his nation and an ornament to his people."18 In those days, there was born a Child in an ancient and noble family of Nur,19 whose father was Mirza 'Abbas, better known as Mirza Buzurg, a favoured minister of the Crown.

That Child was Baha'u'llah.20 At the hour of dawn, on the second day [13] of Muharram, in the year 1233 A.H.,21 the world, unaware of its significance, witnessed the birth of Him who was destined to confer upon it such incalculable blessings.

Shaykh Ahmad, who recognised in its full measure the meaning of this auspicious event, yearned to spend the remaining days of his life within the precincts of the court of this Divine, this new-born King.

But this was not to be.

His thirst unallayed, and his yearning unsatisfied, he felt compelled to submit to God's irrevocable decree, and, turning his face away from the city of his Beloved, proceeded to Kirmanshah.

The governor of Kirmanshah, Prince Muhammad-'Ali Mirza, the Shah's eldest son and the ablest member of his house, had already begged permission of his Imperial Majesty to enable him to entertain and serve in person Shaykh Ahmad.22 So favoured was the Prince in the eyes of the Shah, that his request was immediately granted. Wholly resigned to his destiny, Shaykh Ahmad bade farewell to Tihran. Ere his departure from that city, he breathed a prayer that this hidden Treasure of God, now born amongst his countrymen, might be preserved and cherished by them, that they might recognise the full measure of His blessedness and glory, and might be enabled to proclaim His excellence to all nations and peoples.

Upon his arrival in Kirmanshah, Shaykh Ahmad decided to select a number of the most receptive from among his shi'ah disciples, and, by devoting his special

attention to their enlightenment, to enable them to become the active supporters of the Cause of the promised Revelation. In the series of books and epistles which he undertook to write, among which figures his well-known work Sharhu'z-Ziyarih, he extolled in clear and vivid language the virtues of the imams of the Faith, and laid special stress upon the allusions which they had made to the coming of the promised One. By his repeated references to Husayn, he meant, however, none other than the Husayn who was yet to be revealed; and by his allusions to the ever-recurrent name 'Ali, he intended not the [14] 'Ali who had been slain, but the 'Ali recently born. To those who questioned him regarding the signs that must needs herald the advent of the Qa'im, he emphatically asserted the inevitableness of the promised Dispensation. In the very year the Bab was born, Shaykh Ahmad suffered the loss of his son, whose name was Shaykh 'Ali. To his disciples who mourned his loss he spoke these words of comfort: "Grieve not, O my friends, for I have offered up my son, my own 'Ali, as a sacrifice for the 'Ali whose advent we all await. To this end have I reared and prepared him."

The Bab, whose name was 'Ali-Muhammad, was born in Shiraz, on the first of Muharram, in the year 1235 A.H. He was the descendant of a house renowned for its nobility, which traced its origin to Muhammad Himself. His father, Siyyid Muhammad-Rida, as well as His mother, were descendants of the Prophet, and belonged to families of recognised standing. The date of His birth confirmed the truth of the saying attributed to the Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful: "I am two years younger than my Lord." The mystery of this utterance, however, remained unrevealed except to those who sought and recognised the truth of the new Revelation. It was He, the Bab, who, in His first, His most weighty and exalted Book, revealed this passage concerning Baha'u'llah: "O Thou Remnant of God! I have sacrificed Myself wholly for Thee; I have consented to be cursed for Thy sake; and have yearned for naught but martyrdom in the path of Thy love. Sufficient witness unto Me is God, the Exalted, the Protector, the Ancient of Days!"

While Shaykh Ahmad was sojourning in Kirmanshah, he received so many evidences of ardent devotion from Prince Muhammad-'Ali Mirza that on one occasion he was moved to refer to the Prince in such terms: "Muhammad-'Ali I regard as my own son, though he be a descendant of Fath-'Ali."

A considerable number of seekers and disciples thronged his house and eagerly attended his lectures.

To none, however, did he feel inclined to show the consideration and affectionate regard which characterised his attitude towards Siyyid Kazim.

He seemed to have singled him out from among the multitude that crowded to see him, and to be preparing him to carry on with undiminished vigour his work after his death.

One [15] of his disciples, one day, questioned Shaykh Ahmad concerning the Word which the promised One is expected to utter in the fulness of time, a Word so appallingly tremendous that the three hundred and thirteen chiefs and nobles of

the earth would each and all flee in consternation as if overwhelmed by its stupendous weight.

To him Shaykh Ahmad replied: "How can you presume to sustain the weight of the Word which the chieftains of the earth are incapable of bearing?

Seek not to gratify an impossible desire.

Cease asking me this question, and beseech forgiveness from God."

That presumptuous questioner again pressed him to disclose the nature of that Word.

At last Shaykh Ahmad replied: "Were you to attain that Day, were you to be told to repudiate the guardianship of 'Ali and to denounce its validity, what would you say?" "God forbid!" he exclaimed. "Such things can never be.

That such words should proceed out of the mouth of the promised One is to me inconceivable."

How grievous the mistake he made, and how pitiful his plight!

His faith was weighed in the balance, and was found wanting, inasmuch as he failed to recognise that He who must needs be made manifest is endowed with that sovereign power which no man dare question.

His is the right "to command whatsoever He willeth, and to decree that which He pleaseth."

Whoever hesitates, whoever, though it be for the twinkling of an eye or less, questions His authority, is deprived of His grace and is accounted of the fallen.

And yet few, if any, among those who listened to Shaykh Ahmad in that city, and heard him unfold the mysteries of the allusions in the sacred Scriptures, were able to appreciate the significance of his utterances or to apprehend their purpose.

Siyyid Kazim, his able and distinguished lieutenant, alone, could claim to have understood his meaning.

After the death of Prince Muhammad-'Ali Mirza,23 Shaykh Ahmad, freed from the urgent solicitations of the Prince to extend his sojourn in Kirmanshah, transferred his residence to Karbila. Though to outward seeming he was circling round the shrine of the Siyyidu'sh-Shuhada',24 the Imam Husayn, his heart, whilst he performed those rites, was set upon that true Husayn, the only object of his devotions. A host of [16] the most distinguished ulamas and mujtahids thronged to see him. Many began to envy his reputation, and a number sought to undermine his authority. However much they strove, they failed to shake his position of undoubted preeminence amongst the learned men of that city. Eventually that shining light was summoned to shed its radiance upon the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Thither he journeyed, there he pursued with unstinted devotion his labours, and there he was laid to rest beneath the

shadow of the Prophet's sepulchre, for the understanding of whose Cause he had so faithfully laboured.

Ere he departed from Karbila, he confided to Siyyid Kazim, his chosen successor, the secret of his mission,25 and instructed him to strive to kindle in every receptive heart the fire that had burned so brightly within him. However much Siyyid Kazim insisted on accompanying him as far as Najaf, Shaykh Ahmad refused to comply with his request. "You have no time to lose," were the last words which he addressed to him. "Every fleeting hour should be fully and wisely utilised. You should gird up the loin of endeavour and strive day and night to rend asunder, by the grace of God and by the hand of wisdom and loving-kindness, those veils of heedlessness that have blinded the eyes of men. For verily I say, the Hour is drawing nigh, the Hour I have besought God to spare me from witnessing, for the earthquake of the Last Hour will be tremendous. You should pray to God to be spared the overpowering trials of that Day, for neither of us is capable of withstanding its sweeping force. Others, of greater endurance and power, have been destined to bear this stupendous weight, men whose hearts are sanctified from all earthly things, and whose strength is reinforced by the potency of His power."

Having spoken these words, Shaykh Ahmad bade him farewell, urged him to face valiantly the trials that must needs afflict him, and committed him to the care of God. [17] In Karbila, Siyyid Kazim devoted himself to the work initiated by his master, expounded his teachings, defended his Cause, and answered whatever questions perplexed the minds of his disciples.

The vigour with which he prosecuted his task inflamed the animosity of the ignorant and envious. "For forty years," they clamoured, "we have suffered the pretentious teachings of Shaykh Ahmad to be spread with no opposition whatever on our part.

We no longer can tolerate similar pretensions on the part of his successor, who rejects the belief in the resurrection of the body, who repudiates the literal interpretation of the 'Mi'raj,'26 who regards the signs of the coming Day as allegorical, and who preaches a doctrine heretical in character and subversive of the best tenets of orthodox Islam."

The louder their clamour and protestations, the firmer grew the determination of Siyyid Kazim to prosecute his mission and fulfil his trust.

He addressed an epistle to Shaykh Ahmad, wherein he set forth at length the calumnies that had been uttered against him, and acquainted him with the character and extent of their opposition.

In it he ventured to enquire as to how long he was destined to submit to the unrelenting fanaticism of a stubborn and ignorant people, and prayed to be enlightened regarding the time when the promised One was to be made manifest.

To this Shaykh Ahmad replied: "Be assured of the grace of your God.

Be not grieved at their doings.

The mystery of this Cause must needs be made manifest, and the secret of this Message must needs be divulged.27 I can say no more, I can appoint [18] no time.

His Cause will be made known after Hin.28 'Ask me not of things which, if revealed unto you, might only pain you.'"

How great, how very great, is His Cause, that even to so exalted a personage as Siyyid Kazim words such as these should have been addressed! This answer of Shaykh Ahmad imparted solace and strength to the heart of Siyyid Kazim, who, with redoubled determination, continued to withstand the onslaught of an envious and insidious enemy.

Shaykh Ahmad died soon after,29 in the year 1242 A.H., at the age of eighty-one, and was laid to rest in the cemetery of Baqi',30 in the close vicinity of the resting place of Muhammad in the holy city of Medina.

FOOTNOTES

1.1. His genealogy, according to his son Shaykh Abdu'llah, is the following: "Shaykh Ahmad-ibn-i-Zaynu'd-Din-ibn-i-Ibrahim-ibn-i-Sakhr-ibn-i-Ibrahim-ibn-i-Zahir-ibn-i-Ramadan-ibn-i-Rashid-ibn-i-Dahim-ibn-i-Shimrukh-ibn-i-Sulih." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme" I, p. 1.)

1.2. Born Rajab, 1166 A.H., 24th of April-24th of May, 1753, in town of Ahsa, in district of Ahsa, northeast of Arabian peninsula. (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, p. 1.) Born a shi'ah, though his ancestors were sunnis. (Ibid., p. 2.) According to E. G. Browne ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note E, p. 235), Shaykh Ahmad was born in the year 1157 A.H. and died in 1242.

1.3. Siyyid Kazim, in his book entitled "Dalilu'l-Mutahayyirin," writes as follows: "Our master, one night, saw the Imam Hasan; upon him may the blessing of God rest! His Holiness put in his mouth his blessed tongue. From the adorable saliva of His Holiness he drew forth the sciences and the assistance of God. To the taste it was sweeter even than honey, more perfumed than the musk. It was also quite warm. When he came to himself and wakened from his dream, he inwardly radiated the light of divine contemplation; his soul overflowed with the blessings of God and became entirely severed from everything save God. "His faith, his trust in God and his resignation to the Will of the Most High grew apace. Because of a great love and an ardent desire which arose in his heart, he forgot to eat or to clothe himself except barely enough to sustain life." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, p. 6.)

1.4. "He [Shaykh Ahmad] knew full well that he was chosen of God to prepare men's hearts for the reception of the more complete truth shortly to be revealed, and that through him the way of access to the hidden twelfth Imam Mihdi was reopened. But he did not set this forth in clear and unmistakable terms, lest 'the unregenerate' should turn again and rend him." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," p. 15.)

1.5. "Karbila is about 55 miles S.W. of Baghdad on the banks of the Euphrates.... The tomb of Husayn in the centre of the city, and of his brother 'Abbas in the S.E. quarter, are the chief buildings." (C. R. Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," p. 486.) Najaf is revered by the shi'ahs, as it enshrines the tomb of Imam 'Ali.

1.6. "The chief peculiarities of Shaykh Ahmad's views seem to have been as follows.

He declared that all knowledge and all sciences were contained in the Qur'an, and that therefore to understand the inner meanings of the latter in their entirety, a knowledge of the former must be acquired.

To develop this doctrine, he used to apply cabbalistic methods of interpretation to the sacred text, and exerted himself to acquire familiarity with the various sciences known to the Muslim world.

He entertained the most exaggerated veneration for the Imams, especially the Imam Ja'far-i-Sadiq, the sixth of them in succession, whose words he would often quote....

About the future life, and the resurrection of the body also, he held views which were generally considered to be heterodox, as previously mentioned.

He declared that the body of man was composed of different portions, derived from each of the four elements and the nine heavens, and that the body wherewith he was raised in the resurrection contained only the latter components, the former returning at death to their original sources.

This subtle body, which alone escaped destruction, he called Jism-i-Huriqliya, the latter being supposed to be a Greek word.

He asserted that it existed potentially in our present bodies, 'like glass in stone.' Similarly he asserted that, in the case of the Night-ascent of the Prophet to Heaven, it was this, and not his material body, which performed the journey.

On account of these views, he was pronounced unorthodox by the majority of the ulamas, and accused of holding the doctrines of Mulla Sadra, the greatest Persian philosopher of modern times." (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1889, article 12, pp.

890-91.)

1.7. In the ninth century the remains of the Imam Rida, son of the Imam Musa and eighth of the twelve Imams, were interred in Mashhad.

1.8. "In the country of Fars, there is a Mosque in the center of which rises a structure similar to the Ka'bih, (Masjid-i-Jum'ih). It was built only as a sign indicating the Manifestation of the Will of God through the erection of the house in that land. [Allusion to the new Mecca, i.e. the house of the Bab in Shiraz.] Blessed be he who worships God in that land; truly we, too, worshipped God there, and prayed for him who had erected that building." ("Le Bayan

Persan," vol. 2, p. 151.)

1.9. A. L. M. Nicolas, in Chapter 5 of his book, "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," gives a list of no less than ninety-six volumes as representing the entire literary output of this prolific writer. Among them, the more important are the following:
1. Commentary on the Ziyaratu'l Jami'atu'l-Kabirih of Shaykh Hadi.
2. Commentary on the verse "Qu'l Huvallah-u-Ahad."
3. Risaliy-i-Khaqaniyyih, in answer to Fath-'Ali Shah's question regarding the superiority of the Qa'im over His ancestors.
4. On dreams.
5. Answer to Shaykh Musay-i-Bahrayni regarding the position and claims of the Sahibu'z-Zaman.
6. Answer to the Sufis.
7. Answer to Mulla Mihdiy-i-Astirabadi on the knowledge of the soul.
8. On the joys and pains of the future life.
9. Answer to Mulla 'Ali-Akbar on the best road to the attainment of God.
10. On the Resurrection.

1.10. "The news of his arrival caused a great stir and certain Ulamas among the most celebrated received him with reverence. They accorded him great consideration and the inhabitants of the town did likewise. All of the Ulamas came to see him. It was well known that he was the most learned among the most learned." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," p. 18.)

1.11. A. L. M. Nicolas, in his book "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," pp. 19-20, refers to a second letter addressed by the Shah to Shaykh Ahmad: "The Shah, forewarned, wrote again telling him that evidently it was his duty, his, the King's, to go out of his way to come to Yazd to see the illustrious and holy person whose feet were a blessing to the province upon whose soil they had trodden, but because of political reasons of high importance he could not, at this moment, leave the capital. Besides it was necessary, he said, in case of change of residence, to bring with him a force of at least ten thousand men, and, as the town of Yazd was too small to support such a large population, the arrival of so many troops would most certainly occasion a famine. 'You would not wish such a calamity to occur, I am quite certain, and I think therefore that, although I am of very small importance compared to you, you will consent, nevertheless to come to me.'"

1.12. "God is Most Great."

1.13. October 20, 1819 A.D.

1.14. November 12, 1817 A.D.

1.15. 1857-8 A.D.

1.16. "His [Siyyid Kazim's] family were merchants of repute. His father was named Aqa Siyyid Qasim. When twelve years old, he was living at Ardibil near the tomb of Shaykh Safi'u'd-Din Ishaq, the descendant of the seventh Imam Musa Kazim and the ancestor of the Safavi kings. One night in a dream it was

signified to him by one of the illustrious progenitors of the buried saint that he should put himself under the spiritual guidance of Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i, who was at this time residing at Yazd. He accordingly proceeded thither and enrolled himself amongst the disciples of Shaykh Ahmad, in whose doctrine he attained such eminence that on the Shaykh's death he was unanimously recognised as the leader of the Shaykhi school." ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note E, p. 238.)

1.17. 1815-16 A.D.

1.18. "The Shah felt his good will and respect for the Shaykh grow increasingly from day to day. He felt obliged to obey him and would have considered it an act of blasphemy to oppose him. However, at this time, a succession of earthquakes occurred in Rayy and many were destroyed. "The Shah had a dream in which it was revealed to him that, if Shaykh Ahmad had not been there, the entire city would have been destroyed and all the inhabitants killed. He awakened terrified and his faith in the Shaykh grew apace." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, p. 21.)

1.19. Mirza Abu'l-Fadl asserts in his writings that the genealogy of Baha'u'llah can be traced back to the ancient Prophets of Persia as well as to its kings who ruled over the land prior to the Arab invasion.

1.20. His name was Mirza Husayn-'Ali.

1.21. November 12, 1817 A.D.

1.22. "Kirmanshah awaited him with great impatience. The Prince Governor Muhammad-'Ali Mirza had sent the entire town to meet him and they had erected tents in which to receive him at Chah-Qilan. The Prince went even beyond to the Taj-Abad which lies four farsakhs distant from the town." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, p. 30.)

1.23. 1237. A.H.

1.24. "The Prince of Martyrs."

1.25. A. L. M. Nicolas, in his preface to "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, quotes the following as having been spoken by Shaykh Ahmad regarding Siyyid Kazim: "There is only Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti who understands my objective and no one but him understands it.... Seek the science after me from Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti who has acquired it directly from me, who learned it from the Imams, who learned it from the Prophet to whom God had given it.... He is the only one who understands me!"

1.26. "The Ascent" of Muhammad to Heaven.

1.27. The Bab, Himself, refers to this passage and confirms it in the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih": "The words of the revered Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i are well known.

They contain numerous allusions to the subject of the Manifestation.

For example, he has written with his own hand to Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti: 'Just as it is necessary in order to build a house to have suitable ground, so also for this Manifestation must the moment be propitious.

But here one cannot give an answer clearly foretelling the moment.

Soon we shall know it with certainty.' That which you have heard so often yourself from Siyyid Kazim, is not that an explanation?

Did he not reiterate every minute—'You do not wish then that I should go away so that God may appear?'" ("The Book of the Seven Proofs," translated by A.

L.

M.

Nicolas, p.

58.) "There is also the anecdote referring to Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i on his way to Mecca.

It has been proven that this anecdote is authentic and hence there is something which is certain.

The disciples of the deceased have related the sayings which they have heard and also certain personages were mentioned such as Mulla 'Abdu'l-Khaliq and Murtada-Quli.

Mulla 'Abdu'l-Khaliq relates that the Shaykh said to them one day: 'Pray that you may not be present at the beginning of the Manifestation and of the Return, as there will be many civil wars.' He added: 'If any one of you should still be living at that time, he shall see strange things between the years sixty and sixty-seven.

And what strange thing can be more strange than the very Being of the Manifestation?

You will be there and you will witness another extraordinary event; that is to say, God, in order to bring about the victory of the Manifestation, will raise up a Being who will speak his own thoughts without ever having been instructed by anyone.'" (Ibid., pp.

59-60.)

1.28. According to the Abjad notation, the numerical value of the word "Hin" is 68. It was in the year 1268 A.H. that Baha'u'llah, while confined in the Siyah-Chal of Tihran, received the first intimations of His Divine Mission. Of this He hinted in the odes which He revealed in that year.

1.29. He died in a place called Haddih, in the neighbourhood of Medina. (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, p. 60.)

1.30. "His body was carried to Medina where it was buried in the Cemetery Baqi, behind the walls of the cupola of the Prophet, on the south side, under the drain spout of Mihrab. They say that there also is to be found the tomb of

Fatimih facing that of Baytu'l-Hazan." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, pp. 60-61.) "The death of Shaykh Ahmad put an end for a few days to the conflict, and the anger seemed appeased. Moreover it was at this time that Islam received a terrible blow and that its power was broken. The Russian Emperor defeated the Moslem nations and most of the provinces, inhabited by the Moslem peoples, fell into the hands of the Russian armies." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," II, p. 5.) "On the other hand, it was thought that Shaykh Ahmad being now dead, his doctrine would definitely disappear with him. Peace lasted for nearly two years; but the Muhammadans returned quickly to their former sentiments as soon as they saw that the light of the doctrine of the deceased still radiated over the world, thanks to Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti, the best, the most faithful disciple of Shaykh Ahmad, and his successor." (Ibid., pp. 5-6.)

CHAPTER II
THE MISSION OF SIYYID KAZIM-I-RASHTI

[19] The news of the passing of his beloved master brought unspeakable sorrow to the heart of Siyyid Kazim.

Inspired by the verse of the Qur'an, "Fain would they put out God's light with their mouths; but God only desireth to perfect His light, albeit the infidels abhor it," he arose with unswerving purpose to consummate the task with which Shaykh Ahmad had entrusted him.

He found himself, after the removal of so distinguished a protector, a victim of the slanderous tongue and unrelenting enmity of the people around him.

They attacked his person, scorned his teachings, and reviled his name.

At the instigation of a powerful and notorious shi'ah leader, Siyyid Ibrahim-i-Qazvini, the enemies of Siyyid Kazim leagued together, and determined to destroy him.

Thereupon Siyyid Kazim conceived the plan of securing the support and good will of one of the most formidable and outstanding ecclesiastical dignitaries of Persia, the renowned Haji Siyyid Muhammad Baqir-i-Rashti, who lived in Isfahan and whose authority extended far beyond the confines of that city.

This friendship and sympathy, Siyyid Kazim thought, would enable him to pursue untrammelled the course of his activities, and would considerably enhance the influence which he exercised over his disciples. "Would that one amongst you," he was often heard to say to his followers, "could arise, and, with complete detachment, journey to Isfahan, and deliver this message from me to that learned Siyyid: 'Why is it that in the beginning you showed such marked consideration and affection for the late Shaykh Ahmad, and have now suddenly detached yourself from the body of his chosen disciples?

Why is it that you have abandoned us to the mercy of our opponents?' Would that such a messenger, putting his trust in God, might arise to unravel whatever mysteries perplex the mind of that learned Siyyid, and dispel such doubts as

might have alienated [20] his sympathy.

Would that he were able to obtain from him a solemn declaration testifying to the unquestioned authority of Shaykh Ahmad, and to the truth and soundness of his teachings.

Would that he also, after having secured such a testimony, might visit Mashhad and there obtain a similar pronouncement from Mirza 'Askari, the foremost ecclesiastical leader in that holy city, and then, having completed his mission, might return in triumph to this place."

Again and again did Siyyid Kazim find opportunity to reiterate his appeal.

None, however, ventured to respond to his call except a certain Mirza Muhit-i-Kirmani, who expressed readiness to undertake this mission.

To him Siyyid Kazim replied: "Beware of touching the lion's tail.

Belittle not the delicacy and difficulty of such a mission."

He then, turning his face towards his youthful disciple, Mulla Husayn-i-Bushru'i, the Babu'l-Bab,1 addressed him in these words: "Arise and perform this mission, for I declare you equal to this task.

The Almighty will graciously assist you, and will crown your endeavours with success."

Mulla Husayn joyously sprang to his feet, kissed the hem of his teacher's garment, vowed his loyalty to him, and started forthwith on his journey.

With complete severance and noble resolve, he set out to achieve his end.

Arriving in Isfahan, he sought immediately the presence of the learned Siyyid.

Clad in mean attire, and laden with the dust of travel, he appeared, amidst the vast and richly apparelled company of the disciples of that distinguished leader, an insignificant and negligible figure.

Unobserved and undaunted, he advanced to a place which faced the seat occupied by that renowned teacher.

Summoning to his aid all the courage and confidence with which the instructions of Siyyid Kazim had inspired him, he addressed Haji Siyyid Muhammad-Baqir in these words: "Hearken, O Siyyid, to my words, for response to my plea will ensure the safety of the Faith of the Prophet of God, and refusal to consider my message will cause it grievous injury."

These bold and courageous words, uttered with directness and force, produced a surprising impression upon the Siyyid.

He suddenly interrupted his discourse, and, ignoring his audience, listened with close attention [21] to the message which this strange visitor had brought.

His disciples, amazed at this extraordinary behaviour, rebuked this sudden

intruder and denounced his presumptuous pretensions.

With extreme politeness, in firm and dignified language, Mulla Husayn hinted at their discourtesy and shallowness, and expressed surprise at their arrogance and vainglory.

The Siyyid was highly pleased with the demeanour and argument which the visitor so strikingly displayed.

He deplored and apologised for the unseemly conduct of his own disciples.

In order to compensate for their ingratitude, he extended every conceivable kindness to that youth, assured him of his support, and besought him to deliver his message.

Thereupon, Mulla Husayn acquainted him with the nature and object of the mission with which he had been entrusted.

To this the learned Siyyid replied: "As we in the beginning believed that both Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim were actuated by no desire except to advance the cause of knowledge and safeguard the sacred interests of the Faith, we felt prompted to extend to them our heartiest support and to extol their teachings.

In later years, however, we have noticed so many conflicting statements and obscure and mysterious allusions in their writings, that we felt it advisable to keep silent for a time, and to refrain from either censure or applause."

To this Mulla Husayn replied: "I cannot but deplore such silence on your part, for I firmly believe that it involves the loss of a splendid opportunity to advance the cause of Truth.

It is for you to set forth specifically such passages in their writings as appear to you mysterious or inconsistent with the precepts of the Faith, and I will, with the aid of God, undertake to expound their true meaning."

The poise, the dignity and confidence, which characterised the behaviour of this unexpected messenger, greatly impressed Haji Siyyid Muhammad-Baqir.

He begged him not to press the matter at this moment, but to wait until a later day, when, in private converse, he might acquaint him with his own doubts and misgivings.

Mulla Husayn, however, feeling that delay might prove harmful to the cause he had at heart, insisted upon an immediate conference with him about the weighty problems which he felt impelled and able to resolve.

The Siyyid was moved to tears by the youthful enthusiasm, [22] the sincerity and serene confidence to which the countenance of Mulla Husayn so admirably testified.

He sent immediately for some of the works written by Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim, and began to question Mulla Husayn regarding those passages which had excited his disapproval and surprise.

To each reference the messenger replied with characteristic vigour, with masterly knowledge and befitting modesty.

He continued in this manner, in the presence of the assembled disciples, to expound the teachings of Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim, to vindicate their truth, and to defend their cause, until the time when the Mu'adhdhin, calling the faithful to prayer, suddenly interrupted the flow of his argument.

The next day, he similarly, in the presence of a large and representative assembly, and whilst facing the Siyyid, resumed his eloquent defence of the high mission entrusted by an almighty Providence to Shaykh Ahmad and his successor.

A deep silence fell upon his hearers.

They were seized with wonder at the cogency of his argument and the tone and manner of his speech.

The Siyyid publicly promised that on the following day he would himself issue a written declaration wherein he would testify to the eminence of the position held by both Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim, and would pronounce whosoever deviated from their path as one who had turned aside from the Faith of the Prophet Himself.

He would likewise bear witness to their penetrative insight, and their correct and profound understanding of the mysteries which the Faith of Muhammad enshrined.

The Siyyid redeemed his pledge, and with his own hand penned the promised declaration.

He wrote at length, and in the course of his testimony paid a tribute to the character and learning of Mulla Husayn.

He spoke in glowing terms of Siyyid Kazim, apologised for his former attitude, and expressed the hope that in the days to come he might be enabled to make amends for his past and regrettable conduct towards him.

He read, himself, to his disciples the text of this written testimony, and delivered it unsealed to Mulla Husayn, authorising him to share its contents with whomsoever he pleased, that all might know the extent of his devotion to Siyyid Kazim.

No sooner had Mulla Husayn retired than the Siyyid charged one of his trusted attendants to follow in the footsteps [23] of the visitor and find out the place where he was residing.

The attendant followed him to a modest building, which served as a madrisih,2 and saw him enter a room which, except for a worn-out mat which covered its floor, was devoid of furniture.

He watched him arrive, offer his prayer of thanksgiving to God, and lie down upon that mat with nothing to cover him except his aba.3 Having reported to his

master all that he had observed, the attendant was again instructed to deliver to Mulla Husayn the sum of a hundred tumans,4 and to express the sincere apologies of his master for his inability to extend to so remarkable a messenger a hospitality that befitted his station.

To this offer Mulla Husayn sent the following reply: "Tell your master that his real gift to me is the spirit of fairness with which he received me, and the open-mindedness which prompted him, despite his exalted rank, to respond to the message which I, a lowly stranger, brought him.

Return this money to your master, for I, as a messenger, ask for neither recompense nor reward. 'We nourish your souls for the sake of God; we seek from you neither recompense nor thanks.'6 My prayer for your master is that earthly leadership may never hinder him from acknowledging and testifying to the Truth."5 Haji Siyyid Muhammad-Baqir died before the year sixty A.H., the year that witnessed the birth of the Faith proclaimed by the Bab. [24] He remained to his last moment a staunch supporter and fervent admirer of Siyyid Kazim.

Having fulfilled the first part of his mission, Mulla Husayn despatched this written testimony of Haji Siyyid Muhammad-Baqir to his master in Karbila, and directed his steps towards Mashhad, determined to deliver, to the best of his ability, the message which he was charged to give to Mirza 'Askari.

Immediately the letter, enclosing the Siyyid's written declaration, was delivered to Siyyid Kazim, the latter was so rejoiced that he forthwith sent to Mulla Husayn his reply, expressing his grateful appreciation of the exemplary manner in which he had discharged his trust.

He was so delighted with the answer he had received that, interrupting the course of his lecture, he read out, to his disciples, both the letter of Mulla Husayn and the written testimony enclosed in that letter.

He afterwards shared with them the epistle which he himself had written to Mulla Husayn in recognition of the remarkable service he had rendered him.

In it Siyyid Kazim paid such a glowing tribute to his high attainments, to his ability and character that a few among those who heard it suspected that Mulla Husayn was that promised One to whom their master unceasingly referred, the One whom he so often declared to be living in their very midst and yet to have remained unrecognised by them all.

That communication enjoined upon Mulla Husayn the fear of God, urged him to regard it as the most potent instrument with which to withstand the onslaught of the enemy, and the distinguishing feature of every true follower of the Faith.

It was couched in such terms of tender affection, that no one who read it could doubt that the writer was bidding farewell to his beloved disciple, and that he entertained no hope of ever meeting him again in this world.

In those days Siyyid Kazim became increasingly aware of the approach of the Hour at which the promised One was to be revealed.7 He realised how dense were

those veils that [25] hindered the seekers from apprehending the glory of the concealed Manifestation.

He accordingly exerted his utmost endeavour to remove gradually, with caution and wisdom, whatever barriers might stand in the way of the full recognition of that Hidden Treasure of God.

He repeatedly urged his disciples to bear in mind the fact that He whose advent they were expecting would appear neither from Jabulqa nor from Jabulsa.8 He even hinted at His presence in their very midst. "You behold Him with your own eyes," he often observed, "and yet recognise Him not!"

To his disciples who questioned him regarding the signs of the Manifestation, he would say: "He is of noble lineage.

He is a descendant of the Prophet of God, of the family of Hashim.

He is young in age, and is possessed of innate knowledge.

His learning is derived, not from the teachings of Shaykh Ahmad, but from God.

My knowledge is but a drop compared with the immensity of His knowledge; my attainments a speck of dust in the face of the wonders of His grace and power.

Nay, immeasurable is the difference.

He is of medium height, abstains from smoking, and is of extreme devoutness and piety."9 Certain of the Siyyid's disciples, despite the testimonies of their master, believed him to be the promised One, for in him they recognised the signs to which he was alluding.

Among them was a certain Mulla Mihdiy-i-Khu'i, who went so far as to make public this belief.

Whereupon the Siyyid was sore displeased, and would have cast him out from the company of his chosen followers had he not begged forgiveness and expressed his repentance for his action.

Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunuzi, himself, informed me that he too entertained such doubts, that he prayed to God that if his supposition was well founded he should be confirmed in his belief, and if not that he should be delivered from such idle fancy. "I was so perturbed," he once related to me, "that for days I could neither eat nor sleep. My days were spent in the service of Siyyid Kazim, to whom I was greatly attached. One day, at the hour of dawn, I was suddenly [26] awakened by Mulla Naw-ruz, one of his intimate attendants, who, in great excitement, bade me arise and follow him. We went to the house of Siyyid Kazim, where we found him fully dressed, wearing his aba, and ready to leave his home. He asked me to accompany him. 'A highly esteemed and distinguished Person,' he said, 'has arrived. I feel it incumbent upon us both to visit Him.' The morning light had just broken when I found myself walking with him through the streets of Karbila. We soon reached a house, at the door

of which stood a Youth, as if expectant to receive us.

He wore a green turban, and His countenance revealed an expression of humility and kindliness which I can never describe.

He quietly approached us, extended His arms towards Siyyid Kazim, and lovingly embraced him.

His affability and loving-kindness singularly contrasted with the sense of profound reverence that characterised the attitude of Siyyid Kazim towards him.

Speechless and with bowed head, he received the many expressions of affection and esteem with which that Youth greeted him.

We were soon led by Him to the upper floor of that house, and entered a chamber bedecked with flowers and redolent of the loveliest perfume.

He bade us [27] be seated.

We knew not, however, what seats we actually occupied, so overpowering was the sense of delight which seized us.

We observed a silver cup which had been placed in the centre of the room, which our youthful Host, soon after we were seated, filled to overflowing, and handed to Siyyid Kazim, saying: 'A drink of a pure beverage shall their Lord give them.'10 Siyyid Kazim held the cup with both hands and quaffed it.

A feeling of reverent joy filled his being, a feeling which he could not suppress.

I too was presented with a cupful of that beverage, though no words were addressed to me.

All that was spoken at that memorable gathering was the above-mentioned verse of the Qur'an.

Soon after, the Host arose from His seat and, accompanying us to the threshold of the house, bade us farewell.

I was mute with wonder, and knew not how to express the cordiality of His welcome, the dignity of His bearing, the charm of that face, and the delicious fragrance of that beverage.

How great was my amazement when I saw my teacher quaff without the least hesitation that holy draught from a silver cup, the use of which, according to the precepts of Islam, is forbidden to the faithful.

I could not explain the motive which could have induced the Siyyid to manifest such profound reverence in the presence of that Youth—a reverence which even the sight of the shrine of the Siyyidu'sh-Shuhada' had failed to excite.

Three days later, I saw that same Youth arrive and take His seat in the midst of the company of the assembled disciples of Siyyid Kazim.

He sat close to the threshold, and with the same modesty and dignity of bearing listened to the discourse of the Siyyid.

As soon as his eyes fell upon that Youth, the Siyyid discontinued his address and held his peace.

Whereupon one of his disciples begged him to resume the argument which he had left unfinished. 'What more shall I say?' replied Siyyid Kazim, as he turned his face toward the Bab. 'Lo, the Truth is more manifest than the ray of light that has fallen upon that lap!' I immediately observed that the ray to which the Siyyid referred had fallen upon the lap of that same Youth whom we had recently visited. 'Why is it,' that questioner enquired, 'that you neither reveal His name nor identify His [28] person?' To this the Siyyid replied by pointing with his finger to his own throat, implying that were he to divulge His name, they both would be put to death instantly.

This added still further to my perplexity.

I had already heard my teacher observe that so great is the perversity of this generation,

that were he to point with his finger to the promised One and say: 'He indeed is the Beloved, the Desire of your hearts and mine,' they would still fail to recognise and acknowledge Him. I saw the Siyyid actually point out with his finger the ray of light that had fallen on that lap, and yet none among those who were present seemed to apprehend [29] its meaning. I, for my part, was convinced that the Siyyid himself could never be the promised One, but that a mystery inscrutable to us all, lay concealed in that strange and attractive Youth. Several times I ventured to approach Siyyid Kazim and seek from him an elucidation of this mystery.

Every time I approached him, I was overcome by a sense of awe which his personality so powerfully inspired. Many a time I heard him remark: 'O Shaykh Hasan, rejoice that your name is Hasan [praiseworthy]; Hasan your beginning, and Hasan your end. You have been privileged to attain to the day of Shaykh Ahmad, you have been closely associated [30] with me, and in the days to come yours shall be the inestimable joy of beholding "what eye hath seen not, ear heard not, nor any heart conceived."'

"I often felt the urge to seek alone the presence of that Hashimite Youth and to endeavour to fathom His mystery.

I watched Him several times as He stood in an attitude of prayer at the doorway of the shrine of the Imam Husayn.

So wrapt was He in His devotions that He seemed utterly oblivious of those around Him.

Tears rained from His eyes, and from His lips fell words of glorification and praise of such power and beauty as even the noblest passages of our sacred Scriptures could not hope to surpass.

The words 'O God, my God, my Beloved, my heart's Desire' were uttered with a frequency and ardour that those of the visiting pilgrims who were near enough to hear Him instinctively interrupted the course of their devotions, and

marvelled at the evidences of piety and veneration which that youthful countenance evinced.

Like Him they were moved to tears, and from Him they learned the lesson of true adoration.

Having completed His prayers, that Youth, without crossing the threshold of the shrine and without attempting to address any words to those around Him, would quietly return to His home.

I felt the impulse to address Him, but every time I ventured an approach, a force that I could neither explain nor resist, detained me.

My enquiries about Him elicited the information that He was a resident of Shiraz, that He was a merchant by profession, and did not belong to any of the ecclesiastical orders.

I was, moreover, informed that He, and also His uncles and relatives, were among the lovers and admirers of Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim.

Soon after, I learned that He had departed for Najaf on His way to Shiraz.

That Youth had set my heart aflame.

The memory of that vision haunted me.

My soul was wedded to His till the day when the call of a Youth from Shiraz, proclaiming Himself to be the Bab, reached my ears.

The thought instantly flashed through my mind that such a person could be none other than that selfsame Youth whom I had seen in Karbila, the Youth of my heart's desire.

"When later on I journeyed from Karbila to Shiraz, I found that He had set out on a pilgrimage to Mecca and [31] Medina. I met Him on His return and endeavoured, despite the many obstacles in my way, to remain in close association with Him. When subsequently He was incarcerated in the fortress of Mah-Ku, in the province of Adhirbayjan, I was engaged in transcribing the verses which He dictated to His amanuensis. Every night, for a period of nine months, during which He was a prisoner in that fort, He revealed, after He had offered His evening prayer, a commentary on a juz'11 of the Qur'an. At the end of each month a commentary on the whole of that sacred Book was thus completed. During His incarceration in Mah-Ku, nine commentaries on the whole of the Qur'an had been revealed by Him. The texts of these commentaries were entrusted, in Tabriz, to the keeping of a certain Siyyid Ibrahim-i-Khalil, who was instructed to conceal them until the time for their publication might arrive. Their fate is unknown until now.

"In connection with one of these commentaries, the Bab one day asked me: 'Which do you prefer, this commentary which I have revealed, or the Ahsanu'l-Qisas, My previous commentary on the Surih of Joseph? Which of the two is superior, in your estimation?' 'To me,' I replied, 'the Ahsanu'l-Qisas seems to be endowed with greater power and charm.' He smiled at my observation and said: 'You are

as yet unfamiliar with the tone and tenor of this later commentary. The truths enshrined in this will more speedily and effectively enable the seeker to attain the object of his quest.'

"I continued to be closely associated with Him until that great encounter of Shaykh Tabarsi. When informed of that event, the Bab directed all His companions to hasten to that spot, and extend every assistance in their power to Quddus, His heroic and distinguished disciple. Addressing me one day, He said: 'But for My incarceration in the Jabal-i-Shadid, the fortress of Chihriq, it would have been incumbent upon Me to lend My personal assistance to My beloved Quddus. Participation in that struggle is not enjoined upon you. You should proceed to Karbila and should abide in that holy city, inasmuch as you are destined to behold, with your own eyes, the beauteous countenance of the promised Husayn. As you gaze upon that radiant face, do also remember [32] Me. Convey to Him the expression of My loving devotion.' He again emphatically added these words: 'Verily I say, I have entrusted you with a great mission. Beware lest your heart grow faint, lest you forget the glory with which I have invested you.'

"Soon after, I journeyed to Karbila and lived, as bidden, in that holy city. Fearing that my prolonged stay in that centre of pilgrimage might excite suspicion, I decided to marry. I started to earn my livelihood as a scribe. What afflictions befell me at the hands of the Shaykhis, those who professed to be the followers of Shaykh Ahmad and yet failed to recognise the Bab! Mindful of the counsels of that beloved Youth, I patiently submitted to the indignities inflicted upon me. For two years I lived in that city. Meanwhile that holy Youth was released from His earthly prison and, through His martyrdom, was delivered from the atrocious cruelties that had beset the closing years of His life.

"Sixteen lunar months, less twenty and two days, had elapsed since the day of the martyrdom of the Bab, when, on the day of 'Arafih,12 in the year 1267 A.H.,13 while I was passing by the gate of the inner courtyard of the shrine of the Imam Husayn, my eyes, for the first time, fell upon Baha'u'llah.

What shall I recount regarding the countenance which I beheld!

The beauty of that face, those exquisite features which no pen or brush dare describe, His penetrating glance, His kindly face, the majesty of His bearing, the sweetness of His smile, the luxuriance of His jet-black flowing locks, left an indelible impression upon my soul.

I was then an old man, bowed with age.

How lovingly He advanced towards me!

He took me by the hand and, in a tone which at once betrayed power and beauty, addressed me in these words: 'This very day I have purposed to make you known as a Babi throughout Karbila.' Still holding my hand in His, He continued to converse with me.

He walked with me all along the market-street, and in the end He said: 'Praise be to God that you have remained in Karbila, and have beheld with your own eyes the countenance of the promised Husayn.' I recalled instantly the promise which had been given me by [33] the Bab.

His words, which I had regarded as referring to a remote future, I had not shared with anyone.

These words of Baha'u'llah moved me to the depths of my being.

I felt impelled to proclaim to a heedless people, at that very moment and with all my soul and power, the advent of the promised Husayn.

He bade me, however, repress my feelings and conceal my emotions. 'Not yet,' He breathed into my ears; 'the appointed Hour is approaching.

It has not yet struck.

Rest assured and be patient.' From that moment all my sorrows vanished.

My soul was flooded with joy.

In those days I was so poor that most of the time I hungered for food.

I felt so rich, however, that all the treasures of the earth melted away into nothingness when compared with that which I already possessed. 'Such is the grace of God; to whom He will, He giveth it:

He, verily, is of immense bounty.'"

I now return, after this digression, to my theme. I had been referring to the eagerness with which Siyyid Kazim had determined to rend asunder those veils which intervened between the people of his day and the recognition of the promised Manifestation. In the introductory pages of his works, entitled Sharh-i-Qasidih and Sharh-i-Khutbih,14 he, in veiled language, alludes to the blessed name of Baha'u'llah. In a booklet, the last he wrote, he explicitly mentions the name of the Bab by his reference to the term "Dhikru'llah-i-A'zam." In it he writes: "Addressing this noble 'Dhikr,'15 this mighty voice of God, I say: 'I am apprehensive of the people, lest they harm you. I am apprehensive of my own self, lest I too may hurt you. I fear you, I tremble at your authority, I dread the age in which you live. Were I to treasure you [34] as the apple of my eye until the Day of Resurrection, I would not sufficiently have proved my devotion to you.'"16

How grievously Siyyid Kazim suffered at the hands of the people of wickedness!

What harm that villainous generation inflicted upon him!

For years he suffered silently, and endured with heroic patience all the indignities, the calumnies, the denunciations that were heaped upon him.

He was destined, however, to witness, during the last years of his life, how the avenging hand of God "destroyed with utter destruction" those that opposed, vilified, and plotted against him.

In those days the followers of Siyyid Ibrahim, that notorious enemy of Siyyid Kazim, banded themselves together for the purpose of stirring up sedition and mischief and endangering the life of their formidable adversary.

By every means at their disposal, they sought to poison the minds of his admirers and friends, to undermine his authority, and to discredit his name.

No voice was raised in protest against the agitation that was being sedulously prepared by that ungodly and treacherous people, each of whom professed to be the exponent of true learning and the repository of the mysteries of the [35] Faith of God.

No one sought to warn or awaken them.

They gathered such force and kindled such strife that they succeeded in evicting from Karbila, in a disgraceful manner, the representative official of the Ottoman government, and appropriated for their own sordid aims whatever revenues accrued to him.

Their menacing attitude aroused the central government at Constantinople, which despatched a military official to the scene of agitation, with full instructions to quench the fires of mischief.

With the force at his command, that official besieged the city, and despatched a communication to Siyyid Kazim in which he entreated him to pacify the minds of the excited populace.

He appealed to him to counsel moderation to its inhabitants, to induce them to relax their stubbornness, and to surrender voluntarily to his rule.

Were they to heed his counsels, he promised that he would undertake to ensure their safety and protection, would proclaim a general amnesty, and would strive to promote their welfare.

If they refused, however, to submit, he warned them that their lives would be in danger, that a great calamity would surely befall them.

Upon the receipt of this formal communication, Siyyid Kazim summoned to his presence the chief instigators of the movement, and, with the utmost wisdom and affection, exhorted them to cease their agitation and surrender their arms. He spoke with such persuasive eloquence, such sincerity and detachment, that their hearts were softened and their resistance was subdued. They solemnly undertook to throw open, the next morning, the gates of the citadel and to present themselves, in the company of Siyyid Kazim, to the officer in command of the besieging forces. It was agreed that the Siyyid would intervene in their behalf, and secure for them whatever would ensure their tranquillity and welfare. No sooner had they left the presence of the Siyyid than the ulamas, the chief instigators of the rebellion, unanimously arose to frustrate this plan. Fully aware that such intervention on the part of the Siyyid, who had already excited their envy, would serve to enhance his prestige and consolidate his authority, they determined to persuade a number among the foolish and excitable elements of the population to sally forth at night and attack the

forces of the enemy. They assured [36] them of victory on the strength of a dream in which one of their members had seen 'Abbas,17 who had charged him to incite his followers to wage holy war against the besiegers and had given him the promise of ultimate success.

Deluded by this vain promise, they rejected the advice tendered by that wise and judicious counsellor, and arose to execute the designs of their foolish leaders. Siyyid Kazim, who was well aware of the evil influence that actuated that revolt, addressed a detailed and faithful report on the situation to the Turkish commander, who again wrote to Siyyid Kazim and reiterated his appeal for a peaceful settlement of the issue. He, moreover, declared that at a given time he would force the gates of the citadel, and would regard the home of the Siyyid as the only place of refuge for a defeated enemy. This declaration the Siyyid caused to be spread throughout the city. It served only to excite the derision and contempt of the population. When informed of the reception accorded that declaration, the Siyyid remarked: "Verily, that with which they are threatened is for the morning. Is not the morning near?"18

At daybreak, the appointed hour, the forces of the enemy bombarded the ramparts of the citadel, demolished its walls, entered the city, and pillaged and massacred a considerable number of its population. Many fled in consternation to the courtyard of the shrine of the Imam Husayn. Others sought refuge in the sanctuary of 'Abbas. Those who loved and honoured Siyyid Kazim betook themselves to his home. So great was the crowd that hastened to the shelter of his residence, that it was found necessary to appropriate a number of the adjoining houses in order to accommodate the multitude of refugees who pressed at his doors. So vast and excited was the concourse that thronged his house, that when once the tumult had subsided, it was ascertained that no less than twenty-two persons had been trampled to death.

What consternation seized the residents and visitors of the holy city! With what severity did the victors treat their terrified enemy! With what audacity they ignored those sacred rights and prerogatives with which the piety of countless Muslim pilgrims had invested the holy sites of Karbila! [37] They refused to recognise alike the shrine of the Imam Husayn and the sacred mausoleum of 'Abbas as inviolable sanctuaries for the thousands who fled before the avenging wrath of an alien people. The hallowed precincts of both these shrines ran with the blood of the victims. One place, and only one, could assert its right of sanctuary to the innocent and faithful among the population. That place was the residence of Siyyid Kazim. His house, with its dependencies, was regarded as being endowed with such sanctity as even the most hallowed shrine of shi'ah Islam had failed to retain. That strange manifestation of the avenging wrath of God was an object lesson to those who were inclined to belittle the station of that holy man. That memorable event19 happened on the eighth of Dhi'l-Hijjih in the year 1258 A.H.20

It is admittedly evident that in every age and dispensation those whose mission it is either to proclaim the Truth or to prepare the way for its acceptance, have invariably been opposed by a number of powerful adversaries, who

challenged their authority and attempted to pervert their teachings. These have, either by fraud or pretence, calumny or oppression, succeeded for a time in beguiling the uninformed and in [38] misleading the feeble. Desirous of maintaining their hold over the thoughts and consciences of men, they have, so long as the Faith of God remained concealed, been able to enjoy the fruits of a fleeting and precarious ascendancy. No sooner was the Faith proclaimed, however, than they found, to their utter dismay, the effects of their dark plottings pale before the dawning light of the new Day of God. Before the fierce rays of that rising Orb all their machinations and evil deeds faded into nothingness and were soon a thing forgotten.

Around Siyyid Kazim were likewise gathered a number of vain and ignoble people who feigned devotion and attachment to his person; who professed to be devout and pious, and who claimed to be the sole repositories of the mysteries enshrined in the utterances of Shaykh Ahmad and his successor.

They occupied the seats of honour in the company of the assembled disciples of Siyyid Kazim.

To them he addressed his discourse, and towards them he showed marked consideration and courtesy.

And yet he often, in covert and subtle phrases, alluded to their blindness, their vainglory and utter inaptitude for the apprehension of the mysteries of Divine utterance.

Among his allusions were the following: "None can comprehend my language except him who is begotten of me."

Oftentimes he quoted this saying: "I am spellbound by the vision.

I am mute with wonder, and behold the world bereft of the power of hearing.

I am powerless to divulge the mystery, and find the people incapable of bearing its weight."

On another occasion he remarked: "Many are those who claim to have attained union with the Beloved, and yet that Beloved refuses to acknowledge their claim.

By the tears which he sheds for his loved One can the true lover be distinguished from the false."

Many a time he observed: "He who is destined to be made manifest after me is of pure lineage, of illustrious descent, of the seed of Fatimih.

He is of medium height, and is free from bodily deficiency."21

[39] I have heard Shaykh Abu-Turab22 recount the following: "I, together with a number of the disciples of Siyyid Kazim, regarded the allusions to these deficiencies, from which the Siyyid declared the promised One to be free, as specifically directed toward three individuals amongst our fellow-disciples. We even designated them by such appellations as indicated their bodily defects.

One of them was Haji Mirza Karim Khan,23 son of Ibrahim Khan-i-Qajar-i-Kirmani, who was both one-eyed and sparsely bearded. Another was Mirza Hasan-i-Gawhar, an exceptionally corpulent man. The third was Mirza Muhit-i-Sha'ir-i-Kirmani, who was extraordinarily lean and tall. We felt convinced that these were none other than those to whom the Siyyid constantly alluded as those vain and faithless people who would eventually reveal their real selves, and betray their ingratitude and folly. As to Haji Mirza Karim Khan, who for years sat at the feet of Siyyid Kazim and acquired from him all his so-called learning, in the end he obtained leave from his master to settle in Kirman, and there engage in the promotion of the interests of Islam and the dissemination of those traditions that clustered round the sacred memory of the Imams of the Faith.

"I was present in the library of Siyyid Kazim when, one day, an attendant of Haji Mirza Karim Khan arrived, holding a book in his hand, which he presented to the Siyyid on behalf of his master, requesting him to peruse it and to signify in his own handwriting his approval of its contents.

The Siyyid read portions of that book, and returned it to the attendant with this message: 'Tell your master that he, better than anyone else, can estimate the value of his own book.' The attendant had retired when the Siyyid, with sorrowful voice, remarked: 'Accursed be he!

For years he has been associated with me, and now that he intends to depart, his one aim, after so many years of study and companionship, [40] is to diffuse, through his book, such heretical and atheistic doctrines as he now wishes me to endorse.

He has covenanted with a number of self-seeking hypocrites with the view of establishing himself in Kirman, and in order to assume, after my departure from this world, the reins of undisputed leadership.

How grievously he erred in his judgment!

For the breeze of divine Revelation, wafted from the Day-Spring of guidance, will assuredly quench his light and destroy his influence.

The tree of his endeavour will eventually yield naught but the fruit of bitter disillusion and gnawing remorse.

Verily I say, you shall behold this with your own eyes.

My prayer for you is that you may be protected from the mischievous influence which he, the antichrist of the promised Revelation, will in future exercise.' He bade me conceal this prediction until the Day of Resurrection, the Day when the Hand of Omnipotence will have disclosed the secrets which are now hidden within the breasts of men. 'On that Day,' he exhorted me, 'arise with unswerving purpose and determination for the triumph of the Faith of God.

Publish far and wide all that you have heard and witnessed.'"

This same Shaykh Abu-Turab, who in the early days of the Dispensation proclaimed by the Bab thought it wiser and better not to identify himself with

His Cause, cherished in his heart the fondest love for the revealed Manifestation, and in his faith remained firm and immovable as the rock.

Eventually that smouldering fire blazed forth in his soul and was responsible for such behaviour on his part as to cause him to suffer imprisonment in Tihran, in the same dungeon within which Baha'u'llah was confined.

He remained steadfast to the very end, and crowned a life of loving sacrifice with the glory of martyrdom.

And as the days of Siyyid Kazim drew to a close, he, whenever he met his disciples, whether in private converse or public discourse, exhorted them, saying: "O my beloved companions! Beware, beware, lest after me the world's fleeting vanities beguile you. Beware lest you wax haughty and forgetful of God. It is incumbent upon you to renounce all comfort, all earthly possessions and kindred, in your quest of Him who is the Desire of your hearts and of mine. Scatter far and wide, detach yourselves from all earthly things, and [41] humbly and prayerfully beseech your Lord to sustain and guide you. Never relax in your determination to seek and find Him who is concealed behind the veils of glory. Persevere till the time when He, who is your true Guide and Master, will graciously aid you and enable you to recognise Him. Be firm till the day when He will choose you as the

companions and the heroic supporters of the promised Qa'im.

Well is it with every one of you who will quaff the cup of martyrdom in His path.

Those of you whom God, in His wisdom, will preserve and keep to witness the setting of the Star of Divine guidance, that Harbinger of the Sun of Divine Revelation, must needs be patient, must remain assured and steadfast.

Such ones amongst you must neither falter nor feel dismayed.

For soon after the first trumpet-blast which is to smite the earth with extermination and death, there shall be sounded again yet another call, at which all things will be quickened and revived.

Then will the meaning of these sacred verses be revealed: 'And there was a blast on the trumpet, and all who are in the heavens and all who are in the earth expired, save those whom God permitted to live.

Then was there sounded another blast, and, lo! arising, they gazed around them.

And the earth shone with the light of her Lord, and the Book was set, and the Prophets were brought up, and the witnesses; and judgment was given between them with equity; and none was wronged.'24 Verily I say, after the Qa'im the Qayyum25 will be made manifest.

For [42] when the star of the Former has set, the sun of the beauty of Husayn will rise and illuminate the whole world.

Then will be unfolded in all its glory the 'mystery' and the 'secret' spoken of

by Shaykh Ahmad, who has said: 'The mystery of this Cause must needs be made manifest, and the secret of this Message must needs be divulged.' To have attained unto that Day of days is to have attained unto the crowning glory of past generations, and one goodly deed performed in that age is equal to the pious worship of countless centuries.

How often has that venerable soul, Shaykh Ahmad, recited those verses of the Qur'an already referred to!

What stress he laid upon their significance as foreshadowing the advent of those twin Revelations which are to follow each other in rapid succession, and each of which is destined to suffuse the world with all its glory!

How many times did he exclaim: 'Well is it with him who will recognise their significance and behold their splendour!' How often, addressing me, did he remark: 'Neither of us shall live to gaze upon their effulgent glory.

But many of the faithful among your disciples shall witness the Day which we, alas, can never hope to behold!' O my beloved companions!

How great, how very great, is the Cause!

How exalted the station to which I summon you!

How great the mission for which I have trained and prepared you!

Gird up the loins of endeavour, and fix your gaze upon His promise.

I pray to God graciously to assist you to weather the storms of tests and trials which must needs beset you, to enable you to emerge, unscathed and triumphant, from their midst, and to lead you to your high destiny."

Every year, in the month of Dhi'l-Qa'dih, the Siyyid would proceed from Karbila to Kazimayn26 in order to visit the shrines of the imams. He would return to Karbila in time to visit, on the day of 'Arafih, the shrine of the Imam Husayn. In that year, the last year of his life, he, faithful to his custom, departed from Karbila in the first days of the month of Dhi'l-Qa'dih, in the year 1259 A.H.,27 accompanied by a number of his companions and friends. On the fourth day of that month he arrived at the Masjid-i-Baratha, situated [43] on the highway between Baghdad and Kazimayn, in time to offer up his noonday prayer. He bade the Muadhdhin summon the faithful to gather and pray. Standing beneath the shade of a palm which faced the masjid, he joined the congregation, and had just concluded his devotions when an Arab suddenly appeared, approached the Siyyid, and embraced him. "Three days ago," he said, "I was shepherding my flock in this adjoining pasture, when sleep suddenly

fell upon me. In my dream I saw Muhammad, the Apostle of God, who addressed me in these words: 'Give ear, O shepherd, to My words, and treasure them within your heart. For these words of Mine are the trust of God which I commit to your keeping. If you be faithful to them, great will be your reward. If you neglect them, grievous retribution will befall you. Hear Me; this is the trust with which I charge you: Stay within the precincts of the Masjid-i-Baratha. On the

third day after this dream, a scion of My house, Siyyid Kazim by name, will, accompanied by his friends and companions, [44] alight, at the hour of noon, beneath the shadow of the palm in the vicinity of the masjid. There he will offer his prayer. As soon as your eyes fall upon him, seek his presence and convey to him My loving greetings. Tell him, from Me: "Rejoice, for the hour of your departure is at hand. When you shall have performed your visits in Kazimayn and shall have returned to Karbila, there, three days after your return, on the day of 'Arafih,28 you will wing your flight to Me. Soon after shall He who is the Truth be made manifest. Then

[45] shall the world be illuminated by the light of His face."" A smile wreathed the countenance of Siyyid Kazim upon the completion of the description of the dream related by that shepherd. He said: "Of the truth of the dream which you have dreamt there is no doubt." His companions were sorely grieved. Turning to them, he said: "Is not your love for me for the sake of that true One whose advent we all await? Would you not wish me to die, that the promised One may be revealed?" This episode, in its entirety, has been related to me by no less than ten persons, all of whom were present on that occasion, and who testified to its accuracy. And yet many of those who witnessed with their own eyes such marvellous signs have rejected the Truth and repudiated His Message!

This strange event was noised abroad.

It brought sadness to the heart of the true lovers of Siyyid Kazim.

To these he, with infinite tenderness and joy, addressed words of cheer and comfort.

He calmed their troubled hearts, fortified their faith, and inflamed their zeal.

With dignity and calm he completed his pilgrimage and returned to Karbila.

The very day of his arrival he fell ill, and was confined to bed.

His enemies spread the rumour that he had been poisoned by the Governor of Baghdad.

This was sheer calumny and downright falsehood, inasmuch as the Governor himself had placed his unqualified confidence in Siyyid Kazim, and had always regarded him as a highly talented leader endowed with keen perception and possessed of irreproachable character.29 On the day of 'Arafih, in the year 1259 A.H., at the ripe age of sixty, Siyyid Kazim, in accordance with the vision of that lowly shepherd, bade farewell to this world, leaving behind him a band of earnest and devoted disciples who, purged of all worldly desire, set out in quest of their promised Beloved.

His sacred remains were interred within the precincts of the shrine of the Imam Husayn.30 His passing raised [46] a tumult in Karbila similar to the agitation that seized its people the preceding year,31 on the eve of the day of 'Arafih, when the victorious enemy forced the gates of the citadel and massacred a considerable number of its besieged inhabitants.

A year before, on that day, his house had been the one haven of peace and security for the bereaved and homeless, whereas now it had become a house of sorrow where those whom he had befriended and succoured bewailed his passing and mourned his loss.32

FOOTNOTES

2.1. He was the first to believe in the Bab, who gave him this title.

2.2. "The Madrisih or Persian colleges are entirely in the hands of the clergy and there are several in every large town. They generally consist of a court, surrounded by buildings containing chambers for students and masters, with a gate on one side; and frequently a garden and a well in the centre of the court.... Many of the madrisihs have been founded and endowed by kings or pious persons." (C. R. Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," p. 365.)

2.3. A loose outer garment, resembling a cloak, commonly made of camel's hair.

2.4. Worth approximately one hundred dollars, a substantial sum in those days.

2.5. Qur'an, 76:9.

2.6. The Bab, in the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih," refers to Mulla Husayn in these terms: "You, especially, know who is the first witness of that faith. You know that the majority of the doctors of the Shaykhi and the Siyyidiyyih and other sects admired his science and his talent. When he came to Isfahan the urchins of the town cried out as he passed, 'Ah! Ah! a ragged student has just arrived!' But behold! This man by his proofs and arguments convinced a Siyyid, one known for his proven scientific knowledge, Muhammad-Baqir! Truly that is one of the proofs of this Manifestation, for after the death of the Siyyid, this personage went to see most of the doctors of Islam and found Truth only with the Master of Truth. It was then that he attained the destiny which had been determined for him. In truth the people of the beginning and of the end of this Manifestation envy him and will envy him until the Day of Judgment. And who then can accuse this master-mind of mental weakness and infidelity?" ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," translated by A. L. M. Nicolas, p. 54.)

2.7. The Bab in this connection reveals the following in the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih": "That which he was still saying at the time of his last journey, that which you, yourself, have heard, is it not being spoken of? And likewise the account of Mirza Muhammad-i-Akhbari which Abdu'l-Husayn-i-Shushtari relates? Mirza Muhammad-i-Akhbari, while at Kazimayn, one day asked of the venerable Siyyid when the Imam would manifest himself. The Siyyid looked over the assembly and said: 'You will see him.' Mulla Muhammad-Taqiy-i-Haravi also related this incident in Isfahan." ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," translated by A. L. M. Nicolas, p. 58.)

2.8. See note, at the beginning of the book, on "Distinguishing Features of

Shi'ah Islam."

2.9. "There seems to be conclusive evidence that Siyyid Kazim adverted often near the close of life to the divine Manifestation which he believed to be at hand. He was fond of saying, 'I see him as the rising sun.'" (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's the Reconciliation of Races and Religions," p. 19.)

2.10. Qur'an, 76:21.

2.11. A juz' is one-thirtieth of the Qur'an.

2.12. The ninth day of the month of Dhi'l-Hijjih.

2.13. October 5, 1851 A.D.

2.14. Chapter 2 of A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," II, is entirely devoted to a detailed enumeration of the hundred and thirty-five works composed by Siyyid Kazim, among which the following are of outstanding interest:
1. Sharh-i-Khutbiy-i-Tutunjiyyih.
2. Sharh-i-Qasidih.
3. Tafsirih Ayatu'l-Kursi.
4. Dar Asrar-i-Shihadat-i-Imam Husayn.
5. Cosmography.
6. Dalilu'l-Mutahayyirin. His works are said to exceed 300 volumes. ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note E, p. 238.)

2.15. "Dhikr" means "mention," "remembrance."

2.16. A.

L.

M.

Nicolas quotes in Chapter 3 of his "Essai sur le Shaykhisme,"

II, p.

43, the following extract from the Sharh-i-Qasidih of Siyyid Kazim: "I have announced that every hundred years there are a chosen few who spread and sow the precepts which explain that which is lawful and that which is unlawful; who tell of the things that were hidden during the hundred preceding years.

In other words, in every century a learned and perfect man is found who causes the tree of religious law to revive and bloom; who regenerates its trunk to such an extent that at last the book of Creation comes to its end in a period of twelve hundred years.

At that moment, a certain number of perfect men will appear who will reveal certain very intimate things which were hidden....

Therefore, when the twelve hundred years will have been completed, when the first cycle is ended, which depended upon the appearance of the Sun of the Prophet and of the Moon of the Vilayat, then the influence of that cycle is ended and a second cycle begins in which the intimate precepts and hidden

meanings of the former cycle are explained."

He himself then adds these words: "In other words, and in order to render clearer this amazing statement which truly needs no interpretation, Siyyid Kazim tells us that the first cycle which lasts twelve hundred years is solely for the education of the bodies and of the spirits which are dependent upon them.

It is like a child in the womb of the mother.

The second cycle is for the education of the pure spirits, the souls which have no relation to the world of matter.

It is as though God wished to elevate the spirit by means of the performance of its duty in this world.

Therefore, when the first cycle is completed, the glory of which is the name of Muhammad, comes the cycle of the education of the intimates.

In this cycle the appearances obey the intimates, just as in the preceding cycle the heavenly name of the Prophet, which is Ahmad, is the place of the appearance, the Master: 'But this name must necessarily be found to be of the fruit of the best soil and of the purest air.'"

Nicolas further adds in a footnote the following words: "The name of Ahmad mentioned above would lead one to believe that it refers to Shaykh Ahmad, but one cannot say, however, in speaking of Lahca, that it is the best of lands, or of the purest air.

We know, on the contrary, that all the Persian poets sing the praises of Shiraz and of its ideal climate.

It is only necessary to see what Shaykh Ahmad himself said of his country."

2.17. Brother of the Imam Husayn.

2.18. Qur'an, 11:81.

2.19. A.

L.

M.

Nicolas, in his "Essai sur le Shaykhisme,"

II, pp.

29-30, describes the event as follows: "It was in the year 1258 (1842) that this event took place, on the day of the Feast of Qadr.

The armies of Baghdad, under the leadership of Najib Pasha, took possession of Karbila whose inhabitants they massacred and whose rich mosques they pillaged.

About nine thousand people were killed, the majority of whom were Persians.

Muhammad Shah was seriously ill at the time of this disaster and therefore his

officials had kept the news from him. "When the Shah heard later on of these events, he grew furiously angry and swore fierce vengeance, but the Russian and English representatives intervened in order to quiet things.

Finally Mirza Ja'far Khan Mushiru'd-Dawlih, on return from his ambassadorship at Constantinople, was sent to Erzeroum there to meet the English, Russian and Ottoman delegates. "Having arrived at Tabriz, the Persian plenipotentiary fell ill and Haji Mirza Aqasi appointed in his place Mirza Taqi Khan-i-Farahani, Vazir Nizam: this man appeared in Erzeroum with two hundred officers. "The Turkish delegate was Anvar Effendi who showed himself both courteous and conciliatory, but one of the men of the Amir Nizam committed an offense against the Sunnite religion; the population then attacked the camp of the Ambassador, two or three Persians were killed, everything was pillaged and the Amir Nizam was saved only through the intervention of Badri Pasha. "The Turkish Government expressed regret and paid an indemnity of 15,000 tumans. "In his Hidayatu't-Talibin, Karim Khan asserts that during the sack of Karbila, the victorious troops respected the homes of the Shaykhis.

All those, he said, who sought refuge in them were saved, together with many precious objects which were gathered there.

None of the companions of Siyyid Kazim were killed, while those who had sought refuge in the holy sepulchres were massacred without mercy.

It is said that the Pasha entered on horseback within the sacred precincts."

2.20. January 10, 1843 A.D.

2.21. A. L. M. Nicolas, in his "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," II, pp. 60-61, gives the following extract from the writings of Siyyid Kazim: "You have understood, I think, that the religious law and the precepts of morality are the food of the Spirit. It is then necessary that these religious laws be diverse; it is necessary that sometimes the older regulations be annulled; it is necessary that these precepts contain some things which are doubtful and some things which are certain; some things general and some things specific; some things absolute and some things finite; some of appearances and some of inner realities, so that the child may reach adolescence and may be perfect in his power and his capacity. "It is, at that time, that the Qa'im will appear and after his manifestation the length of his days will come to an end and he will be martyred, and when he is martyred, the world will have reached its eighteenth year."

2.22. According to Samandar (p. 32), Shaykh Abu-Turab was a native of Ishtihard, and ranked among the leading disciples of Siyyid Kazim. He married the sister of Mulla Husayn. He died while in prison in Tihran.

2.23. "The Bab wrote to Haji Muhammad-Karim Khan ... and invited him to acknowledge his authority. This the latter not only entirely refused to do, but further wrote a treatise against the Bab and his doctrines." (P. 910.) "At least two such treatises were written by Haji Muhammad-Karim Khan. One of them was composed at a later date than this, probably after the Bab's death, at the

special request of Nasiri'd-Din Shah. Of these two, one has been printed, and is called 'the crushing of falsehood' (Izhaqu'l-Batil)." (Footnote 1, p. 910.) (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1889, article 12.)

2.24. Qur'an, 39:68.

2.25. References to the Bab and to Baha'u'llah, respectively.

2.26. The tombs of "the two Kazims," the seventh Imam Musa Kazim and the ninth Imam Muhammad-Taqi, about three miles north of Baghdad. Around them has grown up a considerable town, inhabited chiefly by Persians, known as "Kazimayn."

2.27. November 23—December 23, 1843 A.D.

2.28. December 31, 1843 A.D.

2.29. "Karim Khan, regarding the taking of Karbila, speaks emphatically of the respect which the attacking troops showed to the Shaykhis and to Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti. He declares, without the least hesitation, that it is very likely that Siyyid Kazim was poisoned in Baghdad by this infamous Najib Pasha who, he says, gave him a potion to drink which caused such intense thirst that it brought about the death of Siyyid Kazim. It is thus that the Persians record history!" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," II, pp. 30-31.)

2.30. "He was buried behind the window in the corridor of the tomb of the Lord of the Confessors. This tomb was built on an incline toward the interior of the forbidden precincts." (Ibid., p. 31.)

2.31. "During the lifetime of Siyyid Kazim, the doctrine of the Shaykhis spread over all Persia so well that in the Province of Iraq alone there were more than a hundred thousand murids." (Journal Asiatique, 1866, tome 7, p. 463.)

2.32. "Here ends the history of the establishment of Shaykhism, or at least of its unity, for, after the death of Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti, it became divided into two branches. One branch, under the name of Babism, flowered as foreshadowed by the strength of the movement created by Shaykh Ahmad, thus fulfilling the expectations of the two masters, if one may believe their predictions. The other, under the leadership of Karim Khan-i-Qajar-i-Kirmani, will continue its struggles against the Shiite sect, but will always seek security in affecting the outer appearance Ithna-'Asharisme. If, according to Karim Khan, the Bab and his followers are infamous and impious, for the Babis, Karim Khan is the Anti-Christ or Dajjal foretold by Muhammad." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," II, p. 31.)

CHAPTER III
THE DECLARATION OF THE BAB'S MISSION

[47] The death of Siyyid Kazim was the signal for renewed activity on the part of his enemies. Athirst for leadership, and emboldened by his removal and the consequent dismay of his followers, they reasserted their claims and prepared to realise their ambitions. For a time, fear and anxiety filled the hearts of Siyyid Kazim's faithful disciples, but with the return of Mulla

Husayn-i-Bushru'i from the highly successful mission with which he had been entrusted by his teacher, their gloom was dispelled.1

It was on the first day of Muharram, in the year 1260 A.H.,2 that Mulla Husayn came back to Karbila.

He cheered and strengthened the disconsolate disciples of his beloved chief, reminded them of his unfailing promise, and pleaded for unrelaxing vigilance and unremitting effort in their search for the concealed Beloved.

Living in the close neighbourhood of the house the Siyyid had occupied, he, for three days, was engaged continually in receiving visits from a considerable number of mourners who hastened to convey to him, as the leading representative of the Siyyid's disciples, the expression of their distress and sorrow.

He afterwards summoned a group of his most distinguished and trusted fellow-disciples and enquired about the expressed wishes and the last exhortations of their departed leader.

They told him that, repeatedly and emphatically, Siyyid Kazim had bidden them quit their homes, scatter far and wide, purge their hearts from every idle desire, and dedicate themselves to the quest of Him to whose advent he had so often alluded. "He told us," they said, "that the Object of our quest was now [48] revealed.

The veils that intervened between you and Him are such as only you can remove by your devoted search.

Nothing short of prayerful endeavour, of purity of motive, of singleness of mind, will enable you to tear them asunder.

Has not God revealed in His Book: 'Whoso maketh efforts for Us, in Our ways will We guide them'?"3 "Why, then,"

Mulla Husayn observed, "have you chosen to tarry in Karbila?

Why is it that you have not dispersed, and arisen to carry out his earnest plea?" "We acknowledge our failure," was their reply; "to your greatness we all bear witness.

Such is our confidence in you, that if you claim to be the promised One, we shall all readily and unquestionably submit.

We herein pledge our loyalty and obedience to whatever you bid us perform." "God forbid!" exclaimed Mulla Husayn. "Far be it from His glory that I, who am but dust, should be compared to Him who is the Lord of Lords!

Had you been conversant with the tone and language of Siyyid Kazim, you never would have uttered such words.

Your first obligation, as well as mine, is to arise and carry out, both in the spirit and in the letter, the dying message of our beloved chief."

He arose instantly from his seat, and went directly to Mirza Hasan-i-Gawhar,

Mirza Muhit, and other well-known figures among the disciples of Siyyid Kazim.

To each and all he fearlessly delivered the parting message of his chief, emphasised the pressing character of their duty, and urged them to arise and fulfil it.

To his plea they returned evasive and unworthy answers. "Our enemies," one of them remarked, "are many and powerful.

We must remain in this city and guard the vacant seat of our departed chief."

Another observed: "It is incumbent upon me to stay and care for the children whom the Siyyid has left behind."

Mulla Husayn immediately recognised the futility of his efforts.

Realising the degree of their folly, their blindness and ingratitude, he spoke to them no more.

He retired, leaving them to their idle pursuits.

As the year sixty, the year that witnessed the birth of the promised Revelation, had just dawned upon the world, it would not seem inappropriate, at this juncture, to digress from our theme, and to mention certain traditions of Muhammad [49] and of the imams of the Faith which bear specific reference to that year. Imam Ja'far, son of Muhammad, when questioned concerning the year in which the Qa'im was to be made manifest, replied as follows: "Verily, in the year sixty His Cause shall be revealed, and His name shall be noised abroad." In the works of the learned and far-famed

Muhyi'd-Din-i-'Arabi, many references are to be found regarding both the year of the advent and the name of the promised Manifestation. Among them are the following: "The ministers and upholders of His Faith shall be of the people of Persia." "In His name, the name of the Guardian ['Ali] precedeth that of the Prophet [Muhammad]." "The year of His Revelation is identical with half of that number which is divisible by nine [2520]." Mirza Muhammad-i-Akhbari, in his poems relating to the year of the Manifestation, [50] makes the following prediction: "In the year Ghars [the numerical value of the letters of which is 1260] the earth shall be illumined by His light, and in Gharasih [1265] the world shall be suffused with its glory. If thou livest until the year Gharasi [1270], thou shalt witness how the nations, the rulers, the peoples, and the Faith of God shall all have been renewed." In a tradition ascribed to the Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, it is likewise recorded: "In Ghars the Tree of Divine guidance shall be planted."

Mulla Husayn, having acquitted himself of the obligation he felt to urge and awaken his fellow-disciples, set out from Karbila for Najaf. With him were Muhammad-Hasan, his brother, and Muhammad-Baqir, his nephew, both of whom had accompanied him ever since his visit to his native town of Bushruyih, in the province of Khurasan. Arriving at the Masjid-i-Kufih, Mulla Husayn decided to spend forty days in that place, where he led a life of retirement and prayer. By his fasts and vigils he prepared himself for the holy adventure upon which

he was soon to embark. In the exercise of these acts of worship, his brother alone was associated with him, while his nephew, who attended to their daily needs, observed the fasts, and in his hours of leisure joined them in their devotions.

This cloistered calm with which they were surrounded was, after a few days, unexpectedly interrupted by the arrival of Mulla 'Aliy-i-Bastami, one of the foremost disciples of Siyyid Kazim. He, together with twelve other companions, arrived at the Masjid-i-Kufih, where he found his fellow-disciple Mulla Husayn immersed in contemplation and prayer. Mulla 'Ali was endowed with such vast learning, and was so deeply conversant with the teachings of Shaykh Ahmad, that many regarded him as even superior to Mulla Husayn. On several occasions he attempted to enquire from Mulla Husayn as to his destination after the termination of the period of his retirement. Every time he approached him, he found him so wrapt in his devotions that he felt it impossible to venture a question. He soon decided to retire, like him, for forty days from the society of men. All his companions followed his example with the exception of three who acted as their personal attendants.

[51] Immediately after the completion of his forty days' retirement, Mulla Husayn, together with his two companions, departed for Najaf. He left Karbila by night, visited on his way the shrine of Najaf, and proceeded directly to Bushihr,

on the Persian Gulf. There he started on his holy quest after the Beloved of his heart's desire. There, for the first time, he inhaled the fragrance of Him who, for years, had led in that city the life of a merchant and humble citizen.

[52] There he perceived the sweet savours of holiness with which that Beloved's countless invocations had so richly impregnated the atmosphere of that city.

He could not, however, tarry longer in Bushihr. Drawn as if by a magnet which seemed to attract him irresistibly towards the north, he proceeded to Shiraz. Arriving at the gate of that city, he instructed his brother and his nephew to proceed directly to the Masjid-i-Ilkhani, and there to remain until his arrival. He expressed the hope that, God willing, he would arrive in time to join them in their evening prayer.

On that very day, a few hours before sunset, whilst walking outside the gate of the city, his eyes fell suddenly upon a Youth of radiant countenance, who wore a green turban and who, advancing towards him, greeted him with a smile of loving welcome. He embraced Mulla Husayn with tender affection as though he had been his intimate and lifelong friend. Mulla Husayn thought Him at first to be a disciple of Siyyid Kazim who, on being informed of his approach to Shiraz, had come out to welcome him.

Mirza Ahmad-i-Qazvini, the martyr, who on several occasions had heard Mulla Husayn recount to the early believers the story of his moving and historic interview with the Bab, related to me the following: "I have heard Mulla Husayn repeatedly and graphically describe the circumstances of that remarkable

interview: 'The Youth who met me outside the gate of Shiraz overwhelmed me with expressions of affection and loving-kindness. He extended to me a warm invitation to visit His home, and there refresh myself after the fatigues of my journey. I prayed to be excused, pleading that my [53] two companions had already arranged for my stay in that city, and were now awaiting my return. "Commit them to the care of God," was His reply; "He will surely protect and watch over them." Having spoken these words, He bade me follow Him. I was profoundly impressed by the gentle yet compelling manner in which that strange Youth spoke to me.
As I followed Him, His gait, the charm of His voice, the dignity of His bearing, served to enhance my first impressions of this unexpected meeting.

"'We soon found ourselves standing at the gate of a house of modest appearance. He knocked at the door, which was soon opened by an Ethiopian servant. "Enter therein in peace, secure,"4 were His words as He crossed the threshold [54] and motioned me to follow Him. His invitation, uttered with power and majesty, penetrated my soul. I thought it a good augury to be addressed in such words, standing as I did on the threshold of the first house I was entering in Shiraz, a city the very atmosphere of which had produced

already an indescribable impression upon me. Might not my visit to this house, I thought to myself, enable me to draw nearer to the Object of my quest? Might it not hasten the termination of a period of intense longing, of strenuous search, of increasing anxiety, which such a quest involves? As I entered the house and followed my Host to His chamber, a feeling of unutterable joy invaded my being. Immediately [55] we were seated, He ordered a ewer of water to be brought, and bade me wash away from my hands and feet the stains of travel. I pleaded permission to retire from His presence and perform my ablutions in an adjoining room. He refused to grant my request, and proceeded to pour the water over my hands. He then gave me to drink of a refreshing beverage, after which He asked for the samovar5 and Himself prepared the tea which He offered me.

"'Overwhelmed with His acts of extreme kindness, I arose

to depart. "The time for evening prayer is approaching," I ventured to observe. "I have promised my friends to join them at that hour in the Masjid-i-Ilkhani." With extreme courtesy and calm He replied: "You must surely have made the hour of your return conditional upon the will and pleasure of God. It seems that His will has decreed otherwise. You need have no fear of having broken your pledge." His dignity and self-assurance silenced me. I renewed my ablutions and prepared for prayer. He, too, stood beside me and prayed. Whilst praying, I unburdened my soul, which [56] was much oppressed, both by the mystery of this interview and the strain and stress of my search. I breathed this prayer: "I have striven with all my soul, O my God, and until now have failed to find Thy promised Messenger. I testify that Thy word faileth not, and that Thy promise is sure."

"'That night, that memorable night, was the eve preceding the fifth day of Jamadiyu'l-Avval, in the year 1260 A.H.6 [57] It was about an hour after sunset

when my youthful Host began to converse with me. "Whom, after Siyyid Kazim,"

He asked me, "do you regard as his successor and your leader?" "At the hour of his death,"

I replied, "our departed teacher insistently exhorted us to forsake our homes, to scatter far and wide, in quest of the promised Beloved.

I have, accordingly, journeyed to Persia, have arisen to accomplish his will, and am still engaged in my quest." "Has your teacher,"

He further enquired, "given you any detailed indications as to the distinguishing features of the promised One?" "Yes,"

I replied, "He is of a pure lineage, is of illustrious descent, and of the seed of Fatimih.

As to His age, He is more than twenty and less than thirty.

He is endowed with innate knowledge.

He is of medium height, abstains from smoking, and is free from bodily deficiency."

He paused for a while and then with vibrant voice declared: "Behold, all these signs are manifest in Me!"

He then considered each of the above-mentioned signs separately, and conclusively demonstrated that each and all were applicable to His person.

I was greatly surprised, and politely observed: "He whose advent we await is a Man of unsurpassed holiness, and the Cause He is to reveal, a Cause of tremendous power.

Many and diverse are the requirements which He who claims to be its visible embodiment must needs fulfil.

How often has Siyyid Kazim referred to the vastness of the knowledge of the promised One!

How often did he say: 'My own knowledge is but a drop compared with that with which He has been endowed.

All my attainments are but a speck of dust in the face of the immensity of His knowledge.

Nay, immeasurable is the difference!'"

No sooner had those words dropped from my lips than I found myself seized with fear and remorse, such as I could neither conceal nor explain.

I bitterly reproved myself, and resolved at that very moment to alter my attitude and to soften my tone.

I vowed to God that should my Host again refer to the subject, I would, with the utmost humility, answer and say: "If you be willing to substantiate your

claim, you will most assuredly deliver me from the anxiety and suspense which so heavily oppress my soul.

I shall truly be indebted to you for such deliverance."

When I first started upon my quest, I determined to regard

[59] the two following standards as those whereby I could ascertain the truth of whosoever might claim to be the promised Qa'im. The first was a treatise which I had myself composed, bearing upon the abstruse and hidden teachings propounded by Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim. Whoever seemed to me capable of unravelling the mysterious allusions made in that treatise, to him I would next submit my second request, and would ask him to reveal, without the least hesitation or reflection, a commentary on the Surih of Joseph, in a style and language entirely different from the prevailing standards of the time. I had previously requested Siyyid Kazim, in private, to write a commentary on that same Surih, which he refused, saying: "This is, verily, beyond me. He, that great One, who comes after me will, unasked, reveal it for you. That commentary will constitute one of the weightiest testimonies of His truth, and one of the clearest evidences of the loftiness of His position."7

"'I was revolving these things in my mind, when my distinguished Host again remarked: "Observe attentively. Might not the Person intended by Siyyid Kazim be none other than I?" I thereupon felt impelled to present to Him a copy of the treatise which I had with me. "Will you," I asked Him, "read this book of mine and look at its pages with indulgent eyes? I pray you to overlook my weaknesses and failings." He graciously complied with my wish. He opened the book, glanced at certain passages, closed it, and began to address me. Within a few minutes He had, with characteristic vigour and charm, unravelled all its mysteries and resolved all its problems. Having to my entire satisfaction accomplished, within so short a time, the task I had expected Him to perform, He further expounded to me certain truths which could be found neither in the reported sayings of the imams of the Faith nor in the writings of Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim. These truths, which I had never heard before, seemed to be endowed with refreshing vividness and power. "Had you not been My guest," He afterwards

[61] observed, "your position would indeed have been a grievous one.

The all-encompassing grace of God has saved you.

It is for God to test His servants, and not for His servants to judge Him in accordance with their deficient standards.

Were I to fail to resolve your perplexities, could the Reality that shines within Me be regarded as powerless, or My knowledge be accused as faulty?

Nay, by the righteousness of God! it behoves, in this day, the peoples and nations of both the East and the West to hasten to this threshold, and here seek to obtain the reviving grace of the Merciful.

Whoso hesitates will indeed be in grievous loss.

Do not the peoples of the earth testify that the fundamental purpose of their creation is the knowledge and adoration of God?

It behoves them to arise, as earnestly and spontaneously as you have arisen, and to seek with determination and constancy their promised Beloved."

He then proceeded to say: "Now is the time to reveal the commentary on the Surih of Joseph."

He took up His pen and with incredible rapidity revealed the entire Surih of Mulk, the first chapter of His commentary on the Surih of Joseph.

The overpowering effect of the manner in which He wrote was heightened by the gentle intonation of His voice which accompanied His writing.

Not for one moment did He interrupt the flow of the verses which streamed from His pen.

Not once did He pause till the Surih of Mulk was finished.

I sat enraptured by the magic of His voice and the sweeping force of His revelation.

At last I reluctantly arose from my seat and begged leave to depart.

He smilingly bade me be seated, and said: "If you leave in such a state, whoever sees you will assuredly say: 'This poor youth has lost his mind.'"

At that moment the clock registered two hours and eleven minutes after sunset.8 That night, the eve of the fifth day of Jamadiyu'l-Avval, in the year 1260 A.H., corresponded with the eve preceding the sixty-fifth day after Naw-ruz, which was also the eve of the sixth day of Khurdad, of the year Nahang. "This night,"

He declared, "this very hour will, in the days to come, be celebrated as one of the greatest and most significant of all festivals.

Render thanks [62] to God for having graciously assisted you to attain your heart's desire, and for having quaffed from the sealed wine of His utterance. 'Well is it with them that attain thereunto.'"9

"'At the third hour after sunset, my Host ordered the dinner to be served. That same Ethiopian servant appeared again and spread before us the choicest food. That holy repast refreshed alike my body and soul. In the presence of my Host, at that hour, I felt as though I were feeding upon the fruits of Paradise. I could not but marvel at the manners and the devoted attentions of that Ethiopian servant whose very life seemed to have been transformed by the regenerating influence of his Master. I then, for the first time, recognised the significance of this well-known traditional utterance ascribed to Muhammad: "I have prepared for the godly and righteous among My servants what eye hath seen not, ear heard not, nor human heart conceived." Had my youthful Host no other claim to greatness, this were sufficient—-that He received me with that quality of hospitality and loving-kindness which I was convinced no other human

being could possibly reveal.

"'I sat spellbound by His utterance, oblivious of time and of those who awaited me. Suddenly the call of the muadhdhin, summoning the faithful to their morning prayer, awakened me from the state of ecstasy into which I seemed to have fallen. All the delights, all the ineffable glories, which the Almighty has recounted in His Book as the priceless possessions of the people of Paradise—these I seemed to be experiencing that night. Methinks I was in a place of which it could be truly said: "Therein no toil shall reach us, and therein no weariness shall touch us"; "No vain discourse shall they hear therein, nor any falsehood, but only the cry, 'Peace! Peace!'"; "Their cry therein shall be, 'Glory be to Thee, O God!' and their salutation therein, 'Peace!' And the close of their cry, 'Praise be to God, Lord of all creatures!'"10

"'Sleep had departed from me that night. I was enthralled by the music of that voice which rose and fell as He [63] chanted; now swelling forth as He revealed verses of the Qayyumu'l-Asma',11 again acquiring ethereal, subtle harmonies as He uttered the prayers He was revealing.12 At the end of each invocation, He would repeat this verse: "Far from the glory of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, be that which His creatures affirm of Him! And peace be upon His Messengers! And praise be to God, the Lord of all beings!"13

"'He then addressed me in these words: "O thou who art the first to believe in Me! Verily I say, I am the Bab, the Gate of God, and thou art the Babu'l-Bab, the gate of that Gate. Eighteen souls must, in the beginning, spontaneously and of their own accord, accept Me and recognise the truth of My Revelation. Unwarned and uninvited, each of these must seek independently to find Me. And when their number is complete, one of them must needs be chosen to accompany Me on My pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. There I shall deliver the Message of God to the Sharif of Mecca. I then shall return to Kufih, where again, in the Masjid of that holy city, I shall manifest His Cause. It is incumbent upon you not to divulge, either to your companions or to any other soul, that which you have seen and heard. Be engaged in the Masjid-i-Ilkhani in prayer and in teaching. I, too, will there join you in congregational prayer. Beware lest your attitude towards Me betray the secret of your faith. You should continue in this occupation and maintain this attitude until our departure for Hijaz. Ere we depart, we shall appoint unto each of the eighteen souls his special mission, and shall send them forth to accomplish their task. We shall instruct them to teach the Word of God and to quicken the souls of men." Having spoken these words to me, He dismissed me from His presence. Accompanying

[65] me to the door of the house, He committed me to the care of God.

"'This Revelation, so suddenly and impetuously thrust upon me, came as a thunderbolt which, for a time, seemed to have benumbed my faculties.14 I was blinded by its dazzling splendour and overwhelmed by its crushing force. Excitement, joy, awe, and wonder stirred the depths of my soul. Predominant among these emotions was a sense of gladness and strength which seemed to have

transfigured me. How feeble and impotent, how dejected and timid, I had felt previously! Then I could neither write nor walk, so tremulous were my hands and feet. Now, however, the knowledge of His Revelation had galvanised my being. I felt possessed of such courage and power that were the world, all its peoples and its potentates, to rise against me, I would, alone and undaunted, withstand their onslaught. The universe seemed but a handful of dust in my grasp. I seemed to be the Voice of Gabriel personified, calling unto all mankind: "Awake, for lo! the morning Light has broken. Arise, for His Cause is made manifest. The portal of His grace is open wide; enter therein, O peoples of the world! For He who is your promised One is come!"

"'In such a state I left His house and joined my brother and nephew. A large number of the followers of Shaykh Ahmad, who had heard of my arrival, had gathered in the Masjid-i-Ilkhani to meet me. Faithful to the directions of my newly found Beloved, I immediately set myself to carry out His wishes. As I began to organise my classes and perform my devotions, a vast concourse of people gathered gradually about me. Ecclesiastical dignitaries and officials of the city also came to visit me. They marvelled at the spirit which my lectures revealed, unaware that the Source [66] whence my knowledge flowed was none other than He whose advent they, for the most part, were eagerly awaiting.

"'During those days I was, on several occasions, summoned by the Bab to visit Him. He would send at night-time that same Ethiopian servant to the masjid, bearing to me His most loving message of welcome. Every time I visited Him, I spent the entire night in His presence. Wakeful until the dawn, I sat at His feet fascinated by the charm of His utterance and oblivious of the world and its cares and pursuits. How rapidly those precious hours flew by! At daybreak I reluctantly withdrew from His presence. How eagerly in those days I looked forward to the approach of the evening hour! With what feelings of sadness and regret I beheld the dawning of day! In the course of one of these nightly visits, my Host addressed me in these words: "To-morrow thirteen of your companions will arrive. To each of them extend the utmost loving-kindness. Leave them not to themselves, for they have dedicated their lives to the quest of their Beloved. Pray to God that He may graciously enable them to walk securely in that path which is finer than a hair and keener than a sword. Certain ones among them will be accounted, in the sight of God, as His chosen and favoured disciples. As to others, they will tread the middle way. The fate of the rest will remain undeclared until the hour when all that is hidden shall be made manifest."15

"'That same morning, at sunrise, soon after my return from the home of the Bab, Mulla 'Aliy-i-Bastami, accompanied by the same number of companions as indicated to me, arrived at the Masjid-i-Ilkhani.

I immediately set about to provide the means for their comfort.

One night, a few days after their arrival, Mulla 'Ali, as the spokesman of his companions, gave vent to feelings which he could no longer repress. "You know well," he said, "how great is our confidence in you.

We bear you such loyalty that if you should claim to be the promised Qa'im we would all unhesitatingly submit.

Obedient to your summons, we have forsaken our [67] homes and have gone forth in search of our promised Beloved.

You were the first to set us all this noble example.

We have followed in your footsteps.

We have determined not to relax in our efforts until we find the Object of our quest.

We have followed you to this place, ready to acknowledge whomsoever you accept, in the hope of seeking the shelter of His protection and of passing successfully through the tumult and agitation that must needs signalise the last Hour.

How is it that we now see you teaching the people and conducting their prayers and devotions with the utmost tranquillity?

Those evidences of agitation and expectancy seem to have vanished from your countenance.

Tell us, we beseech you, the reason, that we too may be delivered from our present state of suspense and doubt." "Your companions,"

I gently observed, "may naturally attribute my peace and composure to the ascendancy which I seem to have acquired in this city.

The truth is far from that.

The world, I assure you, with all its pomp and seductions, can never lure away this Husayn of Bushruyih from his Beloved.

Ever since the beginning of this holy enterprise upon which I have embarked, I have vowed to seal, with my life-blood, my own destiny.

For His sake I have welcomed immersion in an ocean of tribulation.

I yearn not for the things of this world.

I crave only the good pleasure of my Beloved.

Not until I shed my blood for His name will the fire that glows within me be quenched.

Please God you may live to witness that day.

Might not your companions have thought that, because of the intensity of his longing and the constancy of his endeavours, God has, in His infinite mercy, graciously deigned to unlock before the face of Mulla Husayn the Gate of His grace, and, wishing, according to His inscrutable wisdom, to conceal this fact, has bidden him engage in such pursuits?"

These words stirred the soul of Mulla 'Ali.

He at once perceived their meaning.

With tearful eyes he entreated me to disclose the identity of Him who had turned my agitation into peace and converted my anxiety into certitude. "I adjure you," he pleaded, "to bestow upon me a portion of that holy draught which the Hand of mercy has given you to drink, for it will assuredly allay my thirst, and ease the pain of longing in my heart." "Beseech me not," [68] I replied, "to grant you this favour.

Let your trust be in Him, for He will surely guide your steps, and appease the tumult of your heart."""

Mulla 'Ali hastened to his companions and acquainted them with the nature of his conversation with Mulla Husayn. Ablaze with the fire which the account of that conversation had kindled in their hearts, they immediately dispersed, and, seeking the seclusion of their cells, besought, through fasting and prayer, the early removal of the veil that intervened between them and the recognition of their Beloved. They prayed while keeping their vigils: "O God, our God! Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help. Guide us, we beseech Thee, on the straight Path, O Lord our God! Fulfil what Thou hast promised unto us by Thine Apostles, and put us not to shame on the Day of Resurrection. Verily, Thou wilt not break Thy promise."

On the third night of his retirement, whilst wrapt in prayer, Mulla 'Aliy-i-Bastami had a vision. There appeared before his eyes a light, and, lo! that light moved off before him. Allured by its splendour, he followed it, till at last it led him to his promised Beloved. At that very hour, in the mid-watches of the night, he arose and, exultant with joy and radiant with gladness, opened the door of his chamber and hastened to Mulla Husayn. He threw himself into the arms of his revered companion. Mulla Husayn most lovingly embraced him and said: "Praise be to God who hath guided us hither! We had not been guided had not God guided us!"

That very morning, at break of day, Mulla Husayn, followed by Mulla 'Ali, hastened to the residence of the Bab. At the entrance of His house they met the faithful Ethiopian servant, who immediately recognised them and greeted them in these words: "Ere break of day, I was summoned to the presence of my Master, who instructed me to open the door of the house and to stand expectant at its threshold. 'Two guests,' He said, 'are to arrive early this morning. Extend to them in My name a warm welcome. Say to them from Me: "Enter therein in the name of God."'"

The first meeting of Mulla 'Ali with the Bab, which was analogous to the meeting with Mulla Husayn, differed only in this respect, that whereas at the previous meeting the [69] proofs and testimonies of the Bab's mission had been critically scrutinised and expounded, at this one all argument had been set aside and nothing but the spirit of intense adoration and of close and ardent fellowship prevailed. The entire chamber seemed to have been vitalised by that celestial potency which emanated from His inspired utterance. Everything in that room seemed to be vibrating with this testimony: "Verily, verily, the dawn

of a new Day has broken. The promised One is enthroned in the hearts of men. In His hand He holds the mystic cup, the chalice of immortality. Blessed are they who drink therefrom!"

Each of the twelve companions of Mulla 'Ali, in his turn and by his own unaided efforts, sought and found his Beloved. Some in sleep, others in waking, a few whilst in prayer, and still others in their moments of contemplation, experienced the light of this Divine Revelation and were led to recognise the power of its glory. After the manner of Mulla 'Ali, these, and a few others, accompanied by Mulla Husayn, attained the presence of the Bab and were declared "Letters of the Living." Seventeen Letters were gradually enrolled in the preserved Tablet of God, and were appointed as the chosen Apostles of the Bab, the ministers of His Faith, and the diffusers of His light.

One night, in the course of His conversation with Mulla Husayn, the Bab spoke these words: "Seventeen Letters have thus far enlisted under the standard of the Faith of God.

There remains one more to complete the number.

These Letters of the Living shall arise to proclaim My Cause and to establish My Faith.

To-morrow night the remaining Letter will arrive and will complete the number of My chosen disciples."

The next day, in the evening hour, as the Bab, followed by Mulla Husayn, was returning to His home, there appeared a youth dishevelled and travel-stained.

He approached Mulla Husayn, embraced him, and asked him whether he had attained his goal.

Mulla Husayn tried at first to calm his agitation and advised him to rest for the moment, promising that he would subsequently enlighten him.

That youth, however, refused to heed his advice.

Fixing his gaze upon the Bab, he said to Mulla Husayn: "Why seek you to hide Him from me?

I can recognise Him by His [70] gait.

I confidently testify that none besides Him, whether in the East or in the West, can claim to be the Truth.

None other can manifest the power and majesty that radiate from His holy person."

Mulla Husayn marvelled at his words.

He pleaded to be excused, however, and induced him to restrain his feelings until such time as he would be able to acquaint him with the truth.

Leaving him, he hastened to join the Bab, and informed Him of his conversation with that youth. "Marvel not," observed the Bab, "at his strange behaviour.

We have in the world of the spirit been communing with that youth.

We know him already.

We indeed awaited his coming.

Go to him and summon him forthwith to Our presence."

Mulla Husayn was instantly reminded by these words of the Bab of the following traditional utterance: "On the last Day, the Men of the Unseen shall, on the wings of the spirit, traverse the immensity of the earth, shall attain the presence of the promised Qa'im, and shall seek from Him the secret that will resolve their problems and remove their perplexities."

Though distant in body, these heroic souls are engaged in daily communion with their Beloved, partake of the bounty of His utterance, and share the supreme privilege of His companionship. Otherwise how could Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim have known of the Bab? How could they have perceived the significance of the secret which lay hidden in Him? How could the Bab Himself, how could Quddus, His beloved disciple, have written in such terms, had not the mystic bond of the spirit linked their souls together? Did not the Bab, in the earliest days of His Mission, allude, in the opening passages of the Qayyumu'l-Asma', His commentary on the Surih of Joseph, to the glory and significance of the Revelation of Baha'u'llah? Was it not His purpose, by dwelling upon the ingratitude and malice which characterised the treatment of Joseph by his brethren, to predict what Baha'u'llah was destined to suffer at the hands of His brother and kindred? Was not Quddus, although besieged within the fort of Shaykh Tabarsi by the battalions and fire of a relentless enemy, engaged, both in the daytime and in the night-season, in the completion of his eulogy of Baha'u'llah —that immortal commentary on the Sad of Samad which [71] had already assumed the dimensions of five hundred thousand verses? Every verse of the Qayyumu'l-Asma', every word of the aforementioned commentary of Quddus, will, if dispassionately examined, bear eloquent testimony to this truth.

The acceptance by Quddus of the truth of the Bab's Revelation completed the assigned number of His chosen

disciples.

Quddus, whose name was Muhammad-'Ali, was, through his mother, a direct descendant of the Imam Hasan, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad.1 He was born in Barfurush, in the province of Mazindaran.

It has been reported by those who attended the lectures of Siyyid Kazim that in the last years of the latter's life, Quddus enrolled himself [72] as one of the Siyyid's disciples.

He was the last to arrive, and invariably occupied the lowliest seat in the assembly.

He was the first to depart upon the conclusion of every meeting.

The silence he observed and the modesty of his behaviour distinguished him from the rest of his companions.

Siyyid Kazim was often heard to remark that certain ones among his disciples, though they occupied the lowliest of seats, and observed the strictest silence, were none the less so exalted in the sight of God that he himself felt unworthy to rank among their servants.

His disciples, although they observed the humility of Quddus and acknowledged the exemplary character of his behaviour, remained unaware of the purpose of Siyyid Kazim.

When Quddus arrived in Shiraz and embraced the Faith declared by the Bab, he was only twenty-two years of age.

Though young in years, he showed that indomitable courage and faith which none among the disciples of his master could exceed.

He exemplified by his life and glorious martyrdom the truth of this tradition: "Whoso seeketh Me, shall find Me.

Whoso findeth Me, shall be drawn towards Me.

Whoso draweth nigh unto Me, shall love Me.

Whoso loveth Me, him shall I also love.

He who is beloved of Me, him shall I slay.

He who is slain by Me, I Myself shall be his ransom."

The Bab, whose name was Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad,17 was born in the city of Shiraz, on the first day of Muharram, in the year 1235 A.H.18 He belonged to a house which was renowned for its nobility and which traced its origin to Muhammad Himself. The date of His birth confirmed the truth of the prophecy traditionally attributed to the Imam 'Ali: "I am two years younger than my Lord." Twenty-five years, four months, and four days had elapsed since the day of His birth, when he declared His Mission. In His early childhood He lost His father, Siyyid Muhammad-Rida,19 a man who was known throughout the province of Fars for his piety

[75] and virtue, and was held in high esteem and honour. Both His father and His mother were descendants of the Prophet, both were loved and respected by the people. He was reared by His maternal uncle, Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, a martyr to the Faith, who placed Him, while still a child, under the care of a tutor named Shaykh 'Abid.20 The Bab, though not inclined to study, submitted to His uncle's will and directions.

Shaykh 'Abid, known by his pupils as Shaykhuna, was a man of piety and learning.

He had been a disciple of both Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim. "One day," he related, "I asked the Bab to recite the opening words of the Qur'an: 'Bismi'llahi'r-Rahmani'r-Rahim.'21 He hesitated, pleading that unless He were

told what these words signified, He would in no wise attempt to pronounce them.

I pretended not to know their meaning. 'I know what these words signify,' observed my pupil; 'by your leave, I will explain them.' He spoke with such knowledge and fluency that I was struck with amazement.

He expounded the meaning of 'Allah,' of 'Rahman,' and 'Rahim,' in terms such as I had neither read nor heard.

The sweetness of His utterance still lingers in my memory.

I felt impelled to take Him back to His uncle and to deliver into his hands the Trust he had committed to my care.

I determined to tell him how unworthy I felt to teach so remarkable a child.

I found His uncle alone in his office. 'I have brought Him back to you,' I said, 'and commit Him to your vigilant protection.

He is not to be treated as a mere child, for in Him I can already discern evidences of that mysterious power which the Revelation of the Sahibu'z-Zaman22 alone can reveal.

It is incumbent upon you to surround Him with your most loving care.

Keep Him in your house, for He, verily, stands in no need of teachers such as I.' Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali sternly rebuked the Bab. 'Have You forgotten my instructions?' he said. 'Have I not already admonished You to follow the example of Your [76] fellow-pupils, to observe silence, and to listen attentively to every word spoken by Your teacher?' Having obtained His promise to abide faithfully by his instructions, he bade the Bab return to His school.

The soul of that child could not, however, be restrained by the stern admonitions of His uncle.

No discipline could repress the flow of His intuitive knowledge.

Day after day He continued to manifest such remarkable evidences of superhuman wisdom as I am powerless to recount."

At last His uncle was induced to take Him away from the school of Shaykh 'Abid, and to associate Him with himself in his own profession.23 There, too, He revealed signs of a power and greatness that few could approach and none could rival.

Some years later24 the Bab was united in wedlock with the sister of Mirza Siyyid Hasan and Mirza Abu'l-Qasim.25 The child which resulted from this union, He named Ahmad.26 He died in the year 1259 A.H.,27 the year preceding the declaration of the Faith by the Bab.

The Father did not lament his loss.

He consecrated his death by words such as these: [77] "O God, my God!

Would that a thousand Ishmaels were given Me, this Abraham of Thine, that I

might have offered them, each and all, as a loving sacrifice unto Thee.

O my Beloved, my heart's Desire!

The sacrifice of this Ahmad whom Thy servant 'Ali-Muhammad hath offered up on the altar of Thy love can never suffice to quench the flame of longing in His heart.

Not until He immolates His own heart at Thy feet, not until His whole body falls a victim to the cruelest tyranny in Thy path, not until His breast is made a target for countless darts for Thy sake, will the tumult of His soul be stilled.

O my God, my only Desire!

Grant that the sacrifice of My son, My only son, may be acceptable unto Thee.

Grant that it be a prelude to the sacrifice of My own, My entire self, in the path of Thy good pleasure.

Endue with Thy grace My life-blood which I yearn to shed in Thy path.

Cause it to water and nourish the seed of Thy Faith.

Endow it with Thy celestial potency, that this infant seed of God may soon germinate in the hearts of men, that it may thrive and prosper, that it may grow to become a mighty tree, beneath the shadow of which all the peoples and kindreds of the earth may gather.

Answer Thou My prayer, O God, and fulfil My most cherished desire.

Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful."28

The days which the Bab devoted to commercial pursuits were mostly spent in Bushihr.29 The oppressive heat of the summer did not deter Him from devoting, each Friday, several hours to continuous worship upon the roof of His house. Though exposed to the fierce rays of the noontide sun, He, turning His heart to His Beloved, continued to commune with Him, unmindful of the intensity of the heat [78] and oblivious of the world around Him. From early dawn till sunrise, and from midday till late in the afternoon, He dedicated His time to meditation and pious worship. Turning His gaze towards the north, in the direction of Tihran, He, at every break of day, greeted, with a heart overflowing with love and joy, the rising sun, which to Him was a sign and

symbol of that Day-Star of Truth that was soon to dawn upon the world. As a lover who beholds the face of his beloved, He gazed upon the rising orb with steadfastness and longing. He seemed to be addressing, in mystic language, that shining luminary, and to be entrusting it with His message of yearning and love to His concealed Beloved. With such transports of delight He greeted its beaming rays, that the heedless and [79] ignorant around Him thought Him to be enamoured with the sun itself.30

I have heard Haji Siyyid Javad-i-Karbila'i31 recount the following: "Whilst journeying to India, I passed through Bushihr. As I was already acquainted with

Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, I was enabled to meet the Bab on several occasions. Every time I met Him, I found Him in such a state of humility and lowliness as words fail me to describe. His downcast eyes, His extreme courtesy, and the serene expression of His face made an indelible impression upon my soul.32 I often heard those who were closely associated with Him testify to the purity of His character, to the charm of His manners, to His self-effacement, to His high integrity, and to His extreme devotion to God.33 A certain man confided to His care a trust, requesting Him to dispose of it at a fixed price. When the Bab sent him the value of that article, the man found that the sum which he had been offered considerably exceeded the limit which he had fixed. He immediately wrote to the Bab, requesting Him to explain the reason. The Bab replied: 'What I have sent you is entirely your due. There is not a single farthing in excess of [80] what is your right. There was a time when the trust you had delivered to Me had attained this value. Failing to sell it at that price, I now feel it My duty to offer you the whole of that sum.' However much the Bab's client entreated Him to receive back the sum in excess, the Bab persisted in refusing.

"With what assiduous care He attended those gatherings at which the virtues of the Siyyidu'sh-Shuhada', the Imam Husayn, were being extolled! With what attention He listened to the chanting of the eulogies! What tenderness and devotion He showed at those scenes of lamentation and prayer! Tears rained from His eyes as His trembling lips murmured words of prayer and praise. How compelling was His dignity, how tender the sentiments which His countenance inspired!"

As to those whose supreme privilege it was to be enrolled by the Bab in the Book of His Revelation as His chosen Letters of the Living, their names are as follows:

Mulla Husayn-i-Bushru'i,
Muhammad-Hasan, his brother,
Muhammad-Baqir, his nephew,
Mulla 'Aliy-i-Bastami,
Mulla Khuda-Bakhsh-i-Quchani, later named Mulla 'Ali,
Mulla Hasan-i-Bajistani,
Siyyid Husayn-i-Yazdi,
Mirza Muhammad Rawdih-Khan-i-Yazdi,
Sa'id-i-Hindi,
Mulla Mahmud-i-Khu'i,
Mulla Jalil-i-Urumi,
Mulla Ahmad-i-Ibdal-i-Maraghi'i,
Mulla Baqir-i-Tabrizi,
Mulla Yusif-i-Ardibili,
Mirza Hadi, son of Mulla 'Abdu'l-Vahhab-i-Qazvini,
[81] Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Qazvini.34
Tahirih,35
Quddus.

These all, with the single exception of Tahirih, attained the presence of the

Bab, and were personally invested by Him with the distinction of this rank. It was she who, having learned of the intended departure of her sister's husband, Mirza Muhammad-'Ali, from Qazvin, entrusted him with a sealed letter, requesting that he deliver it to that promised One whom she said he was sure to meet in the course of his journey. "Say to Him, from me," she added, "'The effulgence of Thy face flashed forth, and the rays of Thy visage arose on high. Then speak the word, "Am I not your [82] Lord?" and "Thou art, Thou art!" we will all reply.'"36

Mirza Muhammad-'Ali eventually met and recognised the Bab and conveyed to Him both the letter and the message of Tahirih.

The Bab forthwith declared her one of the Letters of the Living.

Her father, Haji Mulla Salih-i-Qazvini, and his brother, Mulla Taqi, were both mujtahids of great renown,37 were skilled in the traditions of Muslim law, and were universally respected by the people of Tihran, Qazvin, and other leading cities of Persia.

She was married to Mulla Muhammad, son of Mulla Taqi, her uncle, whom [83] the shi'ahs styled Shahid-i-Thalith.38 Although her family belonged to the Bala-Sari, Tahirih alone showed, from the very beginning, a marked sympathy and devotion to Siyyid Kazim.

As an evidence of her personal admiration for him, she wrote an apology in defence and justification of the teachings of Shaykh Ahmad and presented it to him.

To this she soon received a reply, couched in the most affectionate terms, in the opening passages of which the Siyyid thus addressed her: "O thou who art the solace of mine eyes (Ya Qurrat-i-'Ayni!), and the joy of my heart!"

Ever since that time she has been known as Qurratu'l-'Ayn.

After the historic [84] gathering of Badasht, a number of those who attended were so amazed at the fearlessness and outspoken language of that heroine, that they felt it their duty to acquaint the Bab with the character of her startling and unprecedented behaviour.

They strove to tarnish the purity of her name.

To their accusations the Bab replied: "What am I to say regarding her whom the Tongue of Power and Glory has named Tahirih [the Pure One]?"

These words proved sufficient to silence those who had endeavoured to undermine her position.

From that time onwards she was designated by the believers as Tahirih.39

A word should now be said in explanation of the term Bala-Sari. Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim, as well as their followers, when visiting the shrine of the Imam Husayn in Karbila, invariably occupied, as a mark of reverence, the lower end of the sepulchre. They never advanced beyond it, whereas other worshippers,

the Bala-Sari, recited their prayers in the upper section of that shrine. The Shaykhis, believing, as they did, that "every true believer lives both in this world and in the next," felt it unseemly and improper to step beyond the limits of the lower sections of the shrine [85] of the Imam Husayn, who in their eyes was the very incarnation of the most perfect believer.40

Mulla Husayn, who anticipated being the chosen companion of the Bab during His pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, was, as soon as the latter decided to depart from Shiraz, summoned to the presence of his Master, who gave him the following instructions: "The days of our companionship are approaching their end.

My Covenant with you is now accomplished.

Gird up the loins of endeavour, and arise to diffuse My Cause.

Be not dismayed at the sight of the degeneracy and perversity of this generation, for the Lord of the Covenant shall assuredly assist you.

Verily, He shall surround you with His loving protection, and shall lead you from victory to victory.

Even as the cloud that rains its bounty upon the earth, traverse the land from end to end, and shower upon its people the blessings which the Almighty, in His mercy, has deigned to confer upon you.

Forbear with the ulamas, and resign yourself to the will of God.

Raise the cry: 'Awake, awake, for, lo! the Gate of God is open, and the morning Light is shedding its radiance upon all mankind!

The promised One is made manifest; prepare the way for Him, O people of the earth!

Deprive not yourselves of its redeeming grace, nor close your eyes to its effulgent glory.' Those whom you find receptive to your call, share with them the epistles and tablets We have revealed for you, that, perchance, these wondrous words may cause them to turn away from the slough of heedlessness, and soar into the realm [86] of the Divine presence.

In this pilgrimage upon which We are soon to embark, We have chosen Quddus as Our companion.

We have left you behind to face the onslaught of a fierce and relentless enemy.

Rest assured, however, that a bounty unspeakably glorious shall be conferred upon you.

Follow the course of your journey towards the north, and

visit on your way Isfahan, Kashan, Qum, and Tihran. Beseech almighty Providence that He may graciously enable you to attain, in that capital, the seat of true sovereignty, and to enter the mansion of the Beloved. A secret lies hidden in that city. When made manifest, it shall turn the earth into paradise. My hope is that you may partake of its grace and recognise its splendour. From Tihran

proceed to Khurasan, and there proclaim anew the Call. From thence return to Najaf and Karbila, and there await the summons [87] of your Lord. Be assured that the high mission for which you have been created will, in its entirety, be accomplished by you. Until you have consummated your work, if all the darts of an unbelieving world be directed against you, they will be powerless to hurt a single hair of your head. All things are imprisoned within His mighty grasp. He, verily, is the Almighty, the All-Subduing."

The Bab then summoned to His presence Mulla 'Aliy-i-Bastami, and addressed to him words of cheer and loving-kindness. He instructed him to proceed directly to Najaf and Karbila, alluded to the severe trials and afflictions that would befall him, and enjoined him to be steadfast till the end. "Your faith," He told him, "must be immovable as the rock, must weather every storm and survive every calamity. Suffer not the denunciations of the foolish and the calumnies of the clergy to afflict you, or to turn you from your purpose. For you are called to partake of the celestial banquet prepared for you in the immortal Realm. You are the first to leave the House of God, and to suffer for His sake. If you be slain in His path, remember that great will be your reward, and goodly the gift which will be bestowed upon you."

No sooner were these words uttered than Mulla 'Ali arose from his seat and set out to prosecute his mission.

At about a farsang's distance from Shiraz he was overtaken by a youth who, flushed with excitement, impatiently asked to speak to him.

His name was 'Abdu'l-Vahhab. "I beseech you," he tearfully entreated Mulla 'Ali, "to allow me to accompany you on your journey.

Perplexities oppress my heart; I pray you to guide my steps in the way of Truth.

Last night, in my dream, I heard the crier announce in the market-street of Shiraz the appearance of the Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful.

He called to the multitude: 'Arise and seek him.

Behold, he plucks out of the burning fire charters of liberty and is distributing them to the people.

Hasten to him, for whoever receives them from his hands will be secure from penal suffering, and whoever fails to obtain them from him, will be bereft of the blessings of Paradise.' Immediately I heard the voice of the crier, I arose and, abandoning my shop, ran across the market-street of Vakil to a place where my eyes beheld you standing and distributing [88] those same charters to the people.

To everyone who approached to receive them from your hands, you would whisper in his ear a few words which instantly caused him to flee in consternation and exclaim: 'Woe betide me, for I am deprived of the blessings of 'Ali and his kindred!

Ah, miserable me, that I am accounted among the outcast and fallen !' I awoke from my dream and, immersed in an ocean of thought, regained my shop.

Suddenly I saw you pass, accompanied by a man who wore a turban, and who was conversing with you.

I sprang from my seat and, impelled by a power which I could not repress, ran to overtake you.

To my utter amazement, I found you standing upon the very site which I had witnessed in my dream, engaged in the recital of traditions and verses.

Standing aside, at a distance, I kept watching you, wholly unobserved by you and your friend.

I heard the man whom you were addressing, impetuously protest: 'Easier is it for me to be devoured by the flames of hell than to acknowledge the truth of your words, the weight of which mountains are unable to sustain!' To his contemptuous rejection you returned this answer: 'Were all the universe to repudiate His truth, it could never tarnish the unsullied purity of His robe of grandeur.' Departing from him, you directed your steps towards the gate of Kaziran.

I continued to follow you until I reached this place."

Mulla 'Ali tried to appease his troubled heart and to persuade him to return to his shop and resume his daily work. "Your association with me," he urged, "would involve me in difficulties.

Return to Shiraz and rest assured, for you are accounted of the people of salvation.

Far be it from the justice of God to withhold from so ardent and devoted a seeker the cup of His grace, or to deprive a soul so athirst from the billowing ocean of His Revelation."

The words of Mulla 'Ali proved of no avail.

The more he insisted upon the return of 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, the louder grew his lamentation and weeping.

Mulla 'Ali finally felt compelled to comply with his wish, resigning himself to the will of God.

Haji 'Abdu'l-Majid, the father of 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, has often been heard to recount, with eyes filled with tears, this story: "How deeply," he said, "I regret the deed I committed.

Pray that God may grant me the remission of my sin.

I [89] was one among the favoured in the court of the sons of the Farman-Farma, the governor of the province of Fars.

Such was my position that none dared to oppose or harm me.

No one questioned my authority or ventured to interfere with my freedom.

Immediately I heard that my son 'Abdu'l-Vahhab had forsaken his shop and left the city, I ran out in the direction of the Kaziran gate to overtake him.

Armed with a club with which I intended to beat him, I enquired as to the road he had taken.

I was told that a man wearing a turban had just crossed the street and that my son was seen following him.

They seemed to have agreed to leave the city together.

This excited my anger and indignation.

How could I tolerate, I thought to myself, such unseemly behaviour on the part of my son, I, who already hold so privileged a position in the court of the sons of the Farman-Farma?

Nothing but the severest chastisement, I felt, could wipe away the effect of my son's disgraceful conduct.

"I continued my search until I reached them. Seized with a savage fury, I inflicted upon Mulla 'Ali unspeakable injuries. To the strokes that fell heavily upon him, he, with extraordinary serenity, returned this answer: 'Stay your hand, O 'Abdu'l-Majid, for the eye of God is observing you. I take Him as my witness, that I am in no wise responsible for the conduct of your son. I mind not the tortures you inflict upon me, for I stand prepared for the most grievous afflictions in the path I have chosen to follow. Your injuries, compared to what is destined to befall me in future, are as a drop compared to the ocean. Verily, I say, you shall survive me, and will come to recognise my innocence. Great will then be your remorse, and deep your sorrow.' Scorning his remarks, and heedless of his appeal, I continued to beat him until I was exhausted. Silently and heroically he endured this most undeserved chastisement at my hands. Finally, I ordered my son to follow me, and left Mulla 'Ali to himself.

"On our way back to Shiraz, my son related to me the dream he had dreamt. A feeling of profound regret gradually seized me. The blamelessness of Mulla 'Ali was vindicated in my eyes, and the memory of my cruelty to him continued long to oppress my soul. Its bitterness lingered in my heart until the time when I felt obliged to transfer my residence [90] from Shiraz to Baghdad. From Baghdad I moved to Kazimayn, where 'Abdu'l-Vahhab established his business. A strange mystery brooded over his youthful face. He seemed to be concealing from me a secret which appeared to have transformed his life. And when, in the year 1267 A.H.,41 Baha'u'llah journeyed to Iraq and visited Kazimayn, 'Abdu'l-Vahhab fell immediately under the spell of His charm and pledged his undying devotion to Him. A few years later, when my son had suffered martyrdom in Tihran and Baha'u'llah had been exiled to Baghdad, He, with infinite loving-kindness and mercy, awakened me from the sleep of heedlessness, and Himself taught me the message of the New Day, washing away with the waters of Divine forgiveness the

stains of that cruel act."

This episode marks the first affliction which befell a disciple of the Bab after the declaration of His mission.

Mulla 'Ali realised from this experience how steep and thorny was the path leading to his eventual attainment of the promise given him by his Master.

Wholly resigned to His will, and prepared to shed his life-blood for His Cause, he resumed his journey until he arrived at Najaf.

In the presence of Shaykh Muhammad-Hasan, one of the most celebrated ecclesiastics of shi'ah Islam, and in the face of a distinguished company of his disciples, Mulla 'Ali announced fearlessly the manifestation of the Bab, the Gate whose advent they were eagerly awaiting. "His proof," he declared, "is His Word; His testimony, none other than the testimony with which Islam seeks to vindicate its truth.

From the pen of this unschooled Hashimite Youth of Persia there have streamed, within the space of forty-eight hours, as great a number of verses, of prayers, of homilies, and scientific treatises, as would equal in volume the whole of the Qur'an, which it took Muhammad, the Prophet of God, twenty-three years to reveal!"

That proud and fanatic leader, instead of welcoming, in an age of darkness and prejudice, these life-giving evidences of a new-born Revelation, forthwith pronounced Mulla 'Ali a heretic and expelled him from the assembly.

His disciples and followers, even the Shaykhis, who already testified to Mulla 'Ali's piety, sincerity, and learning, endorsed, unhesitatingly, [91] the judgment against him.

The disciples of Shaykh Muhammad-Hasan, joining hands with their adversaries, heaped upon him untold indignities.

They eventually delivered him, his hands bound in chains, to an official of the Ottoman government, arraigning him as a wrecker of Islam, a calumniator of the Prophet, an instigator of mischief, a disgrace to the Faith, and worthy of the penalty of death.

He was taken to Baghdad under the escort of government officials, and was cast into prison by the governor of that city.

Haji Hashim, surnamed 'Attar, a prominent merchant, who was well versed in the Scriptures of Islam, recounted the following: "I was present at Government House on one occasion when Mulla 'Ali was summoned to the presence of the assembled notables and government officials of that city.

He was publicly accused of being an infidel, an abrogator of the laws of Islam, and a repudiator of its rituals and accepted standards.

When his alleged offences and misdeeds had been enumerated, the Mufti, the chief exponent of the law of Islam in that city, turned to him and said: 'O

enemy of God!' As I was occupying a seat beside the Mufti, I whispered in his ear: 'You are as yet unacquainted with this unfortunate stranger.

Why address him in such terms?

Do you not realise that such words as you have addressed to him will excite the anger of the populace against him?

It behoves you to disregard the unsupported charges these busybodies have brought against him, to question him yourself, and to judge him according to the accepted standards of justice inculcated by the Faith of Islam.' The Mufti was sore displeased, arose from his seat, and left the gathering.

Mulla 'Ali was again thrown into prison.

A few days later, I enquired about him, hoping to achieve his deliverance.

I was informed that, on the night of that same day, he had been deported to Constantinople.

I made further enquiries and endeavoured to find out what eventually befell him.

I could not, however, ascertain the truth.

A few believed that on his way to Constantinople he had fallen ill and died.

Others maintained that he had suffered martyrdom."42 Whatever [92] his end, Mulla 'Ali had by his life and death earned the immortal distinction of having been the first sufferer in the path of this new Faith of God, the first to have laid down his life as an offering on the Altar of Sacrifice.

Having sent forth Mulla 'Ali on his mission, the Bab summoned to His presence the remaining Letters of the Living, and to each severally He gave a special command and appointed a special task.

He addressed to them these parting words: "O My beloved friends!

You are the bearers of the name of God in this Day.

You have been chosen as the repositories of His mystery.

It behoves each one of you to manifest the attributes of God, and to exemplify by your deeds and words the signs of His righteousness, His power and glory.

The very members of your body must bear witness to the loftiness of your purpose, the integrity of your life, the reality of your faith, and the exalted character of your devotion.

For verily I say, this is the Day spoken of by God in His Book:43 'On that day will We set a seal upon their mouths; yet shall their hands speak unto Us, and their feet shall bear witness to that which they shall have done.' Ponder the words of Jesus addressed to His disciples, as He sent them forth to propagate the Cause of God.

In words such as these, He bade them arise and fulfil their mission: 'Ye are

even as the fire which in the darkness of the night has been kindled upon the mountain-top.

Let your light shine before the eyes of men.

Such must be the purity of your character and the degree of your renunciation, that the people of the earth may through you recognise and be drawn closer to the heavenly Father who is the Source of purity and grace.

For none has seen the Father who is in heaven.

You who are His spiritual children must by your deeds exemplify His virtues, and witness to His glory.

You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?

Such must be the degree of your detachment, that into whatever city you enter to proclaim and teach the Cause of God, you should in no wise expect either meat or reward from its people.

Nay, when you depart out of that city, you should shake the dust from off your feet.

As you have entered it pure and [93] undefiled, so must you depart from that city.

For verily I say, the heavenly Father is ever with you and keeps watch over you.

If you be faithful to Him, He will assuredly deliver into your hands all the treasures of the earth, and will exalt you above all the rulers and kings of the world.' O My Letters!

Verily I say, immensely exalted is this Day above the days of the Apostles of old.

Nay, immeasurable is the difference!

You are the witnesses of the Dawn of the promised Day of God.

You are the partakers of the mystic chalice of His Revelation.

Gird up the loins of endeavour, and be mindful of the words of God as revealed in His Book:44 'Lo, the Lord thy God is come, and with Him is the company of His angels arrayed before Him!' Purge your hearts of worldly desires, and let angelic virtues be your adorning.

Strive that by your deeds you may bear witness to the truth of these words of God, and beware lest, by 'turning back,' He may 'change you for another people,' who 'shall not be your like,' and who shall take from you the Kingdom of God.

The days when idle worship was deemed sufficient are ended.

The time is come when naught but the purest motive, supported by deeds of

stainless purity, can ascend to the throne of the Most High and be acceptable unto Him. 'The good word riseth up unto Him, and the righteous deed will cause it to be exalted before Him.' You are the lowly, of whom God has thus spoken in His Book:45 "And We desire to show favour to those who were brought low in the land, and to make them spiritual leaders among men, and to make them Our heirs.' You have been called to this station; you will attain to it, only if you arise to trample beneath your feet every earthly desire, and endeavour to become those 'honoured servants of His who speak not till He hath spoken, and who do His bidding.' You are the first Letters that have been generated from the Primal Point,46 the first Springs that have welled out from the Source of this Revelation.

Beseech the Lord your God to grant that no earthly entanglements, no worldly affections, no ephemeral pursuits, may tarnish the purity, or embitter the sweetness, of that grace which flows through you.

I am preparing you for the advent of a mighty Day.

Exert your utmost endeavour that, in the world to come, I, who am now instructing you, may, before the mercy-seat of [94] God, rejoice in your deeds and glory in your achievements.

The secret of the Day that is to come is now concealed.

It can neither be divulged nor estimated.

The newly born babe of that Day excels the wisest and most venerable men of this time, and the lowliest and most unlearned of that period shall surpass in understanding the most erudite and accomplished divines of this age.

Scatter throughout the length and breadth of this land, and, with steadfast feet and sanctified hearts, prepare the way for His coming.

Heed not your weaknesses and frailty; fix your gaze upon the invincible power of the Lord, your God, the Almighty.

Has He not, in past days, caused Abraham, in spite of His seeming helplessness, to triumph over the forces of Nimrod?

Has He not enabled Moses, whose staff was His only companion, to vanquish Pharaoh and his hosts?

Has He not established the ascendancy of Jesus, poor and lowly as He was in the eyes of men, over the combined forces of the Jewish people?

Has He not subjected the barbarous and militant tribes of Arabia to the holy and transforming discipline of Muhammad, His Prophet?

Arise in His name, put your trust wholly in Him, and be assured of ultimate victory."47

With such words the Bab quickened the faith of His disciples and launched them upon their mission. To each He assigned his own native province as the field of his labours. He directed them each and all to refrain from specific references

to His own name and person.48 He instructed them to raise the call that the Gate to the Promised One has been opened, that His proof is irrefutable, and that His testimony is complete. He bade them declare that whoever believes in Him has believed in all the prophets of God, and that whoever denies Him has denied all His saints and His chosen

[96] ones. With these instructions He dismissed them from His presence and committed them to the care of God. Of these Letters of the Living, whom He thus addressed, there remained with Him in Shiraz Mulla Husayn, the first of these Letters, and Quddus, the last. The rest, fourteen in number, set out, at the hour of dawn, from Shiraz, each resolved to carry out, in its entirety, the task with which he had been entrusted.

To Mulla Husayn, as the hour of his departure approached, the Bab addressed these words: "Grieve not that you have not been chosen to accompany Me on My pilgrimage to Hijaz.

I shall, instead, direct your steps to that city which enshrines a Mystery of such transcendent holiness as neither Hijaz nor Shiraz can hope to rival.

My hope is that you may, by the aid of God, be enabled to remove the veils from the eyes of the wayward and to cleanse the minds of the malevolent.

Visit, on your way, Isfahan, Kashan, Tihran, and Khurasan.

Proceed thence to Iraq, and there await the summons of your Lord, who will keep watch over you and will direct you to whatsoever is His will and desire.

As to Myself, I shall, accompanied by Quddus and My Ethiopian servant, proceed on My pilgrimage to Hijaz.

I shall join the company of the pilgrims of Fars, who will shortly be sailing for that land.

I shall visit Mecca and Medina, and there fulfil the mission with which God has entrusted Me.

God willing, I shall return hither by the way of Kufih, in which place I hope to meet you.

If it be decreed otherwise, I shall ask you to join Me in Shiraz.

The hosts of the invisible Kingdom, be assured, will sustain and reinforce your efforts.

The essence of power is now dwelling in you, and the company of His chosen angels revolves around you.

His almighty arms will surround you, and His unfailing Spirit will ever continue to guide your steps.

He that loves you, loves God; and whoever opposes you, has opposed God.

Whoso befriends you, him will God befriend; and whoso rejects you, him will God reject."

FOOTNOTES

3.1. "Mulla Husayn-i-Bushru'i was a man whose great learning and strength of character were acknowledged even by his enemies. He had devoted himself to study from early childhood and his progress in theology and jurisprudence had won him no little consideration." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 128.)

3.2. January 22, 1844 A.D.

3.3. Qur'an, 29:69.

3.4. Qur'an, 15:46.

3.5. Tea-urn.

3.6. Corresponding with the evening of May 22, 1844 A.D. The 23rd of May fell on a Thursday.

3.7. "Mulla Husayn is reported to have said the following: "One day, when I was alone with the late Siyyid [Kazim] in his library, I enquired the reason why the Suriy-i-Yusuf was entitled in the Qur'an 'the Best of Stories,' to which he replied that it was not then the proper occasion for explaining the reason. This incident remained concealed in my mind, neither had I mentioned it to anyone." ("The Tarikh-i-Jadid," p. 39.)

3.8. The date of the Manifestation is fixed by the following passage in the Persian Bayan [Vahid 2, Bab 7): "The beginning thereof was when two hours and eleven minutes [had passed] from the evening preceding the fifth of Jamadiyu'l-Ula, 1260 [A.H.], which is the year 1270 of the mission [of Muhammad]." (From manuscript copy of Bayan written by the hand of Siyyid Husayn, amanuensis and companion of the Bab.)

3.9. A. L. M. Nicolas quotes the following from the Kitabu'l-Haramayn: "In truth, the first day that the Spirit descended in the heart of this Slave was the fifteenth of the month of Rabi'u'l-Avval." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 206.)

3.10. Quotations from the Qur'an.

3.11. The Bab's commentary on the Surih of Joseph.

3.12. "In the first of his books he was, above all, pious and mystical; in the second, polemics and dialectics held an important place, and his listeners noticed that he unfolded, from a chapter in the Book of God which he had chosen, a new meaning which no one had heretofore perceived and especially that he drew from it doctrines and information wholly unexpected. That which one never tired of admiring was the elegance and beauty of the Arabic style used in those writings. They soon had enthusiastic admirers who did not fear to prefer them to the finest passages in the Qur'an." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 120.)

3.13. Qur'an, 37:180.

3.14. "It is related in the 'Biharu'l-Anvar,' the 'Avalim,' and the 'Yanbu" of Sadiq, son of Muhammad, that he spoke these words: 'Knowledge is seven and twenty letters. All that the Prophets have revealed are two letters thereof. None thus far hath known any besides these two letters. But when the Qa'im shall arise, He will cause the remaining five and twenty letters to be made manifest.' Consider: he hath declared Knowledge to consist of seven and twenty letters, and regarded all the Prophets, from Adam even unto the 'Seal,' as Expounders of only two letters thereof, and as having been sent down with these two letters. He also saith that the Qa'im will reveal all the remaining five and twenty letters. Behold from this utterance how great and lofty is His station. His rank excelleth that of all the Prophets, and His Revelation transcendeth the comprehension and understanding of all their chosen ones." ("The Kitab-i-Iqan," p. 205.)

3.15. "Understand in the same way the beginning of the manifestation of the Bayan during forty days no one but the letter Sin believed in B. It was only, little by little, that the Bismi'llahu'l-Amna'u'l-Aqdas clothed themselves with the garment of faith until finally the Primal Unity was completed. Witness then how it has increased until our day." ("Le Bayan Persan," vol. 4, p. 119.)

3.16. The father of Quddus, according to the "Kashfu'l-Ghita'," died several years before the Manifestation of the Bab. At the time of the death of his father, Quddus was still a boy studying in Mashhad in the school of Mirza Ja'far. (P. 227, note 1.)

3.17. He is also known by the following designations:
Siyyid-i-Dhikr
'Abdu'dh-Dhikr
Babu'llah
Nuqtiy-i-Ula
Tal'at-i-A'la
Hadrat-i-A'la
Rabb-i-A'la
Nuqtiy-i-Bayan
Siyyid-i-Bab

3.18. October 20, 1819 A.D.

3.19. According to Mirza Abu'l-Fadl (manuscript on history of the Cause, p. 3), the Bab was still an infant, and had not yet been weaned, when His father passed away.

3.20. According to Mirza Abu'l-Fadl (manuscript, p. 41), the Bab was six or seven years of age when He entered the school of Shaykh 'Abid. The school was known by the name of "Qahviyih-Awliya." The Bab remained five years at that school, where He was taught the rudiments of Persian. On the first day of the month of Rabi'u'l-Avval, in the year 1257 A.H., He left for Najaf and Karbila, returning seven months after to His native province of Fars.

3.21. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

3.22 "The Lord of the Age," one of the titles of the promised Qa'im.

3.23. According to Haji Mu'inu's-Saltanih's narrative (p. 37), the Bab assumed at the age of twenty the independent direction of His business affairs. "Orphaned at an early age, he was placed under the tutelage of his maternal uncle, Aqa Siyyid 'Ali, under whose direction he entered the same trade in which his father had been engaged (that is to say, the mercantile business)." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 189.)

3.24. According to Haji Mu'inu's-Saltanih's narrative (p. 37), the Bab's marriage took place when He was twenty-two years of age.

3.25. The Bab refers to her in his commentary on the Surih of Joseph (Surih of Qarabat).

The following is A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' translation of the passage in question: "In truth I have become betrothed before the throne of God with Sara, that is to say, the dearly beloved, because 'dearly beloved' is derived from Dearly Beloved (the Dearly Beloved is Muhammad which signifies that Sara was a Siyyid).

In truth I have taken the angels of heaven and those who dwell in Paradise as witnesses of our betrothal. "Know that the benevolence of the Dhikr Sublime is great, O dearly beloved!

Because it is the benevolence which comes from God, the Beloved.

Thou art not like other women if thou obeyest God with regard to the Dhikr Sublime.

Know the great truth of the Holy Word and glory within thyself that thou art seated with the friend who is the Favorite of the Most High God.

Truly the glory comes to thee from God, the Wise.

Be patient in the command which comes from God concerning the Bab and his family.

Verily, thy son Ahmad has a refuge in the blessed heaven close to the great Fatimih!" (Preface to A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Le Bayan Persan," vol.

2, pp.

10-11.) "The Bab's widow survived till A.H.

1300 (1882-83)." (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1889, article 12, p.

993) Both were the sons of Mirza 'Ali, who was the paternal uncle of the mother of the Bab.

Mirza Muhsin and Mirza Hadi, respectively the son and grandson of Mirza Siyyid Hasan and Mirza Abu'l-Qasim, became sons-in-law of 'Abdul-Baha.

3.26. The Bab refers to His son in His commentary on the Surih of Joseph. The following is A. L. M. Nicolas' translation: "In truth, thy son Ahmad has a refuge in the Blessed Paradise near to the Great Fatimih." (Surih of Qarabat.) "Glory be to God Who in truth has given to the 'Delight of the Eyes,' in her youth, a son who is named Ahmad. Verily, we have reared this child toward God!" (Surih of 'Abd.) (Preface to A. L. M. Nicolas' "Le Bayan Persan," vol. 2, p. 11.)

3.27. 1843 A.D.

3.28. "He left Shiraz for Bushihr at the age of 17, and remained there for five years engaged in commercial pursuits. During this time he won the esteem of all the merchants with whom he was brought in contact, by his integrity and piety. He was extremely attentive to his religious duties, and gave away large sums to charity. On one occasion he gave 70 tumans [about 22 British pounds] to a poor neighbour." (Appendix 2 of Tarikh-i-Jadid: Haji Mirza Jani's History, pp. 343-4.)

3.29. "He was already predisposed to meditation and inclined to be silent, while his fine face, the radiance of his glance as well as his modest and contemplative mien drew, even at that early date, the attention of his fellow-citizens. Though very young, he felt an invincible attraction to matters of religion, for he was barely nineteen when he wrote his first work, the 'risaliy-i-Fiqhiyyih' in which he reveals a true piety and an Islamic effusion, which seemed to predict a brilliant future within the law of Shiite orthodoxy. It is probable that this work was written at Bushihr, for he was sent there by his uncle at the age of eighteen or nineteen to look after his business interests." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp. 189-190.)

3.30. "In society he held converse preferably with the learned or listened to the tales of travelers who congregated in this commercial city. This is why he was generally considered to be one of the followers of Tariqat who were held in high esteem by the people." (Journal Asiatique, 1866, tome 7, p. 335.)

3.31. "The Kashfu'l-Ghita'" gives the following particulars regarding this remarkable person: "Haji Siyyid Javad himself informed me that he was a resident of Karbila, that his cousins were well known among the recognised ulamas and doctors of the law in that city, and belonged to the Ithna-'Ashari sect of Shi'ah Islam. In his youth he met Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i, but was never regarded as his disciple. He was, however, an avowed follower and supporter of Siyyid Kazim, and ranked among his foremost adherents. He met the Bab in Shiraz, long before the date of the latter's Manifestation. He saw Him on several occasions, when the Bab was only eight or nine years old, in the house of His maternal uncle. He subsequently met Him in Bushihr and stayed for about

six months in the same khan in which the Bab and His maternal uncle were residing. Mulla 'Aliy-i-Bastami, one of the Letters of the Living, acquainted him with the Message of the Bab, while in Karbila, from which city he proceeded to Shiraz in order to inform himself more fully of the nature of His Revelation." (pp. 55-7.)

3.32. "[The] Bab possessed a mild and benignant countenance, his manners were composed and dignified, his eloquence was impressive, and he wrote rapidly and well." (Lady Sheil's "Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia," p. 178.)

3.33. "Withdrawn within himself, always absorbed in pious practices, of extreme simplicity of manner, of a fascinating gentleness, those gifts further heightened by his great youth and his marvellous charm, he drew about himself a number of persons who were deeply edified. People then began to speak of his science and of the penetrating eloquence of his discourses. He could not open his lips (we are assured by those who knew him) without stirring the hearts to their very depths. "Speaking, moreover, with a profound reverence regarding the Prophet, the Imams and their holy companions, he fascinated the severely orthodox while, at the same time, in more intimate addresses, the more ardent and eager minds were happy to find that there was no rigidity in his profession of traditional opinions which they would have found boring. His conversations, on the contrary, opened before them unlimited horizons, varied, colored, mysterious, with shadows broken here and there by patches of blinding light which transported those imaginative people of Persia into a state of ecstasy." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 118.)

3.34. According to Samandar, who was one of the early believers of Qazvin (manuscript, p. 15), Tahirih's sister, Mardiyyih, was the wife of Mirza Muhammad-'Ali, who was one of the Letters of the Living, and who suffered martyrdom at Shaykh Tabarsi. Mardiyyih appears to have recognised and embraced the Message of the Bab (p. 5). Mirza Muhammad-'Ali was the son of Haji Mulla 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, to whom the Bab addressed a Tablet while in the neighbourhood of Qazvin.

3.35. According to the "Memorials of the Faithful" (pp.

291-8), Tahirih had two sons and one daughter, none of whom recognised the truth of the Cause.

Such was the degree of her knowledge and attainments, that her father, Haji Mulla Salih, often expressed his regret in the following terms: "Would that she had been a boy, for he would have shed illumination upon my household, and would have succeeded me!"

She became acquainted with the writings of Shaykh Ahmad while staying in the home of her cousin, Mulla Javad, from whose library she borrowed these books, and took them over to her home.

Her father raised violent objections to her action and, in his heated discussions with her, denounced and criticised the teachings of Shaykh Ahmad.

Tahirih refused to heed the counsels of her father, and engaged in secret correspondence with Siyyid Kazim, who conferred upon her the name of "Qurratu'l-'Ayn."

The title of "Tahirih" was first associated with her name while she was staying in Badasht, and was subsequently approved by the Bab.

From Qazvin she left for Karbila, hoping to meet Siyyid Kazim, but arrived too late, the Siyyid having passed away ten days before her arrival.

She joined the companions of the departed leader, and spent her time in prayer and meditation, eagerly expecting the appearance of Him whose advent Siyyid Kazim had foretold.

While in that city, she dreamed a dream.

A youth, a Siyyid, wearing a black cloak and a green turban, appeared to her in the heavens, who with upraised hands was reciting certain verses, one of which she noted down in her book.

She awoke from her dream greatly impressed by her strange experience.

When, later on, a copy of the "Ahsanu'l-Qisas," the Bab's commentary on the Surih of Joseph, reached her, she, to her intense delight, discovered that same verse which she had heard in her dream in that book.

That discovery assured her of the truth of the Message which the author of that work had proclaimed.

She herself undertook the translation of the "Ahsanu'l-Qisas" into Persian, and exerted the utmost effort for its spread and interpretation.

For three months her house in Karbila was besieged by the guards whom the Governor had appointed to watch and prevent her from associating with the people.

From Karbila she proceeded to Baghdad, and lived for a time in the house of Shaykh Muhammad-i-Shibl, from which place she transferred her residence to another quarter, and was eventually taken to the home of the Mufti, where she stayed for about three months.

3.36. According to the "Kashfu'l-Ghita'" (p. 93), Tahirih was informed of the Message of the Bab by Mulla 'Aliy-i-Bastami, who visited Karbila in the year 1260 A.H., after his return from Shiraz.

3.37. "One of the most distinguished families of Qazvin—and by this I mean most distinguished by the number of high offices which their various members held in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, as well as by their reputation for science—was, without doubt, the family of Haji Mulla Salih-i-Baraqani who received after his death the title of 'Shahid-i-Thalith', that is to say, 'the third martyr.' We shall review their early history in order to make clear the role which they played in the religious dissensions of Persia, as well as in the catastrophe which was fatally to develop the arrogant character of the

brother of Mulla Salih.

When the great Mujtahid Aqa Siyyid Muhammad arrived at Qazvin, someone asked him if Haji Mulla Salih-i-Baraqani was a Mujtahid. 'Assuredly,' replied the Siyyid, and that all the more so since Salih was one of his former students who towards the last had followed the teachings of Aqa Siyyid 'Ali. 'Very well,' replied his questioner, 'but his brother Muhammad-Taqi, is he also worthy of the sacred title?' Aqa Siyyid Muhammad replied by praising the qualities and the science of Taqi but avoiding a precise answer to the direct question put to him.

However, this did not prevent the questioner from spreading abroad in the city the news that Siyyid Muhammad himself acknowledged Taqi as a Master whom he had declared Mujtahid in his presence. "Now Siyyid Muhammad had gone to live with one of his colleagues, Haji Mulla 'Abdu'l-Vahhab.

The latter learned quickly of the news which was thus noised abroad and he immediately summoned before him the questioner of the Siyyid whom he reproached severely in the presence of witnesses.

Naturally, the rumor spread from tongue to tongue until it reached Taqi, who became furious and declared each time he heard the name of Mulla 'Abdu'l-Vahhab,—'I only respect him because he is the son of my blessed Master.' "Siyyid Muhammad, having been informed of all these incidents and of all the rumors, and realizing that he had saddened the heart of Taqi, came one day to invite him to luncheon; he treated him with great respect, wrote for him his brevet of Mujtahid and, this same day, accompanied him to the Mosque.

The prayer over, he sat down on the steps of the pulpit where he spoke the praises of Taqi and confirmed him in his new dignity, in the presence of the entire assembly.

It happened that, a little later, Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i passed through Qazvin.

This personage, said to be the very pious author of 'Qisasu'l-'Ulama,' was declared impious because he had endeavored to reconcile philosophy and religious law, 'and everyone knows that in most cases to try to blend religious law with intelligence is an impossibility.' Be that as it may, Shaykh Ahmad rose high above his contemporaries, many men sharing his opinions.

He had followers in all the cities of Persia and the Shah Fath-'Ali treated him with great deference, while Akhund Mulla 'Ali said of him, 'He is an ignorant man with a pure heart.' "While in Qazvin, he sojourned in the house of Mulla 'Abdu'l-Vahhab who was henceforth to be the enemy of the Baraqani family.

He went to worship in the Mosque of the parish and the ulamas of Qazvin came to pray under his guidance.

He naturally returned all the visits and courtesies extended to him by these holy men, was on good terms with them and soon it became known that his host was one of his disciples.

One day he went to call upon Haji Mulla Taqi-i-Baraqani who received him apparently with profound respect, but took advantage of the opportunity to ask him some insidious questions. 'Regarding the resurrection of the dead on the Day of Judgment,' he asked, 'do you share the opinion of Mulla Sadra?' 'No,' replied Shaykh Ahmad.

Then Taqi, calling his youngest brother Haji Mulla 'Ali, said: 'Go to my library and bring me the Shavahid-i-Rububiyyih of Mulla Sadra.' Then, as Haji Mulla was slow to return, he said to Shaykh Ahmad: 'Although I do not agree with you on this subject, I am nevertheless curious to know your opinion on the matter.' The Shaykh replied, 'Nothing would be easier.

My conviction is that the resurrection will not take place with our material bodies but with their essence, and by essence I mean, for example, the glass which is potentially in the stone.' "Excuse me,' Taqi replied maliciously, 'but this essence is different from the material body and you know that it is a dogma in our holy religion to believe in the resurrection of the material body.' The Shaykh remained silent and it was in vain that one of his pupils, a native of Turkistan, endeavored to divert the conversation by starting a discussion which was likely to be a lengthy one, but the blow was dealt and Shaykh Ahmad withdrew, convinced that he had been compromised.

It was not long before he realized that his conversation had been carefully related by Taqi for, that very day, when he went to the Mosque to pray he was followed only by 'Abdu'l-Vahhab.

A misunderstanding was broiling and threatened to break, but 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, thinking he had found a way to smooth things over and remove all the difficulties, entreated his Master to write and publish a book in which he would affirm the resurrection of the material body.

But he had not taken into account the hatred of Taqi.

In fact, Shaykh Ahmad did write the treatise, which still may be found in his book entitled 'Ajvibatu'l-Masa'il' but no one cared to read it and his impiety was noised abroad increasingly from day to day.

It came to the point where the Governor of the city, Prince 'Ali-Naqi Mirza Ruknu'd-Dawlih, considering the importance of the personages involved in the controversy and afraid being blamed for allowing this dissension to grow, resolved to bring about an agreement. "One night, he invited all the celebrated Ulamas of the city to a great banquet.

Shaykh Ahmad was given the seat of honor and close to him, only separated by one person, was Taqi.

Platters were brought, prepared for three people, so that the two enemies found that they were obliged to eat together, but the irreconcilable Taqi turned toward the platter of his neighbors on his right hand and to the great consternation of the Prince, he placed his left hand over the left side of his face in such a manner that he could not possibly see Shaykh Ahmad.

After the banquet which proved rather dull, the Prince, still determined to reconcile the two adversaries, bestowed great praise on Shaykh Ahmad, acknowledging him as the great Arabian and Persian Doctor and saying that Taqi should show him the greatest respect; that it was not proper for him to give ear to the gossip of men eager to create conflict between two exceptional minds.

Taqi interrupted him violently and declared with great contempt, 'There can be no peace between impiety and faith!

Concerning the resurrection the Shaykh holds a doctrine opposed to the religion of Islam, (Islamic law) therefore, whoever holds such a doctrine is an impious one and what can such a rebel and I have in common?' "The Prince insisted and entreated in vain, but Taqi refused to yield and they all adjourned." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

263-267.)

3.38. Third Martyr.

3.39. "Mulla Salih had among his children a daughter, Zarrin-Taj (Crown of Gold), who had attracted attention from early childhood.

Instead of taking part in games and amusements like her companions, she passed hours at a time listening to her parents discuss religious matters.

Her keen intelligence quickly perceived the fallacies of Islamic science without succumbing to it and soon she was able to discuss points which were most obscure and confusing.

The Hadiths (traditions) held no secrets for her.

Her reputation soon became widely known in the city and her fellow-citizens considered her a prodigy, and justly so.

A prodigy in science, also a prodigy of beauty, for the child, as she grew to girlhood, possessed a face which shone with such radiant beauty that they named her 'Qurratu'l-'Ayn', which M. de Gobineau translates as 'The Consolation of the Eyes.' Her brother 'Abdu'l-Vahhab-i-Qazvini who inherited the learning and reputation of his father, himself relates, in spite of the fact that he remained, at least in appearance, a Muhammadan: 'None of us, her brothers or her cousins dared to speak in her presence, her learning so intimidated us, and if we ventured to express some hypothesis upon a disputed point of doctrine, she demonstrated in such a clear, precise and conclusive manner that we were going astray, that we instantly withdrew confused.' "She was present at her father's and uncle's classes, in the same room with two or three hundred students, but always concealed behind a curtain, and more than once she refuted the explanation that these two elderly men offered upon such and such a

question.

Her reputation became universal throughout all Persia, and the most haughty Ulamas consented to adopt some of her hypotheses and opinions.

This fact is all the more extraordinary because the Shiite Muhammadan religion relegates the woman almost to the level of the animal.

They consider that she has no soul and exists merely for reproduction. "Qurratu'l-'Ayn married, when still quite young, the son of her uncle, Muhammad-i-Qazvini who was the Imam-Jum'ih of the city and later she went to Karbila where she attended the classes of Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti.

She shared with enthusiasm the ideas of her Master, ideas with which she was already familiar, the city of Qazvin having become a center for the Shaykhi doctrine. "She was, as we shall see later, of an ardent temperament, of a precise and clear intelligence, of a marvellous presence of mind and indomitable courage.

All of these qualities combined were to bring her to take interest in the Bab whom she heard speak immediately after his return to Qazvin.

That which she learned interested her so vitally that she began corresponding with the Reformer and soon, convinced by him, she made known her conversion urbi et orbi.

The scandal was very great and the clergy were shocked.

In vain, her husband, her father and her brothers pleaded with her to renounce this dangerous madness, but she remained inflexible and proclaimed resolutely her faith." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

273-274.)

3.40. "'This name comes to them,' said Haji Karim Khan in his Hidayatu't-Talibin, 'from the fact that the late Shaykh Ahmad, being at Karbila during his pilgrimages to the holy tombs, and out of respect for the Imams, recited his prayers standing behind the Imam, that is to say, at his feet. In fact, for him there was no difference between the respect to be tendered to a dead Imam or a living Imam. The Persians, on the contrary, when entering into the tomb, placed themselves at the head of the Imam and consequently turned their backs to him when they prayed because the dead saints are buried with their heads towards the Qiblih. This is a disgrace and a lie! The apostles of Jesus pretending to have come to the assistance of God, were called 'Nasara,' a name which was given to all those who followed in their footsteps. It is thus that the name of Bala-Sari extended to all that follow the doctrine of those who pray standing at the head of the Imam.'" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le

Shaykhisme," I, preface, pp. 5-6.)

3.41. 1850-51 A.D.

3.42. According to Muhammad Mustafa (p. 106), Mulla 'Ali suffered six months' imprisonment in Baghdad by order of Najib Pasha, the governor of the city. He was thence ordered to leave for Constantinople, according to instructions received from the Ottoman government. He passed through Mosul, where he was able to awaken interest in the new Revelation. His friends were, however, unable to discover whether he eventually reached his destination.

3.43. The Qur'an.

3.44. The Qur'an.

3.45. The Qur'an.

3.46. One of the Bab's titles.

3.47. The Bab refers to the Letters of the Living in the Persian Bayan (Vahid 1, Bab 2) in the following terms: "All of these formed the name of the Living One, for these are the names that are the nearest to God; the others are guided by their clear and significant actions, for God began the creation of the Bayan through them, and it is to them that the creation of the Bayan will again return. They are the lights which in the past have eternally prostrated themselves and will prostrate themselves eternally in the future, before the celestial throne." ("Le Bayan Persan," vol. 1, pp. 24-25.)

3.48. A. L. M. Nicolas, in his introduction to volume 1 of "Le Bayan Persan" (pp. 3-5), writes as follows: "Everyone agrees in acknowledging that it would be absolutely impossible for him to proclaim loudly his doctrine or to spread it among men. He had to act as does a physician to children, who must disguise a bitter medicine in a sweet coating in order to win over his young patients. The people in the midst of whom he appeared were, and still are, alas, more fanatical than the Jews were at the time of Jesus, when the majesty of Roman peace was no longer there to put a stop to the furious excesses of religious madness of an over-excited people. Therefore, if Christ, in spite of the relative calm of the surroundings in which He preached, thought it necessary to employ the parable, Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad, a fortiori, was obliged to disguise his thought in numerous circuitous ways and only pour out, one drop at a time, the filter of his divine truths. He brings up his child, Humanity; he guides it, endeavoring always not to frighten it and directs its first steps on a path which leads it slowly but surely, so that, as soon as it can proceed alone, it reaches the goal pre-ordained for it from all eternity."

CHAPTER IV
MULLA HUSAYN'S JOURNEY TO TIHRAN

[97] With these noble words ringing in his ears, Mulla Husayn embarked upon his perilous enterprise.

Wherever he went, to whatever class of people he addressed himself, he

delivered fearlessly and without reserve the Message with which his beloved Master had entrusted him.

Arriving in Isfahan, he established himself in the madrisih of Nim-Avard.

Around him gathered those who on his previous visit to that city had known him as the favoured messenger of Siyyid Kazim to the eminent mujtahid, Haji Siyyid Muhammad-Baqir.1 He, being now dead, had been succeeded by his son, who had just returned from Najaf and was now established upon the seat of his father.

Haji Muhammad-Ibrahim-i-Kalbasi had also fallen seriously ill, and was on the verge of death.

The disciples of the late Haji Siyyid Muhammad-Baqir, now freed from the restraining influence of their departed teacher, and alarmed at the strange doctrines which Mulla Husayn was propounding, vehemently denounced him to Haji Siyyid Asadu'llah, the son of the late Haji Siyyid Muhammad-Baqir. "Mulla Husayn," they complained, "was able, in the course of his last visit, to win the support of your illustrious father to the cause of Shaykh Ahmad.

No one among the Siyyid's helpless disciples dared to oppose him.

He now comes as the upholder of a still more formidable opponent and is pleading His Cause with still greater vehemence and vigour.

He is persistently claiming that He whose Cause he now champions is the Revealer of a Book which is divinely inspired, and which bears a striking resemblance to the tone [98] and language of the Qur'an.

In the face of the people of this city, he has flung these challenging words: 'Produce one like it, if you are men of truth.' The day is fast approaching when the whole of Isfahan will have embraced his Cause!"

Haji Siyyid Asadu'llah returned evasive answers to their complaints. "What am I to say?" he was at last forced to reply. "Do you not yourselves admit that Mulla Husayn has, by his eloquence and the cogency of his argument, silenced a man no less great than my illustrious father?

How can I, then, who am so inferior to him in merit and knowledge, presume to challenge what he has already approved?

Let each man dispassionately examine these claims.

If he be satisfied, well and good; if not, let him observe silence, and not incur the risk of discrediting the fair name of our Faith."

Finding that their efforts had failed to influence Haji Siyyid Asadu'llah, his disciples referred the matter to Haji Muhammad-Ibrahim-i-Kalbasi. "Woe betide us," they loudly protested, "for the enemy has risen to disrupt the holy Faith of Islam!" In lurid and exaggerated language, they stressed the challenging character of the ideas propounded by Mulla Husayn. "Hold your peace," replied Haji Muhammad-Ibrahim. "Mulla Husayn is not the person to be duped by anyone, nor can he fall a victim to dangerous heresies. If your contention be true, if

Mulla Husayn has indeed espoused a new Faith, it is unquestionably your first obligation to enquire dispassionately into the character of his teachings, and to refrain from denouncing him without previous and careful scrutiny. If my health and strength be restored, it is my intention, God willing, to investigate the matter myself, and to ascertain the truth."

This severe rebuke, pronounced by Haji Kalbasi, greatly disconcerted the disciples of Haji Siyyid Asadu'llah. In their dismay they appealed to Manuchihr Khan, the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih, the governor of the city. That wise and judicious ruler refused to interfere in these matters, which he said fell exclusively within the jurisdiction of the ulamas. He warned them to abstain from mischief and to cease disturbing the peace and tranquillity of the messenger. His trenchant words shattered the hopes of the mischief-makers. Mulla Husayn was thereby relieved from the machinations [99] of his enemies, and, for a time, pursued untrammelled the course of his labours.

The first to embrace the Cause of the Bab in that city was a man, a sifter of wheat, who, as soon as the Call reached his ears, unreservedly accepted the Message.

With marvellous devotion he served Mulla Husayn, and through his close association with him became a zealous advocate of the new Revelation.

A few years later, when the soul-stirring details of the siege of the fort of Shaykh Tabarsi were being recounted to him, he felt an irresistible impulse to throw in his lot with those heroic companions of the Bab who had risen for the defence of their Faith.

Carrying his sieve in his hand, he immediately arose and set out to reach the scene of that memorable encounter. "Why leave so hurriedly?" his friends asked him, as they saw him running in a state of intense excitement through the bazaars of Isfahan. "I have risen," he replied, "to join the glorious company of the defenders of the fort of Shaykh Tabarsi!

With this sieve which I carry with me, I intend to sift the people in every city through which I pass.

Whomsoever I find ready to espouse the Cause I have embraced, I will ask to join me and hasten forthwith to the field of martyrdom."

Such was the devotion of this youth, that the Bab, in the Persian Bayan, refers to him in such terms: "Isfahan, that outstanding city, is distinguished by the religious fervour of its shi'ah inhabitants, by the learning of its divines, and by the keen expectation, shared by high and low alike, of the imminent coming of the Sahibu'z-Zaman.

In every quarter of that city, religious institutions have been established.

And yet, when the Messenger of God had been made manifest, they who claimed to be the repositories of learning and the expounders of the mysteries of the Faith of God rejected His Message.

Of all the inhabitants of that seat of learning, only one person, a sifter of wheat, was found to recognise the Truth, and was invested with the robe of Divine virtue!"2

[100] Among the siyyids of Isfahan, a few, such as Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Nahri, whose daughter was subsequently joined in wedlock with the Most Great Branch,3 Mirza Hadi, the brother of Mirza Muhammad-'Ali, and Mirza Muhammad-Riday-i-Pa-Qal'iyi, recognised the truth of the Cause.

Mulla Sadiq-i-Khurasani, formerly known as Muqaddas, and surnamed by Baha'u'llah, Ismu'llahu'l-Asdaq, who, according to the instructions of Siyyid Kazim, had during the last five years been residing in Isfahan and had been preparing the way for the advent of the new Revelation, was also among the first believers who identified themselves with the Message proclaimed by the Bab.4 As soon as he learned of the arrival of Mulla Husayn in Isfahan, he hastened to meet him.

He gives the following account of his first interview, which took place at night in the home of Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Nahri: "I asked Mulla Husayn to divulge the name of Him who claimed to be the promised Manifestation.

He replied: 'To enquire about that name and to divulge it are alike forbidden.' 'Would it, then, be possible,' I asked, 'for me, even as the Letters of the Living, to seek independently the grace of the All-Merciful and, through prayer, to discover His identity?' 'The door of His grace,' he replied, 'is never closed before the face of him who seeks to find Him.' I immediately retired from his presence, and requested his host to allow me the privacy of a room in his house where, alone and undisturbed, I could commune with God.

In the midst of my contemplation, I suddenly remembered the face of a Youth whom I had often observed while in Karbila, standing in an attitude of prayer, with His face bathed in tears at the entrance of the shrine of the Imam Husayn.

That same countenance now reappeared before my eyes.

In my vision I seemed to behold that same face, those same features, expressive of such joy as I could never describe.

He smiled as He gazed at me.

I went towards Him, ready to throw myself at His feet.

I was bending towards the ground, when, lo! that radiant figure vanished from before me.

Overpowered with joy and gladness, I ran out to meet Mulla [101] Husayn, who with transport received me and assured me that I had, at last, attained the object of my desire.

He bade me, however, repress my feelings. 'Declare not your vision to anyone,' he urged me; 'the time for it has not yet arrived.

You have reaped the fruit of your patient waiting in Isfahan.

You should now proceed to Kirman, and there acquaint Haji Mirza Karim Khan with this Message.

From that place you should travel to Shiraz and endeavour to rouse the people of that city from their heedlessness.

I hope to join you in Shiraz and share with you the blessings of a joyous reunion with our Beloved.'"5

From Isfahan, Mulla Husayn proceeded to Kashan. The first to be enrolled in that city among the company of the faithful was a certain Haji Mirza Jani, surnamed Par-Pa, who was a merchant of note.6 Among the friends of Mulla Husayn was a well-known divine, Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Baqi, a resident of Kashan and a member of the shaykhi community. Although intimately associated with Mulla Husayn during his stay in Najaf and Karbila, the Siyyid felt unable to sacrifice rank and leadership for the Message which his friend had brought him.

Arriving in Qum, Mulla Husayn found its people utterly unprepared to heed his call. The seeds he sowed among them did not germinate until the time when Baha'u'llah was exiled to Baghdad. In those days Haji Mirza Musa, a native of Qum, embraced the Faith, journeyed to Baghdad, and there met Baha'u'llah. He eventually quaffed the cup of martyrdom in His path.

From Qum, Mulla Husayn proceeded directly to Tihran. He lived, during his stay in the capital, in one of the rooms [102] which belonged to the madrisih of Mirza Salih, better known as the madrisih of Pay-i-Minar. Haji Mirza Muhammad-i-Khurasani, the leader of the shaykhi community of Tihran, who acted as an instructor in that institution,

was approached by Mulla Husayn but failed to respond to his invitation to accept the Message. "We had cherished the hope," he said to Mulla Husayn, "that after the death of Siyyid Kazim you would strive to promote the best interests of the shaykhi community and would deliver it from the [103] obscurity into which it has sunk. You seem, however, to have betrayed its cause. You have shattered our fondest expectations. If you persist in disseminating these subversive doctrines, you will eventually extinguish the remnants of the shaykhis in this city." Mulla Husayn assured him that he had no intention of prolonging his stay in Tihran, that his aim was in no wise to abase or suppress the teachings inculcated by Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim.7

During his stay in Tihran, Mulla Husayn each day would leave his room early in the morning and would return to it only an hour after sunset.

Upon his return he would quietly and alone re-enter his room, close the door behind him, and [104] remain in the privacy of his cell until the next day.8 Mirza Musa, Aqay-i-Kalim, the brother of Baha'u'llah, recounted to me the following: "I have heard Mulla Muhammad-i-Mu'allim, a native of Nur, in the province of Mazindaran, who was a fervent admirer of both Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim, relate this story: 'I was in those days recognised as one of the favoured disciples of Haji Mirza Muhammad, and lived in the same school in which he taught.

My room adjoined his room, and we were closely associated together.

On the day that he was engaged in discussion with Mulla Husayn, I overheard their conversation from beginning to end, and was deeply affected by the ardour, the fluency, and learning of that youthful stranger.

I was surprised at the evasive answers, the arrogance, and contemptuous behaviour of Haji Mirza Muhammad.

That day I felt strongly attracted by the charm of that youth, and deeply resented the unseemly conduct of my teacher towards him.

I concealed my feelings, however, and pretended to ignore his discussions with Mulla Husayn.

I was seized with a passionate desire to meet the latter, and ventured, at the hour of midnight, to visit him.

He did not expect me, but I knocked at his door, and found him awake seated beside his lamp.

He received me affectionately, and spoke to me with extreme courtesy and tenderness.

I unburdened my heart to him, and as I was addressing him, tears, which I could not repress, flowed from my eyes. "I can now see," he said, "the reason why I have chosen to dwell in this place.

Your teacher has contemptuously rejected this Message and despised its Author.

My hope is that his pupil may, unlike his master, recognise its truth.

What is your name, and which city is your home?" "My name,"

I replied, "is Mulla Muhammad, and my surname Mu'allim.

My home is Nur, in the province of Mazindaran." "Tell me," further enquired Mulla Husayn, "is there to-day among the family of the late Mirza Buzurg-i-Nuri, who was so renowned for his character, his charm, and artistic and intellectual attainments, anyone who has proved himself capable of maintaining the high traditions of that [105] illustrious house?" "Yea,"

I replied, "among his sons now living, one has distinguished Himself by the very traits which characterised His father.

By His virtuous life, His high

attainments, His loving-kindness and liberality, He has proved Himself a noble descendant of a noble father." "What is His occupation?" he asked me. "He cheers the disconsolate [106] and feeds the hungry," I replied. "What of His rank and position?" "He has none," I said, "apart from befriending the poor and the stranger." "What is His name?" "Husayn-'Ali." "In which of the scripts of His father does He excel?" "His favourite script is shikastih-nasta'liq." "How does He spend His time?" "He roams the woods and delights in the beauties of the countryside."9 "What is His age?" "Eight and twenty." The eagerness with

which Mulla Husayn questioned me, and the sense of delight with which he welcomed every particular I gave him, greatly surprised me. Turning to me, with his face beaming with satisfaction and joy, he once more enquired: "I presume you often meet Him?" "I frequently visit His home," I replied. "Will you," he said, "deliver into His hands a trust from me?" "Most assuredly," was my reply. He then gave me a scroll wrapped in a piece of cloth, and requested me to hand it to Him the next day at the hour of dawn. "Should He deign to answer me," he added, "will you be kind enough to acquaint me with His reply?" I received the scroll from him and, at break of day, arose to carry out his desire.

"'As I approached the house of Baha'u'llah, I recognised His brother Mirza Musa, who was standing at the gate, and to whom I communicated the object of my visit. He went into the house and soon reappeared bearing a message of welcome. I was ushered into His presence, and presented the scroll to Mirza Musa, who laid it before Baha'u'llah. He bade us both be seated. Unfolding the scroll, He glanced at its contents and began to read aloud to us certain of its passages. I sat enraptured as I listened to the sound of His [107] voice and the sweetness of its melody. He had read a page of the scroll when, turning to His brother, He said: "Musa, what have you to say? Verily I say, whoso believes in the Qur'an and recognises its Divine origin, and yet hesitates, though it be for a moment, to admit that these soul-stirring words are endowed with the same regenerating power, has most assuredly erred in his judgment and has strayed far from the path of justice." He spoke no more. Dismissing me from His presence, He charged me to take to Mulla Husayn, as a gift from Him, a loaf of Russian sugar and a package of tea,10 and to convey to him the expression of His appreciation and love.

"'I arose and, filled with joy, hastened back to Mulla Husayn, and delivered to him the gift and message of Baha'u'llah. With what joy and exultation he received them from me! Words fail me to describe the intensity of his emotion. He started to his feet, received with bowed head the gift from my hand, and fervently kissed it. He then took me in his arms, kissed my eyes, and said: "My dearly beloved friend! I pray that even as you have rejoiced my heart, God may grant you eternal felicity and fill your heart with imperishable gladness." I was amazed at the behaviour of Mulla Husayn. What could be, I thought to myself, the nature of the bond that unites these two souls? What could have kindled so fervid a fellowship in their hearts? Why should Mulla Husayn, in whose sight the pomp and circumstance of royalty were the merest trifle, have evinced such gladness at the sight of so inconsiderable a gift from the hands of Baha'u'llah? I was puzzled by this thought and could not unravel its mystery.

"'A few days later, Mulla Husayn left for Khurasan. As he bade me farewell, he said: "Breathe not to anyone what you have heard and witnessed. Let this be a secret hidden within your breast. Divulge not His name, for they who envy His position will arise to harm Him. In your moments of meditation, pray that the Almighty may protect Him, that, through Him, He may exalt the downtrodden, enrich the poor, [108] and redeem the fallen. The secret of things is concealed

from our eyes. Ours is the duty to raise the call of the New Day and to proclaim this Divine Message unto all people. Many a soul will, in this city, shed his blood in this path. That blood will water the Tree of God, will cause it to flourish, and to overshadow all mankind."""

FOOTNOTES

4.1. "In crowds they gathered to hear the teacher. He occupied in turn all the pulpits of Isfahan where he was free to speak publicly and to announce that Mirza 'Ali-Muhammad was the twelfth Imam, the Imam Mihdi. He displayed and read his Master's books and would reveal their eloquence and their depth, emphasizing the extreme youthfulness of the seer and telling of his miracles." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 130.)

4.2. "Behold the land of Sad (Isfahan) which in this world of appearances is the greatest of lands. In every one of its schools, numerous slaves are found who bear the name of savants and contestants. At the time of the election of members, even a sifter of grain may put on the garb of primacy (above the others). It is here that the secret of the word of the Imams, regarding the Manifestation, shines forth: 'The lowliest of the creatures shall become the most exalted, and the most exalted shall become the most debased.'" ("Le Bayan Persan," vol. 4, p. 113.)

4.3. Reference to 'Abdu'l-Baha's marriage with Munirih Khanum.

4.4. Gobineau (p. 129) mentions Mulla Muhammad-Taqiy-i-Harati, a well-known juris-consult, as one of the earliest converts to the Faith.

4.5. "The sojourn of Bushru'i in Isfahan proved a triumph for the Bab. The conversions that he performed were numerous and brilliant; but, such are the ways of the world, that they drew down upon him the fierce hatred of the official clergy to which he was obliged to yield and he withdrew from that city. In fact, the conversion of Mulla Muhammad Taqiy-i-Hirati, a jurist of the first rank, brought their fury to a climax, because over-flowing with zeal as he was, he would go every day to the mambar where he talked to men openly of the greatness of the Bab to whom he gave the rank of Na'ib-i-khass of the twelfth Imam." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 255.)

4.6. According to the "Kashfu'l-Ghita'" (pp. 42-5), Haji Mirza Jani was known by the people of Kashan as Haji Mirza Janiy-i-Buzurg in order to distinguish him from his namesake, who was also a merchant of Kashan, known by the name of Haji Mirza Janiy-i-Turk, or Kuchiq. The former had three brothers; the eldest was named Haji Muhammad-Isma'il-i-Dhabih, the second Haji Mirza Ahmad, the third Haji 'Ali-Akbar.

4.7. "He passed several days in that capital but he did not appear in public. He limited himself to confidential conversations with those who visited him. He thus received many and won over to his doctrine a fairly large number of enquirers. Each one wished to see him, or to have seen him, and the King, Muhammad Shah and his Minister, Haji Mirza Aqasi, true Persians as they were,

did not fail to have him brought before them. He laid before them his doctrine and gave to them the Books of the Master." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 131.)

4.8. According to Samandar (manuscript, p. 2), Mulla Husayn, on his way from Shiraz to Tihran in the year 1260 A.H., was the bearer of a Tablet revealed by the Bab for Muhammad Shah.

4.9. "On one occasion," writes Dr. J. E. Esslemont, "'Abdu'l-Baha, the eldest son of Baha'u'llah, related to the writer the following particulars about His Father's early days: 'From childhood He was extremely kind and generous. He was a great lover of outdoor life, most of His time being spent in the garden or the fields. He had an extraordinary power of attraction, which was felt by all. People always crowded around Him. Ministers and people of the Court would surround Him, and the children also were devoted to Him. When He was only thirteen or fourteen years old He became renowned for His learning.... When Baha'u'llah was twenty-two years old, His father died, and the Government wished Him to succeed to His father's position in the Ministry, as was customary in Persia, but Baha'u'llah did not accept the offer. Then the Prime Minister said: "Leave him to himself. Such a position is unworthy of him. He has some higher aim in view. I cannot understand him, but I am convinced that he is destined for some lofty career. His thoughts are not like ours. Let him alone."'" ("Baha'u'llah and the New Era," pp. 29-30.)

4.10. Tea and that variety of sugar being extremely rare in Persia at that time, both were used as gifts among the higher classes of the population.

CHAPTER V
BAHA'U'LLAH'S JOURNEY TO MAZINDARAN

[109] The first journey Baha'u'llah undertook for the purpose of promoting the Revelation announced by the Bab was to His ancestral home in Nur, in the province of Mazindaran.

He set out for the village of Takur, the personal estate of His father, where He owned a vast mansion, royally furnished and superbly situated.

It was my privilege to hear Baha'u'llah Himself, one day, recount the following: "The late Vazir, My father, enjoyed a most enviable position among his countrymen.

His vast wealth, his noble ancestry, his artistic attainments, his unrivalled prestige and exalted rank made him the object of the admiration of all who knew him.

For a period of over twenty years, no one among the wide circle of his family and kindred, which extended over Nur and Tihran, suffered distress, injury, or illness.

They enjoyed, during a long and uninterrupted period, rich and manifold blessings.

Quite suddenly, however, this prosperity and glory gave way to a series of calamities which severely shook the foundations of his material prosperity.

The first loss he suffered was occasioned by a great flood which, rising in the mountains of Mazindaran, swept with great violence over the village of Takur, and utterly destroyed half the mansion of the Vazir, situated above the fortress of that village.

The best part of that house, which had been known for the solidity of its foundations, was utterly wiped away by the fury of the roaring torrent.

Its precious articles of furniture were destroyed, and its elaborate ornamentation irretrievably ruined.

This was shortly followed by the loss of various State positions which the Vazir occupied, and by the repeated assaults directed against him by his envious adversaries.

Despite this sudden change of fortune, the Vazir maintained his dignity and calm, and continued, within the restricted limits of his means, his acts of benevolence and charity.

He continued to exercise towards his faithless associates

[111] that same courtesy and kindness that had characterised his dealings with his fellow-men. With splendid fortitude he grappled, until the last hour of his life, with the adversities that weighed so heavily upon him."

Baha'u'llah had already, prior to the declaration of the Bab, visited the district of Nur, at a time when the celebrated mujtahid Mirza Muhammad Taqiy-i-Nuri was at the height of his authority and influence. Such was the eminence of his position, that they who sat at his feet regarded themselves each as the authorised exponent of the Faith and Law of Islam. The mujtahid was addressing a company of over two hundred of such disciples, and was expatiating upon a dark passage of the reported utterances of the imams, when Baha'u'llah, followed by a number of His companions, passed by that place, and paused for a while to listen to his discourse. The mujtahid asked his disciples to elucidate an abstruse theory relating to the metaphysical aspects of the Islamic teachings. As they all confessed their inability to explain it, Baha'u'llah was moved to give, in brief but convincing language, a lucid exposition of that theory. The mujtahid was greatly annoyed at the incompetence of his disciples. "For years I have been instructing you," he angrily exclaimed, "and have patiently striven to instil into your minds the profoundest truths and the noblest principles of the Faith. And yet you allow, after all these years of persistent study, this youth, a wearer of the kulah,1 who has had no share in scholarly training, and who is entirely unfamiliar with your academic learning, to demonstrate his superiority over you!"

Later on, when Baha'u'llah had departed, the mujtahid related to his disciples two of his recent dreams, the circumstances of which he believed were of the utmost significance. "In my first dream," he said, "I was standing in the midst

of a vast concourse of people, all of whom seemed to be pointing to a certain house in which they said the Sahibu'z-Zaman dwelt. Frantic with joy, I hastened in my dream to attain His presence. When I reached the house, I was, to my great surprise, refused admittance. 'The promised [112] Qa'im,' I was informed, 'is engaged in private conversation with another Person. Access to them is strictly forbidden.' From the guards who were standing beside the door, I gathered that that Person was none other than Baha'u'llah.

"In my second dream," the mujtahid continued, "I found myself in a place where I beheld around me a number of coffers, each of which, it was stated, belonged to Baha'u'llah. As I opened them, I found them to be filled with books. Every word and letter recorded in these books was set with the most

exquisite jewels. Their radiance dazzled me. I was so overpowered by their brilliance that I awoke suddenly from my dream."

When, in the year '60, Baha'u'llah arrived in Nur, He discovered that the celebrated mujtahid who on His previous visit had wielded such immense power had passed away.

The vast number of his devotees had shrunk into a mere handful of dejected disciples who, under the leadership of his successor, Mulla Muhammad, were striving to uphold the traditions of their departed leader.

The enthusiasm which greeted Baha'u'llah's arrival sharply contrasted with the [113] gloom that had settled upon the remnants of that once flourishing community.

A large number of the officials and notables in that neighbourhood called upon Him and, with every mark of affection and respect, accorded Him a befitting welcome.

They were eager, in view of the social position He occupied, to learn from Him all the news regarding the life of the Shah, the activities of his ministers, and the affairs of his government.

To their enquiries Baha'u'llah replied with extreme indifference, and seemed to reveal very little interest or concern.

With persuasive eloquence He pleaded the cause of the new Revelation, and directed their attention to the immeasurable benefits which it was destined to confer upon their country.2 Those who heard Him marvelled at the keen interest which a man of His position and age evinced for truths which primarily concerned the divines and theologians of Islam.

They felt powerless to challenge the soundness of His arguments or to belittle the Cause which He so ably expounded.

They admired the loftiness of His enthusiasm and the profundity of His thoughts, and were deeply impressed by His detachment and self-effacement.

None dared to contend with His views except His uncle 'Aziz, who ventured to oppose Him, challenging His statements and aspersing their truth.

When those who heard him sought to silence this opponent and to injure him, Baha'u'llah intervened in his behalf, and advised them to leave him in the hands of God.

Alarmed, he sought the aid of the mujtahid of Nur, Mulla Muhammad, and appealed to him to lend him immediate assistance. "O vicegerent of the Prophet of God!" he said. "Behold what has befallen the Faith.

A youth, a layman, attired in the garb of nobility, has come to Nur, has invaded the strongholds of orthodoxy, and disrupted the holy Faith of Islam.

Arise, and resist his onslaught.

Whoever attains his presence falls immediately under his spell, and is enthralled by the power of his utterance.

I know not whether he is a sorcerer, or whether he mixes with his tea some mysterious substance that makes every man who drinks the tea fall a victim to its charm."

The [114] mujtahid, notwithstanding his own lack of comprehension, was able to realise the folly of such remarks.

Jestingly he observed: "Have you not partaken of his tea, or heard him address his companions?" "I have," he replied, "but, thanks to your loving protection, I have remained immune from the effect of his mysterious power."

The mujtahid, finding himself unequal to the task of arousing the populace against Baha'u'llah, and of combating directly the ideas which so powerful an opponent was fearlessly spreading, contented himself with a written statement in which he declared: "O 'Aziz, be not afraid, no one will dare molest you."

In writing this, the mujtahid had, through a grammatical error, so perverted the purport of his statement, that those who read it among the notables of the village of Takur were scandalised by its meaning, and vilified both the bearer and the author of that statement.

Those who attained the presence of Baha'u'llah and heard Him expound the Message proclaimed by the Bab were so much impressed by the earnestness of His appeal that they forthwith arose to disseminate that same Message among the people of Nur and to extol the virtues of its distinguished Promoter. The disciples of Mulla Muhammad meanwhile endeavoured to persuade their teacher to proceed to Takur, to visit Baha'u'llah in person, to ascertain from Him the nature of this new Revelation, and to enlighten his followers regarding its character and purpose. To their earnest entreaty the mujtahid returned an evasive answer. His disciples, however, refused to admit the validity of the objections he raised. They urged that the first obligation imposed upon a man of his position, whose function was to preserve the integrity of shi'ah Islam, was to enquire into the nature of every movement that tended to affect the interests of their Faith. Mulla Muhammad eventually decided to delegate two of his eminent lieutenants, Mulla 'Abbas and Mirza Abu'l-Qasim, both sons-in-law and trusted disciples of the late mujtahid, Mirza Muhammad-Taqi, to visit

Baha'u'llah and to determine the true character of the Message He had brought. He pledged himself to endorse unreservedly whatever conclusions they might arrive at, and to recognise their decision in such matters as final.

[116] On being informed, upon their arrival in Takur, that Baha'u'llah had departed for His winter resort, the representatives of Mulla Muhammad decided to leave for that place.

When they arrived, they found Baha'u'llah engaged in revealing a commentary on the opening Surih of the Qur'an, entitled "The Seven Verses of Repetition."

As they sat and listened to His discourse, the loftiness of the theme, the persuasive eloquence which characterised its presentation, as well as the extraordinary manner of its delivery, profoundly impressed them.

Mulla 'Abbas, unable to contain himself, arose from his seat and, urged by an impulse he could not resist, walked back and stood still beside the door in an attitude of reverent submissiveness.

The charm of the discourse to which he was listening had fascinated him. "You behold my condition," he told his companion as he stood trembling with emotion and with eyes full of tears. "I am powerless to question Baha'u'llah.

The questions I had planned to ask Him have vanished suddenly from my memory.

You are free either to proceed with your enquiry or to return alone to our teacher and inform him of the state in which I find myself.

Tell him from me that 'Abbas can never again return to him.

He can no longer forsake this threshold."

Mirza Abu'l-Qasim was likewise moved to follow the example of his companion. "I have ceased to recognise my teacher," was his reply. "This very moment, I have vowed to God to dedicate the remaining days of my life to the service of Baha'u'llah, my true and only Master."

The news of the sudden conversion of the chosen envoys of the mujtahid of Nur spread with bewildering rapidity throughout the district. It roused the people from their lethargy. Ecclesiastical dignitaries, State officials, traders, and peasants all flocked to the residence of Baha'u'llah. A considerable number among them willingly espoused His Cause. In their admiration for Him, a number of the most distinguished among them remarked: "We see how the people of Nur have risen and rallied round you. We witness on every side evidences of their exultation. If Mulla Muhammad were also to join them, the triumph of this Faith would be completely assured." "I am come to Nur," Baha'u'llah replied, "solely for the purpose of proclaiming the [117] Cause of God. I cherish no other intention. If I were told that at a distance of a hundred leagues a seeker yearned for the Truth and was unable to meet Me, I would, gladly and unhesitatingly, hasten to his abode, and would Myself satisfy his hunger. Mulla Muhammad, I am told, lives in Sa'adat-Abad, a village not far distant from this place. It is My purpose to visit him and deliver to him the Message of God."

Desirous of giving effect to His words, Baha'u'llah, accompanied by a number of His companions, proceeded immediately to that village.

Mulla Muhammad most ceremoniously received Him. "I have not come to this place,"

Baha'u'llah observed, "to pay you an official or formal visit.

My purpose is to enlighten you regarding a new and wondrous Message, divinely inspired and fulfilling the promise given to Islam.

Whosoever has inclined his ear to this Message has felt its irresistible power, and has been transformed by the potency of its grace.

Tell Me whatsoever perplexes your mind, or hinders you from recognising the Truth."

Mulla Muhammad disparagingly remarked: "I undertake no action unless I first consult the Qur'an.

I have invariably, on such occasions, followed the practice of invoking the aid of God and His blessings; of opening at random His sacred Book, and of consulting the first verse of the particular page upon which my eyes chance to fall.

From the nature of that verse I can judge the wisdom and the advisability of my contemplated course of action."

Finding that Baha'u'llah was not inclined to refuse him his request, the mujtahid called for a copy of the Qur'an, opened and closed it again, refusing to reveal the nature of the verse to those who were present.

All he said was this: "I have consulted the Book of God, and deem it inadvisable to proceed further with this matter."

A few agreed with him; the rest, for the most part, did not fail to recognise the fear which those words implied.

Baha'u'llah, disinclined to cause him further embarrassment, arose and, asking to be excused, bade him a cordial farewell.

One day, in the course of one of His riding excursions into the country, Baha'u'llah, accompanied by His companions, saw, seated by the roadside, a lonely youth.

His hair was dishevelled, and he wore the dress of a dervish.

By the side of a brook he had kindled a fire, and was cooking his food [118] and eating it.

Approaching him, Baha'u'llah most lovingly enquired: "Tell Me, dervish, what is it that you are doing?" "I am engaged in eating God," he bluntly replied. "I am cooking God and am burning Him."

The unaffected simplicity of his manners and the candour of his reply pleased

Baha'u'llah extremely.

He smiled at his remark and began to converse with him with unrestrained tenderness and freedom.

Within a short space of time, Baha'u'llah had changed him completely.

Enlightened as to the true nature of God, and with a mind purged from the idle fancy of his own people, he immediately recognised the Light which that loving Stranger had so unexpectedly brought him.

That dervish, whose name was Mustafa, became so enamoured with the teachings which had been instilled into his mind that, leaving his cooking utensils behind, he straightway arose and followed Baha'u'llah.

On foot, behind His horse, and inflamed with the fire of His love, he chanted merrily verses of a love-song which he had composed on the spur of the moment and had dedicated to his Beloved. "Thou art the Day-Star of guidance," ran its glad refrain. "Thou art the Light of Truth.

Unveil Thyself to men, O Revealer of the Truth."

Although, in later years, that poem obtained wide circulation among his people, and it became known that a certain dervish, surnamed Majdhub, and whose name was Mustafa Big-i-Sanandaji, had, without premeditation, composed it in praise of his Beloved, none seemed to be aware to whom it actually referred, nor did anyone suspect, at a time when Baha'u'llah was still veiled from the eyes of men, that this dervish alone had recognised His station and discovered His glory.

Baha'u'llah's visit to Nur had produced the most far-reaching results, and had lent a remarkable impetus to the spread of the new-born Revelation.

By His magnetic eloquence, by the purity of His life, by the dignity of His bearing, by the unanswerable logic of His argument, and by the many evidences of His loving-kindness, Baha'u'llah had won the hearts of the people of Nur, had stirred their souls, and had enrolled them under the standard of the Faith.

Such was the effect of His words and deeds, as He went about preaching the Cause and revealing its glory to His countrymen in Nur, that the very stones and trees of that district seemed to have [119] been quickened by the waves of spiritual power which emanated from His person.

All things seemed to be endowed with a new and more abundant life, all things seemed to be proclaiming aloud: "Behold, the Beauty of God has been made manifest!

Arise, for He has come in all His glory."

The people of Nur, when Baha'u'llah had departed from out their midst, continued to propagate the Cause and to consolidate its foundations.

A number of them endured the severest afflictions for His sake; others quaffed with gladness the cup of martyrdom in His path.

Mazindaran in general, and Nur in particular, were thus distinguished from the other provinces and districts of Persia, as being the first to have eagerly embraced the Divine Message.

The district of Nur, literally meaning "light," which lay embedded within the mountains of Mazindaran, was the first to catch the rays of the Sun that had arisen in Shiraz, the first to proclaim to the rest of Persia, which still lay enveloped in the shadow of the vale of heedlessness, that the Day-Star of heavenly guidance had at length arisen to warm and illuminate the whole land.

When Baha'u'llah was still a child, the Vazir, His father, dreamed a dream. Baha'u'llah appeared to him swimming in a vast, limitless ocean. His body shone upon the waters with a radiance that illumined the sea. Around His head, which could distinctly be seen above the waters, there radiated, in all directions, His long, jet-black locks, floating in great profusion above the waves. As he dreamed, a multitude of fishes gathered round Him, each holding fast to the extremity of one hair. Fascinated by the effulgence of His face, they followed Him in whatever direction He swam. Great as was their number, and however firmly they clung to His locks, not one single hair seemed to have been detached from His head, nor did the least injury affect His person. Free and unrestrained, He moved above the waters and they all followed Him.

The Vazir, greatly impressed by this dream, summoned a soothsayer, who had achieved fame in that region, and asked him to interpret it for him. This man, as if inspired by a premonition of the future glory of Baha'u'llah, declared: "The limitless ocean that you have seen in your dream, O [120] Vazir, is none other than the world of being. Single-handed and alone, your son will achieve supreme ascendancy over it. Wherever He may please, He will proceed unhindered. No one will resist His march, no one will hinder His progress. The multitude of fishes signifies the turmoil which He will arouse amidst the peoples and kindreds of the earth. Around Him will they gather, and to Him will they cling. Assured of the unfailing protection of the Almighty, this tumult will never harm His person, nor will His loneliness upon the sea of life endanger His safety."

That soothsayer was subsequently taken to see Baha'u'llah. He looked intently upon His face, and examined carefully His features. He was charmed by His appearance, and extolled every trait of His countenance. Every expression in that face revealed to his eyes a sign of His concealed glory. So great was his admiration, and so profuse his praise of Baha'u'llah, that the Vazir, from that day, became even more passionately devoted to his son. The words spoken by that soothsayer served to fortify his hopes and confidence in Him. Like Jacob, he desired only to ensure the welfare of his beloved Joseph, and to surround Him with his loving protection.

Haji Mirza Aqasi, the Grand Vazir of Muhammad Shah, though completely alienated from Baha'u'llah's father, showed his son every mark of consideration and favour. So great was the esteem which the Haji professed for Him, that Mirza Aqa Khan-i-Nuri, the I'timadu'd-Dawlih, who afterwards succeeded Haji Mirza

Aqasi, felt envious. He resented the superiority which Baha'u'llah, as a mere youth, was accorded over him. The seeds of jealousy were, from that time, implanted in his breast. Though still a youth, and while his father is yet alive, he thought, he is given precedence in the presence of the Grand Vazir. What will, I wonder, happen to me when this young man shall have succeeded his father?

After the death of the Vazir, Haji Mirza Aqasi continued to show the utmost consideration to Baha'u'llah.

He would visit Him in His home, and would address Him as though He were his own son.

The sincerity of his devotion, however, was very soon put to the test.

One day, as he was passing through the village of Quch-Hisar, which belonged to Baha'u'llah, [121] he was so impressed by the charm and beauty of that place and the abundance of its water that he conceived the idea of becoming its owner.

Baha'u'llah, whom he had summoned to effect the immediate purchase of that village, observed: "Had this property been exclusively mine own, I would willingly have complied with your desire.

This transitory life, with all its sordid possessions, is worthy of no attachment in my eyes, how much less this small and insignificant estate.

As a number of other people, both rich and poor, some of full age and some still minors, share with me the ownership of this property, I would request you to refer this matter to them, and to seek their consent."

Unsatisfied with this reply, Haji Mirza Aqasi sought, through fraudulent means, to achieve his purpose.

So soon as Baha'u'llah was informed of his evil designs, He, with the consent of all concerned, immediately transferred the title of the property to the name of the sister of Muhammad Shah, who had already repeatedly expressed her desire to become its owner.

The Haji, furious at this transaction, ordered that the estate should be forcibly seized, claiming that he already had purchased it from its original possessor.

The representatives of Haji Mirza Aqasi were severely rebuked by the agents of the sister of the Shah, and were requested to inform their master of the determination of that lady to assert her rights.

The Haji referred the case to Muhammad Shah, and complained of the unjust treatment to which he had been subjected.

That very night, the Shah's sister had acquainted him with the nature of the transaction. "Many a time," she said to her brother, "your Imperial Majesty has graciously signified your desire that I should dispose of the jewels with which

I am wont to adorn myself in your presence, and with the proceeds purchase some property.

I have at last succeeded in fulfilling your desire.

Haji Mirza Aqasi, however, is now fully determined to seize it forcibly from me."

The Shah reassured his sister, and commanded the Haji to forgo his claim.

The latter, in his despair, summoned Baha'u'llah to his presence and, by every artifice, strove to discredit His name.

To the charges he brought against Him, Baha'u'llah vigorously replied, and succeeded in establishing His innocence.

In his impotent rage, the Grand Vazir exclaimed: [122] "What is the purpose of all this feasting and banqueting in which you seem to delight?

I, who am the Prime Minister of the Shahanshah of Persia, never receive the number and variety of guests that crowd around your table every night.

Why all this extravagance and vanity?

You surely must be meditating a plot against me." "Gracious God!"

Baha'u'llah replied. "Is the man who, out of the abundance of his heart, shares his bread with his fellow-men, to be accused of harbouring criminal intentions?"

Haji Mirza Aqasi was utterly confounded.

He dared no reply.

Though supported by the combined ecclesiastical and civil powers of Persia, he eventually found himself, in every contest he ventured against Baha'u'llah, completely defeated.

On a number of other occasions, Baha'u'llah's ascendancy over His opponents was likewise vindicated and recognised. These personal triumphs achieved by Him served to enhance His position, and spread abroad His fame. All classes of men marvelled at His miraculous success in emerging unscathed from the most perilous encounters. Nothing short of Divine protection, they thought, could have ensured His safety on such occasions. Not once did Baha'u'llah, beset though He was by the gravest perils, submit to the arrogance, the greed, and the treachery of those around Him. In His constant association, during those days, with the highest dignitaries of the realm, whether ecclesiastical or State officials, He was never content simply to accede to the views they expressed or the claims they advanced. He would, at their gatherings, fearlessly champion the cause of truth, would assert the rights of the downtrodden, defending the weak and protecting the innocent.

FOOTNOTES

5.1. The kulah, a lambskin hat, differentiated the clergy from the laity, and

was worn invariably by State officials.

5.2. "His [Baha'u'llah's] speech was like a 'rushing torrent' and his clearness in exposition brought the most learned divines to his feet." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," p. 120.)

CHAPTER VI
MULLA HUSAYN'S JOURNEY TO KHURASAN

[123] AS THE Bab bade farewell to the Letters of the Living, He instructed them, each and all, to record separately the name of every believer who embraced the Faith and identified himself with its teachings. The list of these believers He bade them enclose in sealed letters, and address them to His maternal uncle, Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, in Shiraz, who would in turn deliver them to Him. "I shall classify these lists," He told them, "into eighteen sets of nineteen names each. Each set will constitute one vahid.1 All these names, in these eighteen sets, will, together with the first vahid, consisting of My own name and those of the eighteen Letters of the Living, constitute the number of Kull-i-Shay'.2 Of all these believers I shall make mention in the Tablet of God, so that upon each one of them the Beloved of our hearts may, in the Day when He shall have ascended the throne of glory, confer His inestimable blessings, and declare them the dwellers of His Paradise."

To Mulla Husayn, more particularly, the Bab gave definite injunctions to send Him a written report on the nature and progress of his activities in Isfahan, in Tihran, and in Khurasan. He urged him to inform Him of those who accepted and submitted to the Faith, as well as of those who rejected and repudiated its truth. "Not until I receive your letter from Khurasan," He said, "shall I be ready to set out from this city on My pilgrimage to Hijaz."

Mulla Husayn, refreshed and fortified by the experience of his intercourse with Baha'u'llah, set out on his journey to Khurasan. During his visit to that province, he exhibited in an astonishing manner the effects of that regenerating power with which the parting words of the Bab had invested

[125] him.3 The first to embrace the Faith in Khurasan was Mirza Ahmad-i-Azghandi, the most learned, the wisest, and the most eminent among the ulamas of that province. In whatever gathering he appeared, no matter how great the number or representative the character of the divines who were present, he alone was invariably the chief speaker. The high traits of his character, as well as his extreme devoutness, had ennobled the reputation which he had already acquired through his erudition, his ability and wisdom. The next to embrace the Faith among the shaykhis of Khurasan was Mulla Ahmad-i-Mu'allim, who, while in Karbila, had been the instructor of the children of Siyyid Kazim. Next to him came Mulla Shaykh 'Ali, whom the Bab surnamed 'Azim, and then Mulla Mirza Muhammad-i-Furughi, whose learning was unsurpassed except by that of Mirza Ahmad. No one apart from these outstanding figures among the ecclesiastical leaders of Khurasan exercised sufficient authority or possessed the necessary knowledge to challenge the arguments of Mulla Husayn.

Mirza Muhammad Baqir-i-Qa'ini, who, for the remaining years of his life, had established his residence in Mashhad, was the next to embrace the Message. The love of the Bab inflamed his soul with such a consuming passion, that no one could resist its force or could belittle its influence. His fearlessness, his unsparing energy, his unswerving loyalty, and the integrity of his life, all combined to make him the terror of his enemies and a source of inspiration to his friends. [126] He placed his home at the disposal of Mulla Husayn, arranged for separate interviews between him and the ulamas of Mashhad, and continued to endeavour, to the utmost of his power, to remove every obstacle that might impede the progress of the Faith. He was untiring in his efforts, undeviating in his purpose, and inexhaustible in his energy. He continued to labour indefatigably for his beloved Cause until the last hour of his life, when he fell a martyr at the fort of Shaykh Tabarsi. In his last days he was bidden by Quddus, after the tragic death of Mulla Husayn, to assume the leadership of the heroic defenders of that fort. He acquitted himself gloriously of his task. His home, situated in Bala-Khiyaban, in the city of Mashhad, is up to the present time known by the name of Babiyyih. Whoever enters it can never escape the accusation of being a Babi. May his soul rest in peace!

Mulla Husayn, as soon as he had won to the Cause such able and devoted supporters, decided to address a written report concerning his activities to the Bab. In his communication he referred at length to his sojourn in Isfahan and Kashan, described the account of his experience with Baha'u'llah, referred to the departure of the latter for Mazindaran, related the events of Nur, and informed Him of the success which had attended his own efforts in Khurasan. In it he enclosed a list of the names of those who had responded to his call, and of whose steadfastness and sincerity he was assured. He sent his letter by way of Yazd, through the trustworthy partners of the Bab's maternal uncle who were at that time residing in Tabas. That letter reached the Bab on the night preceding the twenty-seventh day of Ramadan,4 a night held in great reverence by all the sects of Islam and regarded by many as rivalling in sacredness the Laylatu'l-Qadr itself, the night which, in the words of the Qur'an, "excelleth a thousand months."5 The only companion of the Bab, when that letter reached Him that night, was Quddus, with whom He shared a number of its passages.

I have heard Mirza Ahmad relate the following: "The Bab's maternal uncle himself described to me the circumstances

[127] attending the receipt of Mulla Husayn's letter by the Bab: 'That night I saw such evidences of joy and gladness on the faces of the Bab and of Quddus as I am unable to describe. I often heard the Bab, in those days, exultingly repeat the words, "How marvellous, how exceedingly marvellous, is that which has occurred between the months of Jamadi and Rajab!" As He was reading the communication addressed to Him by Mulla Husayn, He turned to Quddus and, showing him certain passages of that letter, explained the reason for His joyous expressions of surprise. I, for my part, remained completely unaware of the nature of that explanation.'"

Mirza Ahmad, upon whom the account of this incident had produced a profound

impression, was determined to fathom its mystery. "Not until I met Mulla Husayn in Shiraz," he told me, "was I able to satisfy my curiosity. When I repeated to him the account described to me by the Bab's uncle, he smiled and said how well he remembered that

[128] between the months of Jamadi and Rajab he chanced to be in Tihran. He gave no further explanation, and contented himself with this brief remark. This was sufficient, however, to convince me that in the city of Tihran there lay hidden a Mystery which, when revealed to the world, would bring unspeakable joy to the hearts of both the Bab and Quddus."

The references in Mulla Husayn's letter to Baha'u'llah's immediate response to the Divine Message, to the vigorous campaign which He had boldly initiated in Nur, and to the marvellous success which had attended His efforts, cheered and gladdened the Bab, and reinforced His confidence in the ultimate victory of His Cause. He felt assured that if now He were to fall suddenly a victim to the tyranny of His foes and depart from this world, the Cause which He had revealed would live; would, under the direction of Baha'u'llah, continue to develop and flourish, and would yield eventually its choicest fruit. The master-hand of Baha'u'llah would steer its course, and the pervading influence of His love would establish it in the hearts of men. Such a conviction fortified His spirit and filled Him with hope. From that moment His fears of the imminence of peril or danger entirely forsook Him. Phoenix-like He welcomed with joy the fire of adversity, and gloried in the glow and heat of its flame.

FOOTNOTES

6.1. The numerical value of the word "vahid," which means "unity," is 19.

6.2. The numerical value of "Kull-i-Shay'," which means "all things," is 361, or 19 X 19.

6.3. "The pilgrim, as was customary with him, would make the most of his stay which he would prolong if need be, in the villages, towns and cities on his way, in order to hold conferences, to speak against the mullas, to make known the Books of the Bab and to preach his doctrines.

He was summoned everywhere and waited for impatiently; he was sought after with curiosity, listened to eagerly and believed with little difficulty. "It was at Nishapur above all, that he made two important conversions in the persons of Mulla 'Abdu'l-Khaliq of Yazd, and of Mulla 'Ali the Young.

The first of these doctors had been the pupil of Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i.

He was a person celebrated for his science, for his eloquence and for his standing among the people.

The other, a Shaykhi like the first, a man of strict ethics and high understanding, held the important position of the principal mujtahid of the city.

Both became ardent Babis.

They made the pulpits of the mosques resound with violent denunciations of Islam. "During several weeks, it seemed as though the old religion had been completely defeated.

The clergy, demoralized by the defection of their chief and frightened by the public addresses which did not spare them, either dared not show themselves or had taken flight.

When Mulla Husayn-i-Bushru'i came to Mashhad he found, on the one hand, the population stirred up and divided about him, on the other hand, the clergy forewarned and very anxious, but exasperated and determined to oppose a vigorous resistance to the attacks about to be launched against them." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp.

139-140.)

6.5. Corresponding with the night preceding the 10th of October, 1844 A.D.

6.6. The Laylatu'l-Qadr, meaning literally "Night of Power," is one of the last ten nights of Ramadan, and, as is commonly believed, the seventh of those nights reckoning backward.

CHAPTER VII
THE BAB'S PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA AND MEDINA

[129] The letter of Mulla Husayn decided the Bab to undertake His contemplated pilgrimage to Hijaz. Entrusting His wife to His mother, and committing them both to the care and protection of His maternal uncle, He joined the company of the pilgrims of Fars who were preparing to leave Shiraz for Mecca and Medina.1 Quddus was His only companion, and the Ethiopian servant His personal attendant. He first proceeded to Bushihr, the seat of His uncle's business, where in former days He, in close association with him, had lived the life of a humble merchant. Having there completed the preliminary arrangements for His long and arduous voyage, He embarked on a sailing vessel, which, after two months of slow, stormy, and unsteady sailing, landed Him upon the shores of that sacred land.2 High seas and the complete absence of comfort could [130] neither interfere with the regularity of His devotions nor perturb the peacefulness of His meditations and prayers. Oblivious of the storm that raged about Him, and undeterred by the sickness which had seized His fellow-pilgrims, He continued to occupy His time in dictating to Quddus such prayers and epistles as He felt inspired to reveal.

I have heard Haji Abu'l-Hasan-i-Shirazi, who was travelling in the same vessel as the Bab, describe the circumstances of that memorable voyage: "During the entire period of approximately two months," he asserted, "from the day we embarked at Bushihr to the day when we landed at Jaddih, the port of Hijaz, whenever by day or night I chanced to meet either the Bab or Quddus, I invariably found them together, both absorbed in their work. The Bab seemed to be dictating, and Quddus was busily engaged in taking down whatever fell from His lips. Even at a time when panic seemed to have seized the passengers of that storm-tossed vessel, they would be seen pursuing their labours with

unperturbed confidence and calm. Neither the violence of the elements nor the tumult of the people around them could either ruffle the serenity of their countenance or turn them from their purpose."

The Bab Himself, in the Persian Bayan,3 refers to the [131] hardships of that voyage. "For days," He wrote, "we suffered from the scarcity of water. I had to content myself with the juice of the sweet lemon." Because of this experience, He supplicated the Almighty to grant that the means of ocean travel might soon be speedily improved, that its hardships might be reduced, and its perils be entirely eliminated. Within a short space of time, since that prayer was offered, the evidences of a remarkable improvement in all forms of maritime transport have greatly multiplied, and the Persian Gulf, which in those days hardly possessed a single steam-driven vessel, now boasts a fleet of ocean liners that can, within the range of a few days and in the utmost comfort, carry the people of Fars on their annual pilgrimage to Hijaz.

The peoples of the West, among whom the first evidences of this great Industrial Revolution have appeared, are, alas, as yet wholly unaware of the Source whence this mighty stream, this great motive power, proceeds—a force that has revolutionised every aspect of their material life. Their own history testifies to the fact that in the year which witnessed the dawn of this glorious Revelation, there suddenly appeared evidences of an industrial and economic revolution that the people themselves declare to have been unprecedented in the history of mankind. In their concern for the details of the working and adjustments of this newly conceived machinery, they have gradually lost sight of the Source and object of this tremendous power which the Almighty has committed to their charge. They seem to have sorely misused this power and misunderstood its function. Designed to confer upon the people of the West the blessings of peace and of happiness, it has been utilised by them to promote the interests of destruction and war.

[132] Upon His arrival in Jaddih, the Bab donned the pilgrim's garb, mounted a camel, and set out on His journey to Mecca. Quddus, however, notwithstanding the repeatedly expressed desire of his Master, preferred to accompany Him on foot all the way from Jaddih to that holy city. Holding in his hand the bridle of the camel upon which the Bab was riding, he walked along joyously and prayerfully, ministering to his Master's needs, wholly indifferent to the fatigues of his arduous march. Every night, from eventide until the break of day, Quddus, sacrificing comfort and sleep, would continue with unrelaxing vigilance to watch beside his Beloved, ready to provide for His wants and to ensure the means of His protection and safety.

One day, when the Bab had dismounted close to a well in order to offer His morning prayer, a roving Bedouin suddenly appeared on the horizon, drew near to Him, and, snatching the saddlebag that had been lying on the ground beside Him, and which contained His writings and papers, vanished into the unknown desert. His Ethiopian servant set out to pursue him, but was prevented by his Master, who, as He was praying, motioned to him with His hand to give up his pursuit. "Had I allowed you," the Bab later on affectionately assured him, "you would

surely have overtaken and punished him. But this was not to be. The papers and writings which that bag contained are destined to reach, through the instrumentality of this Arab, such places as we could never have succeeded in attaining. Grieve not, therefore, at his action, for this was decreed by God, the Ordainer, the Almighty." Many a time afterwards did the Bab on similar occasions seek to comfort His friends by such reflections. By words such as these He turned the bitterness of regret and of resentment into radiant acquiescence in the Divine purpose and into joyous submission to God's will.

On the day of 'Arafat,4 the Bab, seeking the quiet seclusion of His cell, devoted His whole time to meditation and worship. On the following day, the day of Nahr, after He had offered the feast-day prayer, He proceeded to Muna, where, according to ancient custom, He purchased nineteen lambs of the choicest breed, of which He sacrificed nine in [133] His own name, seven in the name of Quddus, and three in the name of His Ethiopian servant. He refused to partake of the meat of this consecrated sacrifice, preferring instead to distribute it freely among the poor and needy of that neighbourhood.

Although the month of Dhi'l-Hijjih,5 the month of pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, coincided in that year with the first month of the winter season, yet so intense was the heat in that region that the pilgrims who made the circuit of

[134] the sacred shrine were unable to perform that rite in their usual garments. Draped in a light, loose-fitting tunic, they joined in the celebration of the festival. The Bab, however, refused, as a mark of deference, to discard either His turban or cloak. Dressed in His usual attire, He, with the utmost dignity and calm, and with extreme simplicity and reverence, compassed the Ka'bih and performed all the prescribed rites of worship.

On the last day of His pilgrimage to Mecca, the Bab met Mirza Muhit-i-Kirmani. He stood facing the Black Stone, when the Bab approached him and, taking his hand in His, addressed him in these words: "O Muhit! You regard yourself as one of the most outstanding figures of the shaykhi community and a distinguished exponent of its teachings. In your heart you even claim to be one of the direct successors and rightful inheritors of those twin great Lights, those Stars that have heralded the morn of Divine guidance. Behold, we are both now standing within this most sacred shrine. Within its hallowed precincts, He whose Spirit dwells in this place can cause Truth immediately to be known and distinguished from falsehood, and righteousness from error. Verily I declare, none besides Me in this day, whether in the East or in the West, can claim to be the Gate that leads men to the knowledge of God. My proof is none other than that proof whereby the truth of the Prophet Muhammad was established. Ask Me whatsoever you please; now, at this very moment, I pledge Myself to reveal such verses as can demonstrate the truth of My mission. You must choose either to submit yourself unreservedly to My Cause or to repudiate it entirely. You have no other alternative. If you choose to reject My message, I will not let go your hand until you pledge your word to declare publicly your repudiation

[135] of the Truth which I have proclaimed. Thus shall He who speaks the Truth be made known, and he that speaks falsely shall be condemned to eternal misery and shame. Then shall the way of Truth be revealed and made manifest to all men."

This peremptory challenge, thrust so unexpectedly by the Bab upon Mirza Muhit-i-Kirmani, profoundly distressed him. He was overpowered by its directness, its compelling [136] majesty and force. In the presence of that Youth, he, notwithstanding his age, his authority and learning, felt as a helpless bird prisoned in the grasp of a mighty eagle. Confused and full of fear, he replied: "My Lord, my Master! Ever since the day on which my eyes beheld You in Karbila, I seemed at last to have found and recognised Him who had been the object of my quest. I renounce whosoever has failed to recognise You, and despise him in whose heart may yet linger the faintest misgivings as to Your purity and holiness. I pray You to overlook my weakness, and entreat You to answer me in my perplexity. Please God I may, at this very place, within the precincts of this hallowed shrine, swear my fealty to You, and arise for the triumph of Your Cause. If I be insincere in what I declare, if in my heart I should disbelieve what my lips proclaim, I would deem myself utterly unworthy of the grace of the Prophet of God, and regard my action as an act of manifest disloyalty to 'Ali, His chosen successor."

The Bab, who listened attentively to his words, and who was well aware of his helplessness and poverty of soul, answered and said: "Verily I say, the Truth is even now known and distinguished from falsehood. O shrine of the Prophet of God, and you, O Quddus, who have believed in Me! I take you both, in this hour, as My witnesses. You have seen and heard that which has come to pass between Me and him. I call upon you to testify thereunto, and God, verily, is, beyond and above you, My sure and ultimate Witness. He is the All-Seeing, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. O Muhit! Set forth whatsoever perplexes your mind, and I will, by the aid of God, unloose My tongue and undertake to resolve your problems, so that you may testify to the excellence of My utterance and realise that no one besides Me is able to manifest My wisdom."

Mirza Muhit responded to the invitation of the Bab and submitted to Him his questions. Pleading the necessity of his immediate departure for Medina, he expressed the hope of receiving, ere his departure from that city, the text of the promised reply. "I will grant your request," the Bab assured him." On My way to Medina I shall, with the assistance of God, reveal My answer to your questions. If I meet you [137] not in that city, My reply will surely reach you immediately after your arrival at Karbila. Whatever justice and fairness may dictate, the same shall I expect you to fulfil. 'If ye do well, to your own behoof will ye do well: and if ye do evil, against yourselves will ye do it.' 'God is verily independent of all His creatures.'"6

Mirza Muhit, ere his departure, again expressed his firm resolve to redeem his solemn pledge. "I shall never depart from Medina," he assured the Bab, "whatever may betide, until I have fulfilled my covenant with You." As the mote which is driven before the gale, he, unable to withstand the sweeping majesty

of the Revelation proclaimed by the Bab, fled in terror from before His face. He tarried awhile in Medina and, faithless to his pledge and disregardful of the admonitions of his conscience, left for Karbila.

The Bab, faithful to His promise, revealed, on His way from Mecca to Medina, His written reply to the questions that had perplexed the mind of Mirza Muhit, and gave it the name of Sahifiy-i-Baynu'l-Haramayn.7 Mirza Muhit, who received it in the early days of his arrival in Karbila, remained unmoved by its tone and refused to recognise the precepts which it inculcated.

His attitude towards the Faith was one of concealed and persistent opposition.

At times he professed to be a follower and supporter of that notorious adversary of the Bab, Haji Mirza Karim Khan, and occasionally claimed for himself the station of an independent leader.

Nearing the end of his days, whilst residing in Iraq, he, feigning submission to Baha'u'llah, expressed, through one of the Persian princes who dwelt in Baghdad, a desire to meet Him.

He requested that his proposed interview be regarded as strictly confidential. "Tell him," was Baha'u'llah's reply, "that in the days of My retirement in the mountains of Sulaymaniyyih, I, in a certain ode which I composed, set forth the essential requirements from every wayfarer who treads the path of search in his quest of Truth.

Share with him this verse from that ode: 'If thine aim be to cherish thy life, approach not our court; but if sacrifice be thy heart's desire, come and let others come with thee.

For such is the way of Faith, if in [138] thy heart thou seekest reunion with Baha; shouldst thou refuse to tread this path, why trouble us?

Begone!' If he be willing, he will openly and unreservedly hasten to meet Me; if not, I refuse to see him."

Baha'u'llah's unequivocal answer disconcerted Mirza Muhit.

Unable to resist and unwilling to comply, he departed for his home in Karbila the very day he received that message.

As soon as he arrived, he sickened, and, three days later, he died.

No sooner had the Bab performed the last of the observances in connection with His pilgrimage to Mecca than he addressed an epistle to the Sherif of that holy city, wherein He set forth, in clear and unmistakable terms, the distinguishing features of His mission, and called upon him to arise and embrace His Cause.

This epistle, together with selections from His other writings, He delivered to Quddus, and instructed him to present them to the Sherif.

The latter, however, too absorbed in his own material pursuits to incline his ear to the words which had been addressed to him by the Bab, failed to respond to the call of the Divine Message.

Haji Niyaz-i-Baghdadi has been heard to relate the following: "In the year 1267 A.H.,8 I undertook a pilgrimage to that holy city, where I was privileged to meet the Sherif.

In the course of his conversation with me, he said: 'I recollect that in the year '60, during the season of pilgrimage, a youth came to visit me.

He presented to me a sealed book which I readily accepted but was too much occupied at that time to read.

A few days later I met again that same youth, who asked me whether I had any reply to make to his offer.

Pressure of work had again detained me from considering the contents of that book.

I was therefore unable to give him a satisfactory reply.

When the season of pilgrimage was over, one day, as I was sorting out my letters, my eyes fell accidentally upon that book.

I opened it and found, in its introductory pages, a moving and exquisitely written homily which was followed by verses the tone and language of which bore a striking resemblance to the Qur'an.

All that I gathered from the perusal of the book was that among the people of Persia a man of the seed of Fatimih and descendant of the family of Hashim, had raised a new call, and was announcing

[139] to all people the appearance of the promised Qa'im.

I remained, however, ignorant of the name of the author of that book, nor was I informed of the circumstances attending that call.' 'A great commotion,' I remarked, 'has indeed seized that land during the last few years.

A Youth, a descendant of the Prophet and a merchant by profession, has claimed that His utterance was the Voice of Divine inspiration.

He has publicly asserted that, within the space of a few days, there could stream from His tongue verses of such number and excellence as would surpass in volume and beauty the Qur'an itself—a work which it took Muhammad no less than twenty-three years to reveal.

A multitude of people, both high and low, civil and ecclesiastical, among the inhabitants of Persia, have rallied round His standard and have willingly sacrificed themselves in His path.

That Youth has, during the past year, in the last days of the month of Sha'ban,9 suffered martyrdom in Tabriz, in the province of Adhirbayjan.

They who persecuted Him sought by this means to extinguish the light which He kindled in that land.

Since His martyrdom, however, His influence has pervaded all classes of people.' The Sherif, who was listening attentively, expressed his indignation

at the behaviour of those [140] who had persecuted the Bab. 'The malediction of God be upon these evil people,' he exclaimed, 'a people who, in days past, treated in the same manner our holy and illustrious ancestors!' With these words the Sherif concluded his conversation with me."

From Mecca the Bab proceeded to Medina.

It was the first day of the month of Muharram, in the year 1261 A.H.,10 when He found Himself on the way to that holy city.

As He approached it, He called to mind the stirring events that had immortalised the name of Him who had lived and died within its walls.

Those scenes which bore eloquent testimony to the creative power of that immortal Genius seemed to be re-enacted, with undiminished splendour, before His eyes.

He prayed as He drew nigh unto that holy sepulchre which enshrined the mortal remains of the Prophet of God.

He also remembered, as He trod that holy ground, that shining Herald of His own Dispensation.

He knew that in the cemetery of Baqi', in a place not far distant from the shrine of Muhammad, there had been laid to rest Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i, the harbinger of His own Revelation, who, after a life of onerous service, had decided to spend the evening of his days within the precincts of that hallowed shrine.

There came to Him also the vision of those holy men, those pioneers and martyrs of the Faith, who had fallen gloriously on the field of battle, and who, with their life-blood, had sealed the triumph of the Cause of God.

Their sacred dust seemed as if reanimated by the gentle tread of His feet.

Their shades seemed to have been stirred by the reviving breath of His presence.

They looked to Him as if they had arisen at His approach, were hastening towards Him, and were voicing their welcome.

They seemed to be addressing to Him this fervent plea: 'Repair not unto Thy native land, we beseech Thee, O Thou Beloved of our hearts!

Abide Thou in our midst, for here, far from the tumult of Thine enemies who are lying in wait for Thee, Thou shalt be safe and secure.

We are fearful for Thee.

We dread the plottings and machinations of Thy foes.

We tremble at the thought that their deeds might bring eternal damnation to their souls." "Fear not," the Bab's indomitable Spirit replied: "I am come into this [141] world to bear witness to the glory of sacrifice.

You are aware of the intensity of My longing; you realise the degree of My renunciation.

Nay, beseech the Lord your God to hasten the hour of My martyrdom and to accept My sacrifice.

Rejoice, for both I and Quddus will be slain on the altar of our devotion to the King of Glory.

The blood which we are destined to shed in His path will water and revive the garden of our immortal felicity.

The drops of this consecrated blood will be the seed out of which will arise the mighty Tree of God, the Tree that will gather beneath its all-embracing shadow the peoples and kindreds of the earth.

Grieve not, therefore, if I depart from this land, for I am hastening to fulfil My destiny."

FOOTNOTES

7.1. According to Haji Mu'inu's-Saltanih's narrative (p. 72), the Bab set out on His pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina in the month of Shavval, 1260 A.H. (Oct., 1844 A.D.).

7.2. "He retained the most disagreeable impression of his voyage. 'Know that the sea voyages are hard.

We do not favor them for the faithful; travel by land,' he wrote in the Kitab-i-Baynu'l-Haramayn in addressing himself to his uncle, as we shall soon see.

He elaborates upon this subject also in the Bayan.

Do not consider this childish, the feelings which moved the Bab in his horror of the sea are far more noble. "Struck by the selfishness of the pilgrims which was heightened by the discomforts of a long and dangerous sea voyage, equally shocked by the unclean conditions that the pilgrims were obliged to endure on board, he wished to prevent men from yielding to their lower instincts and treating one another harshly.

We know that the Bab especially commended politeness and the most refined courtesy in all social relations. 'Never sadden anyone, no matter whom, for no matter what,' he enjoined, and during this voyage he experienced the meanness of man and his brutality when in the presence of difficulties. 'The saddest thing that I saw on my pilgrimage to Mecca was the constant disputes of the pilgrims between themselves, disputes which took away the moral benefit of the pilgrimage.' (Bayan, 4:16.) "In time he arrived at Mascate where he rested for several days during which he sought to convert the people of that country but without success.

He spoke to one among them, a religious man probably, one of high rank, whose conversion might also have been followed by that of his fellow citizens, at

least so I believe, though he gives us no details upon this subject.

Evidently he did not attempt to convert the first comer who would have had no influence on the other inhabitants of the city.

That he attempted a conversion and did not succeed is an indisputable fact because he himself affirms it: 'The mention of God, in truth, descended upon the earth of Mascate and made the way of God come to one of the inhabitants of the country.

It may be possible that he understood our verses and became one of those who are guided.

Say:

This man obeyed his passions after having read our verses and in truth this man is by the rules of the Book, among the transgressors.

Say:

We have not seen in Mascate men of the Book willing to help him, because they are lost in ignorance.

And the same was true of all these voyagers on the boat with the exception of one who believed in our verses and became one of those who fear God.'" (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

207-208.)

7.3. "It is thus that I myself saw, on the voyage to Mecca, a notable who was spending considerable sums of money but who hesitated to spend the price of a glass of water for his fellow-traveler. This happened on the boat where the water was scarce, so scarce in fact, during the voyage from Bushihr to Mascate, which lasted twelve days with no opportunity to get water, that I had to content myself with sweet lemons." ("Le Bayan Persan," vol. 2, p. 154.) "One cannot imagine on the sea anything but discomfort. One cannot have all the necessities as in land travel. The mariners are obliged to live thus but by their services they come nearer to God, and God rewards actions performed on the land and on the sea but He grants a two-fold recompense for those services accomplished by one of the servants on the sea, because their work is more arduous." (Ibid., pp. 155-156.) "I have seen (on the way to Mecca) acts of the vilest kind, in the eyes of God, which were sufficient to undo the good resulting from the pilgrimage. These were the quarrels among the pilgrims! Verily, the House of God has no need of such people!" (Ibid., p. 155.)

7.4. The day preceding the festival.

7.5. December, 1844 A.D.

7.6. Verses of the Qur'an.

7.7. "The Epistle between the Two Shrines."

7.8. 1850-51 A.D.

7.9. July, 1850 A.D.

7.10. Friday, January 30, 1845 A.D.

CHAPTER VIII
THE BAB'S STAY IN SHIRAZ AFTER THE PILGRIMAGE

[142] The visit of the Bab to Medina marked the concluding stage of His pilgrimage to Hijaz.

From thence He returned to Jaddih, and by way of the sea regained His native land.

He landed at Bushihr nine lunar months after He had embarked on His pilgrimage from that port.

In the same khan1 which He had previously occupied, He received His friends and relatives, who had come to greet and welcome Him.

While still in Bushihr, He summoned Quddus to His presence and with the utmost kindness bade him depart for Shiraz. "The days of your companionship with Me,"

He told him, "are drawing to a close.

The hour of separation has struck, a separation which no reunion will follow except in the Kingdom of God, in the presence of the King of Glory.

In this world of dust, no more than nine fleeting months of association with Me have been allotted to you.

On the shores of the Great Beyond, however, in the realm of immortality, joy of eternal reunion awaits us.

The hand of destiny will ere long plunge you into an ocean of tribulation for His sake.

I, too, will follow you; I, too, will be immersed beneath its depths.

Rejoice with exceeding gladness, for you have been chosen as the standard-bearer of the host of affliction, and are standing in the vanguard of the noble army that will suffer martyrdom in His name.

In the streets of Shiraz, indignities will be heaped upon you, and the severest injuries will afflict your body.

You will survive the ignominious behaviour of your foes, and will attain the presence of Him who is the one object of our adoration and love.

In His presence you will forget all the harm and disgrace that shall have befallen you.

The hosts of the Unseen will hasten forth to assist you, and will [143] proclaim to all the world your heroism and glory.

Yours will be the ineffable joy of quaffing the cup of martyrdom for His sake.

I, too, shall tread the path of sacrifice, and will join you in the realm of eternity."

The Bab then delivered into his hands a letter He had written to Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, His maternal uncle, in which He had informed him of His safe return to Bushihr.

He also entrusted him with a copy of the Khasa'il-i-Sab'ih,2 a treatise in which He had set forth the essential requirements from those who had attained to the knowledge of the new Revelation and had recognised its claim.

As He bade Quddus His last farewell, He asked him to convey His greetings to each of His loved ones in Shiraz.

Quddus, with feelings of unshakable determination to carry out the expressed wishes of his Master, set out from Bushihr.

Arriving at Shiraz, he was affectionately welcomed by Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, who received him in his own home and eagerly enquired after the health and doings of his beloved Kinsman.

Finding him receptive to the call of the new Message, Quddus acquainted him with the nature of the Revelation with which that Youth had already fired his soul.

The Bab's maternal uncle, as a result of the endeavours exerted by Quddus, was the first, after the Letters of the Living, to embrace the Cause in Shiraz.

As the full significance of the new-born Faith had remained as yet undivulged, he was unaware of the full extent of its implications and glory.

His conversation with Quddus, however, removed the veil from his eyes.

So steadfast became his faith, and so profound grew his love for the Bab, that he consecrated his whole life to His service.

With unrelaxing vigilance he arose to defend His Cause and to shield His person.

In his sustained endeavours, he scorned fatigue and was disdainful of death.

Though recognised as an outstanding figure among the business men of that city, he never allowed material considerations to interfere with his spiritual responsibility of safeguarding the person, and advancing the Cause, of his beloved Kinsman.

He persevered in his task until the hour when, joining the company of the Seven Martyrs of Tihran, he, in circumstances of exceptional heroism, laid down his life for Him.

[144] The next person whom Quddus met in Shiraz was Ismu'llahu'l-Asdaq, Mulla Sadiq-i-Khurasani, to whom he entrusted the copy of the Khasa'il-i-Sab'ih, and stressed the necessity of putting into effect immediately all its provisions.

Among its precepts was the emphatic injunction of the Bab to every loyal believer to add the following words to the traditional formula of the adhan:3 "I bear witness that He whose name is 'Ali-Qabl-i-Muhammad4 is the servant of the Baqiyyatu'llah."5 Mulla Sadiq, who in those days had been extolling from the pulpit-top to large audiences the virtues of the imams of the Faith, was so enraptured by the theme and language of that treatise that he unhesitatingly resolved to carry out all the observances it ordained.

Driven by the impelling force inherent in that Tablet, he, one day as he was leading his congregation in prayer in the Masjid-i-Naw, suddenly proclaimed, as he was sounding the adhan, the additional words prescribed by the Bab.

The multitude that [145] heard him was astounded by his cry.

Dismay and consternation seized the entire congregation.

The distinguished divines, who occupied the front seats and who were greatly revered for their pious orthodoxy, raised a clamour, loudly protesting: "Woe betide us, the guardians and protectors of the Faith of God!

Behold, this man has hoisted the standard of heresy.

Down with this infamous traitor!

He has spoken blasphemy.

Arrest him, for he is a disgrace to our Faith." "Who," they angrily exclaimed, "dared authorise such grave departure from the established precepts of Islam?

Who has presumed to arrogate to himself this supreme prerogative?"

The populace re-echoed the protestations of these divines, and arose to reinforce their clamour. The whole city had been aroused, and public order was, as a result, seriously threatened. The governor of the province of Fars, Husayn Khan-i-Iravani, surnamed Ajudan-Bashi, and generally designated in those days as Sahib-Ikhtiyar,6 found it necessary to intervene and to enquire into the cause of this sudden commotion. He was informed that a disciple of a young man named Siyyid-i-Bab, who had just returned from His pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina and was now living in Bushihr, had arrived in Shiraz and was propagating the teachings of his Master. "This disciple," Husayn Khan was further informed, "claims that his teacher is the author of a new revelation and is the revealer of a book which he asserts is divinely inspired. Mulla Sadiq-i-Khurasani has embraced that faith, and is fearlessly summoning the multitude to the acceptance of that message. He declares its recognition to be the first obligation of every loyal and pious follower of shi'ah Islam."

Husayn Khan ordered the arrest of both Quddus and Mulla Sadiq.

The police authorities, to whom they were delivered, were instructed to bring them handcuffed into the presence of the governor.

The police also delivered into the hands of Husayn Khan the copy of the Qayyumu'l-Asma', which they had seized from Mulla Sadiq while he was reading

aloud its passages to an excited congregation.

Quddus, owing to his youthful appearance and unconventional dress, was at first ignored by Husayn Khan, who preferred to direct [146] his remarks to his more dignified and elderly companion. "Tell me," angrily asked the governor, as he turned to Mulla Sadiq, "if you are aware of the opening passage of the Qayyumu'l-Asma' wherein the Siyyid-i-Bab addresses the rulers and kings of the earth in these terms: 'Divest yourselves of the robe of sovereignty, for He who is the King in truth, hath been made manifest!

The Kingdom is God's, the Most Exalted.

Thus hath the Pen of the Most High decreed!' If this be true, it must necessarily apply to my sovereign, Muhammad Shah, of the Qajar dynasty,7 whom I represent as the chief magistrate of this province.

Must Muhammad Shah, according to this behest, lay down his crown and abandon his sovereignty?

Must I, too, abdicate my power and relinquish my position?"

Mulla Sadiq unhesitatingly replied: "When once the truth of the Revelation announced by the Author of these words shall have been definitely established, the truth of whatsoever has fallen from His lips will likewise be vindicated.

If these words be the Word of God, the abdication of Muhammad Shah and his like can matter but little.

It can in no wise turn aside the Divine purpose, nor alter the sovereignty of the almighty and eternal King."8

That cruel and impious ruler was sorely displeased with such an answer.

He reviled and cursed him, ordered his attendants to strip him of his garments and to scourge him with a thousand lashes.

He then commanded that the beards of both Quddus and Mulla Sadiq should be burned, their noses be pierced, that through this incision a cord should be passed, and with this halter they should be led through the streets of the city.9 "It will be an object lesson to the people of Shiraz,"

Husayn Khan declared, "who will know what the penalty of heresy will be."

Mulla Sadiq, calm and self-possessed and with eyes upraised to heaven, was heard reciting this prayer: "O Lord, our God!

We have indeed heard the voice of One that called.

He called us to the [147] Faith—'Believe ye on the Lord your God!'—and we have believed.

O God, our God!

Forgive us, then, our sins, and hide away from us our evil deeds, and cause us to die with the righteous."10 With magnificent fortitude both resigned

themselves to their fate.

Those who had been instructed to inflict this savage punishment performed their task with alacrity and vigour.

None intervened in behalf of these sufferers, none was inclined to plead their cause.

Soon after this, they were both expelled from Shiraz.

Before their expulsion, they were warned that if they ever attempted to return to this city, they would both be crucified.

By their sufferings they earned the immortal distinction of having been the first to be persecuted on Persian soil for the sake of their Faith.

Mulla 'Aliy-i-Bastami, though the first to fall a victim to the relentless hate of the enemy, underwent his persecution in Iraq, which lay beyond the confines of Persia.

Nor did his sufferings, intense as they were, compare with the hideousness and the barbaric cruelty which characterised the torture inflicted upon Quddus and Mulla Sadiq.

An eye-witness of this revolting episode, an unbeliever residing in Shiraz, related to me the following: "I was present when Mulla Sadiq was being scourged.

I watched his persecutors each in turn apply the lash to his bleeding shoulders, and continue the strokes until he became exhausted.

No one believed that Mulla Sadiq, so advanced in age and so frail in body, could possibly survive fifty such savage strokes.

We marvelled at his fortitude when we found that, although the number of the strokes of the scourge he had received had already exceeded nine hundred, his face still retained its original serenity and calm.

A smile was upon his face, as he held his hand before his mouth.

He seemed utterly indifferent to the blows that were being showered upon him.

When he was being expelled from the city, I succeeded in approaching him, and asked him why he held his hand before his mouth.

I expressed surprise at the smile upon his countenance.

He emphatically replied: 'The first seven strokes were severely painful; to the rest I seemed to have grown indifferent.

I was wondering whether the strokes that followed were being actually applied to my own body.

A feeling [148] of joyous exultation had invaded my soul.

I was trying to repress my feelings and to restrain my laughter.

I can now realise how the almighty Deliverer is able, in the twinkling of an eye, to turn pain into ease, and sorrow into gladness.

Immensely exalted is His power above and beyond the idle fancy of His mortal creatures.'"

Mulla Sadiq, whom I met years after, confirmed every detail of this moving episode.

Husayn Khan's anger was not appeased by this atrocious and most undeserved chastisement.

His wanton and capricious cruelty found further vent in the assault which he now directed against the person of the Bab.11 He despatched to Bushihr a mounted escort of his own trusted guard, with emphatic instructions to arrest the Bab and to bring Him in chains to Shiraz.

The leader of that escort, a member of the Nusayri community, better known as the sect of 'Aliyu'llahi, related the following: "Having completed the third stage of our journey to Bushihr, we encountered, in the midst of the wilderness, a youth who wore a green sash and a small turban after the manner of the siyyids who are in the trading profession.

He was on horseback, and was followed by an Ethiopian servant who was in charge of his belongings.

As we approached him, he saluted us and enquired as to our destination.

I thought it best to conceal from him the truth, and replied that in this vicinity we had been commanded by the governor of Fars to conduct a certain enquiry.

He smilingly observed: 'The governor has sent you to arrest Me.

Here am I; do with Me as you please.

By [149] coming out to meet you, I have curtailed the length of your march, and have made it easier for you to find Me.' I was startled by his remarks and marvelled at his candour and straightforwardness.

I could not explain, however, his readiness to subject himself, of his own accord, to the severe discipline of government officials, and to risk thereby his own life and safety.

I tried to ignore him, and was preparing to leave, when he approached me and said: 'I swear by the righteousness of Him who created man, distinguished him from among the rest of His creatures, and caused his heart to be made the seat of His sovereignty and knowledge, that all My life I have uttered no word but the truth, and had no other desire except the welfare and advancement of My fellow-men.

I have disdained My own ease and have avoided being the cause of pain or sorrow to anyone.

I know that you are seeking Me.

I prefer to deliver Myself into your hands, rather than subject you and your companions to unnecessary annoyance for My sake.' These words moved me profoundly.

I instinctively dismounted from my horse, and, kissing his stirrups, addressed him in these words: 'O light of the eyes of the Prophet of God!

I adjure you, by Him who has created you and endowed you with such loftiness and power, to grant my request and to answer my prayer.

I beseech you to escape from this place and to flee from before the face of Husayn Khan, the ruthless and despicable governor of this province.

I dread his machinations against you; I rebel at the idea of being made the instrument of his malignant designs against so innocent and noble a descendant of the Prophet of God.

My companions are all honourable men.

Their word is their bond.

They will pledge themselves not to betray your flight.

I pray you, betake yourself to the city of Mashhad in Khurasan, and avoid falling a victim to the brutality of this remorseless wolf.' To my earnest entreaty he gave this answer: 'May the Lord your God requite you for your magnanimity and noble intention.

No one knows the mystery of My Cause; no one can fathom its secrets.

Never will I turn My face away from the decree of God.

He alone is My sure Stronghold, My Stay and My Refuge.

Until My last hour is at hand, none dare assail Me, none can frustrate the plan of the Almighty.

And when [150] My hour is come, how great will be My joy to quaff the cup of martyrdom in His name!

Here am I; deliver Me into the hands of your master.

Be not afraid, for no one will blame you.' I bowed my consent and carried out his desire."

The Bab straightway resumed His journey to Shiraz.

Free and unfettered, He went before His escort, which followed Him in an attitude of respectful devotion.

By the magic of His words, He had disarmed the hostility of His guards and transmuted their proud arrogance into humility and love.

Reaching the city, they proceeded directly to the seat of the government.

Whosoever observed the cavalcade marching through the streets could not help but marvel at this most unusual spectacle.

Immediately Husayn Khan was informed of the arrival of the Bab, he summoned Him to his presence.

He received Him with the utmost insolence and bade Him occupy a seat facing him in the centre of the room.

He publicly rebuked Him, and in abusive language denounced His conduct. "Do you realise," he angrily protested, "what a great mischief you have kindled?

Are you aware what a disgrace you have become to the holy Faith of Islam and to the august person of our sovereign?

Are you not the man who claims to be the author of a new revelation which annuls the sacred precepts of the Qur'an?"

The Bab calmly replied: "'If any bad man come unto you with news, clear up the matter at once, lest through ignorance ye harm others, and be speedily constrained to repent of what ye have done.'"12 These words inflamed the wrath of Husayn Khan. "What!" he exclaimed. "Dare you ascribe to us evil, ignorance, and folly?"

Turning to his attendant, he bade him strike the Bab in the face.

So violent was the blow, that the Bab's turban fell to the ground.

Shaykh Abu-Turab, the Imam-Jum'ih of Shiraz, who was present at that meeting and who strongly disapproved of the conduct of Husayn Khan, ordered that the Bab's turban be replaced upon His head, and invited Him to be seated by his side.

Turning to the governor, the Imam-Jum'ih explained to him the circumstances connected with the revelation of the verse of the Qur'an which the Bab had quoted, and sought by this means to calm his fury. "This verse which this youth has [151] quoted," he told him, "has made a profound impression upon me.

The wise course, I feel, is to enquire into this matter with great care, and to judge him according to the precepts of the holy Book."

Husayn Khan readily consented; whereupon Shaykh Abu-Turab questioned the Bab regarding the nature and character of His Revelation.

The Bab denied the claim of being either the representative of the promised Qa'im or the intermediary between Him and the faithful. "We are completely satisfied," replied the Imam-Jum'ih; "we shall request you to present yourself on Friday in the Masjid-i-Vakil, and to proclaim publicly your denial."

As Shaykh Abu-Turab arose to depart in the hope of terminating the proceedings, Husayn Khan intervened and said: "We shall require a person of recognised standing to give bail and surety for him, and to pledge his word in writing that if ever in future this youth should attempt by word or deed to prejudice the interests either of the Faith of Islam or of the government of this land,

he would straightway deliver him into our hands, and regard himself under all circumstances responsible for his behaviour."

Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, the Bab's maternal uncle, who was present at that meeting, consented to act as the sponsor of his Nephew.

In his own handwriting he wrote the pledge, affixed to it his seal, confirmed it by the signature of a number of witnesses, and delivered it to the governor; whereupon Husayn Khan ordered that the Bab be entrusted to the care of His uncle, with the condition that at whatever time the governor should deem it advisable, Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali would at once deliver the Bab into his hands.

Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, his heart filled with gratitude to God, conducted the Bab to His home and committed Him to the loving care of His revered mother. He rejoiced at this family reunion and was greatly relieved by the deliverance of his dear and precious Kinsman from the grasp of that malignant tyrant. In the quiet of His own home, the Bab led for a time a life of undisturbed retirement. No one except His wife, His mother, and His uncles had any intercourse with Him. Meanwhile the mischief-makers were busily pressing Shaykh Abu-Turab to summon the Bab to the Masjid-i-Vakil and to call upon Him to fulfil His pledge.

[153] Shaykh Abu-Turab was known to be a man of kindly disposition, and of a temperament and nature which bore a striking resemblance to the character of the late Mirza Abu'l-Qasim, the Imam-Jum'ih of Tihran. He was extremely reluctant to treat with contumely persons of recognised standing, particularly if these were residents of Shiraz. Instinctively he felt this to be his duty, observed it conscientiously, and was as a result universally esteemed by the people of that city. He therefore sought, through evasive answers and repeated postponements, to appease the indignation of the multitude. He found, however, that the stirrers-up of mischief and sedition were bending every effort further to inflame the feelings of general resentment which had seized the masses. He at length felt compelled to address a confidential message to Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, requesting him to bring the Bab with him on Friday to the Masjid-i-Vakil, that He might fulfil the pledge He had given. "My hope," he added, "is that by the aid of God the statements of your nephew may ease the tenseness of the situation and may lead to your tranquillity as well as to our own."

The Bab, accompanied by Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, arrived at the Masjid at a time when the Imam-Jum'ih had just ascended the pulpit and was preparing to deliver his sermon.

As soon as his eyes fell upon the Bab, he publicly welcomed Him, requested Him to ascend the pulpit, and called upon Him to address the congregation.

The Bab, responding to his invitation, advanced towards him and, standing on the first step of the staircase, prepared to address the people. "Come up higher," interjected the Imam-Jum'ih.

Complying with his wish, the Bab ascended two more steps.

As He was standing, His head hid the breast of Shaykh Abu-Turab, who was occupying the pulpit-top.

He began by prefacing His public declaration with an introductory discourse.

No sooner had He uttered the opening words of "Praise be to God, who hath in truth created the heavens and the earth," than a certain siyyid known as Siyyid-i-Shish-Pari, whose function was to carry the mace before the Imam-Jum'ih, insolently shouted: "Enough of this idle chatter!

Declare, now and immediately, the thing you intend to say."

The Imam-Jum'ih greatly resented the rudeness of the siyyid's [154] remark. "Hold your peace," he rebuked him, "and be ashamed of your impertinence."

He then, turning to the Bab, asked Him to be brief, as this, he said, would allay the excitement of the people.

The Bab, as He faced the congregation, declared: "The condemnation of God be upon him who regards me either as a representative of the Imam or the gate thereof.

The condemnation of God be also upon whosoever imputes to me the charge of having denied the unity of God, of having repudiated the prophethood of Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets, of having rejected the truth of any of the messengers of old, or of having refused to recognise the guardianship of 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, or of any of the imams who have succeeded him."

He then ascended to the top of the staircase, embraced the Imam-Jum'ih, and, descending to the floor of the Masjid, joined the congregation for the observance of the Friday prayer.

The Imam-Jum'ih intervened and requested Him to retire. "Your family," he said, "is anxiously awaiting your return.

All are apprehensive lest any harm befall you.

Repair to your house and there offer your prayer; of greater merit shall this deed be in the sight of God."

Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali also was, at the request of the Imam-Jum'ih, asked to accompany his nephew to his home.

This precautionary measure which Shaykh Abu-Turab thought it wise to observe was actuated by the fear lest, after the dispersion of the congregation, a few of the evil-minded among the crowd might still attempt to injure the person of the Bab or endanger His life.

But for the sagacity, the sympathy, and the careful attention which the Imam-Jum'ih so strikingly displayed on a number of such occasions, the infuriated mob would doubtless have been led to gratify its savage desire, and would have committed the most abominable of excesses.

He seemed to have been the instrument of the invisible Hand appointed to

protect both the person and the Mission of that Youth.13

[155] The Bab regained His home and for some time was able to lead, in the privacy of His house, and in close association with His family and kinsmen, a life of comparative tranquillity. In those days He celebrated the advent of the first Naw-Ruz since He had declared His Mission. That festival fell, in that year, on the tenth day of the month of Rabi'u'l-Avval, 1261 A.H.14

A few among those who were present on that memorable occasion in the Masjid-i-Vakil, and had listened to the statements of the Bab, were greatly impressed by the masterly manner in which that Youth had, by His unaided efforts, succeeded in silencing His formidable opponents.

Soon after this event, they were each led to apprehend the reality of His Mission and to recognise its glory.

Among them was Shaykh 'Ali Mirza, the nephew of this same Imam-Jum'ih, a young man who had just attained the age of maturity.

The seed implanted in his heart grew and developed, until in the year 1267 A.H.15 he was privileged to meet Baha'u'llah in Iraq.

That visit filled him with enthusiasm and joy.

Returning greatly refreshed to his native land, he resumed with redoubled energy his labours for the Cause.

From that year until the present time, he has persevered in his task, and has achieved distinction by the uprightness of his character and whole-hearted devotion to his government and country.

Recently a letter addressed by him to Baha'u'llah has reached the Holy Land, in which he expresses his keen satisfaction at the progress of the Cause in Persia. "I am mute with wonder," he writes, "when I behold the evidences of God's unconquerable power manifested among the people of my country.

In a land which has for years so savagely persecuted the Faith, a man who for forty years has been known throughout Persia as a Babi, has been made the sole arbitrator in a case of dispute which involves, on the one hand, the Zillu's-Sultan, the tyrannical son of the Shah and a sworn enemy of the Cause, and, on the other, Mirza Fath-'Ali Khan, the Sahib-i-Divan.

It has been publicly announced that whatsoever be the verdict of this Babi, the same should be unreservedly accepted by both parties and should be unhesitatingly enforced."

[156] A certain Muhammad-Karim who was among the congregation that Friday was likewise attracted by the Bab's remarkable behaviour on that occasion. What he saw and heard on that day brought about his immediate conversion. Persecution drove him out of Persia to Iraq, where, in the presence of Baha'u'llah, he continually deepened his understanding and faith. Later on he was bidden by Him to return to Shiraz and to endeavour to the best of his ability to propagate the Cause. There he remained and laboured to the end of his life.

Still another was Mirza Aqay-i-Rikab-Saz. He became so enamoured of the Bab on that day that no persecution, however severe and prolonged, was able either to shake his convictions or to obscure the radiance of his love. He, too, attained the presence of Baha'u'llah in Iraq. In answer to the questions which he asked regarding the interpretation of the Disconnected Letters of the Qur'an and the meaning of the Verse of Nur, he was favoured with an expressly written Tablet revealed by the pen of Baha'u'llah. In His path he eventually suffered martyrdom.

Among them also was Mirza Rahim-i-Khabbaz, who distinguished himself by his fearlessness and fiery ardour. He relaxed not in his efforts until the hour of his death.

Haji Abu'l-Hasan-i-Bazzaz, who, as a fellow-traveller of the Bab during His pilgrimage to Hijaz, had but dimly recognised the overpowering majesty of His Mission, was, on that memorable Friday, profoundly shaken and completely transformed. He bore the Bab such love that tears of an overpowering devotion continually flowed from his eyes. All who knew him admired the uprightness of his conduct and praised his benevolence and candour. He, as well as his two sons, has proved by his deeds the tenacity of his faith, and has won the esteem of his fellow-believers.

And yet another of those who felt the fascination of the Bab on that day was the late Haji Muhammad-Bisat, a man well-versed in the metaphysical teachings of Islam and a great admirer of both Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim. He was of a kindly disposition and was gifted with a keen sense of humour. He had won the friendship of the Imam-Jum'ih, [157] was intimately associated with him, and was a faithful attendant at the Friday congregational prayer.

The Naw-Ruz of that year, which heralded the advent of a new springtime, was also symbolic of that spiritual rebirth, the first stirrings of which could already be discerned throughout the length and breadth of the land. A number of the most eminent and learned among the people of that country emerged from the wintry desolation of heedlessness, and were quickened by the reviving breath of the new-born Revelation. The seeds which the Hand of Omnipotence had implanted in their hearts germinated into blossoms of the purest and loveliest fragrance.16 As the breeze of His loving-kindness and tender mercy wafted over these blossoms, the penetrating power of their perfume spread far and wide over the face of all that land. It diffused itself even beyond the confines of Persia. It reached Karbila and reanimated the souls of those who were waiting in expectation for the return [158] of the Bab to their city. Soon after Naw-Ruz, an epistle reached them by way of Basrih, in which the Bab, who had intended to return from Hijaz to Persia by way of Karbila, informed them of the change in His plan and of His consequent inability to fulfil His promise. He directed them to proceed to Isfahan and remain there until the receipt of further instructions. "Should it be deemed advisable," He added, "We shall request you to proceed to Shiraz; if not, tarry in Isfahan until such time as God may make known to you His will and guidance."

The receipt of this unexpected intelligence created a considerable stir among those who had been eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Bab at Karbila. It agitated their minds and tested their loyalty. "What of His promise to us?" whispered a few of the discontented among them. "Does He regard the breaking of His pledge as the interposition of the will of God?" The others, unlike those waverers, became more steadfast in their faith and clung with added determination to the Cause. Faithful to their Master, they joyously responded to His invitation, ignoring entirely the criticisms and protestations of those who had faltered in their faith.

[159] They set out for Isfahan, determined to abide by whatsoever might be the will and desire of their Beloved. They were joined by a few of their companions, who, though gravely shaken in their belief, concealed their feelings. Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Nahri, whose daughter was subsequently joined in wedlock with the Most Great Branch, and Mirza Hadi, the brother of Mirza Muhammad-'Ali, both residents of Isfahan, were among those companions whose vision of the glory and sublimity of the Faith the expressed misgivings of the evil whisperers had failed to obscure. Among them, too, was a certain Muhammad-i-Hana-Sab, also a resident of Isfahan, who is now serving in the home of Baha'u'llah. A number of these staunch companions of the Bab participated in the great struggle of Shaykh Tabarsi and miraculously escaped the tragic fate of their fallen brethren.

On their way to Isfahan they met, in the city of Kangavar, Mulla Husayn with his brother and nephew, who were his companions on his previous visit to Shiraz, and who were proceeding to Karbila. They were greatly delighted by this unexpected encounter, and requested Mulla Husayn to prolong his stay in Kangavar, with which request he readily complied. Mulla Husayn, who, while in that city, led the companions of the Bab in the Friday congregational prayer, was held in such esteem and reverence by his fellow-disciples that a number of those present, who later on, in Shiraz, revealed their disloyalty to the Faith, were moved with envy. Among them were Mulla Javad-i-Baraghani and Mulla 'Abdu'l-'Aliy-i-Harati, both of whom feigned submission to the Revelation of the Bab in the hope of satisfying their ambition for leadership. They both strove secretly to undermine the enviable position achieved by Mulla Husayn. Through their hints and insinuations, they persistently endeavoured to challenge his authority and disgrace his name.

I have heard Mirza Ahmad-i-Katib, better known in those days as Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim, who had been the travelling companion of Mulla Javad from Qazvin, relate the following: "Mulla Javad often alluded in his conversation with me to Mulla Husayn. His repeated and disparaging remarks, couched in artful language, impelled me to cease my association with him. Every time I determined to sever my [160] intercourse with Mulla Javad, I was prevented by Mulla Husayn, who, discovering my intention, counselled me to exercise forbearance towards him. Mulla Husayn's association with the loyal companions of the Bab greatly added to their zeal and enthusiasm. They were edified by his example and were lost in admiration for the brilliant qualities of mind and

heart which distinguished so eminent a fellow-disciple."

Mulla Husayn decided to join the company of his friends and to proceed with them to Isfahan. Travelling alone, at about a farsakh's17 distance in advance of his companions, he, as soon as he paused at nightfall to offer his prayer, would be overtaken by them and would, in their company, complete his devotions. He would be the first to resume the journey, and would again be joined by that devoted band at the hour of dawn, when he once more would break his march to offer his prayer. Only when pressed by his friends would he consent to observe the congregational form of worship. On such occasions he would sometimes follow the lead of one of his companions. Such was the devotion which he had kindled in those hearts that a number of his fellow-travellers would dismount from their steeds and, offering them to those who were journeying on foot, would themselves follow him, utterly indifferent to the strain and fatigues of the march.

As they approached the outskirts of Isfahan, Mulla Husayn, fearing that the sudden entry of so large a group of people might excite the curiosity and suspicion of its inhabitants, advised those who were travelling with him to disperse and to enter the gates in small and inconspicuous numbers.

A few days after their arrival, there reached them the news that Shiraz was in a state of violent agitation, that all manner of intercourse with the Bab had been forbidden, and that their projected visit to that city would be fraught with the gravest danger.

Mulla Husayn, quite undaunted by this sudden intelligence, decided to proceed to Shiraz.

He acquainted only a few of his trusted companions with his intention.

Discarding his robes and turban, and wearing the jubbih18 and kulah of the people of Khurasan, he, disguising himself as a horseman of Hizarih and Quchan and accompanied by his brother and nephew, set out at an unexpected hour for the [161] city of his Beloved.

As he approached its gate, he instructed his brother to proceed in the dead of night to the house of the Bab's maternal uncle and to request him to inform the Bab of his arrival.

Mulla Husayn received, the next day, the welcome news that Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali was expecting him an hour after sunset outside the gate of the city.

Mulla Husayn met him at the appointed hour and was conducted to his home.

Several times at night did the Bab honour that house with His presence, and continue in close association with Mulla Husayn until the break of day.

Soon after this, He gave permission to His companions who had gathered in Isfahan, to leave gradually for Shiraz, and there to wait until it should be feasible for Him to meet them.

He cautioned them to exercise the utmost vigilance, instructed them to enter, a

few at a time, the gate of the city, and bade them disperse, immediately upon their arrival, into such quarters as were reserved for travellers, and accept whatever employment they could find.

The first group to reach the city and meet the Bab, a few days after the arrival of Mulla Husayn, consisted of Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Nahri, Mirza Hadi, his brother; Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim-i-Qazvini, Mulla Javad-i-Baraghani, Mulla 'Abdu'l-'Aliy-i-Harati, and Mirza Ibrahim-i-Shirazi.

In the course of their association with Him, the last three of the group gradually betrayed their blindness of heart and demonstrated the baseness of their character.

The manifold evidences of the Bab's increasing favour towards Mulla Husayn aroused their anger and excited the smouldering fire of their jealousy.

In their impotent rage, they resorted to the abject weapons of fraud and of calumny.

Unable at first to manifest openly their hostility to Mulla Husayn, they sought by every crafty device to beguile the minds and damp the affections of his devoted admirers.

Their unseemly behaviour alienated the sympathy of the believers and precipitated their separation from the company of the faithful.

Expelled by their very acts from the bosom of the Faith, they leagued themselves with its avowed enemies and proclaimed their utter rejection of its claims and principles.

So great was the mischief which they stirred up among the people of that city that they were eventually expelled by the civil authorities, [162] who alike despised and feared their plottings.

The Bab has in a Tablet, in which He expatiates upon their machinations and misdeeds, compared them to the calf of the Samiri, the calf that had neither voice nor soul, which was both the abject handiwork and the object of the adoration of a wayward people. "May Thy condemnation, O God!"

He wrote, with reference to Mulla Javad and Mulla 'Abdu'l-'Ali, "rest upon the Jibt and Taghut,19 the twin idols of this perverse people."

All three subsequently proceeded to Kirman and joined forces with Haji Mirza Muhammad Karim Khan, whose designs they furthered and the vehemence of whose denunciations they strove to reinforce.

One night after their expulsion from Shiraz, the Bab, who was visiting the home of Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, where He had summoned to meet Him Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Nahri, Mirza Hadi, and Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim-i-Qazvini, turned suddenly to the last-named and said: "'Abdu'l-Karim, are you seeking the Manifestation?" These words, uttered with calm and extreme gentleness, had a startling effect upon him. He paled at this sudden interrogation and burst into tears. He threw himself at the feet of the Bab in a state of profound

agitation. The Bab took him lovingly in His arms, kissed his forehead, and invited him to be seated by His side. In a tone of tender affection, He succeeded in appeasing the tumult of his heart.

As soon as they had regained their home, Mirza Muhammad-'Ali and his brother enquired of Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim the reason for the violent perturbation which had suddenly seized him. "Hear me," he answered; "I will relate to you the tale of a strange experience, a tale which I have shared with no one until now.

When I attained the age of maturity, I felt, while I lived in Qazvin, a profound yearning to unravel the mystery of God and to apprehend the nature of His saints and prophets.

Nothing short of the acquisition of learning, I realised, could enable me to achieve my goal.

I succeeded in obtaining the consent of my father and uncles to the abandonment of my business, and plunged immediately into study and research.

I occupied a room in one of the madrisihs of Qazvin, and concentrated my efforts on the [163] acquisition of every available branch of human learning.

I often discussed the knowledge which I acquired with my fellow-disciples, and sought by this means to enrich my experience.

At night, I would retire to my home, and, in the seclusion of my library, would devote many an hour to undisturbed study.

I was so immersed in my labours that I grew indifferent to both sleep and hunger.

Within two years I had resolved to master the intricacies of Muslim jurisprudence and theology.

I was a faithful attendant at the lectures given by Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim-i-Iravani, who, in those days, ranked as the most outstanding divine of Qazvin.

I greatly admired his vast erudition, his piety and virtue.

Every night during the period that I was his disciple, I devoted my time to the writing of a treatise which I submitted to him and which he revised with care and interest.

He seemed to be greatly pleased with my progress, and often extolled my high attainments.

One day, in the presence of his assembled disciples, he declared: 'The learned and sagacious Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim has qualified himself to expound authoritatively the sacred Scriptures of Islam.

He no longer needs to attend either my classes or those of my equals.

I shall, please God, celebrate his elevation to the rank of a mujtahid on the morning of the coming Friday, and will deliver his certificate to him after the

congregational prayer.'

"No sooner had Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim spoken these words and departed than his disciples came forward and heartily congratulated me on my accomplishments.

I returned, greatly elated, to my home.

Upon my arrival I discovered that both my father and my elder uncle, Haji Husayn-'Ali, both of whom were greatly esteemed throughout Qazvin, were preparing a feast in my honour, with which they intended to celebrate the completion of my studies.

I requested them to postpone the invitation they had extended to the notables of Qazvin until further notice from me.

They gladly consented, believing that in my eagerness for such a festival I would not unduly postpone it.

That night I repaired to my library and, in the privacy of my cell, pondered the following thoughts in my heart:

Had you not fondly imagined, I said to myself, that only the sanctified in spirit could ever hope to attain the station of an authoritative expounder of the [164] sacred Scriptures of Islam?

Was it not your belief that whoso attained this station would be immune from error?

Are you not already accounted among those who enjoy that rank?

Has not Qazvin's most distinguished divine recognised and declared you to be such?

Be fair.

Do you in your own heart regard yourself as having attained that state of purity and sublime detachment which you, in days past, considered the requisites for one who aspires to reach that exalted position?

Think you yourself to be free from every taint of selfish desire?

As I sat musing, a feeling of my own unworthiness gradually overpowered me.

I recognised myself as still a victim of cares and perplexities, of temptations and doubts.

I was oppressed by such thoughts as to how I should conduct my classes, how to lead my congregation in prayer, how to enforce the laws and precepts of the Faith.

I felt continually anxious as to how I should discharge my duties, how to ensure the superiority of my achievements over those who had preceded me.

I was overcome with such a sense of humiliation that I felt impelled to seek forgiveness from God.

Your aim in acquiring all this learning, I thought to myself, has been to unravel the mystery of God and to attain the state of certitude.

Be fair.

Are you sure of your own interpretation of the Qur'an?

Are you certain that the laws which you promulgate reflect the will of God?

The consciousness of error suddenly dawned upon me.

I realised for the first time how the rust of learning had corroded my soul and had obscured my vision.

I lamented my past, and deplored the futility of my endeavours.

I knew that the people of my own rank were subject to the same afflictions.

As soon as they had acquired this so-called learning, they would claim to be the exponents of the law of Islam and would arrogate to themselves the exclusive privilege of pronouncing upon its doctrine.

"I remained absorbed in my thoughts until dawn. That night I neither ate nor slept. At times I would commune with God: 'Thou seest me, O my Lord, and Thou beholdest my plight. Thou knowest that I cherish no other desire except Thy holy will and pleasure. I am lost in bewilderment at the thought of the multitude of sects into which Thy holy Faith hath fallen. I am deeply perplexed when I behold the [165] schisms that have torn the religions of the past. Wilt Thou guide me in my perplexities, and relieve me of my doubts? Whither am I to turn for consolation and guidance?' I wept so bitterly that night that I seemed to have lost consciousness. There suddenly came to me the vision of a great gathering of people, the expression of whose shining faces greatly impressed me. A noble figure, attired in the garb of a siyyid, occupied a seat on the pulpit facing the congregation. He was expounding the meaning of this sacred verse of the Qur'an: 'Whoso maketh efforts for Us, in Our ways will We guide them.' I was fascinated by his face. I arose, advanced towards him, and was on the point of throwing myself at his feet when that vision suddenly vanished. My heart was flooded with light. My joy was indescribable.

"I immediately decided to consult Haji Allah-Vardi, father of Muhammad-Javad-i-Farhadi, a man known throughout Qazvin for his deep spiritual insight. When I related to him my vision, he smiled and with extraordinary precision described to me the distinguishing features of the siyyid who had appeared to me. 'That noble figure,' he added, 'was none other than Haji Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti, who is now in Karbila and who may be seen expounding every day to his disciples the sacred teachings of Islam. Those who listen to his discourse are refreshed and edified by his utterance. I can never describe the impression which his words exert upon his hearers.' I joyously arose and, expressing to him my feelings of profound appreciation, retired to my home and started forthwith on my journey to Karbila. My old fellow-disciples came and entreated me either to call in person on the learned Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim, who had expressed a desire to meet me, or to allow him to come to my house. 'I feel

the impulse,' I replied, 'to visit the shrine of the Imam Husayn at Karbila. I have vowed to start immediately on that pilgrimage. I cannot postpone my departure. I will, if possible, visit him for a few moments when I start to leave the city. If I cannot, I would beg him to excuse me and to pray in my behalf that I may be guided on the straight path.'

"I confidentially acquainted my relatives with the nature of my vision and its interpretation. I informed them of my projected visit to Karbila. My words to them that very day [166] instilled the love of Siyyid Kazim in their hearts. They felt greatly drawn to Haji Allah-Vardi, freely associated with him, and became his fervent admirers.

"My brother, 'Abdu'l-Hamid [who later quaffed the cup of martyrdom in Tihran], accompanied me on my journey to Karbila. There I met Siyyid Kazim and was amazed to hear him discourse to his assembled disciples under exactly the same circumstances as he had appeared to me in my vision. I was astounded when I discovered, upon my arrival, that he was expounding the meaning of the same verse which he, when he appeared to me, was explaining to his disciples. As I sat and listened to him, I was greatly impressed by the force of his argument and the profundity of his thoughts. He graciously received me and showed me the utmost kindness. My brother and I both felt an inner joy we had never before experienced. At the hour of dawn we would hasten to his home, and would accompany him on his visit to the shrine of the Imam Husayn.

"I spent the entire winter in close companionship with him. During the whole of that period, I faithfully attended his classes. Every time I listened to his speech, I heard him describe a particular aspect of the manifestation of the promised Qa'im. This theme constituted the sole subject of his discourses. Whichever verse or tradition he happened to be expounding, he would invariably conclude his commentary on it with a particular reference to the advent of the promised Revelation. 'The promised One,' he would openly and repeatedly declare, 'lives in the midst of this people. The appointed time for His appearance is fast approaching. Prepare the way for Him, and purify yourselves so that you may recognise His beauty. Not until I depart from this world will the day-star of His countenance be revealed. It behoves you after my departure to arise and seek Him. You should not rest for one moment until you find Him.'

"After the celebration of Naw-Ruz, Siyyid Kazim bade me depart from Karbila. 'Rest assured, O 'Abdu'l-Karim,' he told me as he bade me farewell, 'you are of those who, in the Day of His Revelation, will arise for the triumph of His Cause. You will, I hope, remember me on that blessed Day.' I besought him to allow me to remain in Karbila, pleading [167] that my return to Qazvin would arouse the enmity of the mullas of that city. 'Let your trust be wholly in God,' was his reply. 'Ignore entirely their machinations. Engage in trade, and rest assured that their protestations will never succeed in harming you.' I followed his advice, and together with my brother set out for Qazvin.

"Immediately upon my arrival, I undertook to carry out the counsel of Siyyid Kazim. With the instructions he had given me, I was able to silence every

malicious opposer. I devoted my days to the transaction of my business; at night I would regain my home and, in the quiet of my chamber, would consecrate my time to meditation and prayer. With tearful eyes I would commune with God and would beseech Him, saying: 'Thou hast, by the mouth of Thine inspired servant, promised that I shall attain unto Thy Day, and shall behold Thy Revelation. Thou hast, through him, assured me that I shall be among those who will arise for the triumph of Thy Cause. How long wilt Thou withhold from me Thy promise? When will the hand of Thy loving-kindness unlock to me the door of Thy grace, and confer upon me Thy everlasting bounty?' Every night I would renew this prayer and would continue in my supplications until the break of day.

"One night, on the eve of the day of 'Arafih, in the year 1255 A.H.,20 I was so wrapt in prayer that I seemed to have fallen into a trance. There appeared before me a bird, white as the snow, which hovered above my head and alighted upon the twig of a tree beside me. In accents of indescribable sweetness, that bird voiced these words: 'Are you seeking the Manifestation, O 'Abdu'l-Karim? Lo, the year '60.' Immediately after, the bird flew away and vanished. The mystery of those words greatly agitated me. The memory of the beauty of that vision lingered long in my mind. I seemed to have tasted all the delights of Paradise. My joy was irrepressible.

"The mystic message of that bird had penetrated my soul and was continually on my lips. I revolved it constantly in my mind. I shared it with no one, fearing lest its sweetness forsake me. A few years later, the Call from Shiraz reached my ears. The day I heard it, I hastened to that city. On [168] my way I met, in Tihran, Mulla Muhammad-i-Mu'allim, who acquainted me with the nature of this Call, and informed me that those who had acknowledged it had gathered in Karbila and were awaiting the return of their Leader from Hijaz. I immediately departed for that city. From Hamadan, Mulla Javad-i-Baraghani, to my great distress, accompanied me to Karbila, where I was privileged to meet you as well as the rest of the believers. I continued to treasure within my heart the strange message conveyed to me by that bird. When I subsequently attained the presence of the Bab and heard from His lips those same words, spoken in the same tone and language as I had heard them, I realised their significance. I was so overwhelmed by their power and glory that I instinctively fell at His feet and magnified His name."

In the early days of the year 1265 A.H.,21 I set out, at the age of eighteen, from my native village of Zarand for Qum, where I chanced to meet Siyyid Isma'il-i-Zavari'i, surnamed Dhabih, who later on, while in Baghdad, offered up his life as a sacrifice in the path of Baha'u'llah.

Through him I was led to recognise the new Revelation.

He was then preparing to leave for Mazindaran and had determined to join the heroic defenders of the fort of Shaykh Tabarsi.

He had intended to take me with him, together with Mirza Fathu'llah-i-Hakkak, a lad of my age, who was a resident of Qum.

As circumstances interfered with his plan, he promised before his departure that he would communicate with us from Tihran and would ask us to join him.

In the course of his conversation with Mirza Fathu'llah and me, he related to us the account of Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim's marvellous experience.

I was seized with an ardent desire to meet him.

When I subsequently arrived at Tihran and met Siyyid Isma'il in the Madrisiy-i-Daru'sh-Shafay-i-Masjid-i-Shah, I was introduced by him to this same Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim, who was then living in that same madrisih.

In those days we were informed that the struggle of Shaykh Tabarsi had come to an end, and that those companions of the Bab who had gathered in Tihran and were contemplating joining their brethren had each returned to his own province unable to achieve his goal.

Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim remained in the [169] capital, where he devoted his time to transcribing the Persian Bayan.

My close association with him at that time served to deepen my love and admiration for him.

I still feel, after the lapse of eight and thirty years since our first interview in Tihran, the warmth of his friendship and the fervour of his faith.

My feelings of affectionate regard for him prompted me to dwell at length upon the circumstances of his early life, culminating in what may be regarded as the turning point of his whole career.

May it in turn serve to awaken the reader to the glory of this momentous Revelation.

FOOTNOTES

8.1. Similar to a caravanserai.

8.2. Literally meaning "The Seven Qualifications."

8.3. Refer to Glossary.

8.4. Reference to the name of the Bab.

8.5. Reference to Baha'u'llah. Refer to Glossary.

8.6. According to the "Tarikh-i-Jadid" (p. 204), he was also styled "Nizamu'd-Dawlih."

8.7. "One of the tribes of Turan, a Turkish family, called the Qajar, which first appeared in Persia in the invading army of Changiz Khan." (C. R. Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," p. 339.)

8.8. According to A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab" (footnote 175, p. 225), this meeting took place on August 6, 1845 A.D.

8.9. According to the "Traveller's Narrative" (p. 5), a certain Mulla

'Ali-Akbar-i-Ardistani was, together with them, subjected to the same persecution.

8.10. Qur'an, 3:193.

8.11. "This city became the arena for passionate discussions which profoundly troubled the general peace.

The curious, the pilgrims, the scandal-mongers met there commenting upon the news, approving or blaming, exalting the young Siyyid, or, on the contrary, heaping upon him maledictions and insults.

Everyone was excited and enervated.

The Mullas saw with bitter anxiety the growing number of adherents to the new doctrine and their resources diminished correspondingly.

It became necessary to act, as prolonged tolerance would empty the mosques of their believers who were convinced that since Islam did not defend itself, it acknowledged defeat.

On the other hand, Husayn Khan, governor of Shiraz, Nizamu'd-Dawlih, feared that, in letting things drift, the scandal would become such that later it would be impossible to suppress it; that would be to court disgrace.

Besides, the Bab did not content himself with preaching, he called to himself men of good-will. 'He who knows the Word of God and does not come to His assistance in the days of violence is exactly like those who turned away from the testimony of his holiness Husayn, son of 'Ali, at Karbila.

Those are the impious ones!' (Kitab-i-Baynu'l-Haramayn.) The civil interests concurring with the interests of heaven, Nizamu'd-Dawlih and Shaykh Abu-Turab, the Imam-Jum'ih agreed that humiliation should be inflicted upon the innovator such as would discredit him in the eyes of the populace; perhaps thus they might succeed in quieting things." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

229-230.)

8.12. Qur'an, 49:6.

8.13. "Following this public seance provoked by the folly of the mullas and which won for him numerous partisans, the trouble became serious in all the provinces of Persia; the dispute grew into such a grave situation that Muhammad Shah sent to Shiraz a man in whom he had complete confidence, instructing him to make a report of everything he saw and understood. This envoy was Siyyid Yahyay-i-Darabi." (A. L. M. Nicolas' Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp. 232-233.)

8.14. March, 1845 A.D.

8.15. 1850-51 A.D.

8.16. "Be that as it may, the resultant impression was immense in Shiraz and all the learned and religious gathered around 'Ali-Muhammad.

As soon as he appeared in the mosque, they surrounded him and, as soon as he was seated in the pulpit, everyone was silent in order to listen to him.

His public talks never attacked the essentials of the Faith of Islam, they respected most of its ritual; in fact, the Kitman dominated.

Nevertheless, they were daring discourses.

The clergy was not spared; its vices were cruelly lashed.

The sad and painful destiny of humanity was generally the theme.

Here and there, certain allusions, the obscurity of which irritated the passions of some while it flattered the pride of others already initiated as a whole or only in part, gave to his prophecies such a bitter truth that the crowd was growing day by day and so, in all Persia, they were beginning to talk of 'Ali-Muhammad. "The Mullas of Shiraz had not waited for all this agitation to unite against this young detractor.

From his first public appearances, they sent to him their most able mullas to argue with him and confuse him, and these public debates were held either in the mosques or in the colleges in the presence of the governor, the military chiefs, the clergy, the people, in fact before everyone.

But, instead of benefiting the clergy, they contributed quite a little to spread and exalt, at their own expense, the renown of this enthusiastic teacher.

It is a fact that he defeated his adversaries, he condemned them—which was not very difficult—with the Qur'an in hand.

It was an easy matter for him to show before all these crowds who knew the mullas well, at which point their conduct, their precepts, and to what extent their beliefs, even their theology, were in flagrant contradiction with the Book, which they could not deny. "Possessed of extraordinary daring and exaltation, he flayed unsparingly the vices of his antagonists, disregarding all ordinary conventions.

After having proven their infidelity to their own doctrine, he shamed them in their lives and threw them at pitch and toss to the indignation or the contempt of the auditors. "At Shiraz, his first appearances, when he preached, were so profoundly moving that even the orthodox Muhammadans who were present have retained an indelible memory of them and never recall them without a sort of terror.

They agreed unanimously that the eloquence of 'Ali-Muhammad was of an incomparable kind, such that, without having been an eye-witness, one could not possibly imagine.

Soon the young theologian no longer appeared in public without being surrounded with many partisans.

His house was always filled with them and he not only taught in the mosques and in the colleges, but it was principally at his house and in the evenings that, withdrawn in a room with the elite of his admirers, he lifted for them the veils of a doctrine which even for himself he had not yet fully established. "It seemed in these early days that he was occupied with polemics rather than with dogmatic statements and nothing is more natural.

In these secret talks, his bold declarations which were much more frequent than in the public addresses, grew each day and tended so clearly to a complete overthrow of Islam that they were a prelude to a new profession of Faith.

The little congregation was ardent, brave, carried away, ready for anything; they were fanatical in the true and noble sense of the word, that is to say, that every one of its members thought himself of no importance and burned with a desire to sacrifice his life-blood and his belongings for the cause of Truth." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp.

120, 122.) "The Bab now began to gather round him a group of devoted adherents.

He seems to have been noted for extreme simplicity of manner, and engaging gentleness, and a wonderful charm of appearance.

Men were impressed by his knowledge and his penetrating eloquence of speech.

And his writings, though to Gobineau they appeared dull, were greatly admired by the Persians for the beauty and elegance of their style and produced an immense sensation in Shiraz.

As soon as he entered the mosque it was surrounded.

As soon as he ascended the pulpit there was silence." (Sir Francis Younghusband's "The Gleam," p.

194.) "These ethics taught by a young man at an age when passions were intense, deeply impressed an audience, religious to the point of fanaticism, above all when the words of the preacher were in perfect harmony with his conduct.

No one doubted the continence and the firmness of Karbila'i Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad; he spoke little, meditated constantly and most of the time fled from the presence of men, which all the more aroused their curiosity.

He was sought after everywhere." (Journal Asiatique, 1866, tome 7, p.

341.) "By the uprightness of his life the young Siyyid served as an example to those about him.

He was willingly listened to when, in his ambiguous and interrupted talks, he condemned the abuses evident in all classes of society.

His words were repeated and elaborated upon and they spoke of him as the true

Master and gave themselves to him unreservedly." (Ibid.)

8.17. Refer to Glossary.

8.18. Refer to Glossary.

8.19. Qur'an, 4:50.

8.20. The night preceding February 13, 1840 A.D.

8.21. 1848 A.D.

CHAPTER IX
THE BAB'S STAY IN SHIRAZ AFTER THE PILGRIMAGE
(Continued)

[170] Soon after the arrival of Mulla Husayn at Shiraz, the voice of the people rose again in protest against him. The fear and indignation of the multitude were excited by the knowledge of his continued and intimate intercourse with the Bab. "He again has come to our city," they clamoured; "he again has raised the standard of revolt, and is, together with his chief, contemplating a still fiercer onslaught upon our time-honoured institutions." So grave and menacing became the situation that the Bab instructed Mulla Husayn to regain, by way of Yazd, his native province of Khurasan. He likewise dismissed the rest of His companions who had gathered in Shiraz, and bade them return to Isfahan. He retained Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim, to whom He assigned the duty of transcribing His writings.

These precautionary measures which the Bab deemed wise to undertake, relieved Him from the immediate danger of violence from the infuriated people of Shiraz, and served to lend a fresh impetus to the propagation of His Faith beyond the limits of that city.

His disciples, who had spread throughout the length and breadth of the country, fearlessly proclaimed to the multitude of their countrymen the regenerating power of the new-born Revelation.

The fame of the Bab had been noised abroad and had reached the ears of those who held the highest seats of authority, both in the capital and throughout the provinces.1 A wave of passionate enquiry swayed the minds and hearts of both the leaders and the [171] masses of the people.

Amazement and wonder had seized those who had heard from the lips of the immediate messengers of the Bab the tales of those signs and testimonies which had heralded the birth of His Manifestation.

The dignitaries of State and Church either attended in person or delegated their ablest representatives to enquire into the truth and character of this remarkable Movement.

Muhammad Shah2 himself was moved to ascertain the veracity of these reports and to enquire into their nature.

He delegated Siyyid Yahyay-i-Darabi,3 the most learned, the most eloquent, and

the most influential of his subjects, to interview the Bab and to report to him the results of his investigations.

The Shah had implicit confidence in his impartiality, in his competence and profound spiritual insight.

He occupied a position of such pre-eminence among the leading figures in Persia that at whatever meeting he happened to be present, no matter how great the number of the ecclesiastical leaders who attended it, he was invariably its chief speaker.

None would dare to assert his views in his presence.

They all reverently observed silence before him; all testified to his sagacity, his unsurpassed knowledge and mature wisdom. [172]
In those days Siyyid Yahya was residing in Tihran in the house of Mirza Lutf-'Ali, the Master of Ceremonies to the Shah, as the honoured guest of his Imperial Majesty. The Shah confidentially signified through Mirza Lutf-'Ali his desire and pleasure that Siyyid Yahya should proceed to Shiraz and investigate the matter in person. "Tell him from us," commanded the sovereign, "that inasmuch as we repose the utmost confidence in his integrity, and admire his moral and intellectual standards, and regard him as the most suitable among the divines of our realm, we expect him to proceed to Shiraz, to enquire thoroughly into the episode of the Siyyid-i-Bab, and to inform us of the results of his investigations. We shall then know what measures it behoves us to take."

Siyyid Yahya had been himself desirous of obtaining first-hand knowledge of the claims of the Bab, but had been unable, owing to adverse circumstances, to undertake the journey to Fars. The message of Muhammad Shah decided him to carry out his long-cherished intention. Assuring his sovereign of his readiness to comply with his wish, he immediately set out for Shiraz.

On his way, he conceived the various questions which he thought he would submit to the Bab. Upon the replies which the latter gave to these questions would, in his view, depend the truth and validity of His mission. Upon his arrival at Shiraz, he met Mulla Shaykh 'Ali, surnamed 'Azim, with whom he had been intimately associated while in Khurasan. He asked him whether he was satisfied with his interview with the Bab. "You should meet Him," 'Azim replied, "and seek independently to acquaint yourself with His Mission. As a friend, I would advise you to exercise the utmost consideration [173] in your conversations with Him, lest you, too, in the end should be obliged to deplore any act of discourtesy towards Him."

Siyyid Yahya met the Bab at the home of Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, and exercised in his attitude towards Him the courtesy which 'Azim had counselled him to observe. For about two hours he directed the attention of the Bab to the most abstruse and bewildering themes in the metaphysical teachings of Islam, to the obscurest passages of the Qur'an, and to the mysterious traditions and prophecies of the imams of the Faith. The Bab at first listened to his learned references to the law and prophecies of Islam, noted all his questions, and

began to give to each a brief but persuasive reply. The conciseness and lucidity of His answers excited the wonder and admiration of Siyyid Yahya. He was overpowered by a sense of humiliation at his own presumptuousness and pride. His sense of superiority completely vanished. As he arose to depart, he addressed the Bab in these words: "Please God, I shall, in the course of my next audience with You, submit the rest of my questions and with them shall conclude my enquiry." As soon as he retired, he joined 'Azim, to whom he related the account of his interview. "I have in His presence," he told him, "expatiated unduly upon my own learning. He was able in a few words to answer my questions and to resolve my perplexities. I felt so abased before Him that I hurriedly begged leave to retire." 'Azim reminded him of his counsel, and begged him not to forget this time the advice he had given him.

In the course of his second interview, Siyyid Yahya, to his amazement, discovered that all the questions which he had intended to submit to the Bab had vanished from his memory. He contented himself with matters that seemed irrelevant to the object of his enquiry. He soon found, to his still greater surprise, that the Bab was answering, with the same lucidity and conciseness that had characterised His previous replies, those same questions which he had momentarily forgotten. "I seemed to have fallen fast asleep," he later observed. "His words, His answers to questions which I had forgotten to ask, reawakened me. A voice still kept whispering in my ear: 'Might not this, after all, have [174] been an accidental coincidence?' I was too agitated to collect my thoughts. I again begged leave to retire. 'Azim, whom I subsequently met, received me with cold indifference, and sternly remarked: 'Would that schools had been utterly abolished, and that neither of us had entered one! Through our little-mindedness and conceit, we are withholding from ourselves the redeeming grace of God, and are causing pain to Him who is the Fountain thereof. Will you not this time beseech God to grant that you may be enabled to attain His presence with becoming humility and detachment, that perchance He may graciously relieve you from the oppression of uncertainty and doubt?'

"I resolved that in my third interview with the Bab I would in my inmost heart request Him to reveal for me a commentary on the Surih of Kawthar.4 I determined not to breathe that request in His presence.

Should he, unasked by me, reveal this commentary in a manner that would immediately distinguish it in my eyes from the prevailing standards current among the commentators on the Qur'an, I then would be convinced of the Divine character of His Mission, and would readily embrace His Cause.

If not, I would refuse to acknowledge Him.

As soon as I was ushered into His presence, a sense of fear, for which I could not account, suddenly seized me.

My limbs quivered as I beheld His face.

I, who on repeated occasions had been introduced into the presence of the Shah and had never discovered the slightest trace of timidity in myself, was now so

awed and shaken that I could not remain standing on my feet.

The Bab, beholding my plight, arose from His seat, advanced towards me, and, taking hold of my hand, seated me beside Him. 'Seek from Me,' He said, 'whatever is your heart's desire.

I will readily reveal it to you.' I was speechless with wonder.

Like a babe that can neither understand nor speak, I felt powerless to respond.

He smiled as He gazed at me and said: 'Were I to reveal for you the commentary on the Surih of Kawthar, would you acknowledge that My words are born of the Spirit of God?

Would you recognise that My utterance can in no wise be associated with sorcery or magic?' Tears flowed from my eyes as I heard Him speak these words. [175] All I was able to utter was this verse of the Qur'an: 'O our Lord, with ourselves have we dealt unjustly: if Thou forgive us not and have not pity on us, we shall surely be of those who perish.'

"It was still early in the afternoon when the Bab requested Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali to bring His pen-case and some paper. He then started to reveal His commentary on the Surih of Kawthar. How am I to describe this scene of inexpressible majesty? Verses streamed from His pen with a rapidity that was truly astounding. The incredible swiftness of His writing,5 the soft and gentle murmur of His voice, and the stupendous force of His style, amazed and bewildered me. He continued in this manner until the approach of sunset. He did not pause until the entire commentary of the Surih was completed. He then laid down His pen and asked for tea. Soon after, He began to read it aloud in my presence. My heart leaped madly as I heard Him pour out, in accents of unutterable sweetness, those treasures enshrined in that sublime commentary.6 I was so entranced by its beauty that three times over I was on the verge of fainting. He sought to revive my failing strength with a few drops of rose-water which He caused to be sprinkled on my face. This [176] restored my vigour and enabled me to follow His reading to the end.

"When He had completed His recital, the Bab arose to depart. He entrusted me, as He left, to the care of His maternal uncle. 'He is to be your guest,' He told him, 'until the time when he, in collaboration with Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim, shall have finished transcribing this newly revealed commentary, and shall have verified the correctness of the transcribed copy.' Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim and I devoted three days and three nights to this work. We would in turn read aloud to each other a portion of the commentary until the whole of it had been transcribed. We verified all the traditions in the text and found them to be entirely accurate. Such was the state of certitude to which I had attained that if all the powers of the earth were to be leagued against me they would be powerless to shake my confidence in the greatness of His Cause.7

"As I had, since my arrival at Shiraz, been living in the home of Husayn Khan, the governor of Fars, I felt that my prolonged absence from his house might excite his suspicion and inflame his anger. I therefore determined to take

leave of Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali and Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim and to regain the residence of the governor. On my arrival I found that Husayn Khan, who in the meantime had been searching for me, was eager to know whether I had fallen a victim to the Bab's magic influence. 'No one but God,' I replied, 'who alone can change the hearts of men, is able to captivate the heart of Siyyid Yahya. Whoso can ensnare his heart is of God, and His word unquestionably the voice of Truth.' My answer silenced the governor. In his conversation with others, I subsequently learned, he had expressed the view that I too had fallen a hopeless victim to the charm of that Youth. He had even written to Muhammad Shah and complained that during my stay in Shiraz I had refused all manner of intercourse with the ulamas of the city. 'Though nominally my guest,' he wrote to his sovereign, 'he frequently [177] absents himself for a number of consecutive days and nights from my house. That he has become a Babi, that he has been heart and soul enslaved by the will of the Siyyid-i-Bab, I have ceased to entertain any doubt.'

"Muhammad Shah himself, at one of the state functions in his capital, was reported to have addressed these words to Haji Mirza Aqasi: 'We have been lately informed8 that Siyyid Yahyay-i-Darabi has become a Babi. If this be true, it behoves us to cease belittling the cause of that siyyid.' Husayn Khan, on his part, received the following imperial command: 'It is strictly forbidden to any one of our subjects to utter such words as would tend to detract from the exalted rank of Siyyid Yahyay-i-Darabi. He is of noble lineage, a man of great learning, of perfect and consummate virtue. He will under no circumstances incline his ear to any cause unless he believes it to be conducive to the advancement of the best interests of our realm and to the well-being of the Faith of Islam.'

"Upon the receipt of this imperial injunction, Husayn Khan, unable to resist me openly, strove privily to undermine my authority. His face betrayed an implacable enmity and hate. He failed, however, in view of the marked favours bestowed upon me by the Shah, either to harm my person or to discredit my name.

"I was subsequently commanded by the Bab to journey to Burujird, and there acquaint my father9 with the new Message. He urged me to exercise towards him the utmost forbearance and consideration. From my confidential conversations with him I gathered that he was unwilling to repudiate the truth of the Message I had brought him. He preferred, however, to be left alone and to be allowed to pursue his own way."

Another dignitary of the realm who dispassionately investigated and ultimately embraced the Message of the Bab [178] was Mulla Muhammad-'Ali,10 a native of Zanjan, whom the Bab surnamed Hujjat-i-Zanjani.

He was a man of independent mind, noted for extreme originality and freedom from all forms of traditional restraint.

He denounced the whole hierarchy of the ecclesiastical leaders of his country, from the Abvab-i-Arba'ih11 down to the humblest mulla among his contemporaries.

He despised their character, deplored their degeneracy, and expatiated upon their vices.

He even, prior to his conversion, betrayed an attitude of careless contempt for Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i and Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti.12 He was so filled with horror at the misdeeds that had stained the history of shi'ah Islam that whoever belonged to that sect, no matter how high his personal attainments, was regarded by him as unworthy of his consideration.

Not infrequently did cases of fierce controversy arise between him and the divines of Zanjan which, but for the personal intervention of the Shah, would have led to grave disorder and bloodshed.

He was eventually summoned to the capital and, in the presence of his opponents, representatives of the ecclesiastical heads of Tihran and other cities, was called upon to vindicate his claim.

Single-handed and alone he would establish his superiority over his adversaries and would silence their clamour.

Although in their hearts they dissented from his views and condemned his conduct, they were compelled to acknowledge outwardly his authority and to confirm his opinion.

As soon as the Call from Shiraz reached his ears, Hujjat deputed one of his disciples, Mulla Iskandar, in whom he reposed the fullest confidence, to enquire into the whole matter and to report to him the result of his investigations. Utterly indifferent to the praise and censure of his countrymen, whose integrity he suspected and whose judgment he disdained, he sent his delegate to Shiraz with explicit instructions to conduct a minute and independent enquiry. Mulla Iskandar attained the presence of the Bab and felt immediately the regenerating power of His influence. He tarried [179] forty days in Shiraz, during which time he imbibed the principles of the Faith and acquired, according to his capacity, a knowledge of the measure of its glory.

With the approval of the Bab, he returned to Zanjan.

He arrived at a time when all the leading ulamas of the city had assembled in the presence of Hujjat.

As soon as he appeared, Hujjat enquired whether he believed in, or rejected, the new Revelation.

Mulla Iskandar submitted the writings of the Bab which he had brought with him, and asserted that whatever should be the verdict of his master, the same would he deem it his obligation to follow. "What!" angrily exclaimed Hujjat. "But for the presence of this distinguished company, I would have chastised you severely.

How dare you consider matters of belief to be dependent upon the approbation or rejection of others?"

Receiving from the hand of his messenger the copy of the Qayyumu'l-Asma', he,

as soon as he had perused a page of that book, fell prostrate upon the ground and exclaimed: "I bear witness that these words which I have read proceed from the same Source as that of the Qur'an.

Whoso has recognised the truth of that sacred Book must needs testify to the Divine origin of these words, and must needs submit to the precepts inculcated by their Author.

I take you, members of this assembly, as my witnesses:

I pledge such allegiance to the Author of this Revelation that should He ever pronounce the night to be the day, and declare the sun to be a shadow, I would unreservedly submit to His judgment, and would regard His verdict as the voice of Truth.

Whoso denies Him, him will I regard as the repudiator of God Himself."

With these words he terminated the proceedings of that gathering.13

We have, in the preceding pages, referred to the expulsion of Quddus and of Mulla Sadiq from Shiraz, and have attempted to describe, however inadequately, the chastisement inflicted upon them by the tyrannical and rapacious Husayn [180] Khan.

A word should now be said regarding the nature of their activities after their expulsion from that city.

For a few days they continued to journey together, after which they separated, Quddus departing for Kirman in order to interview Haji Mirza Karim Khan, and Mulla Sadiq directing his steps towards Yazd with the intention of pursuing among the ulamas of that province the work which he had been so cruelly forced to abandon in Fars.

Quddus was received, upon his arrival, at the home of Haji Siyyid Javad-i-Kirmani, whom he had known in Karbila and whose scholarship, skill, and competence were universally recognised by the people of Kirman.

At all the gatherings held in his home, he invariably assigned to his youthful guest the seat of honour and treated him with extreme deference and courtesy.

So marked a preference for so young and seemingly mediocre a person kindled the envy of the disciples of Haji Mirza Karim Khan, who, describing in vivid and exaggerated language the honours which were being lavished upon Quddus, sought to excite the dormant hostility of their chief. "Behold," they whispered in his ears, "he who is the best-beloved, the trusted and most intimate companion of the Siyyid-i-Bab, is now the honoured guest of one who is admittedly the most powerful inhabitant of Kirman.

If he be allowed to live in close companionship with Haji Siyyid Javad, he will no doubt instil his poison into his soul, and will fashion him as the instrument whereby he will succeed in disrupting your authority and in extinguishing your fame."

Alarmed by these evil whisperings, the cowardly Haji Mirza Karim Khan appealed to the governor and induced him to call in person upon Haji Siyyid Javad and demand that he terminate that dangerous association.

The representations of the governor inflamed the wrath of the intemperate Haji Siyyid Javad. "How often," he violently protested, "have I advised you [181] to ignore the whisperings of this evil plotter!

My forbearance has emboldened him.

Let him beware lest he overstep his bounds.

Does he desire to usurp my position?

Is he not the man who receives into his home thousands of abject and ignoble people and overwhelms them with servile flattery?

Has he not, again and again, striven to exalt the ungodly and to silence the innocent?

Has he not, year after year, by reinforcing the hand of the evil-doer, sought to ally himself with him and gratify his carnal desires?

Does he not until this day persist in uttering his blasphemies against all that is pure and holy in Islam?

My silence seems to have added to his temerity and insolence.

He gives himself the liberty of committing the foulest deeds, and refuses to allow me to receive and honour in my own home a man of such integrity, such learning and nobleness.

Should he refuse to desist from his practice, let him be warned that the worst elements of the city will, at my instigation, expel him from Kirman."

Disconcerted by such vehement denunciations, the governor apologised for his action.

Ere he retired, he assured Haji Siyyid Javad that he need entertain no fear, that he himself would endeavour to awaken Haji Mirza Karim Khan to the folly of his behaviour, and would induce him to repent.

The siyyid's message stung Haji Mirza Karim Khan. Convulsed by a feeling of intense resentment which he could neither suppress nor gratify, he relinquished all hopes of acquiring the undisputed leadership of the people of Kirman. That open challenge sounded the death-knell of his cherished ambitions.

In the privacy of his home, Haji Siyyid Javad heard Quddus recount all the details of his activities from the day of his departure from Karbila until his arrival at Kirman. The circumstances of his conversion and his subsequent pilgrimage with the Bab stirred the imagination and kindled the flame of faith in the heart of his host, who preferred, however, to conceal his belief, in the hope of being able to guard more effectively the interests of the newly established community. "Your noble resolve," Quddus lovingly assured him, "will

in itself be regarded as a notable service rendered to the [182] Cause of God. The Almighty will reinforce your efforts and will establish for all time your ascendancy over your opponents."

The incident was related to me by a certain Mirza 'Abdu'llah-i-Ghawgha, who, while in Kirman, had heard it from the lips of Haji Siyyid Javad himself. The sincerity of the expressed intentions of the siyyid has been fully vindicated by the splendid manner in which, as a result of his endeavours,

he succeeded in resisting the encroachments of the insidious Haji Mirza Karim Khan, who, had he remained unchallenged, would have caused incalculable harm to the Faith.

From Kirman, Quddus decided to leave for Yazd, and from thence to proceed to Ardikan, Nayin, Ardistan, Isfahan, Kashan, Qum, and Tihran. In each of these cities, notwithstanding the obstacles that beset his path, he succeeded in instilling into the understanding of his hearers the principles which he had so bravely risen to advocate. I have [183] heard Aqay-i-Kalim, the brother of Baha'u'llah, describe in the following terms his meeting with Quddus in Tihran: "The charm of his person, his extreme affability, combined with a dignity of bearing, appealed to even the most careless observer. Whoever was intimately associated with him was seized with an insatiable admiration for the charm of that youth. We watched him one day perform his ablutions, and were struck by the gracefulness which distinguished him from the rest of the worshippers in the performance of so ordinary a rite. He seemed, in our eyes, to be the very incarnation of purity and grace."

In Tihran, Quddus was admitted into the presence of Baha'u'llah, after which he proceeded to Mazindaran, where, in his native town of Barfurush, in the home of his father, he lived for about two years, during which time he was surrounded by the loving devotion of his family and kindred. His father had married, on the death of his first wife, a lady who treated Quddus with a kindness and care that no mother could have hoped to surpass. She longed to witness his wedding, and was often heard to express her fears lest she should have to carry with her to the grave the "supreme joy of her heart." "The day of my wedding," Quddus observed, "is not yet come. That day will be unspeakably glorious. Not within the confines of this house, but out in the open air, under the vault of heaven, in the midst of the Sabzih-Maydan, before the gaze of the multitude, there shall I celebrate my nuptials and witness the consummation of my hopes." Three years later, when that lady learned of the circumstances attending the martyrdom of Quddus in the Sabzih-Maydan, she recalled his prophetic words and understood their meaning.14 Quddus remained in Barfurush until the time when he was joined by Mulla Husayn after the latter's return from his visit to the Bab in the castle of Mah-Ku. From Barfurush they set out for Khurasan, a journey rendered memorable by deeds so heroic that none of their countrymen could hope to rival them.

As to Mulla Sadiq, as soon as he arrived at Yazd, he enquired of a trusted friend, a native of Khurasan, about the [184] latest developments connected

with the progress of the Cause in that province. He was particularly anxious to be enlightened concerning the activities of Mirza Ahmad-i-Azghandi, and expressed his surprise at the seeming inactivity of one who, at a time when the mystery of the Faith was still undivulged, had displayed such conspicuous zeal in preparing the people for the acceptance of the expected Manifestation.

"Mirza Ahmad," he was told, "secluded himself for a considerable period of time in his own home, and there concentrated his energies upon the preparation of a learned and voluminous compilation of Islamic traditions and prophecies relating to the time and the character of the promised Dispensation. He collected more than twelve thousand traditions of the most explicit character, the authenticity of which was universally recognised; and resolved to take whatever steps were required for the copying and the dissemination of that book. By encouraging his fellow-disciples to quote publicly from its contents, in all congregations and gatherings, he hoped he would be able to remove such hindrances as might impede the progress of the Cause he had at heart.

"When he arrived at Yazd, he was warmly welcomed by his maternal uncle, Siyyid Husayn-i-Azghandi, the foremost mujtahid of that city, who, a few days before the arrival of his nephew, had sent him a written request to hasten to Yazd and deliver him from the machinations of Haji Mirza Karim Khan, whom he regarded as a dangerous though unavowed enemy of Islam. The mujtahid called upon Mirza Ahmad to combat by every means in his power Haji Mirza Khan's pernicious influence; and wished him to establish permanently his residence in that city, that he might, through incessant exhortations and appeals, succeed in enlightening the minds of the people as to the true aims and intentions cherished by that malignant enemy.

"Mirza Ahmad, concealing from his uncle his original intention to leave for Shiraz, decided to prolong his stay in Yazd. He showed him the book which he had compiled, and shared its contents with the ulamas who thronged from every quarter of the city to meet him. All were greatly impressed [185] by the industry, the erudition, and the zeal which the compiler of that celebrated work had demonstrated.

"Among those who came to visit Mirza Ahmad was a certain Mirza Taqi, a man who was wicked, ambitious, and haughty, who had recently returned from Najaf, where he had completed his studies and had been elevated to the rank of mujtahid. In the course of his conversation with Mirza Ahmad, he expressed a desire to peruse that book, and to be allowed to retain it for a few days, that he might acquire a fuller understanding of its contents. Siyyid Husayn and his nephew both acceded to his wish. Mirza Taqi, who was to have returned the book, failed to redeem his promise. Mirza Ahmad, who had already suspected the insincerity of Mirza Taqi's intentions, urged his uncle to remind the borrower of the pledge he had given. 'Tell your master,' was the insolent reply to the messenger sent to claim the book, 'that after having satisfied myself as to the mischievous character of that compilation, I decided to destroy it. Last night I threw it into the pond, thereby obliterating its pages.'

"Moved by deep and determined indignation at such deceitfulness and impertinence, Siyyid Husayn resolved to wreak his vengeance upon him. Mirza Ahmad succeeded, however, by his wise counsels, in pacifying the anger of his infuriated uncle and in dissuading him from carrying out the measures which he proposed to take. 'This punishment,' he urged, 'which you contemplate will excite the agitation of the people, and will stir up mischief and sedition. It will gravely interfere with the efforts which you wish me to exert in order to extinguish the influence of Haji Mirza Karim Khan. He will undoubtedly seize the occasion to denounce you as a Babi, and will hold me responsible for having been the cause of your conversion. By this means he will both undermine your authority and earn the esteem and gratitude of the people. Leave him in the hands of God.'"

Mulla Sadiq was greatly pleased to learn from the account of this incident that Mirza Ahmad was actually residing in Yazd, and that no obstacles stood in the way of his meeting with him. He went immediately to the masjid in which Siyyid Husayn was leading the congregational prayer and in which [186] Mirza Ahmad delivered the sermon. Taking his seat in the first row among the worshippers, he joined them in prayer, after which he went straight to Siyyid Husayn and publicly embraced him. Uninvited, he immediately afterwards ascended the pulpit and prepared to address the faithful. Siyyid Husayn, though at first startled, preferred to raise no objection, being curious to discover the motive, and ascertain the degree of the learning, of this sudden intruder. He motioned to his nephew to refrain from opposing him.

Mulla Sadiq prefaced his discourse with one of the best-known and most exquisitely written homilies of the Bab, after which he addressed the congregation in these terms: "Render thanks to God, O people of learning, for, behold, the Gate of Divine Knowledge, which you deem to have been closed, is now wide open. The River of everlasting life has streamed forth from the city of Shiraz, and is conferring untold blessings upon the people of this land. Whoever has partaken of one drop from this Ocean of heavenly grace, no matter how humble and unlettered, has discovered in himself the power to unravel the profoundest mysteries, and has felt capable of expounding the most abstruse themes of ancient wisdom. And whoever,though he be the most learned expounder of the Faith of Islam, has chosen to rely upon his own competence and power and has disdained the Message of God, has condemned himself to irretrievable degradation and loss."

A wave of indignation and dismay swept over the entire congregation as these words of Mulla Sadiq pealed out this momentous announcement. The masjid rang with cries of "Blasphemy!" which an infuriated congregation shouted in horror against the speaker. "Descend from the pulpit," rose the voice of Siyyid Husayn amid the clamour and tumult of the people, as he motioned to Mulla Sadiq to hold his peace and to retire. No sooner had he regained the floor of the masjid than the whole company of the assembled worshippers rushed upon him and overwhelmed him with blows. Siyyid Husayn immediately intervened, vigorously dispersed the crowd, and, seizing the hand of Mulla Sadiq, forcibly drew him to

his side. "Withhold your hands," he appealed to the multitude; "leave him in my custody. I will take him [187] to my home, and will closely investigate the matter. A sudden fit of madness may have caused him to utter these words. I will myself examine him. If I find that his utterances are premeditated and that he himself firmly believes in the things which he has declared, I will, with my own hands, inflict upon him the punishment imposed by the law of Islam."

By this solemn assurance, Mulla Sadiq was delivered from the savage attacks of his assailants. Divested of his aba15 and turban, deprived of his sandals and staff, bruised and shaken by the injuries he had received, he was entrusted to the care of Siyyid Husayn's attendants, who, as they forced their passage among the crowd, succeeded eventually in conducting him to the home of their master.

Mulla Yusuf-i-Ardibili, likewise, was subjected in those days to a persecution fiercer and more determined than the savage onslaught which the people of Yazd had directed against Mulla Sadiq. But for the intervention of Mirza Ahmad and the assistance of his uncle, he would have fallen a victim to the wrath of a ferocious enemy.

When Mulla Sadiq and Mulla Yusuf-i-Ardibili arrived at Kirman, they again had to submit to similar indignities and to suffer similar afflictions at the hands of Haji Mirza Karim Khan and his associates.16 Haji Siyyid Javad's persistent exertions freed them eventually from the grasp of their persecutors, and enabled them to proceed to Khurasan.

Though hunted and harassed by their foes, the Bab's immediate disciples, together with their companions in different parts of Persia, were undeterred by such criminal acts [188] from the accomplishment of their task. Unswerving in their purpose and immovable in their convictions, they continued to battle with the dark forces that assailed them every step of their path. By their unstinted devotion and unexampled fortitude, they were able to demonstrate to many of their countrymen the ennobling influence of the Faith they had arisen to champion.

While Vahid17 was still in Shiraz, Haji Siyyid Javad-i-Karbila'i18 arrived and was introduced by Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali into the presence of the Bab. In a Tablet which He addressed to Vahid and Haji Siyyid Javad, the Bab extolled the firmness of their faith and stressed the unalterable character of their devotion. The latter had met and known the Bab before the declaration of His Mission, and had been a fervent admirer of those extraordinary traits of character which had distinguished Him ever since His childhood. At a later time, he met Baha'u'llah in Baghdad and became the recipient of His special favour. When, a few years afterwards, Baha'u'llah was exiled to Adrianople, he, already much advanced in years, returned to Persia, tarried awhile in the province of Iraq, and thence proceeded to Khurasan. His kindly disposition, extreme forbearance, and unaffected simplicity earned him the appellation of the Siyyid-i-Nur.19

Haji Siyyid Javad, one day, while crossing a street in Tihran, suddenly saw the

Shah as he was passing on horseback. Undisturbed by the presence of his sovereign, he calmly approached and greeted him. His venerable figure and dignity of bearing pleased the Shah immensely. He acknowledged his salute and invited him to come and see him. Such was the reception accorded him that the courtiers of the Shah were moved with envy. "Does not your Imperial Majesty realise," they protested, "that this Haji [189] Siyyid Javad is none other than the man who, even prior to the declaration of the Siyyid-i-Bab, had proclaimed himself a Babi, and had pledged his undying loyalty to his person?" The Shah, perceiving the malice which actuated their accusation, was sorely displeased, and rebuked them for their temerity and low-mindedness. "How strange!" he is reported to have exclaimed; "whoever is distinguished by the uprightness of his conduct and the courtesy of his manners, my people forthwith denounce him as a Babi and regard him as an object worthy of my condemnation!"

Haji Siyyid Javad spent the last days of his life in Kirman and remained until his last hour a staunch supporter of the Faith. He never wavered in his convictions nor relaxed in his unsparing endeavours for the diffusion of the Cause.

Shaykh Sultan-i-Karbila'i, whose ancestors ranked among the leading ulamas of Karbila, and who himself had been a firm supporter and intimate companion of Siyyid Kazim, was also among those who, in those days, had met the Bab in Shiraz. It was he who, at a later time, proceeded to Sulaymaniyyih in search of Baha'u'llah, and whose daughter was subsequently given in marriage to Aqay-i-Kalim. When he arrived at Shiraz, he was accompanied by Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunuzi, to whom we have referred in the early pages of this narrative. To him the Bab assigned the task of transcribing, in collaboration with Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim, the Tablets which He had lately revealed. Shaykh Sultan, who had been too ill, at the time of his arrival, to meet the Bab, received one night, while still on his sick-bed, a message from his [190] Beloved, informing him that at about two hours after sunset He would Himself visit him. That night the Ethiopian servant, who was acting as lantern-bearer to his Master, was instructed to walk in advance at a distance which would keep away the attention of the people from Him, and to extinguish the lantern as soon as he reached his destination.

I have heard Shaykh Sultan himself describe that nocturnal visit: "The Bab, who had bidden me extinguish the lamp in my room ere He arrived, came straight to my bedside. In the midst of the darkness which enveloped us, I was holding fast to the hem of His garment and was imploring Him: 'Fulfil my desire, O Beloved of my heart, and allow me to sacrifice myself for Thee; for no one else except Thee is able to confer upon me this favour.' 'O Shaykh!' the Bab replied, 'I too yearn to immolate Myself upon the altar of sacrifice. It behoves us both to cling to the garment of the Best-Beloved and to seek from Him the joy and glory of martyrdom in His path. Rest assured I will, in your behalf, supplicate the Almighty to enable you to attain His presence. Remember Me on that Day, a Day such as the world has never seen before.' As the hour of parting approached, he placed in my hand a gift which He asked me to expend for myself. I tried to

refuse; but He begged me to accept it. Finally I acceded to His wish; whereupon He arose and departed.

"The allusion of the Bab that night to His 'Best-Beloved' excited my wonder and curiosity. In the years that followed, I oftentimes believed that the one to whom the Bab had referred was none other than Tahirih. I even imagined Siyyid-i-'Uluvv to be that person. I was sorely perplexed, and knew not how to unravel this mystery. When I reached Karbila and attained the presence of Baha'u'llah, I became firmly convinced that He alone could claim such affection from the Bab, that He, and only He, could be worthy of such adoration."

The second Naw-Ruz after the declaration of the Bab's Mission, which fell on the twenty-first day of the month of Rabi'u'l-Avval, in the year 1262 A.H.,20 found the Bab still in Shiraz enjoying, under circumstances of comparative tranquillity and ease, the blessings of undisturbed association [191] with His family and kindred. Quietly and unceremoniously, He celebrated the festival of Naw-Ruz in His own home, and, in accordance with His invariable custom, bountifully conferred upon both His mother and His wife the marks of His affection and favour. By the wisdom of His counsels and the tenderness of His love, He cheered their hearts and dispelled their apprehensions. He bequeathed to them all His possessions and transferred to their names the title to His property. In a document which He Himself wrote and signed, He directed that His house and its furniture, as well as the rest of His estate, should be regarded as the exclusive property of His mother and His wife; and that upon the death of the former, her share of the property should revert to His wife.

The mother of the Bab failed at first to realise the significance of the Mission proclaimed by her Son. She remained for a time unaware of the magnitude of the forces latent in His Revelation. As she approached the end of her life, however, she was able to perceive the inestimable quality of that Treasure which she had conceived and given to the world. It was Baha'u'llah who eventually enabled her to discover the value of that hidden Treasure which had lain for so many years concealed from her eyes. She was living in Iraq, where she hoped to spend the remaining days of her life, when Baha'u'llah instructed two of His devoted followers, Haji Siyyid Javad-i-Karbila'i and the wife of Haji 'Abdu'l-Majid-i-Shirazi, both of whom were already intimately acquainted with her, to instruct her in the principles of the Faith. She acknowledged the truth of the Cause and remained, until the closing years of the thirteenth century A.H.,21 when she departed this life, fully aware of the bountiful gifts which the Almighty had chosen to confer upon her.

The wife of the Bab, unlike His mother, perceived at the earliest dawn of His Revelation the glory and uniqueness of His Mission and felt from the very beginning the intensity of its force. No one except Tahirih, among the women of her generation, surpassed her in the spontaneous character of her devotion nor excelled the fervor of her faith. To her the Bab confided the secret of His future sufferings, and unfolded [192] to her eyes the significance of the events that were to transpire in His Day. He bade her not to divulge this secret to His mother and counselled her to be patient and resigned to the will

of God. He entrusted her with a special prayer, revealed and written by Himself, the reading of which, He assured her, would remove her difficulties and lighten the burden of her woes. "In the hour of your perplexity," He directed her, "recite this prayer ere you go to sleep. I Myself will appear to you and will banish your anxiety." Faithful to His advice, every time she turned to Him in prayer, the light of His unfailing guidance illumined her path and resolved her problems.22

After the Bab had settled the affairs of His household and provided for the future maintenance of both His mother and His wife, He transferred His residence from His own home to that of Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali. There He awaited the approaching hour of His sufferings. He knew that the afflictions which were in store for Him could no longer be delayed, that He was soon to be caught in a whirlwind of adversity which would carry Him swiftly to the field of martyrdom, the crowning object of His life. He bade those of His disciples who had settled in Shiraz, among whom were Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim and Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunuzi, to proceed to Isfahan and there await His further instructions. Siyyid Husayn-i-Yazdi,

[193] one of the Letters of the Living, who had recently arrived at Shiraz, was likewise instructed to proceed to Isfahan and to join the company of his fellow-disciples in that city.

Meanwhile Husayn Khan, the governor of Fars, was bending every effort to involve the Bab in fresh embarrassments and to degrade Him still further in the eyes of the public. The smouldering fire of his hostility was fanned to flame by the knowledge that the Bab was allowed to pursue unmolested the course of His activities, that He was still able to associate with certain of His companions, and that He continued to enjoy the benefits of unrestrained fellowship with His family and kindred.23 By the aid of his secret agents, he succeeded in obtaining accurate information regarding [194] the character and influence of the Movement which the Bab had initiated. He had secretly watched His movements, ascertained the degree of enthusiasm which He had aroused, and scrutinised the motives, the conduct, and the number of those who had embraced His Cause.

One night there came to Husayn Khan the chief of his emissaries with the report that the number of those who were crowding to see the Bab had assumed such proportions as to necessitate immediate action on the part of those whose function it was to guard the security of the city. "The eager crowd that gathers every night to visit the Bab," he remarked, "surpasses in number the multitude of people that throngs every day before the gates of the seat of your government. Among them are to be seen men celebrated alike for their exalted rank and extensive learning.24 Such are the tact and lavish generosity which his maternal uncle displays in his attitude towards the officials of your government that no one among your subordinates is inclined to acquaint you with the reality of the situation. If you would permit me, I will, with the aid of a number of your attendants, surprise the Bab at the hour of midnight and will deliver, handcuffed, into your hands certain of his associates who will

enlighten you concerning his activities, and who will confirm the truth of my statements." Husayn Khan refused to comply with his wish. "I can tell better than [195] you," was his answer, "what the interests of the State require. Watch me from a distance; I shall know how to deal with him."

That very moment, the governor summoned 'Abdu'l-Hamid Khan, the chief constable of the city. "Proceed immediately," he commanded him, "to the house of Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali. Quietly and unobserved, scale the wall and ascend to the roof, and from there suddenly enter his home. Arrest the Siyyid-i-Bab immediately, and conduct him to this place together with any of the visitors who may be present with him at that time. Confiscate whatever books and documents you are able to find in that house. As to Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, it is my intention to impose upon him, the following day, the penalty for having failed to redeem his promise. I swear by the imperial diadem of Muhammad Shah that this very night I shall have the Siyyid-i-Bab executed together with his wretched companions. Their ignominious death will quench the flame they have kindled, and will awaken every would-be follower of that creed to the danger that awaits every disturber of the peace of this realm. By this act I shall have extirpated a heresy the continuance of which constitutes the gravest menace to the interests of the State."

'Abdu'l-Hamid Khan retired to execute his task.

He, together with his assistants, broke into the house of Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali25 and found the Bab in the company of His maternal uncle and a certain Siyyid Kazim-i-Zanjani, who was later martyred in Mazindaran, and whose brother, Siyyid Murtada, was one of the Seven Martyrs of Tihran.

He immediately arrested them, collected whatever documents he could find, ordered Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali to remain in his house, and conducted the rest to the seat of government.

The Bab, undaunted and self-possessed, was heard to repeat this verse of the Qur'an: "That with which they are threatened is for the morning.

Is not the morning near?"

No sooner had the chief constable reached the marketplace than he discovered, to his amazement, that the people of the city were fleeing from every side in consternation, as if overtaken by an appalling calamity.

He was struck [196] with horror when he witnessed the long train of coffins being hurriedly transported through the streets, each followed by a procession of men and women loudly uttering shrieks of agony and pain.

This sudden tumult, the lamentations, the affrighted countenances, the imprecations of the multitude distressed and bewildered him.

He enquired as to the reason. "This very night," he was told, "a plague26 of exceptional virulence has broken out.

We are smitten by its devastating power.

Already since the hour of midnight it has extinguished the lives of over a hundred people.

Alarm and despair reign in every house.

The people are abandoning their homes, and in their plight are invoking the aid of the Almighty."27

'Abdu'l-Hamid Khan, terrified by this dreadful intelligence, ran to the home of Husayn Khan. An old man who guarded his house and was acting as door-keeper informed him that the house of his master was deserted, that the ravages of the pestilence had devastated his home and afflicted the members of his household. "Two of his Ethiopian maids," he was told, "and a man-servant have already fallen victims to this scourge, and members of his own family are now dangerously ill. In his despair, my master has abandoned his home and, leaving the dead unburied, has fled with the rest of his family to the Bagh-i-Takht."28

'Abdu'l-Hamid Khan decided to conduct the Bab to his own home and keep Him in his custody pending instructions from the governor. As he was approaching his house, he was struck by the sound of weeping and wailing of the members of his household. His son had been attacked by the plague and was hovering on the brink of death. In his despair, he threw himself at the feet of the Bab and tearfully implored Him to save the life of his son. He begged Him to forgive his past transgressions and misdeeds. "I adjure you," he entreated the Bab as he clung to the hem of His garment, "by Him who has elevated you to this exalted [197] position, to intercede in my behalf and to offer a prayer for the recovery of my son. Suffer not that he, in the prime of youth, be taken away from me. Punish him not for the guilt which his father has committed. I repent of what I have done, and at this moment resign my post. I solemnly pledge my word that never again will I accept such a position even though I perish of hunger."

The Bab, who was in the act of performing His ablutions and was preparing to offer the prayer of dawn, directed him to take some of the water with which He was washing His face to his son and request him to drink it. This He said would save his life.

No sooner had 'Abdu'l-Hamid Khan witnessed the signs of the recovery of his son than he wrote a letter to the governor in which he acquainted him with the whole situation and begged him to cease his attacks on the Bab. "Have pity on yourself," he wrote him, "as well as on those whom Providence has committed to your care. Should the fury of this plague continue its fatal course, no one in this city, I fear, will by the end of this day have survived the horror of its attack." Husayn Khan replied that the Bab should be immediately released and given freedom to go wherever He might please.29

As soon as an account of these happenings reached Tihran and was brought to the attention of the Shah, an imperial edict dismissing Husayn Khan from office was issued and sent to Shiraz. From the day of his dismissal, that shameless tyrant fell a victim to countless misfortunes, and was in the end unable to earn even

his daily bread. No one seemed willing or able to save him from his evil plight. When, at a later time, Baha'u'llah had been banished to Baghdad, Husayn Khan sent Him a letter in which he expressed repentance and promised to atone for his past misdeeds on condition that he should regain his former position. Baha'u'llah refused to answer him. Sunk in misery and shame, he languished until his death.

The Bab, who was staying at the home of 'Abdu'l-Hamid Khan, sent Siyyid Kazim to request Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali to [198] come and see Him. He informed His uncle of His intended departure from Shiraz, entrusted both His mother and His wife to his care, and charged him to convey to each the expression of His affection and the assurance of God's unfailing assistance. "Wherever they may be," He told His uncle, as He bade him farewell, "God's all-encompassing love and protection will surround them. I will again meet you amid the mountains of Adhirbayjan, from whence I will send you forth to obtain the crown of martyrdom. I Myself will follow you, together with one of My loyal disciples, and will join you in the realm of eternity."

FOOTNOTES

9.1. "Babism had many adepts in all classes of society, and many among them were of important standing; great lords, members of the clergy, military men and merchants had accepted this doctrine." (Journal Asiatique, 1866, tome 8, p. 251.)

9.2. Refer to "Pedigree of the Qajar Dynasty" at the beginning of the book.

9.3. Concerning him, 'Abdu'l-Baha has written the following: "This remarkable man, this precious soul, had committed to memory no less than thirty thousand traditions, and was highly esteemed and admired by all classes of people.

He had achieved universal renown in Persia, and his authority and erudition were widely and fully recognized." (From manuscript relating to martyrdoms in Persia.) "This personage was, as his name indicates, born at Darab near Shiraz; his father, Siyyid Ja'far, surnamed Kashfi, was one of the greatest and most celebrated ulamas of that period.

His high moral character, his righteous ways had attracted to him universal esteem and consideration.

His science had won for him the glorious name of Kashfi, that is to say, one who discovers and explains the divine secrets.

Brought up by him, his son was not slow to equal him in every way and he enjoyed the public favor bestowed on his father.

When he went to Tihran, he was preceded by his fame and popularity.

He became the regular guest of Prince Tahmasp Mirza, Mu'ayyadu'd-Dawlih, grandson of Fath-'Ali Shah by his father Muhammad-'Ali Mirza.

The government itself paid homage to his science and to his merit and he was consulted more than once in trying circumstances.

It was of him that Muhammad Shahet Haji Mirza Aqasi thought when they wished to find an honest emissary whose faithfulness could not be questioned." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p.

233.) "While these events were taking place in the north of Persia, the central and southern provinces were deeply roused by the fiery eloquence of the missionaries of the new doctrine.

The people, light, credulous, ignorant, superstitious in the extreme, were struck dumb by the incessant miracles which they heard related every moment; the anxious priests, feeling their flock quivering with impatience and ready to escape their control, redoubled their slanders and infamous imputations; the grossest lies, the most bloody fictions were spread among the bewildered populace, torn between horror and admiration....

Siyyid Ja'far was unacquainted with the doctrine of the Shaykhis as he was with those of Mulla Sadra.

Nevertheless, his burning zeal and his ardent imagination had carried him, towards the end of his life, out of the ways of the orthodox Shiite.

He interpreted the 'hadiths' differently from his colleagues and claimed even, so they said, to have fathomed the seventy inner meanings of the Qur'an.

His son, who was to outdo these oddities, was at that time about thirty-five years of age.

After the completion of his studies, he came to Tihran where he became intimately associated with all that the court counted of great personages and distinguished men.

It was upon him that the choice of His Majesty fell.

He was, therefore, commissioned to go to Shiraz to make contact with the Bab and to inform the central authority, as exactly as possible, of the political consequences which would result from a reform which seemed likely unsettle heart of the country." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

387-388.)

9.4. Qur'an, 108.

9.5. According to the "Kashfu'l-Ghita'" (p.

81), no less than two thousand verses were revealed on that occasion by the

Bab.

The bewildering rapidity of this revelation was no less remarkable in the eyes of Siyyid Yahya than the matchless beauty and profound meaning of the verses contained in that commentary. "Within five hours' time he revealed two thousand verses, that is, he spoke as fast as the scribe could write.

One can judge thereby that, if he had been left free, how many of his works from the beginning of his manifestation until today would have been spread abroad among men." ("Le Bayan Persan," vol.

I, p.

43.) "God had given him such power and such fluency of expression that, if a scribe wrote with the most extreme rapidity during two days and two nights without interruption, he would reveal, out of this mine of eloquence, the equivalent of the Qur'an." (Ibid., vol.

2, p.

132.) "And if anyone should reflect on the appearance of this Tree (the Bab), he will without doubt admit the loftiness of God's religion.

For in one from whose life twenty-four years had passed, who was devoid of those sciences wherein all the learned, who now recites verses after such fashion without thought or hesitation, who in the course of five hours writes a thousand verses of supplications without pause of the pen, who produces commentaries and learned treatises of so high a degree of wisdom and understanding of the Divine Unity that doctors and philosophers confess their inability to compre- hend those passages, there is no doubt that all this is from God." (Bayan, Vahid 2, Bab 1.) ("A Traveler's Narrative,"

Note C, p.

219.)

9.6. "Certainly the fact of writing, currente calamo, a new commentary on a surih whose meaning is so obscure, should deeply astonish the Siyyid Yahya, but that which surprised him even more was to find, in this commentary, the explanation that he, himself, had found in his meditation on these three verses. Thus he found himself in agreement with the Reformer in the interpretation that he had believed himself to be the only one to have reached and that he had not made known to anyone." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 234.)

9.7. "It was a strange circumstance," writes Lady Sheil, "that among those who adopted [the] Bab's doctrine there should have been a large number of mullas, and even mujtahids, who hold a high rank as expounders of the law in the Muhammadan church. Many of these men sealed their faith with their blood." ("Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia," pp. 178-9.)

9.8. According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 8), Siyyid Yahya "wrote without fear or care a detailed account of his observations to Mirza Lutf-'Ali, the

chamberlain, in order that the latter might submit it to the notice of the late king, while he himself journeyed to all parts of Persia, and in every town and station summoned the people from the pulpit-tops in such wise that other learned doctors decided that he must be mad, accounting it a sure case of bewitchment."

9.9. His name was Siyyid Ja'far, known as Kashfi, "the Discloser," because of his skill in the interpretation of the Qur'an and the visions which he claimed to have.

9.10. He was styled Hujjatu'l-Islam.

9.11. Literally meaning "The Four Gates," each of whom claimed to be an intermediary between the absent Imam and his followers.

9.12. He was an Akhbari. For an account of the Akhbaris, see Gobineau's "Les Religions et Les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 23 et seq.

9.13. "'I met him [Mulla Muhammad-'Ali],' says Mirza Jani, 'in Tihran, in the house of Mahmud Khan, the kalantar, where he was confined because of his devotion to His Holiness. He said: "I was a mulla, so proud and masterful that I would abase myself to no one, not even the late Haji Siyyid Baqir of Rasht, who was regarded as the 'Proof of Islam' and the most learned of doctors. My doctrines being after the Akhbari school, I differed in certain questions with the mass of the clergy. People complained of me, and Muhammad Shah summoned me to Tihran. I came, and he perused my books and informed himself of their purport. I asked him to summon the siyyid [i.e. Siyyid Baqir of Rasht] also, that we might dispute. At first he intended to do so, but afterwards, having considered the mischief which might result, suspended the proposed discussion. To be brief, notwithstanding all this self-sufficiency, as soon as news of the Manifestation of His Holiness reached me, and I had perused a small page of the verses of that Point of the Furqan, I became as one beside himself, and involuntarily, yet with full option, confessed the truth of His claim, and became His devoted slave; for I beheld in Him the most noble of the Prophet's miracles, and, had I rejected it, I should have rejected the truth of the religion of Islam.'"" (Haji Mirza Jani's History: Appendix 2 of "Tarikh-i-Jadid," pp. 349-50.)

9.14. A similar statement is reported in the "Kashfu'l-Ghita'" (p. 227). Such a statement, the author declares, was made to him by several residents of the province of Mazindaran.

9.15. Refer to Glossary.

9.16. "A bitter struggle broke out between the Muqaddas and Karim Khan who, as it is known, had taken the rank of chief of the Shaykhi sect, after the death of Kazim. The discussion took place in the presence of many people and Karim challenged his opponent to prove the truth of the mission of the Bab. 'If you succeed,' he said to him, 'I will be converted and my pupils with me; but if you fail, I shall have it proclaimed in the bazaars: "Behold the one who tramples under foot the Holy Law of Islam!"' 'I know who you are, Karim,'

replied Muqaddas to him. 'Do you not remember your Master Siyyid Kazim and that which he told you: "Dog, do you not wish that I should die that, after me, may appear the absolute truth?" Witness how today, urged on by your passion for riches and for glory, you lie to yourself!' "Begun in this vein, the discussion was bound to be brief. Instantly, the pupils of Karim drew their knives and threw themselves upon him who was insulting their chief. Fortunately, the governor of the city interposed; Muqaddas arrested and brought to his house where he kept him for a while and, when the excitement had subsided, he sent him away by night, escorted for several miles by ten mounted men." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp. 228-229.)

9.17. Title given by the Bab to Siyyid Yahyay-i-Darabi.

9.18. The remarkable circumstances attending the conversion of Haji Siyyid Javad-i-Karbila'i are fully related in the "Kashfu'l-Ghita'" (pp. 70-77), and reference is made to a significant Tablet revealed to him by Baha'u'llah (p. 63), in which the importance of the Kitab-i-Aqdas is fully stressed, and the necessity of exercising the utmost caution and moderation in the application and execution of its precepts emphasised. The text of this Tablet is found on pp. 64-70 of the same book. The following passage of the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih" refers to the conversion of Haji Siyyid Javad: "Aqa Siyyid Javad-i-Karbila'i a dit qu'avant la manifestation, un indien lui avait ecrit le nom de celui qui serait manifeste." ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," traduction par A. L. M. Nicolas, p. 59.)

9.19. Literally meaning "radiant siyyid."

9.20. 1846 A.D.

9.21. The thirteenth century A.H. ended in October, 1882 A.D.

9.22. "The Bab's widow survived till A.H. 1300, only six years ago. She was the sister of my friend's maternal grandfather. The above particulars are derived from an old lady of the same family, so that there is every reason to regard them as reliable." (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1889, p. 993.)

9.23. "Meanwhile the turmoil, the intense discussions, the scandal continued in Shiraz, so much so that, annoyed by all this uproar and fearful of the outcome, Haji Mirza Aqasi ordered Husayn Khan Nizamu'd-Dawlih to be done with the Reformer and to have him killed immediately and secretly." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 235.)

9.24. "Extremely irritated, discontented and worried, the Mullas of Fars, unable to foresee the heights that popular indignation against them might reach were not the only ones to be perplexed.

The authorities of the town and of the province understood only too well that the people, who were under their care but who were never very much under their control, this time were quite independent of it.

The men of Shiraz, superficial, mockers, noisome, quarrelsome, rebellious, insolent in the extreme, perfectly indifferent toward the Qajar dynasty, were

never easy to govern and their administrators often passed wearisome days.

What then would be the position of these administrators if the real chief of the city and of the country, the arbiter of their thoughts, their idol, were to be a young man who, undaunted, with no ties whatsoever, and no love of personal gain, made a pedestal of his independence and took advantage of it by impudently and publicly attacking every day all that which, until now, had been considered as strong and respected in the city? "In truth, the court, the government and its policies had not as yet been the object of any of the violent denunciations of the Innovator, but, in view of the fact that he was so rigid in his habits, so unrelenting against intellectual dishonesty and the plundering practices of the clergy, it was unlikely that he would approve the same rapaciousness so flagrant in the public officials.

One could well believe that the day when they would fall under his scrutiny, he would not fail to see and violently condemn the abuses which could no longer be concealed." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp.

122-123.)

9.25. September 23,1845 A.D. See "Tarikh-i-Jadid," p. 204.

9.26. Outbreak of cholera.

9.27. The Bab refers to this incident in the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih" in the following terms: "Recall the first days of the Manifestation, how many people died of cholera! That was one of the wonders of the Manifestation yet no one understood it. During four years the scourge raged among the Muhammadan Shiites without anyone grasping its true significance." ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," translated by A. L. M. Nicolas, pp. 61-62.)

9.28. A garden in the outskirts of Shiraz.

9.29. According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 11), "Husayn Khan released the Bab on condition of his quitting the city."

CHAPTER X
THE BAB'S SOJOURN IN ISFAHAN

[199] The summer of the year 1262 A.H.1 was drawing to a close when the Bab bade His last farewell to His native city of Shiraz, and proceeded to Isfahan. Siyyid Kazim-i-Zanjani accompanied Him on that journey. As He approached the outskirts of the city, He wrote a letter to the governor of the province, Manuchihr Khan, the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih,2 in which He requested him to signify his wish as to the place where He could dwell. The letter, which He entrusted to Siyyid Kazim, was expressive of such courtesy and revealed such exquisite penmanship that the Mu'tamid was moved to instruct the Sultanu'l-'Ulama, the Imam-Jum'ih of Isfahan,3 the foremost ecclesiastical authority of that province, to receive the Bab in his own home and to accord Him a kindly and generous [200] reception. In addition to his message, the governor sent the Imam-Jum'ih the letter he had received from the Bab. The Sultanu'l-'Ulama

accordingly bade his own brother, whose savage cruelty in later years earned him the appellation of

[201] Raqsha'4 from Baha'u'llah, to proceed with a number of his favourite companions to meet and escort the expected Visitor to the gate of the city. As the Bab approached, the Imam-Jum'ih went out to welcome Him in person, and conducted Him ceremoniously to his house.

Such were the honours accorded to the Bab in those days that when, on a certain Friday, He was returning from the public bath to the house, a multitude of people were seen eagerly clamouring for the water which He had used for His ablutions. His fervent admirers firmly believed in its unfailng virtue and power to heal their sicknesses and ailments. The Imam-Jum'ih himself had, from the very first night, become so enamoured with Him who was the object of such devotion, that, assuming the functions of an attendant, he undertook to minister to the needs and wants of his beloved Guest. Seizing the ewer from the hand of the chief steward and utterly ignoring the customary dignity of his rank, he proceeded to pour out the water over the hands of the Bab.

One night, after supper, the Imam-Jum'ih, whose curiosity had been excited by the extraordinary traits of character which his youthful Guest had revealed, ventured to request Him to reveal a commentary on the Surih of Va'l-'Asr.5 His request was readily granted.

Calling for pen and paper, the Bab, with astonishing rapidity and without the least premeditation, began to reveal, in the presence of His host, a most illuminating interpretation of the aforementioned Surih.

It was nearing midnight when the Bab found Himself engaged in the exposition of the manifold implications involved in the first letter of that Surih.

That letter, the letter vav, upon which Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i had already laid such emphasis in his writings, symbolised for the Bab the advent of a new cycle of Divine Revelation, and has since been alluded to by Baha'u'llah in the "Kitab-i-Aqdas" in such passages as "the mastery of the Great Reversal" and "the Sign of the Sovereign."

The Bab soon after began to chant, in the presence of His host and his companions, the homily with which He had prefaced His commentary on the Surih.

Those words of power confounded His hearers with wonder. [202] They seemed as if bewitched by the magic of His voice.

Instinctively they started to their feet and, together with the Imam-Jum'ih, reverently kissed the hem of His garment.

Mulla Muhammad-Taqiy-i-Harati, an eminent mujtahid, broke out into a sudden expression of exultation and praise. "Peerless and unique," he exclaimed, "as are the words which have streamed from this pen, to be able to reveal, within so short a time and in so legible a writing, so great a number of verses as to equal a fourth, nay a third, of the Qur'an, is in itself an achievement such as no mortal, without the intervention of God, could hope to perform.

Neither the cleaving of the moon nor the quickening of the pebbles of the sea can compare with so mighty an act."

As the Bab's fame was being gradually diffused over the entire city of Isfahan, an unceasing stream of visitors flowed from every quarter to the house of the Imam-Jum'ih: a few to satisfy their curiosity, others to obtain a deeper understanding of the fundamental verities of His Faith, and still others to seek the remedy for their ills and sufferings. The Mu'tamid himself came one day to visit the Bab and, while seated in the midst of an assemblage of the most brilliant and accomplished divines of Isfahan, requested Him to expound the nature and demonstrate the validity of the Nubuvvat-i-Khassih.6 He had previously, in that same gathering, called upon those who were present to adduce such proofs and evidences in support of this fundamental article of their Faith as would constitute an unanswerable testimony for those who were inclined to repudiate its truth. No one, however, seemed capable of responding to his invitation. "Which do you prefer," asked the Bab, "a verbal or a written answer to your question?" "A written reply," he answered, "not only would please those who are present at this meeting, but would edify and instruct both the present and future generations."

The Bab instantly took up His pen and began to write. In less than two hours, He had filled about fifty pages with a most refreshing and circumstantial enquiry into the origin, the character, and the pervasive influence of Islam. The originality of His dissertation, the vigour and vividness of [203] its style, the accuracy of its minutest details, invested His treatment of that noble theme with an excellence which no one among those who were present on that occasion could have failed to perceive. With masterly insight, He linked the central idea in the concluding passages of this exposition with the advent of the promised Qa'im and the expected "Return" of the Imam Husayn.7 He argued with such force

[204] and courage that those who heard Him recite its verses were astounded by the magnitude of His revelation. No one dared to insinuate the slightest objection—much less, openly to challenge His statements. The Mu'tamid could not help giving vent to his enthusiasm and joy. "Hear me!" he exclaimed. "Members of this revered assembly, I take you as my witnesses. Never until this day have I in my heart been firmly convinced of the truth of Islam. I can henceforth, thanks to this exposition penned by this Youth, declare myself a firm believer in the Faith proclaimed by the Apostle of God. I solemnly testify to my belief in the reality of the superhuman power with which this Youth is endowed, a power which no amount of learning can ever impart." With these words he brought the meeting to an end.

The growing popularity of the Bab aroused the resentment of the ecclesiastical authorities of Isfahan, who viewed with concern and envy the ascendancy which an unlearned Youth was slowly acquiring over the thoughts and consciences of their followers.

They firmly believed that unless they rose to stem the tide of popular

enthusiasm, the very foundations of their existence would be undermined.

A few of the more sagacious among them thought it wise to abstain from acts of direct hostility to either the person or the teachings of the Bab, as such action, they felt, would serve only to enhance His prestige and consolidate His position.

The mischief-makers, however, were busily engaged in disseminating the wildest reports concerning the character and claims of the Bab.

These reports soon reached Tihran and were brought to the attention of Haji Mirza Aqasi, the Grand Vazir of Muhammad Shah.

This haughty and overbearing minister viewed with apprehension the possibility that his sovereign might one day feel inclined to befriend the Bab, an inclination which he felt sure would precipitate his own downfall.

The Haji was, moreover, apprehensive lest the Mu'tamid, who enjoyed the confidence of the Shah, should succeed in arranging an interview between the sovereign and the Bab.

He was well aware that should such an interview take place, the impressionable and tender-hearted Muhammad Shah would be completely won over by the attractiveness and novelty of that creed.

Spurred on by [205] such reflections, he addressed a strongly worded communication to the Imam-Jum'ih, in which he upbraided him for his grave neglect of the obligation imposed upon him to safeguard the interests of Islam. "We have expected you,"

Haji Mirza Aqasi wrote him, "to resist with all your power every cause which conflicts with the best interests of the government and people of this land.

You seem instead to have befriended, nay to have glorified, the author of this obscure and contemptible movement."

He likewise wrote a number of encouraging letters to the ulamas of Isfahan, whom he had previously ignored but upon whom he now lavished his special favours.

The Imam-Jum'ih, while refusing to alter his respectful attitude towards his Guest, was induced by the tone of the message he had received from the Grand Vazir, to instruct his associates to devise such means as would tend to lessen the ever-increasing number of visitors who thronged each day to the presence of the Bab.

Muhammad-Mihdi, surnamed the Safihu'l-'Ulama', son of the late Haji Kalbasi, in his desire to gratify the wish and to earn the esteem of Haji Mirza Aqasi, began to calumniate the Bab from the pulpit in the most unseemly language.

As soon as the Mu'tamid was informed of these developments, he sent a message to the Imam-Jum'ih in which he reminded him of the visit he as governor had paid to the Bab, and extended to him as well as to his Guest an invitation to

his home. The Mu'tamid invited Haji Siyyid Asadu'llah, son of the late Haji Siyyid Muhammad Baqir-i-Rashti, Haji Muhammad-Ja'far-i-Abadiyi, Muhammad-Mihdi, Mirza Hasan-i-Nuri, and a few others to be present at that meeting. Haji Siyyid Asadu'llah refused the invitation and endeavoured to dissuade those who had been invited, from participating in that gathering. "I have sought to excuse myself," he informed them, "and I would most certainly urge you to do the same. I regard it as most unwise of you to meet the Siyyid-i-Bab face to face. He will, no doubt, reassert his claim and will, in support of his argument, adduce whatever proof you may desire him to give, and, without the least hesitation, will reveal as a testimony to the truth he bears, verses of such a number as would equal half the Qur'an. In the end he will challenge you in these words: 'Produce likewise, [206] if ye are men of truth.' We can in no wise successfully resist him. If we disdain to answer him, our impotence will have been exposed. If we, on the other hand, submit to his claim, we shall not only be forfeiting our own reputation, our own prerogatives and rights, but will have committed

[207] ourselves to acknowledge any further claims that he may feel inclined to make in the future."

Haji Muhammad-Ja'far heeded this counsel and refused to accept the invitation of the governor.

Muhammad Mihdi, Mirza Hasan-i-Nuri, and a few others who disdained such advice, presented themselves at the appointed hour at the home of the Mu'tamid.

At the invitation of the host, Mirza Hasan, a noted Platonist, requested the Bab to elucidate certain abstruse philosophical doctrines connected with the 'Arshiyyih of Mulla Sadra,8 the meaning of which only a few had been able to unravel.9 In simple and unconventional language, the Bab replied to each of his questions.

Mirza Hasan, though unable to apprehend the meaning of the answers which he had received, realised how inferior was the learning of the so-called exponents of the Platonic and the Aristotelian schools of thought of his day to the knowledge displayed by that Youth.

Muhammad Mihdi ventured in his turn to question the Bab regarding certain aspects of the Islamic law.

Dissatisfied with the explanation he received, he began to contend idly with the Bab.

He was soon silenced by the Mu'tamid, who, cutting short his conversation, turned to an attendant and, bidding him light the lantern, gave the order that Muhammad Mihdi be immediately conducted to his home.

The Mu'tamid subsequently [208] confided his apprehensions to the Imam-Jum'ih. "I fear the machinations of the enemies of the Siyyid-i-Bab," he told him. "The Shah has summoned Him to Tihran.

I am commanded to arrange for His departure.

I deem it more advisable for Him to stay in my home until such time as He can leave this city."

The Imam-Jum'ih acceded to his request and returned alone to his house.

The Bab had tarried forty days at the residence of the Imam-Jum'ih. While He was still there, a certain Mulla Muhammad-Taqiy-i-Harati, who was privileged to meet the Bab every day, undertook, with His consent, to translate one of His works, entitled Risaliy-i-Furu'-i-'Adliyyih, from the original Arabic into Persian. The service he thereby rendered to the Persian believers was marred, however, by his subsequent behaviour. Fear suddenly seized him, and he was induced eventually to sever his connection with his fellow-believers.

Ere the Bab had transferred His residence to the house of the Mu'tamid, Mirza Ibrahim, father of the Sultanu'sh-Shuhada' and elder brother of Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Nahri, to whom we have already referred, invited the Bab to his home one night.

Mirza Ibrahim was a friend of the Imam-Jum'ih, was intimately associated with him, and controlled the management of all his affairs.

The banquet which was spread for the Bab that night was one of unsurpassed magnificence.

It was commonly observed that neither the officials nor the notables of the city had offered a feast of such magnitude and splendour.

The Sultanu'sh-Shuhada' and his brother, the Mahbubu'sh-Shuhada', who were lads of nine and eleven, respectively, served at that banquet and received special attention from the Bab.

That night, during dinner, Mirza Ibrahim turned to his Guest and said: "My brother, Mirza Muhammad-'Ali, has no child.

I beg You to intercede in his behalf and to grant his heart's desire."

The Bab took a portion of the food with which He had been served, placed it with His own hands on a platter, and handed it to His host, asking him to take it to Mirza Muhammad-'Ali and his wife. "Let them both partake of this,"

He said; "their wish will be fulfilled."

By virtue of that portion which the Bab had chosen to bestow upon her, the wife of Mirza [209] Muhammad-'Ali conceived and in due time gave birth to a girl, who eventually was joined in wedlock with the Most Great Branch,10 a union that came to be regarded as the consummation of the hopes entertained by her parents.

The high honours accorded to the Bab served further to inflame the hostility of the ulamas of Isfahan. With feelings of dismay, they beheld on every side evidences of His all-pervasive influence invading the stronghold of orthodoxy and subverting their foundations. They summoned a gathering, at which they issued a written document, signed and sealed by all the ecclesiastical leaders

of the city, condemning the Bab to death.11 They all concurred in this condemnation with the exception of Haji Siyyid Asadu'llah and Haji Muhammad-Ja'far-i-Abadiyi, both of whom refused to associate themselves with the contents of so glaringly abusive a document. The Imam-Jum'ih, though declining to endorse the death-warrant of the Bab, was induced, by reason of his extreme cowardice and ambition, to add to that document, in his own handwriting, the following testimony: "I testify that in the course of my association with this youth I have been unable to discover any act that would in any way betray his repudiation of the doctrines of Islam. On the contrary, I have known him as a pious and loyal observer of its precepts. The extravagance of his claims, however, and his disdainful contempt for the things of the world, incline me to believe that he is devoid of reason and judgment."

No sooner had the Mu'tamid been informed of the condemnation pronounced by the ulamas of Isfahan than he determined, by a plan which he himself conceived, to nullify the effects of that cruel verdict. He issued immediate instructions that towards the hour of sunset the Bab, escorted by five hundred horsemen of the governor's own mounted body-guard, should leave the gate of the city and proceed in the direction of Tihran. Imperative orders had been given that at the completion of each farsang12 one hundred of this mounted escort should return directly to Isfahan. [210] To the chief of the last remaining contingent, a man in whom he placed implicit confidence, the Mu'tamid confidentially intimated his desire that at every maydan13 twenty of the

[211] remaining hundred should likewise be ordered by him to return to the city. Of the twenty remaining horsemen, the Mu'tamid directed that ten should be despatched to Ardistan for the purpose of collecting the taxes levied by the government, and that the rest, all of whom should be of his tried and most reliable men, should, by an unfrequented route, bring the Bab back in disguise to Isfahan.14 They were, moreover, instructed so to regulate their march that before dawn of the ensuing day the Bab should have arrived at Isfahan and should have been delivered into his custody. This plan was immediately taken in hand and duly executed. At an unsuspected hour, the Bab re-entered the city, was directly conducted to the private residence of the Mu'tamid, known by the name of 'Imarat-i-Khurshid,15 and was introduced, through a side entrance reserved for the Mu'tamid himself, into his private apartments. The governor waited in person on the Bab, served His meals, and provided whatever was required for His comfort and safety.16

[212] Meanwhile the wildest conjectures obtained currency in the city regarding the journey of the Bab to Tihran, the sufferings which He was made to endure on His way to the capital, the verdict which had been pronounced against Him, and the penalty which He had suffered. These rumours greatly distressed the believers who were residing in Isfahan. The Mu'tamid, who was well aware of their grief and anxiety, interceded with the Bab in their behalf and begged to be allowed to introduce them into His presence. The Bab addressed a few words in His own handwriting to Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim-i-Qazvini, who had taken up his quarters in the madrisih of Nim-Avard, and instructed the Mu'tamid to send it

to him by a trusted messenger. An hour later, Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim was ushered into the presence of the Bab. Of his arrival no one except the Mu'tamid was informed. He received from his Master some of His writings, and was instructed to transcribe them in collaboration with Siyyid Husayn-i-Yazdi and Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunuzi. To these he soon returned, bearing the welcome news of the Bab's well-being and safety. Of all the believers residing in Isfahan, these three alone were allowed to see Him.

One day, while seated with the Bab in his private garden within the courtyard of his house, the Mu'tamid, taking his Guest into his confidence, addressed Him in these words: "The almighty Giver has endowed me with great riches.17 I know not how best to use them.

Now that I have, by the aid of God, been led to recognise this Revelation, it is my ardent desire to consecrate all my possessions to the furtherance of its interests and the spread of its fame.

It is my intention to proceed, by Your leave, to Tihran, and to do my best to win to this Cause Muhammad Shah, whose confidence in me is firm and unshaken.

I am certain that he will eagerly embrace it, and will arise to promote it far and wide.

I will also endeavour to induce the Shah to dismiss the profligate Haji Mirza Aqasi, the folly of whose administration has well-nigh brought this land to the verge of ruin.

Next, I will strive to obtain for You the hand of one of the [213] sisters of the Shah, and will myself undertake the preparation of Your nuptials.

Finally, I hope to be enabled to incline the hearts of the rulers and kings of the earth to this most wondrous Cause and to extirpate every lingering trace of that corrupt ecclesiastical hierarchy that has stained the fair name of Islam." "May God requite you for your noble intentions," the Bab replied. "So lofty a purpose is to Me even more precious than the act itself.

Your days and Mine are numbered, however; they are too short to enable Me to witness, and allow you to achieve, the realisation of your hopes.

Not by the means which you fondly imagine will an almighty Providence accomplish the triumph of His Faith.

Through the poor and lowly of this land, by the blood which these shall have shed in His path, will the omnipotent Sovereign ensure the preservation and consolidate the foundation of His Cause.

That same God will, in the world to come, place upon your head the crown of immortal glory, and will shower upon you His inestimable blessings.

Of the span of your earthly life there remain only three months and nine days, after which you shall, with faith and certitude, hasten to your eternal abode."

The Mu'tamid greatly rejoiced at these words.

Resigned to the will of God, he prepared himself for the departure which the words of the Bab had so clearly foreshadowed.

He wrote his testament, settled his private affairs, and bequeathed whatever he possessed to the Bab.

Immediately after his death, however, his nephew, the rapacious Gurgin Khan, discovered and destroyed his will, seized his property, and contemptuously ignored his wishes.

As the days of his earthly life were drawing to a close, the Mu'tamid increasingly sought the presence of the Bab, and, in his hours of intimate fellowship with Him, obtained a deeper realisation of the spirit which animated His Faith. "As the hour of my departure approaches," he one day told the Bab, "I feel an undefinable joy pervading my soul.

But I am apprehensive for You, I tremble at the thought of being compelled to leave You to the mercy of so ruthless a successor as Gurgin Khan.

He will, no doubt, discover Your presence in this home, and will, I fear, grievously ill-treat You." "Fear not," remonstrated the Bab; "I have [214] committed Myself into the hands of God.

My trust is in Him.

Such is the power which He has bestowed upon Me that if it be My wish, I can convert these very stones into gems of inestimable value, and can instil into the heart of the most wicked criminal the loftiest conceptions of uprightness and duty.

Of My own will have I chosen to be afflicted by My enemies, 'that God might accomplish the thing destined to be done.'"18 As those precious hours flew by, a sense of overpowering devotion, of increased consciousness of nearness to God, filled the heart of the Mu'tamid.

In his eyes the world's pomp and pageantry melted away into insignificance when brought face to face with the eternal realities enshrined in the Revelation of the Bab.

His vision of its glories, its infinite potentialities, its incalculable blessings grew in vividness as he increasingly realised the vanity of earthly ambition and the limitations of human endeavour.

He continued to ponder these thoughts in his heart, until the time when a slight attack of fever, which lasted but one night, suddenly terminated his life.

Serene and confident, he winged his flight to the Great Beyond.19

As the life of the Mu'tamid was approaching its end, the Bab summoned to His presence Siyyid Husayn-i-Yazdi and Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim, acquainted them with the nature of His prediction to His host, and bade them tell the believers who had gathered in the city, to scatter throughout Kashan, Qum, and Tihran, and

await whatever Providence, in His wisdom, might choose to decree.

A few days after the death of the Mu'tamid, a certain person who was aware of the design which he had conceived and carried out for the protection of the Bab, informed his successor, Gurgin Khan,20 of the actual residence of the Bab in the 'Imarat-i-Khurshid, and described to him the honours which his predecessor had lavished upon his Guest in the privacy of his own home. On the receipt of this unexpected intelligence, Gurgin Khan despatched his messenger to Tihran and instructed him to deliver in person the following [215] message to Muhammad Shah: "Four months ago it was generally believed in Isfahan that, in pursuance of your Majesty's imperial summons, the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih, my predecessor, had sent the Siyyid-i-Bab to the seat of your Majesty's government. It has now been disclosed that this same siyyid is actually occupying the 'Imarat-i-Khurshid, the private residence of the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih. It has been ascertained that my predecessor himself extended the hospitality of his home to the Siyyid-i-Bab and sedulously guarded that secret from both the people and the officials of this city. Whatever it pleases your Majesty to decree, I unhesitatingly pledge myself to perform."

The Shah, who was firmly convinced of the loyalty of the Mu'tamid, realised, when he received this message, that the late governor's sincere intention had been to await a favourable occasion when he could arrange a meeting between him and the Bab, and that his sudden death had interfered with the execution of that plan. He issued an imperial mandate summoning the Bab to the capital. In his written message to Gurgin Khan, the Shah commanded him to send the Bab in disguise, in the company of a mounted escort21 headed by Muhammad Big-i-Chaparchi,22 of the sect of the 'Aliyu'llahi, to Tihran; to exercise the utmost consideration towards Him in the course of His journey, and strictly to maintain the secrecy of His departure.23

Gurgin Khan went immediately to the Bab and delivered into His hands the written mandate of the sovereign. He then summoned Muhammad Big, conveyed to him the behests of Muhammad Shah, and ordered him to undertake immediate preparations for the journey. "Beware," he warned him, "lest anyone discover his identity or suspect the nature of your mission. No one but you, not even the members of his escort, should be allowed to recognise him. Should anyone question you concerning him, say that he is [216] a merchant whom we have been instructed to conduct to the capital and of whose identity we are completely ignorant." Soon after midnight, the Bab, in accordance with those instructions, set out from the city and proceeded in the direction of Tihran.

FOOTNOTES

10.1. 1846 A.D.

10.2. "He [Manuchihr Khan] was a man of energy and courage and in 1841 completely crushed the Bakhtiyari tribes, which had risen in rebellion. His vigorous though severe administration secured to the people of Isfahan some little justice." (C. R. Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," p. 487.)

10.3. According to Mirza Abu'l-Fadl (manuscript, p. 66), the name of the Imam-Jum'ih of Isfahan was Mir Siyyid Muhammad, and his title "Sultanu'l-'Ulama'." "The office of Sadru's-Sudur, or chief priest of Safavi times, was abolished by Nadir Shah, and the Imam-Jum'ih of Isfahan is now the principal ecclesiastical dignitary of Persia." (C. R. Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," p. 365.)

10.4. Meaning female serpent.

10.5. Qur'an, 103.

10.6. Muhammad's "Specific Mission."

10.7. Reference to His own Mission and to Baha'u'llah's subsequent Revelation.

10.8. See Note K, "A Traveller's Narrative," and Gobineau, pp. 65-73.

10.9. "Muhammad having grown silent, Mirza Muhammad-Hasan, who followed the philosophical doctrine of Mulla Sadra, questioned the Bab in order to induce him to explain three miracles which it would suffice to relate in order to enlighten the reader.

The first one was the Tiyyu'l-Ard, or the immediate transfer of a human being from one part of the world to another very distant point.

The Shiites are convinced that the third Imam, Javad, had adopted this easy and economical way of traveling.

For example, he betook himself, in the twinkling of an eye, from Medina in Arabia to Tus in Khurasan. "The second miracle was the multiple and simultaneous presence of the same person in many different places. 'Ali was, at the same moment, host to sixty different people. "The third miracle was a problem of cosmography which I submit to our astronomers who will certainly relish it.

It is said that, during the reign of a tyrant, the heavens revolve rapidly, while during that of an Imam they revolve slowly.

First, how could the heavens have two movements and then, what were they doing during the reign of the Umayyads and the Abbassids?

It was the solution of these insanities that they proposed to the Bab! "I shall not dwell on them any longer but I believe I must here make clear the mentality of the learned Moslems of Persia.

And if one should consider that, for nearly one thousand years, the science of Iran rests upon such trash, that men exhaust themselves in continuous research upon such matters, one will easily understand the emptiness and arrogance of all these minds. "Be that as it may, the reunion was interrupted by the announcement of dinner of which each one partook, after which they returned to their respective homes." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

239-240.)

10.10. Reference to Munirih Khanum's marriage with 'Abdu'l-Baha.

10.11. According to Mirza Abu'l-Fadl, about seventy eminent ulamas and notables had set their seal to a document which condemned the Bab as a heretic, and which declared Him to be deserving of the penalty of death.

10.12. Refer to Glossary.

10.13. Maydan: A subdivision of a farsakh. A square or open place.

10.14. According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 13), the Mu'tamid gave secret orders that when the Bab reached Murchih-Khar (the second stage out from Isfahan on the north road, distant about 35 miles therefrom), He should return to Isfahan.

10.15. "Thus this room (in which I find myself) which has neither doors nor definite limits, is today the highest of the dwellings of Paradise, for the Tree of Truth lives herein. It would seem that all the atoms of the room, all sing in one voice, 'In truth, I am God! There is no other God beside Me, the Lord of all things.' And they sing above all the rooms of the earth, even above those adorned with mirrors of gold. If, however, the Tree of Truth abides in one of these ornamented rooms, then the atoms of their mirrors sing that song as did and do the atoms of the mirrors of the Palace Sadri, for in the days of Sad (Isfahan) he abided therein." ("Le Bayan Persan," vol. 1, p. 128.)

10.16. According to "A Traveller's Narrative," p. 13, the Bab remained four months in that house.

10.17. "On the fourth of March, 1847, Monsieur de Bonniere wrote to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of France: 'Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih, governor of Isfahan, has just died leaving a fortune appraised at forty million francs.'" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 242, note 192.)

10.18. Qur'an, 8:42.

10.19. He died, according to E. G. Browne ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note L, p. 277), in the month of Rabi'u'l-Avval of the year 1263 A.H. (Feb.-March, 1847 A.D.).

10.20. According to "A Traveller's Narrative," p. 13, he was the nephew of the Mu'tamid.

10.21. According to "A Traveller's Narrative," p. 14, the members of the escort were Nusayri horsemen. See note 1, p. 14.

10.22. Chaparchi means "courier."

10.23. "The Shah, whimsical and fickle, forgetting that he had, a short time before, ordered the murder of the Reformer, felt the desire of seeing, at last,

the man who aroused such universal interest; he therefore gave the order to Gurgin Khan to send the Bab to him in Tihran." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 242.)

CHAPTER XI
THE BAB'S STAY IN KASHAN

[217] On the eve of the Bab's arrival at Kashan, Haji Mirza Jani, surnamed Parpa, a noted resident of that city, dreamed that he was standing at a late hour in the afternoon at the gate of 'Attar, one of the gates of the city, when his eyes suddenly beheld the Bab on horseback wearing, instead of His customary turban, the kulah1 usually worn by the merchants of Persia. Before Him, as well as behind Him, marched a number of horsemen into whose custody He seemed to have been delivered. As they approached the gate, the Bab saluted him and said: "Haji Mirza Jani, We are to be your Guest for three nights. Prepare yourself to receive Us."

When he awoke, the vividness of his dream convinced him of the reality of his vision. This unexpected apparition constituted in his eyes a providential warning which he felt it his duty to heed and observe. He accordingly set out to prepare his house for the reception of the Visitor, and to provide whatever seemed necessary for His comfort. As soon as he had completed the preliminary arrangements for the banquet which he had decided to offer the Bab that night, Haji Mirza Jani proceeded to the gate of 'Attar, and there waited for the signs of the Bab's expected arrival. At the appointed hour, as he was scanning the horizon, he descried in the distance what seemed to him a company of horsemen [218] approaching the gate of the city. As he hastened to meet them, his eyes recognised the Bab surrounded by His escort, dressed in the same clothes and wearing the same expression as he had seen the night before in his dream. Haji Mirza Jani joyously approached Him and bent to kiss His stirrups. The Bab prevented him, saying: "We are to be your Guest for three nights. To-morrow is the day of Naw-Ruz; we shall celebrate it together in your home." Muhammad Big, who had been riding close to the Bab, thought Him to be

an intimate acquaintance of Haji Mirza Jani.

Turning to him, he said: "I am ready to abide by whatever is the desire of the Siyyid-i-Bab.

I would ask you, however, to obtain the approval of my colleague who shares with me the charge of conducting the Siyyid-i-Bab to Tihran."

Haji Mirza Jani submitted his request and was met with a flat refusal. "I decline your suggestion," he was told. "I have been most emphatically instructed not to allow this youth to enter any city until his arrival at the capital.

I have been particularly commanded to spend the night outside the gate of the city, [219] to break my march at the hour of sunset, and to resume it the next day at the hour of dawn.

I cannot depart from the orders that have been given to me."

This gave rise to a heated altercation which was eventually settled in favour of Muhammad Big, who succeeded in inducing his opponent to deliver the Bab into the custody of Haji Mirza Jani with the express understanding that on the third morning he should safely deliver back his Guest into their hands.

Haji Mirza Jani, who had intended to invite to his home the entire escort of the Bab, was advised by Him to abandon this intention. "No one but you,"

He urged, "should accompany Me to your home."

Haji Mirza Jani requested to be allowed to defray the expense of the horsemen's three days' stay in Kashan. "It is unnecessary," observed the Bab; "but for My will, nothing whatever could have induced them to deliver Me into your hands.

All things lie prisoned within the grasp of His might.

Nothing is impossible to Him.

He removes every difficulty and surmounts every obstacle."

The horsemen were lodged in a caravanserai in the immediate neighbourhood of the gate of the city.

Muhammad Big, following the instructions of the Bab, accompanied Him until they drew near the house of Haji Mirza Jani.

Having ascertained the actual situation of the house, he returned and joined his companions.

The night the Bab arrived at Kashan coincided with the eve preceding the third Naw-Ruz, after the declaration of His Mission, which fell on the second day of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani, in the year 1263 A.H.2 On that same night, Siyyid Husayn-i-Yazdi, who had previously, in accordance with the directions of the Bab, come to Kashan, was invited to the house of Haji Mirza Jani and introduced into the presence of his Master. The Bab was dictating to him a Tablet in honour of His host, when a friend of the latter, a certain Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Baqi, who was noted in Kashan for his learning, arrived. The Bab invited him to enter, permitted him to hear the verses which He was revealing, but refused to disclose His identity. In the concluding passages of the Tablet which He was addressing to Haji Mirza Jani, He prayed in his behalf, supplicated the Almighty to illumine

[221] his heart with the light of Divine knowledge, and to unloose his tongue for the service and proclamation of His Cause. Unschooled and unlettered though he was, Haji Mirza Jani was able, by virtue of this prayer, to impress with his speech even the most accomplished divine of Kashan. He became endowed with such power that he was able to silence every idle pretender who dared to challenge the precepts of his Faith. Even the haughty and imperious Mulla Ja'far-i-Naraqi was unable, despite his consummate eloquence, to resist the force of his argument, and was compelled to acknowledge outwardly the merits of the Cause of his adversary, though at heart he refused to believe in its truth.

Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Baqi sat and listened to the Bab. He heard His voice, watched His movements, looked upon the expression of His face, and noted the words which streamed unceasingly from His lips, and yet failed to be moved by their majesty and power. Wrapt in the veils of his own idle fancy and learning, he was powerless to appreciate the meaning of the utterances of the Bab. He did not even trouble to enquire the name or the character of the Guest into whose presence he had been introduced. Unmoved by the things he had heard and seen, he retired from that presence, unaware of the unique opportunity which, through his apathy, he had irretrievably lost. A few days later, when informed of the name of the Youth whom he had treated with such careless indifference, he was filled with chagrin and remorse. It was too late, however, for him to seek His presence and atone for his conduct, for the Bab had already departed from Kashan. In his grief, he renounced the society of his fellowmen, and led, to the end of his days, a life of unrelieved seclusion.

Among those who were privileged to meet the Bab in the home of Haji Mirza Jani was a man named Mihdi, who was destined at a later time, in the year 1268 A.H.,3 to suffer martyrdom in Tihran. He and a few others were, during those three days, affectionately entertained by Haji Mirza Jani, whose lavish hospitality earned him the praise and commendation of his Master. To even the members of the Bab's escort he extended the same loving-kindness, and, by [222] his liberality and charm of manner, won their lasting gratitude. On the morning of the second day after Naw-Ruz, he, mindful of his pledge, delivered the Prisoner into their hands, and, with a heart overflowing with grief, bade Him a last and touching farewell.

FOOTNOTES

11.1. See Glossary.

11.2. 1847 A.D.

11.3. 1851-2 A.D.

CHAPTER XII
THE BAB'S JOURNEY FROM KASHAN TO TABRIZ

[223] Attended by His escort, the Bab proceeded in the direction of Qum.1 His alluring charm, combined with a compelling dignity and unfailing benevolence, had, by this time, completely disarmed and transformed His guards.

They seemed to have abdicated all their rights and duties and to have resigned themselves to His will and pleasure.

In their eagerness to [224] serve and please Him, they, one day, remarked: "We are strictly forbidden by the government to allow You to enter the city of Qum, and have been ordered to proceed by an unfrequented route directly to Tihran.

We have been particularly directed to keep away from the Haram-i-Ma'sumih,2 that inviolable sanctuary under whose shelter the most notorious criminals are immune from arrest.

We are ready, however, to ignore utterly for Your sake whatever instructions we have received.

If it be Your wish, we shall unhesitatingly conduct You through the streets of Qum and enable You to visit its holy shrine." "'The heart of the true believer is the throne of God,'" observed the Bab. "He who is the ark of salvation and the Almighty's impregnable stronghold is now journeying with you through this wilderness.

I prefer the way of the country rather than to enter this unholy city.

The immaculate one whose remains are interred within this shrine, her brother, and her illustrious ancestors no doubt bewail the plight of this wicked people.

With their lips they pay homage to her; by their acts they heap dishonour upon her name.

Outwardly they serve and reverence her shrine; inwardly they disgrace her dignity."

Such lofty sentiments had instilled such confidence in the hearts of those who accompanied the Bab that had He at any time chosen to turn away suddenly and leave them, no one among His guards would have felt in the least perturbed or would have attempted to pursue Him. Proceeding by a route that skirted the northern end of the city of Qum, they halted at the village of Qumrud, which was owned by a relative of Muhammad Big, and the inhabitants of which all belonged to the sect of the 'Aliyu'llahi. At the invitation of the headman of the village, the Bab tarried one night in that place and was touched by the warmth and spontaneity of the reception which those simple folk had accorded Him. Ere He resumed His journey, He invoked the blessings of [225] the Almighty in their behalf and cheered their hearts with assurances of His appreciation and love.

After a march of two days from that village, they arrived, on the afternoon of the eighth day after Naw-Ruz, at the fortress of Kinar-Gird,3 which lies six farsangs to the south of Tihran. They were planning to reach the capital on the

[226] ensuing day, and had decided to spend the night in the neighbourhood of that fortress, when a messenger unexpectedly arrived from Tihran, bearing a written order from Haji Mirza Aqasi to Muhammad Big.

That message instructed him to proceed immediately with the Bab to the village of Kulayn,4 where Shaykh-i-Kulayni, Muhammad-ibn-i-Ya'qub, the author of the Usul-i-Kafi, who was born in that place, had been laid to rest with his father, and whose shrines are greatly [227] honoured by the people of that neighbourhood.5 Muhammad Big was commanded, in view of the unsuitability of the houses in that village, to pitch a special tent for the Bab and keep the escort in its neighbourhood pending the receipt of further instructions.

On the morning of the ninth day after Naw-Ruz, the eleventh day of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani, in the year 1263 A.H.,6 in the immediate vicinity of that

village, which belonged to Haji Mirza Aqasi, a tent which had served for his own use whenever he visited that place was erected for the Bab, on the slopes of a hill pleasantly situated amid wide stretches of orchards and smiling meadows.

The peacefulness of that spot, the luxuriance of its vegetation, and the unceasing murmur of its streams greatly pleased the Bab.

He was joined two days after by Siyyid Husayn-i-Yazdi, Siyyid Hasan, his brother; Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim, and Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunuzi, all of whom were invited to lodge in the immediate surroundings of His tent.

On the fourteenth day of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani,7 the twelfth day after Naw-Ruz, Mulla Mihdiy-i-Khu'i and Mulla Muhammad-Mihdiy-i-Kandi arrived from Tihran.

The latter, who had been closely associated with Baha'u'llah in Tihran, had been commissioned by Him to present to the Bab a sealed letter together with certain gifts which, as soon as they were delivered into His hands, provoked in His soul sentiments of unusual delight.

His face glowed with joy as He overwhelmed the bearer with marks of His gratitude and favour.

That message, received at an hour of uncertainty and suspense, imparted solace and strength to the Bab. It dispelled the gloom that had settled upon His heart, and imbued His soul with the certainty of victory. The sadness which had long lingered upon His face, and which the perils of His captivity had served to aggravate, visibly diminished. He no longer shed those tears of anguish which had streamed so profusely from His eyes ever since the days of His arrest and departure from Shiraz. The cry "Beloved, My Well-Beloved," [228] which in His bitter grief and loneliness He was wont to utter, gave way to expressions of thanksgiving and praise, of hope and triumph. The exultation which glowed upon His face never forsook Him until the day when the news of the great disaster which befell the heroes of Shaykh Tabarsi again beclouded the radiance of His countenance and dimmed the joy of His heart.

I have heard Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim recount the following incident: "My companions and I were fast asleep in the vicinity of the tent of the Bab when the trampling of horsemen suddenly awakened us.

We were soon informed that the tent of the Bab was vacant and that those who had gone out in search of Him had failed to find Him.

We heard Muhammad Big remonstrate with the guards. 'Why feel disturbed?' he pleaded. 'Are not His magnanimity and nobleness of soul sufficiently established in your eyes to convince you that He will never, for the sake of His own safety, consent to involve others in embarrassment?

He, no doubt, must have retired, in the silence of this moonlit night, to a place where He can seek undisturbed communion with God.

He will unquestionably return to His tent.

He will never desert us.' In his eagerness to reassure his colleagues, Muhammad Big set out on foot along the road leading to Tihran.

I, too, with my companions, followed him.

Shortly after, the rest of the guards were seen, each on horseback, marching behind us.

We had covered about a maydan8 when, by the dim light of the early dawn, we discerned in the distance the lonely figure of the Bab.

He was coming towards us from the direction of Tihran. 'Did you believe Me to have escaped?' were His words to Muhammad Big as He approached him. 'Far be it from me,' was the instant reply as he flung himself at the feet of the Bab, 'to entertain such thoughts.' Muhammad Big was too much awed by the serene majesty which that radiant face revealed that morning to venture any further remark.

A look of confidence had settled upon His countenance, His words were invested with such transcendent power, that a feeling of profound reverence wrapped our very souls.

No one dared to question Him as to the cause of so remarkable a change in His speech

[229] and demeanour. Nor did He Himself choose to allay our curiosity and wonder."

For a fortnight9 the Bab tarried in that spot. The tranquillity which He enjoyed amidst those lovely surroundings was rudely disturbed by the receipt of a letter which Muhammad Shah10 himself addressed to the Bab and which was [230] composed in these terms:11 "Much as we desire to meet you, we find ourself unable, in view of our immediate departure from our capital, to receive you befittingly in Tihran. We have signified our desire that you be conducted to Mah-Ku, and have issued the necessary instructions to 'Ali Khan, the warden of the castle, to treat you with respect and consideration. It is our hope and intention to summon you to this place upon our return to the seat of our government, at [231] which time we shall definitely pronounce our judgment. We trust that we have caused you no disappointment, and that you will at no time hesitate to inform us in case any grievances befall you. We fain would hope that you will continue to pray for our well-being and for the prosperity of our realm." (Dated Rabi'u'th-Thani, 1263 A.H.)12

Haji Mirza Aqasi13 was no doubt responsible for having induced Muhammad Shah to address such a communication to the Bab.

He was actuated solely by a sense of fear14 lest [232] the contemplated interview should rob him of his position of unquestioned pre-eminence in the affairs of the State and should lead eventually to his overthrow from power.

He entertained no feelings of malice or resentment toward the Bab.

He finally succeeded15 in persuading his sovereign to transfer so dreaded an opponent to a remote and sequestered corner of his realm, and was thus able to relieve his mind of a thought that continually obsessed him.16 How stupendous was his mistake, how grievous his blunder!

Little did he realise, at that moment, that by his incessant intrigues he was withholding from his king and country the incomparable benefits of a Divine Revelation which alone had the power to deliver the land from the appalling state of degradation into which it had fallen.

By his act that short-sighted minister did not only withhold from Muhammad Shah the supreme instrument with which he could have rehabilitated a fast-declining empire, but also deprived him of that spiritual Agency which could have enabled him to establish his undisputed ascendancy over the peoples and nations of the earth.

By his folly, his extravagance and perfidious counsels, he undermined the foundations of the State, lowered its prestige, sapped the loyalty of his subjects, and plunged them into

[233] an abyss of misery.17 Incapable of being admonished by the example of his predecessors, he contemptuously ignored the demands and interests of the people, pursued, with unremitting zeal, his designs for personal aggrandisement, and by his profligacy and extravagance involved his country in ruinous wars with its neighbours.

Sa'd-i-Ma'adh, who was neither of royal blood nor invested with authority, attained, through the uprightness of his conduct and his unsparing [234] devotion to the Cause of Muhammad, so exalted a station that to the present day the chiefs and rulers of Islam have continued to reverence his memory and to praise his virtues; whereas Buzurg-Mihr, the ablest, the wisest and most experienced administrator among the vazirs of Nushiravan-i-'Adil, in spite of his commanding position, eventually was publicly disgraced, was thrown into a pit, and became the object of the contempt and the ridicule of the people.

He bewailed his plight and wept so bitterly that he finally lost his sight.

Neither the example of the former nor the fate of the latter seemed to have awakened that self-confident minister to the perils of his own position.

He persisted in his thoughts until he too forfeited his rank, lost his riches,18 and sank into abasement and shame.

The numerous properties which he forcibly seized from the humble and law-abiding subjects of the Shah, the costly furnitures with which he embellished them, the vast expenditures of labour and treasure which he ordered for their improvement—all were irretrievably lost two years after he had issued his decree condemning the Bab to a cruel incarceration in the inhospitable mountains of Adhirbayjan.

All his possessions were confiscated by the State.

He himself was disgraced by his sovereign, was ignominiously expelled from Tihran, and fell a prey to disease and poverty.

Bereft of hope and sunk in misery, he languished in Karbila until the hour of his death.19

[235] The Bab was accordingly ordered to proceed to Tabriz.20 The same escort, under the command of Muhammad Big, attended Him on His journey to the northwestern province of Adhirbayjan. He was allowed to select one companion and one attendant from among His followers to be with Him during His sojourn in that province. He selected Siyyid Husayn-i-Yazdi and Siyyid Hasan, his brother. He refused to expend on Himself the funds provided by the government for the expense of that journey. All the allowances that were given by the State He bestowed upon the poor and needy, and devoted to His own private needs the money which He, as a merchant, had earned in Bushihr and Shiraz. As orders had been given to avoid entering the towns in the course of the journey to Tabriz, a number of the believers of Qazvin, informed of the approach of their beloved Leader, set out for the village of Siyah-Dihan21 and were there able to meet Him.

One of them was Mulla Iskandar, who had been delegated by Hujjat to visit the Bab in Shiraz, and to investigate His Cause. The Bab commissioned him to deliver the following message to Sulayman Khan-i-Afshar, who was a great admirer of the late Siyyid Kazim: "He whose virtues the late siyyid unceasingly extolled, and to the approach of whose Revelation he continually alluded, is now revealed. I am that promised One. Arise and deliver Me from the hand of the oppressor." When the Bab entrusted this message to Mulla Iskandar, Sulayman Khan was in Zanjan and was preparing to leave for Tihran. Within the space of three days, that message reached him. He failed, however, to respond to that appeal.

[236] Two days later, a friend of Mulla Iskandar had acquainted Hujjat, who, at the instigation of the ulamas of Zanjan, had been incarcerated in the capital, with the appeal of the Bab. Hujjat immediately instructed the believers of his native city to undertake whatever preparations were required and to collect the necessary forces to achieve the deliverance of their Master. He urged them to proceed with caution and to attempt, at an appropriate moment, to seize and carry Him away to whatever place He might desire. These were shortly joined by a number of believers from Qazvin and Tihran, who set out, according to the directions of Hujjat, to execute the plan. They overtook the guards at the hour of midnight and, finding them fast asleep, approached the Bab and begged Him to flee. "The mountains of Adhirbayjan too have their claims," was His confident reply as He lovingly advised them to abandon their project and return to their homes.22

Approaching the gate of Tabriz, Muhammad Big, feeling that the hour of his separation from his Prisoner was at hand, besought His presence and with tearful eyes begged Him to overlook his shortcomings and transgressions. "The journey from Isfahan," he said, "has been long and arduous. I have failed to do

my duty and to serve You as I ought. I crave Your forgiveness, and pray You to vouchsafe me Your blessings." "Be assured," the Bab replied, "I account you a member of My fold. They who embrace My Cause will eternally bless and glorify you, will extol your conduct and exalt your name."23 The rest of the guards followed the

[237] example of their chief, implored the blessings of their Prisoner, kissed His feet, and with tears in their eyes bade Him a last farewell. To each the Bab expressed His appreciation of his devoted attentions and assured him of His prayers in his behalf. Reluctantly they delivered Him into the hands of the governor of Tabriz, the heir to the throne of Muhammad Shah. To those with whom they were subsequently brought in contact, these devoted attendants of the Bab and eye-witnesses of His superhuman wisdom and power, recounted with awe and admiration the tale of those wonders which they had seen and heard, and by this means helped to diffuse in their own way the knowledge of the new Revelation.

The news of the approaching arrival of the Bab at Tabriz bestirred the believers in that city.

They all set out to meet Him, eager to extend to so beloved a Leader their welcome.

The officials of the government into whose custody the Bab was to be delivered refused to allow them to draw near and to receive His blessings.

One youth, however, unable to restrain himself, rushed forth barefooted, through the gate of the city, and, in his impatience to gaze upon the face of his Beloved, ran out a distance of half a farsang24 towards Him.

As he approached the horsemen who were marching in advance of the Bab, he joyously welcomed them and, seizing [238] the hem of the garment of one among them, devoutly kissed his stirrups. "Ye are the companions of my Well-Beloved," he tearfully exclaimed. "I cherish you as the apple of my eye."

His extraordinary behaviour, the intensity of his emotion, amazed them.

They immediately granted him his request to attain the presence of his Master.

As soon as his eyes fell upon Him, a cry of exultation broke from his lips.

He fell upon his face and wept profusely.

The Bab dismounted from His horse, put His arms around him, wiped away his tears, and soothed the agitation of his heart.

Of all the believers of Tabriz, that youth alone succeeded in offering his homage to the Bab and in being blessed by the touch of His hand.

All the others had perforce to content themselves with a distant glimpse of their Beloved, and with that view sought to satisfy their longing.

When the Bab arrived at Tabriz, He was conducted to one of the chief houses in that city, which had been reserved

[239] for His confinement.25 A detachment of the Nasiri regiment stood guard at the entrance of His house.

With the exception of Siyyid Husayn and his brother, neither the public nor His followers were allowed to meet Him.

This same regiment, which had been recruited from among the inhabitants of Khamsih, and upon which special honours had been conferred, was subsequently chosen to discharge the volley that caused His death.

The circumstances of His arrival had stirred the people in Tabriz profoundly.

A tumultuous concourse of people had gathered to witness His entry into the city.26 Some were impelled by curiosity, others were earnestly desirous of ascertaining the veracity of the wild reports that were current about Him, and still others were moved by their faith and devotion to attain His presence and to assure Him of their loyalty.

As He walked along the streets, the acclamations of the multitude resounded on every side.

The great majority of the people who beheld His face greeted Him with the shout of "Allah-u-Akbar,"27 others loudly glorified and cheered Him, a few invoked upon Him the blessings of the Almighty, others were seen to kiss reverently the dust of His footsteps.

Such was the clamour which His arrival had raised that a crier was ordered to warn the populace of the danger that awaited those who ventured to seek His presence. "Whosoever shall make any attempt to approach the Siyyid-i-Bab," went forth the cry, "or seek to meet him, all his possessions shall forthwith be seized and he himself condemned to perpetual imprisonment."

On the day after the Bab's arrival, Haji Muhammad-Taqiy-i-Milani, a noted merchant of the city, ventured, together with Haji 'Ali-'Askar, to interview the Bab.

They were warned by their friends and well-wishers that by such an attempt they would not only be risking the loss of their [240] possessions, but would also be endangering their lives.

They refused, however, to heed such counsels.

As they approached the door of the house in which the Bab was confined, they were immediately arrested.

Siyyid Hasan, who at that moment was coming out from the presence of the Bab, instantly intervened. "I am commanded by the Siyyid-i-Bab," he vehemently protested, "to convey to you this message: 'Suffer these visitors to enter, inasmuch as I Myself have invited them to meet Me.'"

I have heard Haji 'Ali-'Askar testify to the following: "This message immediately silenced the opposers.

We were straightway ushered into His presence.

He greeted us with these words: 'These miserable wretches who watch at the gate of My house have been destined by Me as a protection against the inrush of the multitude who throng around the house.

They are powerless to prevent those whom I desire to meet from attaining My presence.' For about two hours, we tarried with Him.

As He dismissed us, He entrusted me with two cornelian ringstones, instructing me to have carved on them the two verses which He had previously given to me; to have them mounted and brought to Him as soon as they were ready.

He assured us that at whatever time we desired to meet Him, no one would hinder our admittance to His presence.

Several times I ventured to go to Him in order to ascertain His wish regarding certain details connected with the commission with which He had entrusted me.

Not once did I encounter the slightest opposition on the part of those who were guarding the entrance of His house.

Not one offensive word did they utter against me, nor did they seem to expect the slightest remuneration for their indulgence.

"I recall how, in the course of my association with Mulla Husayn, I was impressed by the many evidences of his perspicacity and extraordinary power. I was privileged to accompany him on his journey from Shiraz to Mashhad, and visited with him the towns of Yazd, Tabas, Bushruyih, and Turbat. I deplored in those days the sadness of my failure to meet the Bab in Shiraz. 'Grieve not,' Mulla Husayn confidently assured me; 'the Almighty is no doubt able to compensate you in Tabriz for the loss you have sustained in Shiraz. Not once, but seven times, can He enable you [241] to partake of the joy of His presence, in return for the one visit which you have missed.' I was amazed at the confidence with which he uttered those words. Not until the time of my visit to the Bab in Tabriz, when, despite adverse circumstances, I was, on several occasions, admitted into His presence, did I recall those words of Mulla Husayn and marvel at his remarkable foresight. How great was my surprise when, on my seventh visit to the Bab, I heard Him speak these words: 'Praise be to God, who has enabled you to complete the number of your visits and who has extended to you His loving protection.'"

FOOTNOTES

12.1. The site of the second most sacred shrine in Persia, and the burial-place of many of her kings, among them Fath-'Ali and Muhammad Shah.

12.2. "At Qum are deposited the remains of his [Imam Rida's] sister, Fatimiy-i-Ma'sumih, i.e. the Immaculate, who, according to one account, lived and died here, having fled from Baghdad to escape the persecution of the Khalifs; according to another, sickened and died at Qum, on her way to see her brother at Tus. He, for his part, is believed by the pious Shi'ahs to return the compliment by paying her a visit every Friday from his shrine at Mashhad." Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," vol. 2, p. 8.)

12.3. A station on the old Tsfahan road, distant about 28 miles from Tihran. ("A Traveller's Narrative," p. 14, note 2.)

12.4. See "A Traveller's Narrative," p. 14, note 3.

12.5. "As the order of the prime minister Haji Mirza Aqasi became generally known, it was impossible to carry it out. From Isfahan to Tihran, everyone spoke of the iniquity of the clergy and of the government towards the Bab; everywhere the people muttered and exclaimed against such an injustice." (Journal Asiatique, 1866, tome 7, p. 355.)

12.6. March 29, 1847 A.D.

12.7. April 1, 1847 A.D.

12.8. See Glossary.

12.9. According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 14), the Bab remained in the village of Kulayn for a period of twenty days.

12.10. "Muhammad Shah," writes Gobineau, "was a prince of peculiar temperament, a type often seen in Asia but not often discovered or understood by Europeans.

Although he reigned during a period when political practices were rather harsh, he was kind and patient and his tolerance extended even to the discords of his harem which were of such a nature as normally to cause grave annoyance; for, even in the days of Fath-'Ali Shah, the laisser-aller, the whims and fancies were never carried to such an extreme.

The following words which our 18th century might recognize as its own are attributed to him: 'Why are you not more discreet, Madam?

I do not wish to hinder you from enjoying yourself.' "But, in his case, it was not affected indifference, but fatigue and boredom.

His health had always been wretched; seriously ill with gout, he was hardly ever free from pain.

His disposition naturally weak, had become very melancholy and, as he craved love and could not find it in his family either with his wives or children, he had centered all his affection upon the aged Mulla, his tutor.

He had made of him his only friend, his confidant, then his first and all-powerful minister, even his god!

Brought up by this idol with very irreverent sentiments toward Islam, he was equally as indifferent toward the dogmas of the Prophet as toward the Prophet himself.

He cared little for the Imams and, if he had any regard for 'Ali, it is because the Persian mind is wont to identify this venerable personage with the nation itself. "But in brief, Muhammad Shah was no better Muhammadan than he was Christian or Jew.

He believed that the Divine Essence incarnates Itself in the Sages with all Its

power, and, as he considered Haji Mirza Aqasi a Sage par excellence, he felt certain that he was God and he would piously ask him to perform miracles.

Often he said to his officers with earnestness and conviction, 'The Haji has promised me a miracle for tonight, you shall see!' As long as the character of the Haji was not involved, Muhammad Shah was completely indifferent regarding the success or failure of this or that religious doctrine; he was rather pleased to witness the conflict of opinions which were proof to him of the universal blindness." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp.

131-132.)

12.11. According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p.

14), the Bab "forwarded a letter to the Royal Presence craving audience to set forth the truth of His condition, expecting this to be a means for the attainment of great advantages."

Regarding this letter, Gobineau writes as follows: "'Ali-Muhammad wrote personally to the Court and his letter and the accusations of his adversaries all arrived at the same time.

Without assuming an aggressive attitude toward the king, but trusting on the contrary to his authority and justice, he represented to them that the depravity of the clergy in Persia had been well known for many years; that not only morals were thereby corrupted and the well-being of the nation affected, but that religion itself, poisoned by the sins of so many, was in great danger and was about to disappear leaving the people in perilous darkness. "As for himself, called by God, in virtue of a special mission, to prevent such an evil, he had already begun to apprise the people of Fars that the true doctrine had made evident and rapid progress; that all its adversaries had been confounded and were now powerless and universally despised; but that this was only a beginning. "The Bab, confident of the magnanimity of the king, requested the permission to come to the capital with his principal disciples and there hold conferences with all the Mullas of the Empire, in the presence of the sovereign, the nobles and the people, convinced that he would shame them by exposing their faithlessness.

He would accept beforehand the judgment of the king and, in case of failure, was ready to sacrifice his head and that of each one of his followers." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p.

124.)

12.12. March 19-April 17, 1847 A.D.

12.13. According to Hidayat in the "Majma'u'l-Fusaha'," the name of Haji Mirza Aqasi was 'Abbas-'Ali.

He was the son of Mirza Muslim, one of the well-known divines of Iravan.

His son, 'Abbas-'Ali, was a pupil, while in Karbila, of Fahkru'd-Din

'Abdu's-Samad-i-Hamadani.

From Karbila he proceeded to Hamadan, visited Adhirbayjan, and from there undertook a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Returning, in circumstances of extreme poverty, to Adhirbayjan, he succeeded in gradually improving his position, and was made the tutor of the children of Mirza Musa Khan, the brother of the late Mirza Abu'l-Qasim, the Qa'im-Maqam.

Muhammad Mirza, to whom he had announced his eventual accession to the throne of Persia, was greatly devoted to him.

He eventually was appointed his prime minister, and retired after the death of the monarch to Karbila, where he died in Ramadan, 1265 A.H. (Notes of Mirza Abu'l-Fadl.) According to Haji Mu'inu's-Saltanih's narrative (p.

120), Haji Mirza Aqasi was born in Mah-Ku, where his parents had been residing after their departure from Iravan, in the Caucasus. "Haji Mirza Aqasi, native of Iravan, attained unlimited influence over his weak-minded master, formerly his tutor, and professed Sufi doctrine.

A quizzical old gentleman, with a long nose, whose countenance betokened the oddity and self-sufficiency of his character." (C.

R.

Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia" p.

473.) "As for the Haji, he was a very special kind of god.

It was not absolutely certain that he did himself believe that of which the Shah was convinced.

In any case, he preferred the same general principles as the King and he had taught them to him in good faith.

He could nevertheless be a buffoon; jesting was the policy, the rule of his conduct and of his life.

He pretended to take nothing seriously, not even himself. "'I am not a prime minister,' he often said, especially to those whom he mistreated; 'I am an old mulla of humble birth and without merit and, if I find myself in this high office, it is because it is the wish of the King.' "He never referred to his sons without calling them 'sons of hussies and sons of dogs.' It is in these terms that he enquired of them or sent them orders by his officers, when they were away.

His greatest delight was to pass in review units of cavalry in which he would assemble, in their most gorgeous trappings, all the nomad Khans of Persia.

When these warlike tribes were gathered in the valley, the Haji would appear, dressed like a beggar, with a threadbare and shapeless cap, a sword dangling awkwardly at his side and riding a small donkey.

Then he would draw up the horsemen about him, call them fools, make fun of

their attire, show their worthlessness, and then send them home with presents; for his sarcasm was always tempered with generosity." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp.

132-133.)

12.14. "An anecdote shows the real motive of the prime minister in the suggestions he made to the Shah concerning the Bab.

The Prince Farhad Mirza, still young, was the pupil of Haji Mirza Aqasi.

The latter related the following story: 'When His Majesty, after consulting the prime minister, had written to the Bab to betake himself to Mah-Ku, we went with Haji Mirza Aqasi to spend a few days at Yaft-Abad, in the neighborhood of Tihran, in the park which he had created there.

I was very desirous of questioning my master regarding the recent happenings but I feared to do so publicly.

One day, while I was walking with him in the garden and he was in a good humor, I made bold to ask him: "Haji, why have you sent the Bab to Mah-Ku?"

He replied,"You are still too young to understand certain things, but know that had he come to Tihran, you and I would not be, at this moment, walking free from care in this cool shade."'" (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

243-244) According to Haji Mu'inu's-Saltanih's narrative (p.

129), the chief motive which actuated Haji Mirza Aqasi to urge Muhammad Shah to order the banishment of the Bab to Adhirbayjan was the fear lest the promise which the Bab had given to the sovereign that He would cure him of his illness, were he to allow Him to be received in Tihran, should be fulfilled.

He felt sure that should the Bab be able to effect such a cure, the Shah would fall under the influence of his Prisoner and would cease to confer upon his prime minister the honours and benefits which he exclusively enjoyed.

12.15. According to Mirza Abu'l-Fadl, Haji Mirza Aqasi sought, by his reference to the rebellion of Muhammad Hasan Khan, the Salar, in Khurasan, and the revolt of Aqa Khan-i-Isma'ili, in Kirman, to induce the sovereign to abandon the project of summoning the Bab to the capital, and to send Him instead to the remote province of Adhirbayjan.

12.16. "Nevertheless, on this occasion, his expectations did not materialize. Fearing that the presence of the Bab in Tihran would occasion new disturbances (there were plenty of them due to his whims and his poor administration), he altered his plans and the escort, charged to take the Bab from Isfahan to Tihran, received, when about thirty kilometers from the city, the order to take

the prisoner directly to Mah-Ku. This town, in the mind of the prime minister, would offer nothing to the impostor because its inhabitants, out of gratitude for the favors and protection they had received from him, would take steps to suppress any disturbances which might break out." (Journal Asiatique, 1866, tome 7, p. 356.)

12.17. "The state of Persia, however, was not satisfactory; for Haji Mirza Aqasi, who had been its virtual ruler for thirteen years, 'was utterly ignorant of statesmanship or of military science, yet too vain to receive instruction and too jealous to admit of a coadjutor; brutal in his language; insolent in his demeanour; indolent in his habits; he brought the exchequer to the verge of bankruptcy and the country to the brink of revolution. The pay of the army was generally from three to five years in arrears. The cavalry of the tribes was almost annihilated.' Such—to adopt the weighty words of Rawlinson—was the condition of Persia in the middle of the nineteenth century." (P. M. Sykes' "A History of Persia," vol. 2, pp. 439-40.)

12.18. "Haji Mirza Aqasi, the half crazy old Prime Minister, had the whole administration in his hands, and obtained complete control over the Shah. The misgovernment of the country grew worse and worse, while the people starved, and cursed the Qajar dynasty.... The condition of the provinces was deplorable; and every man with any pretension to talent or patriotism was driven into exile by the old Haji, who was sedulously collecting wealth for himself at Tihran, at the expense of the wretched country. The governorships of provinces were sold to the highest bidders, who oppressed the people in a fearful manner." (C. R. Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," pp. 486-7.)

12.19. Gobineau writes regarding his fall: "Haji Mirza Aqasi, robbed of the power which he had constantly ridiculed, had retired to Karbila and he spent his remaining days playing tricks on the mullas and scoffing even at the holy martyrs." ("Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 160.) "This shrewd man had gained such power over the late Shah that one could truly say that the minister was the real sovereign; he could not therefore survive the loss of his good fortune. At the death of Muhammad Shah, he had disappeared and had gone to Karbila where, under the protection of the sainted Imam, even a state criminal could find an inviolable asylum. He was soon overcome by gnawing grief which, more than his remorse, shortened his life." (Journal Asiatique, 1866, tome 7, pp. 367-368.)

12.20. According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 16), the Bab "wrote a letter, in the course of the journey, to the Prime Minister, saying: 'You summoned me from Isfahan to meet the doctors and for the attainment of a decisive settlement. What has happened now that this excellent intention has been changed for Mah-Ku and Tabriz?'"

12.21. According to Samandar (manuscript, pp. 4-5), the Bab tarried in the village of Siyah-Dihan, in the neighbourhood of Qazvin, on His way to Adhirbayjan. In the course of that journey, He is reported to have revealed several Tablets addressed to the leading ulamas in Qazvin, among whom were the

following: Haji Mulla 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, Haji Mulla Salih, Haji Mulla Taqi, and Haji Siyyid Taqi. These Tablets were conveyed to their recipients through Haji Mulla Ahmad-i-Ibdal. Several believers, among whom were the two sons of Haji Mulla 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, were able to meet the Bab during the night which He spent in that village. It is from this village that the Bab is reported to have addressed His epistle to Haji Mirza Aqasi.

12.22. In the "Tarikh-i-Jadid," Muhammad Big is reported to have related the following account to Haji Mirza Jani: "So we mounted and rode on till we came to a brick caravanserai distant two parsangs from the city. Thence we proceeded to Milan, where many of the inhabitants came to see His Holiness, and were filled with wonder at the majesty and dignity of that Lord of mankind. In the morning, as we were setting out from Milan, an old woman brought a scald-headed child, whose head was so covered with scabs that it was white down to the neck, and entreated His Holiness to heal him. The guards would have forbidden her, but His Holiness prevented them, and called the child to Him. Then He drew a handkerchief over its head and repeated certain words; which he had no sooner done than the child was healed. And in that place about two hundred persons believed and underwent a true and sincere conversion." (Pp. 220-21.)

12.23. Mirza Abu'l-Fadl states in his writings that he himself, while in Tihran, met the son of Muhammad Big, whose name was 'Ali-Akbar Big, and heard him recount the remarkable experiences his father had had in the course of his journey to Tabriz in the company of the Bab. 'Ali-Akbar Big was a fervent believer in the Cause of Baha'u'llah and was known as such by the Baha'is of Persia.

12.24. See Glossary.

12.25. According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 16), the Bab remained forty days in Tabriz. According to Haji Mu'inu's-Saltanih's manuscript (p. 138), the Bab spent the first night, on His arrival in Tabriz, in the home of Muhammad Big. From there He was transferred to a room in the Citadel (the Ark) which adjoined the Masjid-i-'Ali Shah.

12.26. "The success of this energetic man, Mulla Yusuf-i-Ardibili, was so great and so swift that, at the very gates of Tauris (Tabriz), the inhabitants of this populous village acknowledged him as their leader and took the name of Babis. Needless to say that, in the town itself, the Babis were quite numerous, even though the government was taking steps to convict the Bab, to punish him and thereby justify itself in the eyes of the people." (Journal Asiatique, 1866, tome 7, pp. 357-358.)

12.27. "God is the Most Great."

CHAPTER XIII
THE BAB'S INCARCERATION IN THE CASTLE OF MAH-KU

[243] Siyyid Husayn-i-Yazdi has been heard to relate the following: "During the first ten days of the Bab's incarceration in Tabriz, no one knew what would next befall Him. The wildest conjectures were current in the city. One day I

ventured to ask Him whether He would continue to remain where He was or would be transferred to still another place. 'Have you forgotten,' was His immediate reply, 'the question you asked me in Isfahan? For a period of no less than nine months, we shall remain confined in the Jabal-i-Basit,1 from whence we shall be transferred to the Jabal-i-Shadid.2 Both these places are among the mountains of Khuy and are situated on either side of the town bearing that name.' Five days after the Bab had uttered this prediction, orders were issued to transfer Him and me to the castle of Mah-Ku and to deliver us into the custody of 'Ali Khan-i-Mah-Ku'i."

The castle, a solid, four-towered stone edifice, occupies the summit of a mountain at the foot of which lies the town of Mah-Ku.

The only road that leads from it passes into that town, ending at a gate which adjoins the seat of government and is invariably kept closed.

This gate is distinct from that of the castle itself.

Situated on the confines of both the Ottoman and Russian empires, this castle has been used, in view of its commanding position and strategic advantages, as a centre for reconnoitring purposes.

The officer in charge of that station observed, in time of war, the movements of the enemy, surveyed the surrounding regions, and reported to his government such cases of emergency as came [244] under his observation.

The castle is bounded on the west by the river Araxes, which marks the frontier between the territory of the Shah and the Russian empire.

To the south extends the territory of the Sultan of Turkey; the frontier town of Bayazid being at a distance of only four farsangs3 from the mountain of Mah-Ku.

The frontier officer, in charge of the castle, was a man named 'Ali Khan.

The residents of the town are all Kurds and belong to the sunni sect of Islam.4 The shi'ahs, who constitute the vast majority of the inhabitants of Persia, have always been their avowed and bitter enemies.

These Kurds particularly abhor the siyyids of the shi'ah denomination, whom they regard as the spiritual leaders and chief agitators among their opponents. 'Ali Khan's mother being a Kurd, the son was held in great esteem and was implicitly obeyed by the people of Mah-Ku.

They regarded him as a member of their own community and placed the utmost confidence in him.

Haji Mirza Aqasi had deliberately contrived to relegate the Bab to so remote, so inhospitable and dangerously situated a corner of the territory of the Shah, with the sole purpose of stemming the tide of His rising influence and of severing every tie that bound Him to the body of His disciples throughout the country.

Confident that few, if any, would venture to penetrate that wild and turbulent region, occupied by so rebellious a people, he fondly imagined that this forced seclusion of his Captive from the pursuits and interests of His followers would gradually tend to stifle the Movement at its very birth and would lead to its final extinction.5 He was soon made to realise, however, that he had gravely mistaken the nature of the Revelation of the Bab and had underrated the force of its influence.

The turbulent spirits of this unruly people were soon subdued by the gentle manners of the Bab, and their hearts were softened [245] by the ennobling influence of His love.

Their pride was humbled by His unexampled modesty, and their unreasoning arrogance mellowed by the wisdom of His words.

Such was the fervour which the Bab had kindled in those hearts that their first act, every morning, was to seek a place whence they could catch a glimpse of His face, where they could commune with Him and beseech His blessings upon their daily work.

In cases of dispute, they would instinctively hasten to that spot and, with their gaze fixed upon His prison, would invoke His name and adjure one another to declare the truth. 'Ali Khan several times attempted to induce them to desist from this practice but found himself powerless to restrain their enthusiasm.

He discharged his functions with the utmost severity and refused to allow any of the avowed disciples of the Bab to reside, even for one night, in the town of Mah-Ku.6

"For the first two weeks," Siyyid Husayn further related, "no one was permitted to visit the Bab. My brother and I alone were admitted to His presence. Siyyid Hasan would, every day, accompanied by one of the guards, descend to the town and purchase our daily necessities. Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunuzi, who had arrived at Mah-Ku, spent the nights in a masjid outside the gate of the town. He acted as an intermediary between those of the followers of the Bab who occasionally visited Mah-Ku and Siyyid Hasan, my brother, who would in turn submit the petitions of the believers to their Master and would acquaint Shaykh Hasan with His reply.

[246] "One day the Bab charged my brother to inform Shaykh Hasan that He would Himself request 'Ali Khan to alter his attitude towards the believers who visited Mah-Ku and to abandon his severity. 'Tell him,' He added, 'I will to-morrow instruct the warden to conduct him to this place.' I was greatly surprised at such a message.

How could the domineering and self-willed 'Ali Khan, I thought to myself, be induced to relax the severity of his discipline?

Early the next day, the gate of the castle being still closed, we were surprised by a sudden knock at the door, knowing full well that orders had been

given that no one was to be admitted before the hour of sunrise.

We recognised the voice of 'Ali Khan, who seemed to be expostulating with the guards, one of whom presently came in and informed me that the warden of the castle insisted on being allowed admittance into the presence of the Bab.

I conveyed his message and was commanded to usher him at once into His presence.

As I was stepping out of the door of His antechamber, I found 'Ali Khan standing at the threshold in an attitude of complete submission, his face betraying an expression of unusual humility and wonder.

His self-assertiveness and pride seemed to have entirely vanished.

Humbly and with extreme courtesy, he returned my salute and begged me to allow him to enter the presence of the Bab.

I conducted him to the room which my Master occupied.

His limbs trembled as he followed me.

An inner agitation which he could not conceal [247] brooded over his face.

The Bab arose from His seat and welcomed him.

Bowing reverently, 'Ali Khan approached and flung himself at His feet. 'Deliver me,' he pleaded, 'from my perplexity.

I adjure You, by the Prophet of God, Your illustrious Ancestor, to dissipate my doubts, for their weight has well-nigh crushed my heart.

I was riding through the wilderness and was approaching the gate of the town, when, it being the hour of dawn, my eyes suddenly beheld You standing by the side of the river engaged in offering Your prayer.

With outstretched arms and upraised eyes, You were invoking the name of God.

I stood still and watched You.

I was waiting for You to terminate Your devotions that I might approach and rebuke You for having ventured to leave the castle without my leave.

In Your communion with God, You seemed so wrapt in worship that You were utterly forgetful of Yourself.

I quietly approached You; in Your state of rapture, You remained wholly unaware of my presence.

I was suddenly seized with great fear and recoiled at the thought of awakening You from Your ecstasy.

I decided to leave You, to proceed to the guards and to reprove them for their negligent conduct.

I soon found out, to my amazement, that both the outer and inner gates were closed.

They were opened at my request, I was ushered into Your presence, and now find You, to my wonder, seated before me.

I am utterly confounded.

I know not whether my reason has deserted me.' The Bab answered and said: 'What you have witnessed is true and undeniable.

You belittled this Revelation and have contemptuously disdained its Author.

God, the All-Merciful, desiring not to afflict you with His punishment, has willed to reveal to your eyes the Truth.

By His Divine interposition, He has instilled into your heart the love of His chosen One, and caused you to recognise the unconquerable power of His Faith.'"

This marvellous experience completely changed the heart of 'Ali Khan. Those words had calmed his agitation and subdued the fierceness of his animosity. By every means in his power, he determined to atone for his past behaviour. "A poor man, a shaykh," he hastily informed the Bab, "is yearning to attain Your presence. He lives in a masjid outside the gate of Mah-Ku. I pray You that I myself be [248] allowed to bring him to this place that he may meet You. By this act I hope that my evil deeds may be forgiven, that I may be enabled to wash away the stains of my cruel behaviour toward Your friends." His request was granted, whereupon he went straightway to Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunuzi and conducted him into the presence of his Master.

'Ali Khan set out, within the limits imposed upon him, to provide whatever would tend to alleviate the rigour of the captivity of the Bab. At night the gate of the castle was still closed; in the daytime, however, those whom the Bab desired to see were allowed to enter His presence, were able to converse with Him and to receive His instructions.

As He lay confined within the walls of the castle, He devoted His time to the composition of the Persian Bayan, the most weighty, the most illuminating and comprehensive of all His works.7 In it He laid down the laws and precepts of His Dispensation, plainly and emphatically announced the advent of a subsequent Revelation, and persistently urged His followers to seek and find "Him whom God would make manifest,"8 warning them lest they allow the mysteries and allusions in the Bayan to interfere with their recognition of His Cause.9

[249] I have heard Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunuzi bear witness to the following: "The voice of the Bab, as He dictated the teachings and principles of His Faith, could be clearly heard by those who were dwelling at the foot of the mountain. The melody of His chanting, the rhythmic flow of the verses which streamed from His lips caught our ears and penetrated into our very souls. Mountain and valley re-echoed the majesty of His voice. Our hearts vibrated in their depths to the appeal of His utterance."10

[250] The gradual relaxation of the stern discipline imposed upon the Bab encouraged an increasing number of His disciples from the different provinces of Persia to visit Him in the castle of Mah-Ku. An unceasing stream of eager

and devout pilgrims was directed to its gates through the gentleness and leniency of 'Ali Khan.11 After a stay of three days, they would invariably be dismissed by the Bab, with instructions to return to their respective fields of service and to resume their labours for the consolidation of His Faith. 'Ali [251] Khan himself never failed to pay his respects to the Bab each Friday, and to assure Him of his unswerving loyalty and devotion. He often presented Him with the rarest and choicest fruit available in the neighbourhood of Mah-Ku, and would continually offer Him such delicacies as he thought would prove agreeable to His taste and liking.

In this manner the Bab spent the summer and autumn within the walls of that castle.

A winter followed of such [252] exceptional severity that even the copper implements were affected by the intensity of the cold.

The beginning of that season coincided with the month of Muharram of the year 1264 A.H.12 The water which the Bab used for His ablutions was of such icy coldness that its drops glistened as they froze upon His face.

He would invariably, after the termination of each prayer, summon Siyyid Husayn to His presence and would request him to read aloud to Him a passage from the Muhriqu'l-Qulub, a work composed by the late Haji Mulla Mihdi, the great-grandfather of Haji Mirza Kamalu'd-Din-i-Naraqi, in which the author extols the virtues, laments the death, and narrates the circumstances of the martyrdom of the Imam Husayn.

The recital of those sufferings would provoke intense emotion in the heart of the Bab.

His tears would keep flowing as He listened to the tale of the unutterable indignities heaped upon him, and of the agonising pain which he was made to suffer at the hands of a perfidious enemy.

As the circumstances of that tragic life were unfolded before Him, the Bab was continually reminded of that still greater tragedy which was destined to signalise the advent of the promised Husayn.

To Him those past atrocities were but a symbol which foreshadowed the bitter afflictions which His own beloved Husayn was soon to suffer at the hands of His countrymen.

He wept as He pictured in His mind those calamities which He who was to be made manifest was predestined to suffer, calamities such as the Imam Husayn, even in the midst of his agonies, was never made to endure.13

[253] In one of His writings revealed in the year '60 A.H., the Bab declares the following: "The spirit of prayer which animates My soul is the direct consequence of a dream which I had in the year before the declaration of My Mission. In My vision I saw the head of the Imam Husayn, the Siyyidu'sh-Shuhada', which was hanging upon a tree. Drops of blood dripped profusely from His lacerated throat. With feelings of unsurpassed delight, I

approached that tree and, stretching forth My hands, gathered a few drops of that sacred blood, and drank them devoutly. When I awoke, I felt that the Spirit of God had permeated and taken possession of My soul. My heart was thrilled with the joy of His Divine presence, and the mysteries of His Revelation were unfolded before My eyes in all their glory."

No sooner had Muhammad Shah condemned the Bab to captivity amid the mountain fastnesses of Adhirbayjan than he became afflicted with a sudden reverse of fortune, such as he had never known before and which struck at the very foundations of his State. Appalling disaster surprised his forces that were engaged in maintaining internal order throughout the provinces.14 The standard of rebellion was [254] hoisted in Khurasan, and so great was the consternation provoked by that rising that the projected campaign of the Shah to Hirat was immediately abandoned. Haji Mirza Aqasi's recklessness and prodigality had fanned into flame the smouldering fires of discontent, had exasperated the masses and encouraged them to stir up sedition and mischief. The most turbulent elements in Khurasan that inhabited the regions of Quchan, Bujnurd, and Shiravan leagued themselves with the Salar, son of the Asifu'd-Dawlih, the elder maternal uncle of the Shah and governor of the province, and repudiated the authority of the central government. Whatever forces were despatched from the capital met with immediate defeat at the hands of the chief instigators of the rebellion. Ja'far-Quli Khan-i-Namdar and Amir Arslan Khan, son of the Salar, who conducted the operations against the forces of the Shah, displayed the utmost cruelty and, having repulsed the attacks of the enemy, mercilessly put their captives to death.

Mulla Husayn was at that time residing at Mashhad,15 and was endeavouring, despite the tumult which that revolt had occasioned, to spread the knowledge of the new Revelation. No sooner had he discovered that the Salar, in his desire to extend the scope of the rebellion, had determined to approach him and obtain his support, than he promptly decided to leave the city in order to avoid implicating himself [255] in the plots of that proud and rebellious chief. In the dead of night, with only Qambar-'Ali as his attendant, he proceeded on foot in the direction of Tihran, from which place he was determined to visit Adhirbayjan, where he hoped to meet the Bab. His friends, when they learned of the manner of his departure, immediately provided whatever would be conducive to the comforts of his long and arduous journey and hastened to overtake him. Mulla Husayn declined their help. "I have vowed," he said, "to walk the whole distance that separates me from my Beloved. I shall not relax in my resolve until I shall have reached my destination." He even tried to induce Qambar-'Ali to return to Mashhad, but was finally obliged to yield to his entreaty to allow him to act as his servant throughout his pilgrimage to Adhirbayjan.

On his way to Tihran, Mulla Husayn was enthusiastically greeted by the believers in the different towns through which he passed. They addressed to him the same request and received from him the same reply. I have heard the following testimony from the lips of Aqay-i-Kalim: "When Mulla Husayn arrived at Tihran, I, together with a large number of believers, went to visit him. He

seemed to us the very embodiment of constancy, of piety and virtue. He inspired us with his rectitude of conduct and passionate loyalty. Such were the force of his character and the ardour of his faith that we felt convinced that he, unaided and alone, would be capable of achieving the triumph of the Faith of God." He was, with secrecy, ushered into the presence of Baha'u'llah, and, soon after his interview, proceeded to Adhirbayjan.

The night before his arrival at Mah-Ku, which was the eve of the fourth Naw-Ruz after the declaration of the [256] Mission of the Bab, and which fell in that year, the year 1264 A.H.,16 on the thirteenth of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani, 'Ali Khan dreamed a dream. "In my sleep," he thus relates his story, "I was startled by the sudden intelligence that Muhammad, the Prophet of God, was soon to arrive at Mah-Ku, that He was to proceed directly to the castle in order to visit the Bab and to offer Him His congratulations on the advent of the Naw-Ruz festival.

In my dream, I ran out to meet Him, eager to extend to so holy a Visitor the expression of my humble welcome.

In a state of indescribable gladness, I hastened on foot in the direction of the river, and as I reached the bridge, which lay at a distance of a maydan17 from the town of Mah-Ku, I saw two men advancing towards me.

I thought one of them to be the Prophet Himself, while the other who walked behind Him I supposed to be one of His distinguished companions.

I hastened to throw myself at His feet, and was bending to kiss the hem of His robe, when I suddenly awoke.

A great joy had flooded my soul.

I felt as if Paradise itself, with all its delights, had been crowded into my heart.

Convinced of the reality of my vision, I performed my ablutions, offered my prayer, arrayed myself in my richest attire, anointed myself with perfume, and proceeded to the spot where, the night before in my dream, I had gazed upon the countenance of the Prophet.

I had instructed my attendants to saddle three of my best and swiftest steeds and to conduct them immediately to the bridge.

The sun had just risen when, alone and unescorted, I walked out of the town of Mah-Ku in the direction of the river.

As I approached the bridge, I discovered, with a throb of wonder, the two men whom I had seen in my dream walking one behind the other, and advancing towards me.

Instinctively I fell at the feet of the one whom I believed to be the Prophet, and devoutly kissed them.

I begged Him and His companion to mount the horses which I had prepared for

their entry into Mah-Ku. 'Nay,' was His reply, 'I have vowed to accomplish the whole of my journey on foot.

I will walk to the summit of this mountain and will there visit your Prisoner.'"

This strange experience of 'Ali Khan brought about a

[257] deepening of reverence in his attitude towards the Bab. His faith in the potency of His Revelation became even greater, and his devotion to Him was vastly increased. In an attitude of humble surrender, he followed Mulla Husayn until they reached the gate of the castle. As soon as the eyes of Mulla Husayn fell upon the countenance of his Master, who was seen standing at the threshold of the gate, he halted instantly and, bowing low before Him, stood motionless by His side. The Bab stretched forth His arms and affectionately embraced him. Taking him by the hand, He conducted him to His chamber. He then summoned His friends into His presence and celebrated in their company the feast of Naw-Ruz. Dishes of sweetmeats and of the choicest fruits had been spread before Him. He distributed them among His assembled friends, and as He offered some of the quinces and apples to Mulla Husayn, He said: "These luscious fruits have come to us from Milan, the Ard-i-Jannat,18 and have been specially plucked and consecrated to this feast by the Ismu'llahu'l-Fatiq, Muhammad-Taqi."

Until that time no one of the disciples of the Bab but Siyyid Husayn-i-Yazdi and his brother had been allowed to spend the night within the castle. That day 'Ali Khan went to the Bab and said: "If it be Your desire to retain [258] Mulla Husayn with You this night, I am ready to abide by Your wish, for I have no will of my own. However long You desire him to stay with You, I pledge myself to carry out Your command." The disciples of the Bab continued to arrive in increasing numbers at Mah-Ku, and were immediately and without the least restriction admitted to His presence.

One day, as the Bab, in the company of Mulla Husayn, was looking out over the landscape of the surrounding country from the roof of the castle, He gazed towards the west and, as He saw the Araxes winding its course far away below Him, turned to Mulla Husayn and said: "That is the river, and this is the bank thereof, of which the poet Hafiz has thus written: 'O zephyr, shouldst thou pass by the banks of the Araxes, implant a kiss on the earth of that valley and make fragrant thy breath.

Hail, a thousand times hail, to thee, O abode of Salma!

How dear is the voice of thy camel-drivers, how sweet the jingling of thy bells!'19 The days of your stay in this country are approaching their end.

But for the shortness of your stay, we would have shown you the 'abode of Salma,' even as we have revealed to your eyes the 'banks of the Araxes.'"

By the "abode of Salma" the Bab meant the town of Salmas, which is situated in the neighbourhood of Chihriq and which the Turks designate as Salmas.

Continuing His remarks, the Bab said: "It is the immediate influence of the

Holy Spirit that causes words such as these to stream from the tongue of poets, the significance of which they themselves are oftentimes unable to apprehend.

The following verse is also divinely inspired: 'Shiraz will be thrown into a tumult; a Youth of sugar-tongue will appear.

I fear lest the breath of His mouth should agitate and upset Baghdad.' The mystery enshrined within this verse is now concealed; it will be revealed in the year after Hin."20 The Bab subsequently quoted this well-known tradition: "Treasures lie hidden beneath the throne [259] of God; the key to those treasures is the tongue of poets."

He then, one after the other, related to Mulla Husayn those events which must needs transpire in the future, and bade him not to mention them to anyone.21 "A few days after your departure from this place," the Bab informed him, "they will transfer Us to another mountain.

Ere you arrive at your destination, the news of Our departure from Mah-Ku will have reached you."

The prediction which the Bab had uttered was promptly fulfilled. Those who had been charged to watch secretly the movements and conduct of 'Ali Khan submitted to Haji Mirza Aqasi a detailed report in which they expatiated upon his extreme devotion to his Prisoner and described such incidents as tended to confirm their statements. "Day and night," they wrote him, "the warden of the castle of Mah-Ku is to be seen associating with his captive in conditions of unrestrained freedom and friendliness. 'Ali Khan, who obstinately refused to wed his daughter with the heir to the throne of Persia, pleading that such an act would so infuriate the sunni relatives of his mother that they would unhesitatingly put him and his daughter to death, now with the keenest eagerness desires that same daughter to be espoused to the Bab. The latter has refused, but 'Ali Khan still persists in his entreaty. But for the prisoner's refusal, the nuptials of the maiden would have been already celebrated." 'Ali Khan had actually made such a request and had even begged Mulla Husayn to intercede in his behalf with the Bab but had failed to obtain His consent.

These malevolent reports had an immediate influence upon Haji Mirza Aqasi. Fear and resentment again impelled that capricious minister to issue a peremptory order for the transference of the Bab to the castle of Chihriq.

Twenty days after Naw-Ruz, the Bab bade farewell to the people of Mah-Ku, who, in the course of His nine months' captivity, had recognised to a remarkable degree the power [260] of His personality and the greatness of His character.

Mulla Husayn, who had already, at the bidding of the Bab, departed from Mah-Ku, was still in Tabriz when the news of his Master's predicted transference to Chihriq reached him.

As the Bab bade His last farewell to Mulla Husayn, He addressed him in these words: "You have walked on foot all the way from your native province to this place.

On foot you likewise must return until you reach your destination; for your days of horsemanship are yet to come.

You are destined to exhibit such courage, such skill and heroism as shall eclipse the mightiest deeds of the heroes of old.

Your daring exploits will win the praise and admiration of the dwellers in the eternal Kingdom.

You should visit, on your way, the believers of Khuy, of Urumiyyih, of Maraghih, of Milan, of Tabriz, of Zanjan, of Qazvin, and of Tihran.

To each you will convey the expression of My love and tender affection.

You will strive to inflame their hearts anew with the fire of the love of the Beauty of God, and will endeavour to fortify their faith in His Revelation.

From Tihran you should proceed to Mazindaran, where God's hidden treasure will be made manifest to you.

You will be called upon to perform deeds so great as will dwarf the mightiest achievements of the past.

The nature of your task will, in that place, be revealed to you, and strength and guidance will be bestowed upon you that you may be fitted to render your service to His Cause."

On the morning of the ninth day after Naw-Ruz, Mulla Husayn set forth, as bidden by his Master, on his journey to Mazindaran. To Qambar-'Ali the Bab addressed these parting words: "The Qambar-'Ali of a bygone age would glory in that his namesake has lived to witness a Day for which even He22 who was the Lord of his lord sighed in vain; of which He, with keen longing, has spoken: 'Would that My eyes could behold the faces of My brethren who have been privileged to attain unto His Day!'"

FOOTNOTES

13.1. Literally "the Open Mountain," allusion to Mah-Ku. The numerical value of "Jabal-i-Basit is equivalent to that of "Mah-Ku."

13.2. Literally "the Grievous Mountain," allusion to Chihrig. The numerical value of "Jabal-i-Shadid" is equivalent to that of "Chihrig."

13.3. Refer to Glossary.

13.4. "He dwells in a mountain of which the inhabitants could not even pronounce the name 'Jannat' (Paradise) which is an Arabic word; how then could they understand its meaning? Imagine then what can happen in the matter of the essential truths!" ("Le Bayan Persan," vol. 4, p. 14.)

13.5. "The country of the first minister on the Adhirbayjan frontier, this village was lifted out of obscurity under the administration of this minister and many citizens of Mah-Ku were raised to the highest offices in the state, because of their slavish attitude toward Haji Mirza Aqasi." (Journal Asiatique,

1866, tome 7, p. 356, note 1.)

13.6. "The Bab himself tells us how he spent his days in the prison in which he was held captive.

His lamentations, so frequent in the Bayan, were, I believe, due to the discipline which, from time to time, grew more severe at the command from Tihran.

All the historians, in fact, Babis as well as Moslem, tell us that in spite of the strict orders to keep the Bab from communicating with the outer world, the Bab received great numbers of disciples and strangers in his prison. (The author of Mutanabbiyyin writes: 'The Babis from all parts of the earth went to Adhirbayjan on a pilgrimage to their chief.') "'Oh!

How great is your blindness, O my children !

That which you do, you do believing to please me!

And in spite of these verses which prove my being, these verses which flow from my power, the treasure of which is the very being of this personage (the Bab), in spite of these verses which come from his lips only by my permission, behold that, without any right whatsoever, you have placed him on the summit of a mountain whose inhabitants are not even worthy of mention.

Close to him, which is close to me, there is no one except one of the Letters of the Living of my book.

In his hands, which are my hands, there is not even a servant to light the lamp at night.

And behold!

The men who are upon the earth have been created only for his own existence: it is through his good will that has come all their joy and they do not give him even a light!' (Unite 2, porte 1.) "'The fruit of the religion of Islam is faith in the Manifestation (of the Bab) and behold they imprison him in Mah-Ku!' (Unite 2, porte 7.) 'All that belongs to the divinely Chosen One is in heaven.

This solitary room (wherein I am) which has not even a door, is today the greatest of the gardens of Paradise, for the Tree of Truth is planted herein.

All the atoms of which it is composed cry out, "In truth, there is no other God but God, and there is no other God beside me, the Lord of the Universe!"' (Unite 2, porte 16.) "'The fruit of this door is that men, seeing that it is permitted to do all that for the Bayan (that is, spend so much money) which is only the foreshadowing of Him whom God shall make manifest, must realize what should be done for Him whom God shall make manifest, when he will appear, so that he will be spared what is happening to me on this day.

That is to say, that there are throughout the world many Qur'ans worth thousands of tumans, while He who has showered verses (the Bab) is imprisoned

on a mountain, in a room built of bricks baked in the sun.

And, notwithstanding, that room is the Arch itself (9th heaven, the abode of Divinity).

Let this be an example to the Bayanis so that they may not act toward Him as the believers in the Qur'an have acted toward me.' (Unite 3, porte 19.)" (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

365-367.) "All believe in Him, and still they have imprisoned him on a mountain!

All are made glad in Him and they have abandoned him!

No fire is fiercer for those who have acted thus than their very works; likewise for the believers no heaven is higher than their own faith!" ("Le Bayan Persan," vol.

1, pp.

126-127.)

13.7. "So great multitudes continued to come from all quarters to visit the Bab, and the writings which emanated from His inspired pen during this period were so numerous that they amounted in all to more than a hundred thousand verses." (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," p. 238.) "Behold, that about one hundred thousand lines similar to these verses have been scattered among men not to mention the prayers and questions of science and philosophy." ("Le Bayan Persan," vol. 1, p. 43.) "Consider also the Point of the Bayan. Those who are familiar with it know how great its importance was before the manifestation; but thereafter, and although it has revealed more than five hundred thousand verses upon diverse subjects, attacks are made upon it which are so violent that no writer would wish to relate them." ("Le Bayan Persan," vol. 3, p. 113.) "The verses which have rained from this Cloud of Divine mercy [the Bab] have been so abundant that none hath yet been able to estimate their number. A score of volumes are now available. How many still remain beyond our reach! How many have been plundered and have fallen into the hands of the enemy, the fate of which none knoweth!" (The "Kitab-i-Iqan," pp. 182-3.)

13.8. Allusion to Baha'u'llah. "To Mulla Baqir, one of the Letters of the Living—the glory and favour of God be upon him—He [the Bab] addresses these words: 'Haply, in the eighth year, the Day of His Manifestation, thou mayest attain His presence.'" ("The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf," p. 129.)

13.9. "It is always in the same line of thought that when imprisoned in Mah-Ku he addressed a long letter to the Shah (Muhammad Shah) which we are about to analyze here.

The document begins like nearly all the literary documents of the Bab with

exalted praise of Divine Unity.

The Bab continues in praising, as is fitting, Muhammad, the twelve Imams, who, as we shall see in the second volume of this work, are cornerstones of the Bayan edifice. 'I affirm,' he exclaims, 'that everything which is in this world of possibilities other than they, is, in comparison, as absolute nothingness, and if one could express it at all, all that is but a shadow of a shadow.

I ask God to pardon me for assigning to them such limits.

In truth, the highest degree of praise which one can confer upon them is to confess in their very presence that it is impossible to praise them.... '"This is why God has created me out of a clay from which no one else has been created.

And God has given me what the learned, with all their science, are unable to understand, what no one can know unless he be completely humbled before my revelation....

Know then in truth, I am a pillar of the first word; whosoever knows that first word has known God wholly, and has entered into the universal good.

Whosoever has refused to know it has remained in ignorance of God and has entered into the universal evil. '"I take God as witness, the Master of the two worlds, he who here below lives as long as nature permits and remains all his life the servant of God in all the works prescribed by true religion, if he entertains in his heart any enmity towards me, even so little that God alone might be aware of it, he is useless and God will prepare for him a punishment; he will be among those destined to die.

God has determined the good which is implied in obedience to me, and all the evil which follows disobedience to my commands.

In truth, today I see all that I have just said; I see the children of my love, the obedient ones in the highest heaven, while my enemies are thrust into the depths of eternal fire! '"By my life, I swear, if I had not been obliged to accept the station of the Hujjat of God, I would not have warned you!'... "It is evident that the Bab re-states his affirmations made in the Kitab-i-baynu'i-Haramayn without addition or retraction. 'I am,' he says, 'the Point from which all being flows.

I am that Face of God which never dies!

I am that Light which is never extinguished!

He who knows me is accompanied with all good, he who rejects me is pursued by evil.

In truth, when Moses besought God that he might gaze upon Him, God radiated upon the mountain and as the hadith explains, "this light, I solemnly affirm was my light."

Do you not see that the numerical value of the letters which make up my name is

equal to the value of those which compose the word Rabb (Lord)?

But has not God said in the Qur'an, "And when your Rabb radiates upon the mountain"?' "The Bab continues with a study of the prophecies contained in the Qur'an and in some of the hadiths concerning the manifestation of the Mihdi.

He relates the celebrated hadith of Mufaddal which is one of the strongest arguments in favor of the truth of his mission. "It is said in the Qur'an, chapter 32, verse 4: 'From the heaven to the earth, He governeth all things; hereafter shall they come up to Him on a day whose length shall be a thousand of such years as ye reckon.' (Note:

J.

M.

Rodwell's translation.) "On the other hand, the last Imam disappeared in the year 260 of the Hegira; it is at that time that the prophetic manifestation is completed and that 'The door of science is closed.' But Mufaddal questioned the Imam Sadiq as to the signs of the coming of the Mihdi and the Imam answered: 'He will appear in the year sixty and his name will be glorified.' This means in the year 1260 which is precisely the year of the manifestation of the Bab. "On this subject Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad said: 'I declare before God I have never been taught and my education has been that of a merchant.

In the year sixty, I felt my heart filled with potent verses, with true knowledge and with the testimony of God and I proclaimed my mission that very year....

That same year I sent you a messenger (Mulla Husayn-i-Bushru'i) carrying a Book, so that the government might fulfill its duty towards the Hujjat.

But the will of God being that civil war should break out which would deafen the ears of men, blind their eyes and crush their hardened hearts, the messenger was not permitted to reach you.

Those who considered themselves patriots intervened and, even today, after a lapse of four years, no one has told you the truth regarding this occurrence.

And now as my time is near and my work is not human but divine, I have written briefly to you. "'If you could know how during these four years your officials and delegates have treated me!

If you knew, the fear of God would choke you unless you would decide immediately to obey the Hujjat and make amends for the harm done. "'I was in Shiraz and I suffered from this evil and accursed governor such tyrannies that, if you knew even the least of them, your sense of justice would exact revenge, because his cruelty has drawn the punishment of heaven even unto the judgment day on the entire empire.

This man, very proud and always inebriated, never gave an intelligent order.

I was forced to leave Shiraz and was on my way to visit you in Tihran, but the

late Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih understood my mission and did what respect for God's elect demands.

The ignorant of the city started an uprising and I, therefore, hid myself in the Palace of Sadr until the death of Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih.

May God reward him!

There is no doubt that his salvation from eternal fire is due to what he has done for me.

Then Gurgin forced me to travel during seven nights with five other men, exposed to every discomfort and brutality and deprived of every necessity.

At last, the Sultan ordered that I should be taken to Mah-Ku without even providing me with a mount.

I finally reached that village whose inhabitants are ignorant and coarse.

I affirm before God, if you knew in what place I dwell, you would be the first to pity me.

It is a dungeon on a mountain top and I owe that to your kindness!

My companions are two men and four dogs.

Imagine how I spend my days!

I thank God as He should be thanked, and I declare before God that he who has thus imprisoned me is satisfied with himself.

And if he only knew who it is he has so treated he would never again taste happiness! "'And now I reveal a secret to you!

This man in imprisoning me has imprisoned all of the prophets, all the saints and him who is filled with divine wisdom.

There is no sin which has not brought me affliction.

When I learned of your command (to take me to Mah-Ku) I wrote to Sadr-i-A'zam: "Kill me and send my head wherever you please, because to live without sin among sinners does not please me."

He did not reply and I am convinced that he did not understand the matter, because to sadden without reason the hearts of the believers is worse than to destroy the very house of God; but I declare that it is I who am today the house of God!

Reward comes to him who is good to me; it is as though he were good to God, to His angels and to His saints.

But perhaps God and His saints are too high above us for the good or evil of men to reach their threshold, but what happens to God, happens to me.

I declare before God that he who has imprisoned me has imprisoned himself; only that which is the will of God can happen to me.

Woe to him whose hand works evil!

Blessed is he who scatters good! "'At last, to sum up this letter already too long:

The late Mu'tamid, one night, dismissed all his guests to retire, even Haji Mulla Ahmad, and then he said to me: "I know very well that all I have acquired has been obtained through force and all that I have belongs to the Sahibu'z-Zaman.

I therefore give it all to thee, thou art the Master of Truth and I ask of thee the privilege of ownership."

He even took the ring off his finger and gave it to me.

I took it and gave it back to him and I sent him away in possession of all his goods.

God is witness of the truth of this testimony.

I do not wish for a dinar of his wealth, that is for you to dispose of; but as, in any dispute, God requires the testimony of two witnesses, from the midst of all the learned, call Siyyid Yahya and Akhund Mulla 'Abdu'l-Khaliq.

They will show you and will explain my verses and the truth of my testimony will appear. "'Of these two personages, one knew me before the manifestation, the other afterward; I have chosen them because they both know me well!' "The letter ends with cabalistic proofs and some hadiths.

It is clear therefore that the Bab was very unhappy in his prison.

He evidently remained there a long time, as the document which we have quoted dates back to 1264, and the execution of the martyr took place only on the twenty-seventh of Sha'ban of the year 1266 (July 8, 1850)." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

367-373.)

13.10. This is the prayer which the Bab Himself quotes in the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih" as His supplication during the months of His captivity in the castle of Mah-Ku: "O my God!

Grant to him, to his descendants, to his family, to his friends, to his subjects, to his relatives and all the inhabitants of the earth the light which will clarify their vision and facilitate their task; grant that they may partake of the noblest works here and hereafter! "In truth, nothing is impossible to Thee. "O my God! give him the power to bring about a revival of Thy religion and give life by him to what Thou hast changed in Thy Book.

Manifest through him Thy new commandments so that through him Thy religion may

blossom again!

Put into his hands a new Book, pure and holy, that this Book may be free from all doubt and uncertainty and that no one may be able to alter or destroy it. "O my God!

Dispel through Thy splendor all darkness and through his evident power do away with the antiquated laws.

By his preeminence ruin those who have not followed the ways of God.

Through him destroy all tyrants, put an end, through his sword, to all discord; annihilate, through his justice, all forms of oppression; render the rulers obedient to his commandments; subordinate all the empires of the world to his empire! "O my God!

Humble everyone who desires to humble him; destroy all his enemies; deny anyone who denies him and confuse anyone who spurns the truth, resists his orders, endeavors to darken his light and blot his name!"

The Bab then adds these words: "Repeat these benedictions often and, if time to recite them all be lacking, do not fail to say at least the last.

Be awake on the day of the apparition of Him whom God will manifest because this prayer has come down from heaven for Him, although I hope no sorrow awaits Him; I have taught the believers in my religion never to rejoice over the misfortune of anyone.

It is possible therefore that at the time of the appearance of the Sun of Truth no suffering may fall upon Him." ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," translation of A.

L.

M.

Nicolas, pp.

64-65.)

13.11. "L'auteur du Mutanabiyyin ecrit: 'Les Babi de toutes les parties de la terre se rendaient en Adhirbayjan, en pelerinage aupres de leur chef.'" (Prince 'Ali-Quli Mirza, I'tidadu's-Saltanih being the author.) (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 365, note 227.)

13.12. December 9, 1847-January 8, 1848 A.D.

13.13. "During his sojourn in Mah-Ku the Bab composed a great number of works, amongst the more important of which may be especially mentioned the Persian Bayan and the Seven Proofs (Dala'il-i-Sab'ih), both of which contain ample internal evidence of having been written at this period.

Indeed, if we may credit a statement made in the Tarikh-i-Jadid on the authority of Mirza 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, the various writings of the Bab current in Tabriz alone amounted in all to not less than a million verses!" ("A

Traveller's Narrative"

Note L, p.

200.) Regarding the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih,"

Nicolas writes as follows: "The Book of Seven Proofs is the most important of the polemical works from the pen of Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad, dit le Bab." (Preface, page 1.) "His correspondent evidently asked him for the proofs of his mission and his answer is admirable for its precision and clearness.

It rests upon two verses of the Qur'an; according to the first, no one can reveal verses even though assisted by the entire world of men and evil spirits; according to the second, no one can understand the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an except God, and men of solid learning." (Preface, p.

5.) "Clearly the arguments of the Bab are new and original and one can see, by this brief reference, of what profound interest must be his literary work.

The scope of my work does not permit me to expound, even briefly, the principal dogmas of a bold doctrine the form of which is both brilliant and attractive.

I hope to do so in the future but I wish to make another comment upon the Book of the Seven Proofs: toward the end of his book, the Bab speaks of the miracles which have accompanied his manifestation.

This will probably astonish the reader, as we have seen the new apostle deny clearly the truth of the physical miracles which the Muhammadan imagination attributes to Muhammad.

He affirms that, for himself as well as for the Arabian Prophet, the only proof of his mission was the outpouring of the verses.

He offers no other proof, not because he is unable to perform miracles—God being all-powerful—but simply because physical marvels are of inferior order in comparison with spiritual miracles." (Preface, pp.

12-13.) ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," translation by A.

L.

M.

Nicolas.)

13.14. "The province had been for some years the scene of serious uprisings.

At the end of 1844 or at the beginning of 1845, the governor of Bujnurd had revolted against the authority of the Shah and had made an alliance with the Turkomans against Persia.

The Prince Asifu'd-Dawlih, governor of Khurasan, asked the capital for assistance.

The general Khan Baba Khan, commander-in-chief of the Persian army, was ordered to send a thousand men against the rebels but the scarcity of public funds

prevented the expedition.

The Shah, therefore, planned to head personally a campaign in the spring.

The preparations began immediately.

Soon ten battalions, of one thousand men each, were ready awaiting the arrival of Prince Hamzih Mirza, appointed general-in-chief of the expedition.

All of a sudden, the governor of Khurasan, Asifu'd-Dawlih, brother of the King's mother, feeling that his security was threatened by the suspicions of the authorities at Tihran, arrived at the court humbly to protest at the feet of the King and to assure him of his complete devotion, and demand that his defamers be punished. "It so happened that the principal one among his adversaries was Haji Mirza Aqasi, the all-powerful prime minister.

A long trial took place which ended with the defeat of the governor and he was ordered to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca with the mother of the King. "The son of Asifu'd-Dawlih, Salar, guardian of the mosque at Mashhad, wealthy in his own right, confident because of his alliance with the chief Kurd, Ja'far-Quli Khan, Ilkhani of the tribe of Qajar, assumed a hostile attitude.

Thereupon 3000 men and 12 pieces of artillery were sent in retaliation and the government of Khurasan was given into the hands of Hamzih Mirza. "The news that Ja'far-Quli Khan, heading a large troop of cavalry, had attacked the royal expedition, caused five more regiments and eighteen additional field pieces to be sent.

On the twenty-eighth of October, 1847, this uprising was completely crushed, through the victory of Shah-rud (September 15) and the defeat and flight of Ja'far-Quli-Khan and of Salar." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

257-258.)

13.15. "Mashhad is the greatest place of pilgrimage in all Persia, Karbila being, as everyone knows in Ottoman territory.

It is in Mashhad that the holy shrine of the Imam Rida is located.

I shall not enlarge upon the hundreds of miracles that have taken place and still take place at this shrine; it is enough to know that every year thousands of pilgrims visit the tomb and return home only after the shrewd exploiters of that productive business have separated them from their last penny.

The stream of gold flows on and on for the benefit of the greedy officials; but these officials need the cooperation of many partners to catch their innumerable dupes in their nets.

This is, without doubt, the best organized industry in Persia.

If one half of the city derives its living from the mosque, the other half is likewise keenly interested in the great concourse of pilgrims.

The merchants, the restaurant and hotel keepers, even the young women who find among the visitors an abundant supply of 'husbands for a day'! "All these people were naturally allied against a missionary whose teachings were threatening their livelihood.

To denounce these abuses in any other city was tolerable but it was quite improper to denounce them where everyone of every class was thriving upon them.

The Imam Mihdi had undoubtedly the right to come but he certainly was a public nuisance.

It may have been very thrilling to undertake with him the conquest of the world, but there was fatigue, risk and danger in the enterprise while now they were enjoying perfect peace in a fine city where one could earn a living with ease and security." (Ibid., pp.

258-259.)

13.16. 1848 A.D.

13.17. See Glossary.

13.18. Literally "Land of Paradise."

13.19. According to Haji Mu'inu's-Saltanih's narrative (pp. 67-8), Mirza Habib-i-Shirazi, better known by the name of Qa'ini, one of the most eminent poets of Persia, was the first to sing the praise of the Bab and to extol the loftiness of His station. A manuscript copy of Qa'ini's poems, containing these verses, was shown to the author of the narrative. The following words, he says, were written at the head of the eulogy: 'In praise of the manifestation of the Siyyid-i-Bab.'

13.20. See note 1, page 18.

13.21. In the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih," the Bab reveals the following: "The hadith 'Adhirbayjan' referring to this matter says: 'The things which will happen in Adhirbayjan are necessary for us, nothing can prevent their occurrence. Remain therefore in your homes, but if you hear that an agitator has appeared then hasten towards him.' And the hadith continues, saying: 'Woe to the Arabs, for the civil war is near!' If, in speaking these last words, the Prophet had intended to refer to his own mission, his statement would have been vain and worthless." ("The Book of Seven Proofs," Nicolas' translation, p. 47.)

13.22. Reference to the Prophet Muhammad.

CHAPTER XIV
MULLA HUSAYN'S JOURNEY TO MAZINDARAN

[261] 'Ali Khan cordially invited Mulla Husayn to tarry a few days in his home before his departure from Mah-Ku. He expressed a keen desire to provide every facility for his journey to Mazindaran. The latter, however, refused to delay

his departure or to avail himself of the means of comfort which 'Ali Khan had so devotedly placed at his disposal.

He, faithful to the instructions he had received, stopped at every town and village that the Bab had directed him to visit, gathered the faithful, conveyed to them the love, the greetings, and the assurances of their beloved Master, quickened afresh their zeal, and exhorted them to remain steadfast in His way. In Tihran he was again privileged to enter the presence of Baha'u'llah and to receive from His hands that spiritual sustenance which enabled him, with such undaunted courage, to brave the perils that so fiercely assailed the closing days of his life.

From Tihran Mulla Husayn proceeded to Mazindaran in eager expectation of witnessing the revelation of the hidden treasure promised to him by his Master. Quddus was at that time living in Barfurush in the home which had originally belonged to his own father. He freely associated with all classes of people, and by the gentleness of his character and the wide range of his learning had won the affection and unqualified admiration of the inhabitants of that town. Upon his arrival in that city, Mulla Husayn went directly to the home of Quddus and was affectionately received by him. Quddus himself waited upon his guest, and did his utmost to provide whatever seemed necessary for his comfort. With his own hands he removed the dust, and washed the blistered skin of his feet. He offered him the seat of honour in the company of his assembled friends, and introduced, with [262] extreme reverence, each of the believers who had gathered to meet him.

On the night of his arrival, as soon as the believers who had been invited to dinner to meet Mulla Husayn had returned to their homes, the host, turning to his guest, enquired whether he would enlighten him more particularly regarding his intimate experiences with the Bab in the castle of Mah-Ku. "Many and diverse," replied Mulla Husayn, "were the things which I heard and witnessed in the course of my nine days' association with Him.

He spoke to me of things relating both directly and indirectly to His Faith.

He gave me, however, no definite directions as to the course I should pursue for the propagation of His Cause.

All He told me was this: 'On your way to Tihran, you should visit the believers in every town and village through which you pass.

From Tihran you should proceed to Mazindaran, for there lies a hidden treasure which shall be revealed to you, a treasure which will unveil to your eyes the character of the task you are destined to perform.' By His allusions I could, however dimly, perceive the glory of His Revelation and was able to discern the signs of the future ascendancy of His Cause.

From His words I gathered that I should eventually be called upon to sacrifice my unworthy self in His path.

For on previous occasions, whenever dismissing me from His presence, the Bab

would invariably assure me that I should again be summoned to meet Him.

This time, however, as He spoke to me His parting words, He gave me no such promise, nor did He allude to the possibility of my ever meeting Him again face to face in this world. 'The Feast of Sacrifice,' were His last words to me, 'is fast approaching.

Arise and gird up the loin of endeavour, and let nothing detain you from achieving your destiny.

Having attained your destination, prepare yourself to receive Us, for We too shall ere long follow you.'"

Quddus enquired whether he had brought with him any of his Master's writings, and, on being informed that he had none with him, presented his guest with the pages of a manuscript which he had in his possession, and requested him to read certain of its passages.

As soon as he had read a page of that manuscript, his countenance underwent a [263] sudden and complete change.

His features betrayed an undefinable expression of admiration and surprise.

The loftiness, the profundity—above all, the penetrating influence of the words he had read, provoked intense agitation in his heart and called forth the utmost praise from his lips.

Laying down the manuscript, he said: "I can well realise that the Author of these words has drawn His inspiration from that Fountainhead which stands immeasurably superior to the sources whence the learning of men is ordinarily derived.

I hereby testify to my whole-hearted recognition of the sublimity of these words and to my unquestioned acceptance of the truth which they reveal."

From the silence which Quddus observed, as well as from the expression which his countenance betokened, Mulla Husayn concluded that no one else except his host could have penned those words.

He instantly arose from his seat and, standing with bowed head at the threshold of the door, reverently declared: "The hidden treasure of which the Bab has spoken, now lies unveiled before my eyes.

Its light has dispelled the gloom of perplexity and doubt.

Though my Master be now hidden amid the mountain fastnesses of Adhirbayjan, the sign of His splendour and the revelation of His might stand manifest before me.

I have found in Mazindaran the reflection of His glory."

How grave, how appalling the mistake of Haji Mirza Aqasi!

This foolish minister had vainly imagined that by condemning the Bab to a life of hopeless exile in a remote and sequestered corner of Adhirbayjan, he would succeed in concealing from the eyes of his countrymen that Flame of God's

undying Fire.

Little did he perceive that by setting up the Light of God upon a hill, he was helping to diffuse its radiance and to proclaim its glory.

By his own acts, by his amazing miscalculations, instead of hiding that heavenly Flame from the eyes of men, he gave it still further prominence and helped to excite its glow.

How fair, on the other hand, was Mulla Husayn, and how keen and sure his judgment!

Of those who had known and seen him, none could for one moment question the erudition of this youth, his charm, his high integrity and amazing courage.

Had he, after the death of Siyyid Kazim, declared himself the promised [264] Qa'im, the most distinguished among his fellow-disciples would have unanimously acknowledged his claim and submitted to his authority.

Had not Mulla Muhammad-i-Mamaqani, that noted and learned disciple of Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i, after he was made acquainted in Tabriz by Mulla Husayn with the claims of the new Revelation, declared: "I take God as my witness!

Had this claim which the Siyyid-i-Bab has made been advanced by this same Mulla Husayn, I would, in view of his remarkable traits of character and breadth of knowledge, have been the first to champion his cause and to proclaim it to all people.

As he, however, has chosen to subordinate himself to another person, I have ceased to have any confidence in his words and have refused to respond to his appeal."

Had not Siyyid Muhammad-Baqir-i-Rashti, when he heard Mulla Husayn so ably resolve the perplexities which had long afflicted his mind, testified in such glowing terms to his high attainments: "I, who fondly imagined myself capable of confounding and silencing Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti, realised, when I first met and conversed with him who claims to be only his humble disciple, how grievously I had erred in my judgment.

Such is the strength with which this youth seems endowed that if he were to declare the day to be night, I would still believe him able to deduce such proofs as would conclusively demonstrate, in the eyes of the learned divines, the truth of his statement."

On the very night he was brought in contact with the Bab, Mulla Husayn, though at first conscious of his own infinite superiority and predisposed to belittle the claims advanced by the son of an obscure merchant of Shiraz, did not fail to perceive, as soon as his Host had begun to unfold His theme, the incalculable benefits latent in His Revelation.

He eagerly embraced His Cause and disdainfully abandoned whatever might hamper his own efforts for the proper understanding and the effective promotion of its interests.

And when, in due course, Mulla Husayn was given the opportunity of appreciating the transcendent sublimity of the writings of Quddus, he, with his usual sagacity and unerring judgment, was likewise able to estimate the true worth and merit of those special gifts with which both the person and the utterance [265] of Quddus were endowed.

The vastness of his own acquired knowledge dwindled into insignificance before the all-encompassing, the God-given virtues which the spirit of this youth displayed.

That very moment, he pledged his undying loyalty to him who so powerfully mirrored forth the radiance of his own beloved Master.

He felt it to be his first obligation to subordinate himself entirely to Quddus, to follow in his footsteps, to abide by his will, and to ensure by every means in his power his welfare and safety.

Until the hour of his martyrdom, Mulla Husayn remained faithful to his pledge.

In the extreme deference which he henceforth showed to Quddus, he was solely actuated by a firm and unalterable conviction of the reality of those supernatural gifts which so clearly distinguished him from the rest of his fellow-disciples.

No other consideration induced him to show such deference and humility in his behaviour towards one who seemed to be but his equal.

Mulla Husayn's keen insight swiftly apprehended the magnitude of the power that lay latent in him, and the nobility of his character impelled him to demonstrate befittingly his recognition of that truth.

Such was the transformation wrought in the attitude of Mulla Husayn towards Quddus that the believers who gathered the next morning at his house were extremely surprised to find that the guest who the night before had occupied the seat of honour, and upon whom had been lavished such kindness and hospitality, had given his seat to his host and was now standing, in his place, at the threshold in an attitude of complete humility.

The first words which, in the company of the assembled believers, Quddus addressed to Mulla Husayn were the following: "Now, at this very hour, you should arise and, armed with the rod of wisdom and of might, silence the host of evil plotters who strive to discredit the fair name of the Faith of God.

You should face that multitude and confound their forces.

You should place your reliance upon the grace of God, and should regard their machinations as a futile attempt to obscure the radiance of the Cause.

You should interview the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama', that notorious and false-hearted tyrant, and should fearlessly disclose to his eyes the distinguishing features of this Revelation.

From thence you should proceed to Khurasan.

In the town [266] of Mashhad, you should build a house so designed as both to serve for our private residence and at the same time afford adequate facilities for the reception of our guests.

Thither we shall shortly journey, and in that house we shall dwell.

To it you shall invite every receptive soul who we hope may be guided to the River of everlasting life.

We shall prepare and admonish them to band themselves together and proclaim the Cause of God."

Mulla Husayn set out the next day at the hour of sunrise to interview the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama'.

Alone and unaided, he sought his presence and conveyed to him, as bidden by Quddus, the Message of the new Day.

With fearlessness and eloquence, he pleaded, in the midst of the assembled disciples, the Cause of his beloved Master, called upon him to demolish those idols which his own idle fancy had carved and to plant upon their shattered fragments the standard of Divine guidance.

He appealed to him to disentangle his mind from the fettering creeds of the past, and to hasten, free and untrammelled, to the shores of eternal salvation.

With characteristic vigour, he defeated every argument with which that specious sorcerer sought to refute the truth of the Divine Message, and exposed, by means of his unanswerable logic, the fallacies of every doctrine that he endeavoured to propound.

Assailed by the fear lest the congregation of his disciples should unanimously rally round the person of Mulla Husayn, the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama' had recourse to the meanest of devices, and indulged in the most abusive language in the hope of safeguarding the integrity of his position.

He hurled his calumnies into the face of Mulla Husayn, and, contemptuously ignoring the proofs and testimonies adduced by his opponent, confidently asserted, without the least justification on his part, the futility of the Cause he had been summoned to embrace.

No sooner had Mulla Husayn realised his utter incapacity to apprehend the significance of the Message he had brought him than he arose from his seat and said: "My argument has failed to rouse you from your sleep of negligence.

My deeds will in the days to come prove to you the power of the Message you have chosen to despise."

He spoke with such vehemence and emotion that the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama' was utterly confounded. [267] Such was the consternation of his soul that he was unable to reply.

Mulla Husayn then turned to a member of that audience who seemed to have felt the influence of his words, and charged him to relate to Quddus the

circumstances of this interview. "Say to him," he added: "'Inasmuch as you did not specifically command me to seek your presence, I have determined to set out immediately for Khurasan.

I proceed to carry out in their entirety those things which you have instructed me to perform.'"

Alone and with a heart wholly detached from all else but God, Mulla Husayn set out on his journey to Mashhad.

His only companion, as he trod his way to Khurasan, was the thought of accomplishing faithfully the wishes of Quddus, and his one sustenance the consciousness of his unfailing promise.

He went directly to the home of Mirza Muhammad-Baqir-i-Qa'ini, and was soon able to buy, in the neighbourhood of that house in Bala-Khiyaban, a tract of land on which he began to erect the house which he had been commanded to build, and to which he gave the name of Babiyyih, a name that it bears to the present day.

Shortly after it was completed, Quddus arrived at Mashhad and abode in that house.

A steady stream of visitors, whom the energy and zeal of Mulla Husayn had prepared for the acceptance of the Faith, poured into the presence of Quddus, acknowledged the claim of the Cause, and willingly enlisted under its banner.

The all-observing vigilance with which Mulla Husayn laboured to diffuse the knowledge of the new Revelation, and the masterly manner in which Quddus edified its ever-increasing adherents, gave rise to a wave of enthusiasm which swept over the entire city of Mashhad, and the effects of which spread rapidly beyond the confines of Khurasan.

The house of Babiyyih was soon converted into a rallying centre for a multitude of devotees who were fired with an inflexible resolve to demonstrate, by every means in their power, the great inherent energies of their Faith.

CHAPTER XV
TAHIRIH'S JOURNEY FROM KARBILA TO KHURASAN

[268] As the appointed hour approached when, according to the dispensations of Providence, the veil which still concealed the fundamental verities of the Faith was to be rent asunder, there blazed forth in the heart of Khurasan a flame of such consuming intensity that the most formidable obstacles standing in the way of the ultimate recognition of the Cause melted away and vanished.1 That fire caused such a conflagration in the hearts of men that the effects of its quickening power were felt in the most outlying provinces of Persia.

It obliterated every trace of the misgivings and doubts which had still lingered in the hearts of the believers, and had hitherto hindered them from apprehending the full measure of its glory.

The decree of the enemy had condemned to perpetual isolation Him who was the

embodiment of the beauty of God, and sought thereby to quench for all time the flame of His love.

The hand of Omnipotence, however, was busily engaged, at a time when the host of evil-doers were darkly plotting against Him, in confounding their schemes and in nullifying their efforts.

In the easternmost province of Persia, the Almighty had, through the hand of Quddus, lit a fire that glowed with the hottest flame in the breasts of the people of Khurasan.

And in Karbila, beyond the western confines of that land, He had kindled the light of Tahirih, a light that was destined to shed its radiance upon the whole of Persia.

From the east [269] and from the west of that country, the voice of the Unseen summoned those twin great lights to hasten to the land of Ta,2 the day-spring of glory, the home of Baha'u'llah.

He bade them each seek the presence, and revolve round the person of that Day-Star of Truth, to seek His advice, to reinforce His efforts, and to prepare the way for His coming Revelation.

In pursuance of the Divine decree, in the days when Quddus was still residing in Mashhad, there was revealed from the pen of the Bab a Tablet addressed to all the believers of Persia, in which every loyal adherent of the Faith was enjoined to "hasten to the Land of Kha," the province of Khurasan.3 The news of this high injunction spread with marvellous rapidity and aroused universal enthusiasm. It reached the ears of Tahirih, who, at that time, was residing in Karbila and was bending every effort to extend the scope of the Faith she had espoused.4 She had left her native town of Qazvin and had arrived, after the death of Siyyid Kazim, at that holy city, in eager expectation of witnessing the signs which the departed siyyid had foretold. In the foregoing pages we have seen how instinctively she had been led to discover the Revelation of the Bab and how spontaneously she had acknowledged its truth. Unwarned and uninvited, she perceived the dawning light of the promised Revelation breaking upon the city of Shiraz, and was prompted to pen her message and plead her fidelity to Him who was the Revealer of that light.

The Bab's immediate response to her declaration of faith which, without attaining His presence, she was moved to make, animated her zeal and vastly increased her courage. She arose to spread abroad His teachings, vehemently denounced the corruption and perversity of her generation, and fearlessly advocated a fundamental revolution in the habits [270] and manners of her people.5 Her indomitable spirit was quickened by the fire of her love for the Bab, and the glory of her vision was further enhanced by the discovery of the inestimable blessings latent in His Revelation. The innate fearlessness and the strength of her character were reinforced a hundredfold by her immovable conviction of the ultimate victory of the Cause she had embraced; and her boundless energy was revitalised by her recognition of the abiding value of the

Mission she had risen to champion. All who met her in Karbila were ensnared by her bewitching eloquence and felt the fascination of her words. None could resist her charm; few could escape the contagion of her belief. All testified to the extraordinary traits of her character, marvelled at her amazing personality, and were convinced of the sincerity of her convictions.

She was able to win to the Cause the revered widow of Siyyid Kazim, who was born in Shiraz, and was the first among the women of Karbila to recognise its truth. I have heard Shaykh Sultan describe her extreme devotion to Tahirih, whom she revered as her spiritual guide and esteemed as her affectionate companion. He was also a fervent admirer of the character of the widow of the Siyyid, to whose gentleness of manner he often paid a glowing tribute. "Such was her attachment to Tahirih," Shaykh Sultan was often heard to remark, "that she was extremely reluctant to allow that heroine who was a guest in her house to absent herself, though it were for an hour, from her presence. So great an attachment on her part did not fail to excite the curiosity and quicken the faith of her women friends, both Persian and Arab, who were constant visitors in her home. In the first year of her acceptance of the Message, she suddenly [271] fell ill, and after the lapse of three days, as had been the case with Siyyid Kazim, she departed this life."

Among the men who in Karbila eagerly embraced, through the efforts of Tahirih, the Cause of the Bab, was a certain Shaykh Salih, an Arab resident of that city who was the first to shed his blood in the path of the Faith, in Tihran. She was so profuse in her praise of Shaykh Salih that a few suspected him of being equal in rank to Quddus. Shaykh Sultan was also among those who fell under the spell of Tahirih. On his return from Shiraz, he identified himself with the Faith, boldly and assiduously promoted its interests, and did his utmost to execute her instructions and wishes. Another admirer was Shaykh Muhammad-i-Shibl, the father of Muhammad-Mustafa, an Arab native of Baghdad who ranked high among the ulamas of that city. By the aid of this chosen band of staunch and able supporters, Tahirih was able to fire the imagination and to enlist the allegiance of a considerable number of the Persian and Arab inhabitants of Iraq, most of whom were led by her to join forces with those of their brethren in Persia who were soon to be called upon to shape by their deeds the destiny, and to seal with their life-blood the triumph, of the Cause of God.

The Bab's appeal, which was originally addressed to His followers in Persia, was soon transmitted to the adherents of His Faith in Iraq. Tahirih gloriously responded. Her example was followed immediately by a large number of her faithful admirers, all of whom expressed their readiness to journey forthwith to Khurasan. The ulamas of Karbila sought to dissuade her from undertaking that journey. Perceiving immediately the motive which prompted them to tender her such advice, and aware of their malignant design, she addressed to each of these sophists a lengthy epistle in which she set forth her motives and exposed their dissimulation.6

[272] From Karbila she proceeded to Baghdad.7 A representative delegation,

consisting of the ablest leaders among the shi'ah, the sunni, the Christian and Jewish communities of that city, sought her presence and endeavoured to convince her of the folly of her actions. She was able, however, to silence their protestations, and astounded them with the force of her argument. Disillusioned and confused, they retired, deeply conscious of their own impotence.8

The ulamas of Kirmanshah respectfully received her and presented her with various tokens of their esteem and admiration.9 In Hamadan,10 however, the ecclesiastical leaders [273] of the city were divided in their attitude towards her.

A few sought privily to provoke the people and undermine her prestige; others were moved to extol openly her virtues and applaud her courage. "It behoves us," these friends declared from their pulpits, "to follow her noble example and reverently to ask her to unravel for us the mysteries of the Qur'an and to resolve the intricacies of the holy Book.

For our highest attainments are but a drop compared to the immensity of her knowledge."

While in Hamadan, Tahirih was met by those whom her father, Haji Mulla Salih, had sent from Qazvin to welcome and urge her, on his behalf, to visit her native town and prolong her stay in their midst.11 She reluctantly consented.

Ere she departed, she bade those who had accompanied her from Iraq to proceed to their native land.

Among them were Shaykh Sultan, Shaykh Muhammad-i-Shibl and his youthful son, Muhammad-Mustafa, 'Abid and his son Nasir, who subsequently was given the name of Haji 'Abbas.

Those of her companions who had been living in Persia, such as Siyyid Muhammad-i-Gulpayigani, whose pen-name was Ta'ir, and whom Tahirih had styled Fata'l-Malih, and others were also bidden to return to their homes.

Only two of her companions remained with her—Shaykh Salih and Mulla Ibrahim-i-Gulpayigani, both of whom quaffed the cup of martyrdom, the first in Tihran and the other in Qazvin.

Of her own kinsmen, Mirza Muhammad-'Ali, one of the Letters of the Living and her brother-in-law, and Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Hadi, who had been betrothed to her daughter, travelled with her all the way from Karbila to Qazvin.

On her arrival at the house of her father, her cousin, the haughty and false-hearted Mulla Muhammad, son of Mulla Taqi, who esteemed himself, next to his father and his uncle, the most accomplished of all the mujtahids of Persia, sent certain ladies of his own household to persuade Tahirih to transfer her residence from her father's house to his own. "Say to my presumptuous and arrogant kinsman," was her bold reply to the messengers: "'If your desire had really been to be a faithful mate and companion to me, you would have hastened to meet me in Karbila and would on foot have

[275] guided my howdah12 all the way to Qazvin. I would, while journeying with you, have aroused you from your sleep of heedlessness and would have shown you the way of truth. But this was not to be. Three years have elapsed since our separation. Neither in this world nor in the next can I ever be associated with you. I have cast you out of my life for ever.'"

So stern and unyielding a reply roused both Mulla Muhammad and his father to a burst of fury. They immediately pronounced her a heretic, and strove day and night to undermine her position and to sully her fame. Tahirih vehemently defended herself and persisted in exposing the depravity of their character.13 Her father, a peace-loving and fair-minded [276] man, deplored this acrimonious dispute and endeavoured to bring about a reconciliation and harmony between them, but failed in his efforts.

This state of tension continued until the time when a certain Mulla 'Abdu'llah, a native of Shiraz and fervent admirer of both Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim, arrived in Qazvin at the beginning of the month of Ramadan, in the year 1263 A.H.14 Subsequently, in the course of his trial in Tihran, in the presence of the Sahib-Divan, this same Mulla 'Abdu'llah recounted the following: "I have never been a convinced Babi. When I arrived at Qazvin, I was on my way to Mah-Ku, intending to visit the Bab and investigate the nature of His Cause. On the day of my arrival at Qazvin, I became aware that the town was in a great state of turmoil. As I was passing through the market-place, I saw a crowd of ruffians who had stripped a man of his head-dress and shoes, had wound his turban around his neck, and by it were dragging him through the streets. An angry multitude was tormenting him with their threats, their blows and curses. 'His unpardonable guilt,' I was told in answer to my enquiry, 'is that he has dared to extol in public the virtues of Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim. Accordingly, Haji Mulla Taqi, the Hujjatu'l-Islam, has pronounced him a heretic and decreed his expulsion from the town.'

"I was amazed at the explanation given me. How could a shaykhi, I thought to myself, be regarded as a heretic and be deemed worthy of such cruel treatment? Desirous of ascertaining from Mulla Taqi himself the truth of this report, I betook myself to his school and asked whether he had actually pronounced such a condemnation against him. 'Yes,' he bluntly replied, 'the god whom the late Shaykh Ahmad-i-Bahrayni worshipped is a god in whom I can never believe. Him as well as his followers I regard as the very embodiments of error.' I was moved that very moment to smite his face in the presence of his assembled disciples. I restrained myself, however, and vowed that, God willing, I would pierce his lips with my spear so that he would never be again able to utter such blasphemy.

"I straightway left his presence and directed my steps [277] towards the market, where I bought a dagger and a spear-head of the sharpest and finest steel. I concealed them in my bosom, ready to gratify the passion that burned within me. I was waiting for my opportunity when, one night, I entered the masjid in which he was wont to lead the congregation in prayer. I waited until the hour of dawn, at which time I saw an old woman enter the masjid, carrying

with her a rug, which she spread over the floor of the mihrab.15 Soon after, I saw Mulla Taqi enter alone, walk to the mihrab, and offer his prayer. Cautiously and quietly, I followed him and stood behind him. He was prostrating himself on the floor, when I rushed upon him, drew out my spear-head, and plunged it into the back of his neck. He uttered a loud cry. I threw him on his back and, unsheathing my dagger, drove it hilt-deep into his mouth. With the same dagger, I struck him at several places in his breast and side, and left him bleeding in the mihrab.

"I ascended immediately the roof of the masjid and watched the frenzy and agitation of the multitude.

A crowd rushed in and, placing him upon a litter, transported him to his house.

Unable to identify the murderer, the people seized the occasion to gratify their basest instincts.

They rushed at one another's throats, violently attacked and mutually accused one another in the presence of the governor.

Finding out that a large number of innocent people had been gravely molested and thrown into prison, I was impelled by the voice of my conscience to confess my act.

I accordingly besought the presence of the governor and said to him: 'If I deliver into your hands the author of this murder, will you promise me to set free all the innocent people who are suffering in his place?' No sooner had I obtained from him the necessary assurance than I confessed to him that I had committed the deed.

He was not disposed at first to believe me.

At my request, he summoned the old woman who had spread the rug in the mihrab, but refused to be convinced by the evidence which she gave.

I was finally conducted to the bedside of Mulla Taqi, who was on the point of death.

As soon as he saw me, he recognised my features.

In his agitation, he pointed with his finger to [278] me, indicating that I had attacked him.

He signified his desire that I be taken away from his presence.

Shortly after, he expired.

I was immediately arrested, was convicted of murder, and thrown into prison.

The governor, however, failed to keep his promise and refused to release the prisoners."

The candour and sincerity of Mulla 'Abdu'llah greatly pleased the Sahib-Divan. He gave secret orders to his attendants to enable him to escape from prison. At the hour of midnight, the prisoner took refuge in the home of Rida

Khan-i-Sardar, who had recently been married to the sister of the Sipah-Salar, and remained concealed in that house until the great struggle of Shaykh Tabarsi, when he determined to throw in his lot with the heroic defenders of the fort. He, as well as Rida Khan, who followed him to Mazindaran, quaffed eventually the cup of martyrdom.

The circumstances of the murder fanned to fury the wrath of the lawful heirs of Mulla Taqi, who now determined to wreak their vengeance upon Tahirih. They succeeded in having her placed in the strictest confinement in the house of her father, and charged those women whom they had selected to watch over her, not to allow their captive to leave her room except for the purpose of performing her daily ablutions. They accused her of really being the instigator of the crime. "No one else but you," they asserted, "is guilty of the murder of our father. You issued the order for his assassination." Those whom they had arrested and confined were conducted by them to Tihran and were incarcerated in the home of one of the kad-khudas16 of the capital. The friends and heirs of Mulla Taqi scattered themselves in all directions, denouncing their captives as the repudiators of the law of Islam and demanding that they be immediately put to death.

Baha'u'llah, who was at that time residing in Tihran, was informed of the plight of these prisoners who had been the companions and supporters of Tahirih. As He was already acquainted with the kad-khuda in whose home they were incarcerated, He decided to visit them and intervene in their behalf. That avaricious and deceitful official, who was fully aware of the extreme generosity of Baha'u'llah, greatly exaggerated, [279] in the hope of deriving a substantial pecuniary advantage for himself, the misfortune that had befallen the unhappy captives. "They are destitute of the barest necessities of life," urged the kad-khuda. "They hunger for food, and their clothing is wretchedly scanty." Baha'u'llah extended immediate financial assistance for their relief, and urged the kad-khuda to relax the severity of the rule under which they were confined. The latter consented to relieve a few who were unable to support the oppressive weight of their chains, and for the rest did whatever he could to alleviate the rigour of their confinement. Prompted by greed, he informed his superiors of the situation, and emphasised the fact that both food and money were being regularly supplied by Baha'u'llah for those who were imprisoned in his house.

These officials were in their turn tempted to derive every possible advantage from the liberality of Baha'u'llah.

They summoned Him to their presence, protested against His action, and accused Him of complicity in the act for which the captives had been condemned. "The kad-khuda," replied Baha'u'llah, "pleaded their cause before Me and enlarged upon their sufferings and needs.

He himself bore witness to their innocence and appealed to Me for help.

In return for the aid which, in response to his invitation, I was impelled to extend, you now charge Me with a crime of which I am innocent."

Hoping to intimidate Baha'u'llah by threatening immediate punishment, they refused to allow Him to return to His home.

The confinement to which He was subjected was the first affliction that befell Baha'u'llah in the path of the Cause of God; the first imprisonment He suffered for the sake of His loved ones.

He remained in captivity for a few days, until Ja'far-Quli Khan, the brother of Mirza Aqa Khan-i-Nuri, who at a later time was appointed Grand Vazir of the Shah, and a number of other friends intervened in His behalf and, threatening the kad-khuda in severe language, were able to effect His release.

Those who had been responsible for His confinement had confidently hoped to receive, in return for His deliverance, the sum of one thousand tumans,17 but they soon found out that they were forced to comply with the wishes of Ja'far-Quli Khan without [280] the hope of receiving, either from him or from Baha'u'llah, the slightest reward.

With profuse apologies and with the utmost regret, they surrendered their Captive into his hands.

The heirs of Mulla Taqi were in the meantime bending every effort to avenge the blood of their distinguished kinsman. Unsatisfied with what they had already accomplished, they directed their appeal to Muhammad Shah himself, and endeavoured to win his sympathy to their cause. The Shah is reported to have returned this answer: "Your father, Mulla Taqi, surely could not have claimed to be superior to the Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful. Did not the latter instruct his disciples that, should he fall a victim to the sword of Ibn-i-Muljam, the murderer alone should, by his death, be made to atone for his act, that no one else but he should be put to death? Why should not the murder of your father be similarly avenged? Declare to me his murderer, and I will issue my orders that he be delivered into your hands in order that you may inflict upon him the punishment which he deserves."

The uncompromising attitude of the Shah induced them to abandon the hopes which they had cherished. They declared Shaykh Salih to be the murderer of their father, obtained his arrest, and ignominiously put him to death. He was the first to shed his blood on Persian soil in the path of the Cause of God; the first of that glorious company destined to seal with their life-blood the triumph of God's holy Faith. As he was being conducted to the scene of his martyrdom, his face glowed with zeal and joy. He hastened to the foot of the gallows and met his executioner as if he were welcoming a dear and lifelong friend. Words of triumph and hope fell unceasingly from his lips. "I discarded," he cried, with exultation, as his end approached, "the hopes and the beliefs of men from the moment I recognised Thee, Thou who art my Hope and my Belief!" His remains were interred in the courtyard of the shrine of the Imam-Zadih Zayd in Tihran.

The unsatiable hatred that animated those who had been responsible for the martyrdom of Shaykh Salih impelled them to seek additional instruments for the

furtherance of their designs. Haji Mirza Aqasi, whom the Sahib-Divan had succeeded in convincing of the treacherous conduct of the heirs [281] of Mulla Taqi, refused to entertain their appeal. Undeterred by his refusal, they submitted their case to the Sadr-i-Ardibili, a man notoriously presumptuous and one of the most arrogant among the ecclesiastical leaders of Persia. "Behold," they pleaded, "the indignity that has been inflicted upon those whose supreme function it is to keep guard over the integrity of the Law. How can you, who are its chief and illustrious exponent, allow so grave an affront to its dignity to remain unpunished? Are you really incapable of avenging the blood of that slaughtered minister of the Prophet of God? Do you not realise that to tolerate such a heinous crime would in itself unloose a flood of calumny against those who are the chief repositories of the teachings and principles of our Faith? Will not your silence embolden the enemies of Islam to shatter the structure which your own hands have reared? As a result, will not your own life be endangered?"

The Sadr-i-Ardibili was sore afraid, and in his impotence sought to beguile his sovereign. He addressed the following request to Muhammad Shah: "I would humbly implore your Majesty to allow the captives to accompany the heirs of that martyred leader on their return to Qazvin, that these may, of their own accord, forgive them publicly their action, and enable them to recover their freedom. Such a gesture on their part will considerably enhance their position and will win them the esteem of their countrymen." The Shah, wholly unaware of the mischievous designs of that crafty plotter, immediately granted his request, on the express condition that a written statement be sent to him from Qazvin assuring him that the condition of the prisoners after their freedom was entirely satisfactory, and that no harm was likely to befall them in the future.

No sooner were the captives delivered into the hands of the mischief-makers than they set about gratifying their feelings of implacable hatred towards them. On the first night after they had been handed over to their enemies, Haji Asadu'llah, the brother of Haji Allah-Vardi and paternal uncle of Muhammad-Hadi and Muhammad-Javad-i-Farhadi, a noted merchant of Qazvin who had acquired a reputation for piety and uprightness which stood as high as that of his illustrious brother, was mercilessly put to death. Knowing [282] full well that in his own native town they would be unable to inflict upon him the punishment they desired, they determined to take his life whilst in Tihran in a manner that would protect them from the suspicion of murder. At the hour of midnight, they perpetrated the shameful act, and, the next morning, announced that illness had been the cause of his death. His friends and acquaintances, mostly natives of Qazvin, none of whom had been able to detect the crime that had extinguished such a noble life, accorded him a burial that befitted his station.

The rest of his companions, among whom were Mulla Tahir-i-Shirazi and Mulla Ibrahim-i-Mahallati, both of whom were greatly esteemed for their learning and character, were savagely put to death immediately after their arrival at

Qazvin. The entire population, which had been sedulously instigated beforehand, clamoured for their immediate execution. A band of shameless scoundrels, armed with knives, swords, spears, and axes, fell upon them and tore them to pieces. They mutilated their bodies with such wanton barbarity that no fragment of their scattered members could be found for burial.

Gracious God!

Acts of such incredible savagery have been perpetrated in a town like Qazvin, which prides itself on the fact that no less than a hundred of the highest ecclesiastical leaders of Islam dwell within its gates, and yet none could be found among all its inhabitants to raise his voice in protest against such revolting murders!

No one seemed to question their right to perpetrate such iniquitous and shameless deeds.

No one seemed to be aware of the utter incompatibility between such ferocious deeds committed by those who claimed to be the sole repositories of the mysteries of Islam, and the exemplary conduct of those who first manifested its light to the world.

No one was moved to exclaim indignantly: "O evil and perverse generation!

To what depths of infamy and shame you have sunk!

Have not the abominations which you have wrought surpassed in their ruthlessness the acts of the basest of men?

Will you not recognise that neither the beasts of the field nor any moving thing on earth has ever equalled the ferociousness of your acts?

How long is your heedlessness to last?

Is it not your [283] belief that the efficacy of every congregational prayer is dependent upon the integrity of him who leads that prayer?

Have you not again and again declared that no such prayer is acceptable in the sight of God until and unless the imam who leads the congregation has purged his heart from every trace of malice?

And yet you deem those who instigate and share in the performance of such atrocities to be the true leaders of your Faith, the very embodiments of fairness and justice.

Have you not committed to their hands the reins of your Cause and regarded them as the masters of your destinies?"

The news of this outrage reached Tihran and spread with bewildering rapidity throughout the city. Haji Mirza Aqasi vehemently protested. "In what passage of the Qur'an," he is reported to have exclaimed, "in which tradition of Muhammad, has the massacre of a number of people been justified in order to avenge the murder of a single person?" Muhammad Shah also expressed his strong disapproval of the treacherous conduct of the Sadr-i-Ardibili and his confederates. He

denounced his cowardice, banished him from the capital, and condemned him to a life of obscurity in Qum. His degradation from office pleased immensely the Grand Vazir, who had hitherto laboured in vain to bring about his downfall, and whom his sudden removal from Tihran relieved of the apprehensions which the extension of his authority had inspired. His own denunciation of the massacre of Qazvin was prompted, not so much by his sympathy with the Cause of the defenceless victims, as by his hope of involving the Sadr-i-Ardibili in such embarrassments as would inevitably disgrace him in the eyes of his sovereign.

The failure of the Shah and of his government to inflict immediate punishment upon the malefactors encouraged them to seek further means for the gratification of their relentless hatred towards their opponents. They now directed their attention to Tahirih herself, and resolved that she should suffer at their hands the same fate that had befallen her companions. While still in confinement, Tahirih, as soon as she was informed of the designs of her enemies, addressed the following message to Mulla Muhammad, who had succeeded to the position of his father and was now recognised [284] as the Imam-Jum'ih of Qazvin: "'Fain would they put out God's light with their mouths: but God only desireth to perfect His light, albeit the infidels abhor it.'18 If my Cause be the Cause of Truth, if the Lord whom I worship be none other than the one true God, He will, ere nine days have elapsed, deliver me from the yoke of your tyranny. Should He fail to achieve my deliverance, you are free to act as you desire. You will have irrevocably established the falsity of my belief." Mulla Muhammad, recognising his inability to accept so bold a challenge, chose to ignore entirely her message, and sought by every cunning device to accomplish his purpose.

In those days, ere the hour which Tahirih had fixed for her deliverance had struck, Baha'u'llah signified His wish that she should be delivered from her captivity and brought to Tihran.

He determined to establish, in the eyes of the adversary, the truth of her words, and to frustrate the schemes which her enemies had conceived for her death.

Muhammad-Hadiy-i-Farhadi was accordingly summoned by Him and was entrusted with the task of effecting her immediate transference to His own home in Tihran.

Muhammad-Hadi was charged to deliver a sealed letter to his wife, Khatun-Jan, and instruct her to proceed, in the guise of a beggar, to the house where Tahirih was confined; to deliver the letter into her hands; to wait awhile at the entrance of her house, until she should join her, and then to hasten with her and commit her to his care. "As soon as Tahirih has joined you,"

Baha'u'llah urged the emissary, "start immediately for Tihran.

This very night, I shall despatch to the neighbourhood of the gate of Qazvin an attendant, with three horses, that you will take with you and station at a place that you will appoint outside the walls of Qazvin.

You will conduct Tahirih to that spot, will mount the horses, and will, by an

unfrequented route, endeavour to reach at daybreak the outskirts of the capital.

As soon as the gates are opened, you must enter the city and proceed immediately to My house.

You should exercise the utmost caution lest her identity be disclosed.

The Almighty will assuredly guide your steps and will surround you with His unfailing protection."

[285] Fortified by the assurance of Baha'u'llah, Muhammad-Hadi set out immediately to carry out the instructions he had received. Unhampered by any obstacle, he, ably and faithfully, acquitted himself of his task, and was able to conduct Tahirih safely, at the appointed hour, to the home of his Master. Her sudden and mysterious removal from Qazvin filled her friends and foes alike with consternation. The whole night, they searched the houses and were baffled in their efforts to find her. The fulfilment of the prediction she had uttered astounded even the most sceptical among her opponents. A few were made to realise the supernatural character of the Faith she had espoused, and submitted willingly to its claims. Mirza 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, her own brother, acknowledged, that very day, the truth of the Revelation, but failed to demonstrate subsequently by his acts the sincerity of his belief.19

The hour which Tahirih had fixed for her deliverance found her already securely established under the sheltering shadow of Baha'u'llah.

She knew full well into whose presence she had been admitted; she was profoundly aware of the sacredness of the hospitality she had been so graciously accorded.20 As it was with her acceptance of the Faith proclaimed by the Bab when she, unwarned and unsummoned, had hailed His Message and recognised its truth, so did she perceive through her own intuitive knowledge the future glory of Baha'u'llah.

It was in the year '60, while in Karbila, that she alluded in her odes to her recognition of the Truth He was to reveal.

I have myself been shown in Tihran, in the [286] home of Siyyid Muhammad, whom Tahirih had styled Fata'l-Malih, the verses which she, in her own handwriting, had penned, every letter of which bore eloquent testimony to her faith in the exalted Missions of both the Bab and Baha'u'llah.

In that ode the following verse occurs: "The effulgence of the Abha Beauty hath pierced the veil of night; behold the souls of His lovers dancing, moth-like, in the light that has flashed from His face!"

It was her steadfast conviction in the unconquerable power of Baha'u'llah that prompted her to utter her prediction with such confidence, and to fling her challenge so boldly in the face of her enemies.

Nothing short of an immovable faith in the unfailing efficacy of that power could have induced her, in the darkest hours of her captivity, to assert with

such courage and assurance the approach of her victory.

A few days after Tahirih's arrival at Tihran, Baha'u'llah decided to send her to Khurasan in the company of the believers who were preparing to depart for that province. He too had determined to leave the capital and take the same direction a few days later. He accordingly summoned Aqay-i-Kalim and instructed him to take immediately the necessary measures to ensure the removal of Tahirih, together with her woman attendant, Qanitih, to a place outside the gate of the capital, from whence they were, later on, to proceed to Khurasan. He cautioned him to exercise the utmost care and vigilance lest the guards who were stationed at the entrance of the city, and who had been ordered to refuse the passage of women through the gates without a permit, should discover her identity and prevent her departure.

I have heard Aqay-i-Kalim recount the following: "Putting our trust in God, we rode out, Tahirih, her attendant, and I, to a place in the vicinity of the capital. None of the guards who were stationed at the gate of Shimiran raised the slightest objection, nor did they enquire regarding our destination. At a distance of two farsangs21 from the capital, we alighted in the midst of an orchard abundantly watered and situated at the foot of a mountain, in the centre of which was a house that seemed completely deserted. As I went about in search of the proprietor, I chanced to meet an old [287] man who was watering his plants. In answer to my enquiry, he explained that a dispute had arisen between the owner and his tenants, as a result of which those who occupied the place had deserted it. 'I have been asked by the owner,' he added, 'to keep guard over this property until the settlement of the dispute.' I was greatly delighted with the information he gave me, and asked him to share with us our luncheon. When, later in the day, I decided to depart for Tihran, I found him willing to watch over and guard Tahirih and her attendant. As I committed them to his care, I assured him that I would either myself return that evening or send a trusted attendant whom I would follow the next morning with all the necessary requirements for the journey to Khurasan.

"Upon my arrival at Tihran, I despatched Mulla Baqir, one of the Letters of the Living, together with an attendant, to join Tahirih. I informed Baha'u'llah of her safe departure from the capital. He was greatly pleased at the information I gave Him, and named that orchard 'Bagh-i-Jannat.'22 'That house,' He remarked, 'has been providentially prepared for your reception, that you may entertain in it the loved ones of God.'

"Tahirih tarried seven days in that spot, after which she set out, accompanied by Muhammad-Hasan-i-Qazvini, surnamed Fata, and a few others, in the direction of Khurasan. I was commanded by Baha'u'llah to arrange for her departure and to provide whatever might be required for her journey."

FOOTNOTES

15.1. "It will surprise no one to learn," writes Clement Huart, "that the new sect spread more rapidly in Khurasan than it had anywhere else. Khurasan has been singularly fortunate in that she has always offered to new ideas the most

propitious field. It is out of this province that came many evolutions which caused fundamental changes in the Muhammadan Orient. It is enough to recall that in Khurasan the idea of the Persian renovation originated after the Arabian conquest. It was there likewise that the army was organized which, under the orders of Abu-Muslim placed the Abbassides upon the throne of the Khalifs by overthrowing the aristocracy of Mecca which had occupied it since the accession of the Umayyads." ("La Religion de Bab," pp. 18-19.)

15.2. Tihran.

15.3. "It is believed," writes Lieut.-Col. P. M. Sykes, "that the twelfth Imam never died, but in A.H. 260 (873) disappeared into miraculous concealment, from which he will reappear on the Day of Judgment in the mosque of Gawhar-Shad at Mashhad, to be hailed as the Mihdi or 'Guide' and to fill the earth with justice." ("A History of Persia," vol. 2, p. 45.)

15.4. According to Muhammad Mustafa (p. 108), Tahirih arrived in Karbila in the year 1263 A.H. She visited Kufih and the surrounding district, and was engaged in spreading the teachings of the Bab. She shared with the people whom she met the writings of her Master, among which was His commentary on the Surih of Kawthar.

15.5. "It was in her own family that she heard, for the first time, of the preaching of the Bab at Shiraz and learned the meaning of his doctrines. This knowledge, even incomplete and imperfect as it was, pleased her extremely; she began to correspond with the Bab and soon espoused all his ideas. She did not content herself with a passive sympathy but confessed openly the faith of her Master. She denounced not only polygamy but the use of the veil and showed her face uncovered in public to the great amazement and scandal of her family and of all the sincere Mussulmans but to the applause of many other fellow citizens who shared her enthusiasm and whose numbers grew as a result of her preaching. Her uncle the doctor, her father the jurist, and her husband tried in every way to bring her back at least to a conduct more calm and more reserved. She rebuffed them with arguments inspired by a faith incapable of placid resignation." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 137-138.)

15.6. According to Samandar (manuscript, p. 9), the main reason for the agitation of the people of Karbila which induced them to accuse Tahirih before the governor of Baghdad was her bold action in disregarding the anniversary of the martyrdom of Husayn which was being commemorated in the early days of the month of Muharram in the house of the late Siyyid Kazim in Karbila, and in celebrating instead the anniversary of the birthday of the Bab, which fell on the first day of that month. She is reported to have asked her sister and relatives to discard their mourning garb and wear instead gay attire, in open defiance of the customs and traditions of the people on that occasion.

15.7. According to Muhammad Mustafa (pp.

108-9), the following disciples and companions were with Tahirih when she

arrived in Baghdad:

Mulla Ibrahim-i-Mahallati, Shaykh Salih-i-Karimi, Siyyid Ahmad-i-Yazdi (father of Siyyid Husayn, the amanuensis of the Bab) Siyyid Muhammad-i-Bayigani, Shaykh Sultan-i-Karbila'i, the mother of Mulla Husayn and her daughter, the wife of Mirza Hadiy-i-Nahri and his mother.

According to the "Kashfu'l-Ghita'" (p.

94), the mother and sister of Mulla Husayn were among the ladies and disciples who accompanied Tahirih on her journey from Karbila to Baghdad.

On their arrival, they took up their quarters in the house of Shaykh Muhammad-ibn-i-Shiblu'l-'Araqi, after which they were transferred, by order of the governor of Baghdad, to the house of the Mufti, Siyyid Mahmud-i-Alusi, the well-known author of the celebrated commentary entitled "Ruhu'l-Ma'ani," pending the receipt of fresh instructions from the Sultan in Constantinople.

The "Kashfu'l-Ghita'" further adds (p.

96) that in the "Ruhu'l-Ma'ani" references are reported to have been found to the conversations which the Mufti had had with Tahirih, to whom, it is reported, he addressed these words: "O Qurratu'l-'Ayn!

I swear by God that I share in thy belief.

I am apprehensive, however, of the swords of the family of 'Uthman." "She proceeded directly to the house of the chief Mufti, before whom she defended her creed and her conduct with great ability.

The question whether she should be allowed to continue her teaching was submitted first to the Pasha of Baghdad and then to the central government, the result being that she was ordered to leave Turkish territory." ("A Traveller's Narrative,"

Note Q, p.

310.)

15.8. According to Muhammad Mustafa (p. 111), the following accompanied Tahirih from Khaniqin (on the Persian frontier) to Kirmanshah: Shaykh Salih-i-Karimi, Shaykh Muhammad-i-Shibl, Shaykh Sultan-i-Karbila'i, Siyyid Ahmad-i-Yazdi, Siyyid Muhammad-i-Bayigani, Siyyid Muhsin-i-Kazimi, Mulla Ibrahim-i-Mahallati, and about thirty Arab believers. They tarried three days in the village of Karand, where Tahirih fearlessly proclaimed the teachings of the Bab and was highly successful in awakening the interest of all classes of people in the new Revelation. Twelve hundred persons are reported to have volunteered to follow her and do her bidding.

15.9. According to Muhammad Mustafa (p. 112), an enthusiastic reception was accorded her on her arrival in Kirmanshah. Princes, ulamas, and government officials hastened to visit her, and were greatly impressed by her eloquence, her fearlessness, her extensive knowledge, and the force of her character. The

commentary on the Surih of Kawthar, revealed by the Bab, was publicly read and translated. The wife of the Amir, the governor of Kirmanshah, was among the ladies who met Tahirih and heard her expound the sacred teachings. The Amir himself, together with his family, acknowledged the truth of the Cause and testified to their admiration and love for Tahirih. According to Muhammad Mustafa (p. 116), Tahirih tarried two days in the village of Sahnih on her way to Hamadan, where she was accorded a reception no less enthusiastic than the one which had greeted her in the village of Karand. The inhabitants of the village begged to be allowed to gather together the members of their community and to join hands with the body of her followers for the spread and promotion of the Cause. She advised them, however, to remain, extolled and blessed their efforts, and proceeded to Hamadan.

15.10. According to the "Memorials of the Faithful" (p. 275), Tahirih tarried two months in Hamadan.

15.11. According to Muhammad Mustafa (p. 117), among those who had been sent from Qazvin were the brothers of Tahirih.

15.12. See Glossary.

15.13. "How could it be that a woman, in Persia where woman is considered so weak a creature, and above all in a city like Qazvin, where the clergy possessed so great an influence, where the ulamas, by their number and importance attracted the attention of the government and of the people, how could it be that there, precisely under such untoward circumstances, a woman could have organized so strong a group of heretics? There lies a question which puzzles even the Persian historian, Sipihr, for such an occurrence was without precedent!" (Journal Asiatique, 1866, tome 7, p. 474.)

15.14. August 13-September 12, 1847 A.D.

15.15. See Glossary.

15.16. See Glossary.

15.17. See Glossary.

15.18. Qur'an, 9:33.

15.19. According to the "Kashfu'l-Ghita'" (p. 110), Mulla Husayn is reported by Mulla Ja'far-i-Va'iz-i-Qazvini to have met Tahirih in Qazvin at the home of Aqa Hadi, who is probably none other than Muhammad Hadiy-i-Farhadi, who was commissioned by Baha'u'llah to conduct Tahirih to Tihran. The meeting is stated to have taken place prior to the murder of Mulla Taqi.

15.20. 'Abdu'l-Baha relates, in the "Memorials of the Faithful" (p. 306), the circumstances of a visit paid by Vahid to Tahirih, while the latter was staying in the home of Baha'u'llah in Tihran. "Tahirih," He writes, "was listening from behind the veil to the utterances of Vahid, who was discoursing with fervour and eloquence on the signs and verses that bore witness to the advent of the new Manifestation. I was then a child and was sitting on her lap, as she

followed the recital of the remarkable testimonies which flowed ceaselessly from the lips of that learned man. I well remember how she suddenly interrupted him and, raising her voice, vehemently declared: 'O Yahya! Let deeds, not words, testify to thy faith, if thou art a man of true learning. Cease idly repeating the traditions of the past, for the day of service, of steadfast action, is come. Now is the time to show forth the true signs of God, to rend asunder the veils of idle fancy, to promote the Word of God, and to sacrifice ourselves in His path. Let deeds, not words, be our adorning.'"

15.21. See Glossary.

15.22. "Garden of Paradise."

CHAPTER XVI
THE CONFERENCE OF BADASHT

[289] Soon after Tahirih had started on her journey, Baha'u'llah instructed Aqay-i-Kalim to complete the necessary preparations for His contemplated departure for Khurasan. He committed to his care His family and asked him to provide whatever might be conducive to their well-being and safety.

When He arrived at Shah-Rud, He was met by Quddus, who had left Mashhad, where he had been residing, and had come to welcome Him as soon as he had heard of His approach. The whole province of Khurasan was in those days in the throes of a violent agitation. The activities which Quddus and Mulla Husayn had initiated, their zeal, their courage, their outspoken language, had aroused the people from their lethargy, had kindled in the hearts of some the noblest sentiments of faith and devotion, and had provoked in the breasts of others the instincts of passionate fanaticism and malice. A multitude of seekers constantly poured from every direction into Mashhad, eagerly sought the residence of Mulla Husayn, and through him were ushered into the presence of Quddus.

Their numbers soon swelled to such proportions as to excite the apprehension of the authorities. The chief constable viewed with concern and dismay the crowds of agitated people who streamed unceasingly into every quarter of the holy city. In his desire to assert his rights, intimidate Mulla Husayn, and induce him to curtail the scope of his activities, he issued orders to arrest immediately the latter's special attendant, whose name was Hasan, and subject him to cruel and shameful treatment. They pierced his nose, passed a cord through the incision, and with this halter led and paraded him through the streets.

Mulla Husayn was in the presence of Quddus when the news of the disgraceful affliction that had befallen his servant [289] reached him. Fearing lest this sad intelligence might grieve the heart of his beloved chief, he arose and quietly retired. His companions soon gathered round him, expressed their indignation at this outrageous assault upon so innocent a follower of their Faith, and urged him to avenge the insult. Mulla Husayn tried to appease their anger. "Let not," he pleaded, "the indignity that has befallen Hasan afflict

and disturb you, for Husayn is still with you and will safely deliver him back into your hands to-morrow."

In the face of so solemn an assurance, his companions ventured no further remarks. Their hearts, however, burned with impatience to redress that bitter injury. A number of them eventually decided to band themselves together and loudly raise, through the streets of Mashhad, the cry of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!"1 as a protest against this sudden affront to the dignity of their Faith. That cry was the first of its kind to be raised in Khurasan in the name of the Cause of God. The city re-echoed with the sound of those voices. The reverberations of their shouts reached even the most outlying regions of the province, raised a great tumult in the hearts of the people, and were the signal for the tremendous happenings that were destined to transpire in the future.

In the midst of the confusion that ensued, those who were holding the halter with which they dragged Hasan through the streets, perished by the sword. The companions of Mulla Husayn conducted the released captive into the presence of their leader and informed him of the fate that had befallen the oppressor. "You have refused," Mulla Husayn is reported to have remarked, "to tolerate the trials to which Hasan has been subjected; how can you reconcile yourselves to the martyrdom of Husayn?"2

The city of Mashhad, which had just recovered its peace and tranquillity after the rebellion that the Salar had provoked, was plunged again into confusion and distress. Prince Hamzih Mirza was stationed with his men and munitions at a distance of four farsangs3 from the city, ready to face whatever emergency might arise when the news of these fresh disturbances suddenly reached him. He immediately [290] despatched a detachment to the city with instructions to obtain the assistance of the governor for the arrest of Mulla Husayn, and to conduct him into his presence. 'Abdu'l-'Ali Khan-i-Maraghiyi, the captain of the prince's artillery, immediately intervened. "I deem myself," he pleaded, "one among the lovers and admirers of Mulla Husayn. If you contemplate inflicting any harm upon him, I pray you to take my life and then to proceed to execute your design; for I cannot, so long as I live, tolerate the least disrespect towards him."

The prince, who knew full well how much he stood in need of that officer, was greatly embarrassed at this unexpected declaration. "I too have met Mulla Husayn," was his reply as he tried to remove the apprehension of 'Abdu'l-'Ali Khan. "I too cherish the utmost devotion to him. By summoning him to my camp, I am hoping to restrict the scope of the mischief which has been kindled and to safeguard his person." The prince then addressed in his own handwriting a letter to Mulla Husayn in which he urged the extreme desirability of his transferring his residence for a few days to his headquarters, and assured him of his sincere desire to shield him from the attacks of his infuriated opponents. He gave orders that his own highly ornamented tent be pitched in the vicinity of his camp and be reserved for the reception of his expected guest.

On the receipt of this communication, Mulla Husayn presented it to Quddus, who

advised him to respond to the invitation of the prince. "No harm can befall you," Quddus assured him. "As to me, I shall this very night set out in the company of Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Qazvini, one of the Letters of the Living, for Mazindaran. Please God, you too, later on, at the head of a large company of the faithful and preceded by the 'Black Standards,' will depart from Mashhad and join me. We shall meet at whatever place the Almighty will have decreed."

Mulla Husayn joyously responded. He threw himself at the feet of Quddus and assured him of his firm determination to discharge with fidelity the obligations which he had imposed upon him. Quddus lovingly took him in his arms and, kissing his eyes and his forehead, committed him to the

[291] Almighty's unfailing protection. Early that same afternoon, Mulla Husayn mounted his steed and rode out with dignity and calm to the encampment of Prince Hamzih Mirza, and was ceremoniously conducted by 'Abdu'l-'Ali Khan, who, together with a number of officers, had been appointed by the prince to go out and welcome him, to the tent that had been specially erected for his use.

That very night, Quddus summoned to his presence Mirza Muhammad-Baqir-i-Qa'ini, who had built the Babiyyih, together with a number of the most prominent among his companions, and enjoined upon them to bear unquestioned allegiance to Mulla Husayn and to obey implicitly whatever he might wish them to do. "Tempestuous are the storms which lie ahead of us," he told them. "The days of stress and violent commotion are fast approaching. Cleave to him, for in obedience to his command lies your salvation."

With these words, Quddus bade farewell to his companions and, accompanied by Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Qazvini, departed from Mashhad. A few days later, he encountered Mirza Sulayman-i-Nuri, who informed him of the circumstances attending the deliverance of Tahirih from her confinement in Qazvin, of her journey in the direction of Khurasan, and of Baha'u'llah's subsequent departure from the capital. Mirza Sulayman, as well as Mirza Muhammad-'Ali, [292] remained in the company of Quddus until their arrival at Badasht. They reached that hamlet at the hour of dawn, and found there assembled a large gathering of people whom they recognised as their fellow-believers. They decided, however, to resume their journey, and proceeded directly to Shah-Rud. As they were approaching that village, Mirza Sulayman, who was following at a distance behind them, encountered Muhammad-i-Hana-Sab, who was on his way to Badasht. In answer to his enquiry as to the object of that gathering, Mirza Sulayman was informed that Baha'u'llah and Tahirih had, a few days before, left Shah-Rud for that hamlet; that a large number of believers had already arrived from Isfahan, Qazvin, and other towns of Persia, and were waiting to accompany Baha'u'llah on His intended journey to Khurasan. "Tell Mulla Ahmad-i-Ibdal, who is now in Badasht," Mirza Sulayman remarked, "that this very morning a light has shone upon you, the radiance of which you have failed to recognise."4

No sooner had Baha'u'llah been informed by Muhammad-i-Hana-Sab of the arrival of Quddus at Shah-Rud than He decided to join him. Attended by Mulla Muhammad-i-Mu'allim-i-Nuri, He set out on horseback that same evening for that

village, and had returned with Quddus to Badasht the next morning at the hour of sunrise.

It was then the beginning of summer. Upon His arrival, Baha'u'llah rented three gardens, one of which He assigned exclusively to the use of Quddus, another He set apart for Tahirih and her attendant, and reserved the third for Himself.

[293] Those who had gathered in Badasht were eighty-one in number, all of whom, from the time of their arrival to the day of their dispersion, were the guests of Baha'u'llah. Every day, He revealed a Tablet which Mirza Sulayman-i-Nuri chanted in the presence of the assembled believers. Upon each He bestowed a new name. He Himself was henceforth designated by the name of Baha; upon the Last Letter of the Living was conferred the appellation of Quddus, and to Qurratu'l-'Ayn was given the title of Tahirih. To each of those who had convened at Badasht a special Tablet was subsequently revealed by the Bab, each of whom He addressed by the name recently conferred upon him. When, at a later time, a number of the more rigid and conservative among her fellow-disciples chose to accuse Tahirih of indiscreetly rejecting the time-honoured traditions of the past, the Bab, to whom these complaints had been addressed, replied in the following terms: "What am I to say regarding her whom the Tongue of Power and Glory has named Tahirih [the Pure One]?"

Each day of that memorable gathering witnessed the abrogation of a new law and the repudiation of a long-established tradition. The veils that guarded the sanctity of the ordinances of Islam were sternly rent asunder, and the idols that had so long claimed the adoration of their blind worshippers were rudely demolished. No one knew, however, the Source whence these bold and defiant innovations proceeded, no one suspected the Hand which steadily and unerringly steered their course. Even the identity of Him who had bestowed a new name upon each of those who had congregated in that hamlet remained unknown to those who had received them. Each conjectured according to his own degree of understanding. Few, if any, dimly surmised that Baha'u'llah was the Author of the far-reaching changes which were being so fearlessly introduced.

Shaykh Abu-Turab, one of the best-informed as to the nature of the developments in Badasht, is reported to have related the following incident: "Illness, one day, confined Baha'u'llah to His bed.

Quddus, as soon as he heard of His indisposition, hastened to visit Him.

He seated himself, when ushered into His presence, on the right hand of [294] Baha'u'llah.

The rest of the companions were gradually admitted to His presence, and grouped themselves around Him.

No sooner had they assembled than Muhammad-Hasan-i-Qazvini, the messenger of Tahirih, upon whom the name of Fata'l-Qazvini had been newly conferred, suddenly came in and conveyed to Quddus a pressing invitation from Tahirih to visit her in her own garden. 'I have severed myself entirely from her,' he boldly and decisively replied. 'I refuse to meet her.'5 The messenger retired

immediately, and soon returned, reiterating the same message and appealing to him to heed her urgent call. 'She insists on your visit,' were his words. 'If you persist in your refusal, she herself will come to you.' Perceiving his unyielding attitude, the messenger unsheathed his sword, laid it at the feet of Quddus, and said: 'I refuse to go without you.

Either choose to accompany me to the presence of Tahirih or cut off my head with this sword.' 'I have already declared my intention not to visit Tahirih,' Quddus angrily retorted. 'I am willing to comply with the alternative which you have chosen to put before me.'

"Muhammad-Hasan, who had seated himself at the feet of Quddus, had stretched forth his neck to receive the fatal blow, when suddenly the figure of Tahirih, adorned and unveiled, appeared before the eyes of the assembled companions. Consternation immediately seized the entire gathering.6 All stood aghast before this sudden and most unexpected [295] apparition. To behold her face unveiled was to them inconceivable. Even to gaze at her shadow was a thing which they deemed improper, inasmuch as they regarded her as the very incarnation of Fatimih,7 the noblest emblem of chastity in their eyes.

"Quietly, silently, and with the utmost dignity, Tahirih stepped forward and, advancing towards Quddus, seated herself on his right-hand side. Her unruffled serenity sharply contrasted with the affrighted countenances of those who were gazing upon her face. Fear, anger, and bewilderment stirred the depths of their souls. That sudden revelation seemed to have stunned their faculties. 'Abdu'l-Khaliq-i-Isfahani was so gravely shaken that he cut his throat with his own hands. Covered with blood and shrieking with excitement, he fled away from the face of Tahirih. A few, following his example, abandoned their companions and forsook their Faith. A number were seen standing speechless before her, confounded with wonder. Quddus, meanwhile, had remained seated in his place, holding the unsheathed sword in his hand, his face betraying a feeling of inexpressible anger. It seemed as if he were waiting for the moment when he could strike his fatal blow at Tahirih.

"His threatening attitude failed, however, to move her. Her countenance displayed that same dignity and confidence which she had evinced at the first moment of her appearance before the assembled believers. A feeling of joy and triumph had now illumined her face. She rose from her seat and, undeterred by the tumult that she had raised in the hearts of her companions, began to address the remnant of that assembly. Without the least premeditation, and in language which bore a striking resemblance to that of the Qur'an, she delivered her appeal with matchless eloquence and profound fervour. She concluded her address with this verse of the Qur'an: 'Verily, amid gardens and rivers shall the pious dwell in the seat of truth, in the presence of the potent King.' As she uttered these words, she cast a furtive glance towards both Baha'u'llah and Quddus in such a manner that those who were watching her were unable to tell to which of the two she was alluding. Immediately [296] after, she declared: 'I am the Word which the Qa'im is to utter, the Word which shall put to flight the chiefs and nobles of the earth!'8

"She then turned her face towards Quddus and rebuked him for having failed to perform in Khurasan those things which she deemed essential to the welfare of the Faith. 'I am free to follow the promptings of my own conscience,' retorted Quddus. 'I am not subject to the will and pleasure of my fellow-disciples.' Turning away her eyes from him, Tahirih invited those who were present to celebrate befittingly this great occasion. 'This day is the day of festivity and universal rejoicing,' she added, 'the day on which the fetters of the past are burst asunder. Let those who have shared in this great achievement arise and embrace each other.'"

That memorable day and those which immediately followed it witnessed the most revolutionary changes in the life and habits of the assembled followers of the Bab. Their manner of worship underwent a sudden and fundamental transformation. The prayers and ceremonials by which those devout worshippers had been disciplined were irrevocably

[297] discarded. A great confusion, however, prevailed among those who had so zealously arisen to advocate these reforms. A few condemned so radical a change as being the essence of heresy, and refused to annul what they regarded as the inviolable precepts of Islam. Some regarded Tahirih as the sole judge in such matters and the only person qualified to claim implicit obedience from the faithful. Others who denounced her behaviour held to Quddus, whom they regarded as the sole representative of the Bab, the only one who had the right to pronounce upon such weighty matters. Still others who recognised the authority of both Tahirih and Quddus viewed the whole episode as a God-sent test designed to separate the true from the false and distinguish the faithful from the disloyal.

Tahirih herself ventured on a few occasions to repudiate the authority of Quddus. "I deem him," she is reported to have declared, "a pupil whom the Bab has sent me to edify and instruct. I regard him in no other light." Quddus did not fail, on his part, to denounce Tahirih as "the author of heresy," and stigmatised those who advocated her views as "the victims of error." This state of tension persisted for a few days until Baha'u'llah intervened and, in His masterly manner, effected a complete reconciliation between them. He healed the wounds which that sharp controversy had caused, and directed the efforts of both along the path of constructive service.9

The object of that memorable gathering had been attained.10 The clarion-call of the new Order had been sounded. [298] The obsolete conventions which had fettered the consciences of men were boldly challenged and fearlessly swept away. The way was clear for the proclamation of the laws and precepts that were destined to usher in the new Dispensation. The remnant of the companions who had gathered in Badasht accordingly decided to depart for Mazindaran. Quddus and Tahirih seated themselves in the same howdah,11 which had been prepared for their journey by Baha'u'llah. On their way, Tahirih each day composed an ode which she instructed those who accompanied her to chant as they followed her howdah. Mountain and valley re-echoed the shouts with which that enthusiastic band, as they journeyed to Mazindaran, hailed the extinction of the old, and

the birth of the new Day.

Baha'u'llah's sojourn in Badasht lasted two and twenty days. In the course of their journey to Mazindaran, a few of the followers of the Bab sought to abuse the liberty which the repudiation of the laws and sanctions of an outgrown Faith had conferred upon them. They viewed the unprecedented action of Tahirih in discarding the veil as a signal to transgress the bounds of moderation and to gratify their selfish desires. The excesses in which a few indulged provoked the wrath of the Almighty and caused their immediate dispersion. In the village of Niyala, they were grievously tested and suffered severe injuries at the hands of their enemies. This scattering extinguished the mischief which a few of the irresponsible among the adherents of the Faith had sought to kindle, and preserved untarnished its honour and dignity.

I have heard Baha'u'llah Himself describe that incident: [299] "We were all gathered in the village of Niyala and were resting at the foot of a mountain, when, at the hour of dawn, we were suddenly awakened by the stones which the people of the neighbourhood were hurling upon us from the top of the mountain. The fierceness of their attack induced our companions to flee in terror and consternation. I clothed Quddus in my own garments and despatched him to a place of safety, where I intended to join him. When I arrived, I found that he had gone. None of our companions had remained in Niyala except Tahirih and a young man from Shiraz, Mirza 'Abdu'llah. The violence with which we were assailed had brought desolation into our camp. I found no one into whose custody I could deliver Tahirih except that young man, who displayed on that occasion a courage and determination that were truly surprising. Sword in hand, undaunted by the savage assault of the inhabitants of the village, who had rushed to plunder our property, he sprang forward to stay the hand of the assailants. Though himself wounded in several parts of his body, he risked his life to protect our property. I bade him desist from his act. When the tumult had subsided, I approached a number of the inhabitants of the village and was able to convince them of the cruelty and shamefulness of their behaviour. I subsequently succeeded in restoring a part of our plundered property."

Baha'u'llah, accompanied by Tahirih and her attendant, proceeded to Nur. He appointed Shaykh Abu-Turab to watch over her and ensure her protection and safety. Meanwhile the mischief-makers were endeavouring to kindle the anger of Muhammad Shah against Baha'u'llah, and, by representing Him as the prime mover of the disturbances of Shah-Rud and Mazindaran, succeeded eventually in inducing the sovereign to have Him arrested. "I have hitherto," the Shah is reported to have angrily remarked, "refused to countenance whatever has been said against him. My indulgence has been actuated by my recognition of the services rendered to my country by his father. This time, however, I am determined to put him to death."

He accordingly commanded one of his officers in Tihran to instruct his son who was residing in Mazindaran to arrest [300] Baha'u'llah and to conduct Him to the capital. The son of this officer received the communication on the very day preceding the reception which he had prepared to offer to Baha'u'llah, to whom

he was devotedly attached. He was greatly distressed and did not divulge the news to anyone. Baha'u'llah, however, perceived his sadness and advised him to put his trust in God. The next day, as He was being accompanied by His friend to his home, they encountered a horseman who was coming from the direction of Tihran. "Muhammad Shah is dead!" that friend exclaimed in the Mazindarani dialect, as he hastened to rejoin Him after a brief conversation with the messenger. He drew out the imperial summons and showed it to Him. The document had lost its efficacy. That night was spent in the company of his guest in an atmosphere of undisturbed calm and gladness.

Quddus had in the meantime fallen into the hands of his opponents, and was confined in Sari in the home of Mirza Muhammad-Taqi, the leading mujtahid of that town. The rest of his companions, after their dispersal in Niyala, had scattered in different directions, each carrying with him to his fellow-believers the news of the momentous happenings of Badasht.

FOOTNOTES

16.1. "O Lord of the Age!" one of the titles of the promised Qa'im.

16.2. Allusion to his own martyrdom.

16.3. See Glossary.

16.4. Allusion to Quddus.

16.5. According to the "Kashfu'l-Ghita'," a decision had been previously arrived at between Quddus and Tahirih, in accordance with which the latter was to proclaim publicly the independent character of the Revelation of the Bab, and to emphasise the abrogation of the laws and ordinances of the previous Dispensation. Quddus, on the other hand, was expected to oppose her contention and strenuously to reject her views. This arrangement was made for the purpose of mitigating the effects of such a challenging and far-reaching proclamation, and of averting the dangers and perils which such a startling innovation was sure to produce. (P. 211.) Baha'u'llah appears to have taken a neutral attitude in this controversy, though actually He was the prime mover and the controlling and directing influence throughout the different stages of that memorable episode.

16.6. "But the effect produced had been astounding! The assembly was as if struck by lightning. Some hid their faces with their hands, others, prostrated themselves, others covered their heads with their garments so that they could not see the features of her Highness, the Pure One. If it was a grievous sin to look upon the face of an unknown woman who might pass by, what a crime to let one's eyes fall upon her who was so saintly! The meeting was broken up in the midst of an indescribable tumult. Insults fell upon her whom they thought so indecent as to appear thus with her face uncovered. Some armed that she had lost her mind, others that she was shameless, and some, very few, took up her defense." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp. 283-284.)

16.7. Daughter of Muhammad, and wife of the Imam 'Ali.

16.8. Refer to page 15.

16.9. "It was this bold act of Qurratu'l-'Ayn which shook the foundations of a literal belief in Islamic doctrines among the Persians. It may be added that the first-fruits of Qurratu'l-'Ayn's teaching was no less than the heroic Quddus, and that the eloquent teacher herself owed her insight probably to Baha'u'llah. Of course, the supposition that her greatest friend might censure her is merely a delightful piece of irony." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," pp. 103-4.)

16.10. "It has been suggested that the true cause of the summoning of that assembly was anxiety for the Bab, and a desire to carry him off to a place of safety.

But the more accepted view—that the subject before the Council was the relation of the Babis to the Islamic laws—is also the more probable." (Ibid., p.

80.) "The object of the conference was to correct a widespread misunderstanding.

There were many who thought that the new leader came, in the most literal sense, to fulfil the Islamic Law.

They realised, indeed, that the object of Muhammad was to bring about an universal kingdom of righteousness and peace, but they thought this was to be effected by wading through streams of blood, and with the help of the divine judgments.

The Bab, on the other hand, though not always consistent, was moving, with some of his disciples, in the direction of moral suasion; his only weapon was 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.' When the Qa'im appeared all things would be renewed.

But the Qa'im was on the point of appearing, and all that remained was to prepare for his Coming.

No more should there be any distinction between higher and lower races, or between male and female.

No more should the long, enveloping veil be the badge of woman's inferiority.

The gifted woman before us had her own characteristic solution of the problem...

It is said in one form of tradition, that Qurratu'l-'Ayn herself attended the conference with a veil on.

If so, she lost no time in discarding it, and broke out (we are told) into the fervid exclamation, 'I am the blast of the trumpet, I am the call of the bugle,' i.e. 'Like Gabriel, I would awaken sleeping souls.' It is said, too, that this short speech of the brave woman was followed by the recitation by Baha'u'llah of the Surih of the Resurrection (75).

Such recitations often have an overpowering effect.

The inner meaning of this was that mankind was about to pass into a new cosmic cycle, for which a new set of laws and customs would be indispensable." (Dr.

T.

K.

Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," pp.

101-3.)

16.11. Refer to Glossary.

CHAPTER XVII
THE BAB'S INCARCERATION IN THE CASTLE OF CHIHRIQ

[301] The incident of Niyala occurred in the middle of the month of Sha'ban, in the year 1264 A.H.1 Towards the end of that same month, the Bab was brought to Tabriz, where He suffered at the hands of His oppressors a severe and humiliating injury. That deliberate affront to His dignity almost synchronised with the attack which the inhabitants of Niyala directed against Baha'u'llah and His companions. The one was pelted with stones by an ignorant and pugnacious people; the other was afflicted with stripes by a cruel and treacherous enemy.

I shall now relate the circumstances that led to that odious indignity which the persecutors of the Bab chose to inflict upon Him. He had, in pursuance of the orders issued by Haji Mirza Aqasi, been transferred to the castle of Chihriq2 and consigned to the keeping of Yahya Khan-i-Kurd, whose sister was the wife of Muhammad Shah, the mother of the Nayibu's-Saltanih. Strict and explicit instructions [302] had been given by the Grand Vazir to Yahya Khan, enjoining him not to allow anyone to enter the presence of his Prisoner. He was particularly warned not to follow the example of 'Ali Khan-i-Mah-Ku'i, who had gradually been led to disregard the orders he had received.3

Despite the emphatic character of that injunction, and in the face of the unyielding opposition of the all-powerful Haji Mirza Aqasi, Yahya Khan found himself powerless to abide by those instructions.

He, too, soon came to feel the fascination of his Prisoner; he, too, forgot, as soon as he came into contact with His spirit, the duty he was expected to perform.

At the very outset, the love of the Bab penetrated his heart and claimed his entire being.

The Kurds who lived in Chihriq, and whose fanaticism and hatred of the shi'ahs exceeded the aversion which the inhabitants of Mah-Ku entertained for that people, were likewise subjected to the transforming influence of the Bab.

Such was the love He had kindled in their hearts that every morning, ere they started for their daily work, they directed their steps towards His prison and,

gazing from afar at the castle which contained His beloved self, invoked His name and besought His blessings.

They would prostrate themselves on the ground and seek to refresh their souls with remembrance of Him.

To one another they would freely relate the wonders of His power and glory, and would recount such dreams as bore witness to the creative power of His influence.

To no one would Yahya Khan refuse admittance to the castle.4 As Chihriq itself was unable to accommodate the increasing number of visitors who flocked to its gates, they were enabled to obtain the necessary lodgings in Iski-Shahr, the old Chihriq, which was situated at an hour's distance from the [303] castle.

Whatever provisions were required for the Bab were purchased in the old town and transported to His prison.

One day the Bab asked that some honey be purchased for Him. The price at which it had been bought seemed to Him exorbitant. He refused it and said: "Honey of a superior quality could no doubt have been purchased at a lower price. I who am your example have been a merchant by profession. It behoves you in all your transactions to follow in My way. You must neither defraud your neighbour nor allow him to defraud you. Such was the way of your Master. The shrewdest and ablest of men were unable to deceive Him, nor did He on His part choose to act ungenerously towards the meanest and most helpless of creatures." He insisted that the attendant who had made that purchase should return and bring back to Him a honey superior in quality and cheaper in price.

During the Bab's captivity in the castle of Chihriq, events of a startling character caused grave perturbation to the government. It soon became evident that a number of the most eminent among the siyyids, the ulamas, and the government officials of Khuy had espoused the Cause of the Prisoner and had completely identified themselves with His Faith. Among them figured Mirza Muhammad-'Ali and his brother Buyuk-Aqa, both siyyids of distinguished merit who had risen with fevered earnestness to proclaim their Faith to all sorts and conditions of people among their countrymen. A continuous stream of seekers and confirmed believers flowed back and forth, as the result of such activities, between Khuy and Chihriq.

It came to pass at that time that a prominent official of high literary ability, Mirza Asadu'llah, who was later surnamed Dayyan by the Bab and whose vehement denunciations of His Message had baffled those who had endeavoured to convert him, dreamed a dream. When he awoke, he determined not to recount it to anyone, and, fixing his choice on two verses of the Qur'an, he addressed the following request to the Bab: "I have conceived three definite things in my mind. I request you to reveal to me their nature." Mirza Muhammad-'Ali was asked to submit this written request to the Bab. A few days later, he received a reply [304] penned in the Bab's handwriting, in which He set forth in their entirety the circumstances of that dream and revealed the exact texts of those

verses. The accuracy of that reply brought about a sudden conversion. Though unused to walking, Mirza Asadu'llah hastened on foot along that steep and stony path which led from Khuy to the castle. His friends tried to induce him to proceed on horseback to Chihriq, but he refused their offer. His meeting with the Bab confirmed him in his belief and excited that fiery ardour which he continued to manifest to the end of his life.

That same year the Bab had expressed His desire that forty of His companions should each undertake to compose a treatise and seek, by the aid of verses and traditions, to establish the validity of His Mission. His wishes were instantly obeyed, and the result of their labours was duly submitted to His presence. Mirza Asadu'llah's treatise won the unqualified admiration of the Bab and ranked highest in His estimation. He bestowed on him the name Dayyan and revealed in his honour the Lawh-i-Hurufat5 in which He made the following statement: "Had the Point of the Bayan6 no other testimony with which to establish His truth, this were sufficient—that He revealed a Tablet such as this, a Tablet such as no amount of learning could produce."

The people of the Bayan, who utterly misconceived the purpose underlying that Tablet, thought it to be a mere exposition of the science of Jafr.7 When, at a later time, in the early years of Baha'u'llah's incarceration in the prison city of Akka, Jinab-i-Muballigh made, from Shiraz, his request that He unravel the mysteries of that Tablet, there was revealed from His pen an explanation which they who misconceived the words of the Bab might do well to ponder. Baha'u'llah adduced from the statements of the Bab irrefutable evidence proving that the appearance of the Man-Yuzhiruhu'llah8 must needs occur no less than nineteen years after the Declaration of the Bab. The mystery of the Mustaghath9 had long baffled the most searching minds among the people of the Bayan and had proved an unsurmountable [305] obstacle to their recognition of the promised One. The Bab had Himself in that Tablet unravelled that mystery; no one, however, was able to understand the explanation which He had given. It was left to Baha'u'llah to unveil it to the eyes of all men.

The untiring zeal which Mirza Asadu'llah displayed induced his father, who was an intimate friend of Haji Mirza Aqasi, to report to him the circumstances which led to the conversion of his son, and to inform him of his negligence in carrying out the duties which the State had imposed upon him. He expatiated upon the eagerness with which so able a servant of the government had risen to serve his new Master, and the success which had attended his efforts.

A further cause for apprehension on the part of the government authorities was supplied by the arrival at Chihriq of a dervish who had come from India and who, as soon as he met the Bab, acknowledged the truth of His Mission. All who met that dervish, whom the Bab had named Qahru'llah, during his sojourn at Iski-Shahr, felt the warmth of his enthusiasm and were deeply impressed by the tenacity of his conviction. An increasing number of people became enamoured of the charm of his personality and willingly acknowledged the compelling power of his Faith. Such was the influence which he exercised over them that a few among the believers were inclined to regard him as an exponent of Divine Revelation,

although he altogether disclaimed such pretensions. He was often heard to relate the following: "In the days when I occupied the exalted position of a navvab in India, the Bab appeared to me in a vision. He gazed at me and won my heart completely. I arose, and had started to follow Him, when He looked at me intently and said: 'Divest yourself of your gorgeous attire, depart from your native land, and hasten on foot to meet Me in Adhirbayjan. In Chihriq you will attain your heart's desire.' I followed His directions and have now reached my goal."

The news of the turmoil which that lowly dervish had been able to raise among the Kurdish leaders in Chihriq reached Tabriz and was thence communicated to Tihran. No sooner had the news reached the capital than orders [306] were issued to transfer the Bab immediately to Tabriz in the hope of allaying the excitement which His continued residence in that locality had provoked. Before the news of this fresh order had reached Chihriq, the Bab had charged 'Azim to inform Qahru'llah of His desire that he return to India and there consecrate his life to the service of His Cause. "Alone and on foot," He commanded him, "he should return whence he came. With the same ardour and detachment with which he performed his pilgrimage to this country, he must now repair to his native land and unceasingly labour to advance the interests of the Cause." He also bade him instruct Mirza 'Abdu'l-Vahhab-i-Turshizi, who was living in Khuy, to proceed immediately to Urumiyyih, where He said He would soon join him. 'Azim himself was directed to leave for Tabriz and there inform Siyyid Ibrahim-i-Khalil of His approaching arrival at that city. "Tell him," the Bab added, "that the fire of Nimrod will shortly be kindled in Tabriz, but despite the intensity of its flame no harm will befall our friends."

No sooner had Qahru'llah received the message from his Master than he arose to carry out His wishes. To anyone who wished to accompany him, he would say: "You can never endure the trials of this journey. Abandon the thought of coming with me. You would surely perish on your way, inasmuch as the Bab has commanded me to return alone to my native land." The compelling force of his reply silenced those who begged to be allowed to journey with him. He refused to accept either money or clothing from anyone. Alone, clad in the meanest attire, staff in hand, he walked all the way back to his country. No one knows what ultimately befell him. Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Zunuzi, surnamed Anis, was among those who heard of the message from the Bab in Tabriz, and was fired with the desire to hasten to Chihriq and attain His presence. Those words had kindled in him an irrepressible longing to sacrifice himself in His path. Siyyid 'Aliy-i-Zunuzi, his stepfather, a notable of Tabriz, strenuously objected to his leaving the city, and was at last induced to confine him in his house and strictly watch over him. His [307] son languished in his confinement until the time when his Beloved had reached Tabriz and had been taken back again to His prison in Chihriq.

I have heard Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunuzi relate the following: "At about the same time that the Bab dismissed 'Azim from His presence, I was instructed by Him to collect all the available Tablets that He had revealed during His incarceration

in the castles of Mah-Ku and Chihriq, and to deliver them into the hands of Siyyid Ibrahim-i-Khalil, who was then living in Tabriz, and urge him to conceal and preserve them with the utmost care.

"During my stay in that city, I often visited Siyyid 'Aliy-i-Zunuzi, who was related to me, and frequently heard him deplore the sad fate of his son. 'He seems to have lost his reason,' he bitterly complained. 'He has, by his behaviour, brought reproach and shame upon me.

Try to calm the agitation of his heart and induce him to conceal his convictions.' Every day I visited him, I witnessed the tears that continually rained from his eyes.

After the Bab had departed from Tabriz, one day as I went to see him, I was surprised to note the joy and gladness which had illumined his countenance.

His handsome face was wreathed in smiles as he stepped forward to receive me. 'The eyes of my Beloved,' he said, as he embraced me, 'have beheld this face, and these eyes have gazed upon His countenance.' 'Let me,' he added, 'tell you the secret of my happiness.

After the Bab had been taken back to Chihriq, one day, as I lay confined in my cell, I turned my heart to Him and besought Him in these words: "Thou beholdest, O my Best-Beloved, my captivity and helplessness, and knowest how eagerly I yearn to look upon Thy face.

Dispel the gloom that oppresses my heart, with the light of Thy countenance."

What tears of agonising pain I shed that hour!

I was so overcome with emotion that I seemed to have lost consciousness.

Suddenly I heard the voice of the Bab, and, lo!

He was calling me.

He bade me arise.

I beheld the majesty of His countenance as He appeared before me.

He smiled as He looked into my eyes.

I rushed forward and flung myself at His feet. "Rejoice,"

He said; "the hour is approaching when, in this very city, I shall be suspended before the eyes of the multitude [308] and shall fall a victim to the fire of the enemy.

I shall choose no one except you to share with Me the cup of martyrdom.

Rest assured that this promise which I give you shall be fulfilled."

I was entranced by the beauty of that vision.

When I recovered, I found myself immersed in an ocean of joy, a joy the radiance of which all the sorrows of the world could never obscure.

That voice keeps ringing in my ears.

That vision haunts me both in the daytime and in the night-season.

The memory of that ineffable smile has dissipated the loneliness of my confinement.

I am firmly convinced that the hour at which His pledge is to be fulfilled can no longer be delayed.' I exhorted him to be patient and to conceal his emotions.

He promised me not to divulge that secret, and undertook to exercise the utmost forbearance towards Siyyid 'Ali.

I hastened to assure the father of his determination, and succeeded in obtaining his release from his confinement.

That youth continued until the day of his martyrdom to associate, in a state of complete serenity and joy, with his parents and kinsmen.

Such was his behaviour towards his friends and relatives that, on the day he laid down his life for his Beloved, the people of Tabriz all wept and bewailed him."

FOOTNOTES

17.1. July 3-August 1, 1848 A.D.

17.2. According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 18) the Bab remained for three months in the castle of Chihriq before He was taken to Tabriz to be examined.

17.3. "The Bab was subjected to a closer and more rigorous confinement at Chihriq than he had been at Mah-Ku. Hence he used to call the former 'the Grievous Mountain' (Jabal-i-Shadid, the numerical value of the word 'Shadid'—318—being the same as that of the name Chihriq), and the latter 'the Open Mountain' (Jabal-i-Basit)." ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note L, p. 276.)

17.4. "There, like everywhere else, the people crowded around him. M. Mochenin says in his memoirs concerning the Bab: 'In the month of June, 1850 (is this not more likely to be 1849?), having gone to Chihriq on duty, I saw the Bala-Khanih from the heights of which the Bab taught his doctrine. The multitude of hearers was so great that the court was not large enough to hold them all; most of them stayed in the streets and listened with religious rapture to the verses of the new Qur'an. Very soon after the Bab was transferred to Tauris (Tabriz) to be condemned to death.'" (Journal Asiatique, 1866, tome 7, p. 371.)

17.5. Literally "Tablet of the Letters."

17.6. One of the titles of the Bab.

17.7. Science of divination.

17.8. Reference to Baha'u'llah. See Glossary.

17.9. See Glossary.

CHAPTER XVIII
EXAMINATION OF THE BAB AT TABRIZ

[309] The Bab, in anticipation of the approaching hour of His affliction, had dispersed His disciples who had gathered in Chihriq and awaited with calm resignation the order which was to summon Him to Tabriz. Those into whose custody He was delivered thought it inadvisable to pass through the town of Khuy, which lay on their route to the capital of Adhirbayjan. They decided to go by way of Urumiyyih and thus avoid the demonstrations which the excited populace in Khuy were likely to make as a protest against the tyranny of the government. When the Bab arrived at Urumiyyih, Malik Qasim Mirza ceremoniously received Him and accorded Him the warmest hospitality. In His presence, the prince acted with extraordinary deference and refused to allow the least disrespect on the part of those who were allowed to meet Him.

On a certain Friday when the Bab was going to the public bath, the prince, who was curious to test the courage and power of his Guest, ordered his groom to offer Him one of his wildest horses to ride. Apprehensive lest the Bab might suffer any harm, the attendant secretly approached Him and tried to induce Him to refuse to mount a horse that had already overthrown the bravest and most skilful of horsemen. "Fear not," was His reply. "Do as you have been bidden, and commit Us to the care of the Almighty." The inhabitants of Urumiyyih, who had been informed of the intention of the prince, had filled the public square, eager to witness what might befall the Bab. As soon as the horse was brought to Him, He quietly approached it and, taking hold of the bridle which the groom had offered Him, gently caressed it and placed His foot in the stirrup. The horse stood still and motionless beside Him as if conscious of the power which was dominating it. The multitude that watched this most unusual spectacle marvelled at the

[311] behaviour of the animal. To their simple minds this extraordinary incident appeared little short of a miracle. They hastened in their enthusiasm to kiss the stirrups of the Bab, but were prevented by the attendants of the prince, who feared lest so great an onrush of people might harm Him. The prince himself, who had accompanied his Guest on foot as far as the vicinity of the bath, was bidden by Him, ere they reached its entrance, to return to his residence. All the way, the prince's footmen were endeavouring to restrain the people who, from every side, were pressing forward to catch a glimpse of the Bab. Upon His arrival, He dismissed all those who had accompanied Him except the prince's private attendant and Siyyid Hasan, who waited in the antechamber and aided Him in undressing. On His return from the bath, He again mounted the same horse and was acclaimed by the same multitude. The prince came on foot to meet Him, and escorted Him back to his residence.

No sooner had the Bab left the bath than the people of Urumiyyih rushed to take away, to the last drop, the water which had served for His ablutions.

Great excitement prevailed on that day.

The Bab, as He observed these evidences of unrestrained enthusiasm, was reminded of the well-known tradition, commonly ascribed to the Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, which specifically referred to Adhirbayjan.

The lake of Urumiyyih, that same tradition asserts in its concluding passages, will boil up, will overrun its banks, and inundate the town.

When He was subsequently informed how the overwhelming majority of the people had spontaneously arisen to proclaim their undivided allegiance to His Cause, He calmly observed: "Think men that when they say, 'We believe,' they shall be let alone and not be put to the proof?"1 This comment was fully justified by the attitude which that same people assumed towards Him when the news of the dreadful treatment meted out to Him in Tabriz reached them.

Hardly a handful among those who had so ostentatiously professed their faith in Him persevered, in the hour of trial, in their allegiance to His Cause.

Foremost among these was Mulla Imam-Vardi, the tenacity of whose faith no one except Mulla Jalil-i-Urumi, a native of [312] Urumiyyih and one of the Letters of the Living, could surpass.

Adversity served but to intensify the ardour of his devotion and to reinforce his belief in the righteousness of the Cause he had embraced.

He subsequently attained the presence of Baha'u'llah, the truth of whose Mission he readily recognised, and for the advancement of which he strove with the same fevered earnestness that had characterised his earlier strivings for the promotion of the Cause of the Bab.

In recognition of his long-standing services, he, and also his family, were honoured with numerous Tablets from the pen of Baha'u'llah in which He extolled his achievements and invoked the blessings of the Almighty upon his efforts.

With unflinching determination, he continued to labour for the furtherance of the Faith until past eighty years of age, when he departed this life.

The tales of the signs and wonders which the Bab's unnumbered admirers had witnessed were soon transmitted from mouth to mouth, and gave rise to a wave of unprecedented enthusiasm which spread with bewildering rapidity over the entire country. It swept over Tihran and roused the ecclesiastical dignitaries of the realm to fresh exertions against Him. They trembled at the progress of a Movement which, if allowed to run its course, they felt certain would soon engulf the institutions upon which their authority, nay their very existence, depended. They saw on every side increasing evidences of a faith and devotion such as they themselves had been powerless to evoke, of a loyalty which struck at the very root of the fabric which their own hands had reared and which all the resources at their command had as yet failed to undermine.

Tabriz, in particular, was in the throes of the wildest excitement. The news of the impending arrival of the Bab had inflamed the imagination of its inhabitants and had kindled the fiercest animosity in the hearts of the ecclesiastical leaders of Adhirbayjan. These alone, of all the people of

Tabriz, abstained from sharing in the demonstrations with which a grateful population hailed the return of the Bab to their city. Such was the fervour of popular enthusiasm which that news had evoked that the authorities decided to house the Bab in a place outside the gates of the city. Only those [313] whom He desired to meet were allowed the privilege of approaching Him. All others were strictly refused admittance.

On the second night after His arrival, the Bab summoned 'Azim to His presence and, in the course of His conversation with him, asserted emphatically His claim to be none other than the promised Qa'im. He found him, however, reluctant to acknowledge this claim unreservedly. Perceiving his inner agitation, He said: "To-morrow I shall, in the presence of the Vali-'Ahd,2 and in the midst of the assembled ulamas and notables of the city, proclaim My Mission. Whoso may feel inclined to require from Me any other testimony besides the verses which I have revealed, let him seek satisfaction from the Qa'im of his idle fancy."

I have heard 'Azim testify to the following: "That night I was in a state of great perturbation.

I remained awake and restless until the hour of sunrise.

As soon as I had offered my morning prayer, however, I realised that a great change had come over me.

A new door seemed to have been unlocked and set open before my face.

The conviction soon dawned upon me that if I were loyal to my faith in Muhammad, the Apostle of God, I must needs also unreservedly acknowledge the claims advanced by the Bab, and must submit without fear or hesitation to whatever He might choose to decree.

This conclusion allayed the agitation of my heart.

I hastened to the Bab and begged His forgiveness. 'It is a further evidence of the greatness of this Cause,' He remarked, 'that even 'Azim3 should have felt so exceedingly troubled and shaken by its power and the immensity of its claim.' 'Rest assured,' He added, 'the grace of the Almighty shall enable you to fortify the faint in heart and to make firm the step of the waverer.

So great shall be your faith that should the enemy mutilate and tear your body to pieces, in the hope of lessening by one jot or tittle the ardour of your love, he would fail to attain his object.

You will, no doubt, in the days to come, meet face to face Him who is the Lord of all the worlds, and will partake of the joy of His presence.' These words dispelled the gloom of my apprehensions.

From that day onward, no trace of either fear or agitation ever again cast its shadow upon me."

[314] The detention of the Bab outside the gate of Tabriz failed to allay the excitement which reigned in the city. Every measure of precaution, every

restriction, which the authorities had imposed, served only to aggravate a situation which had already become ominous and menacing. Haji Mirza Aqasi issued his orders for the immediate convocation of the ecclesiastical dignitaries of Tabriz in the official residence of the governor of Adhirbayjan for the express purpose of arraigning the Bab and of seeking the most effective means for the extinction of His influence. Haji Mulla Mahmud, entitled the Nizamu'l-'Ulama', who was the tutor of Nasiri'd-Din Mirza the Vali-'Ahd,4 Mulla Muhammad-i-Mamaqani, Mirza 'Ali-Asghar the Shaykhu'l-Islam, and a number of the most distinguished shaykhis and doctors of divinity were among those who had convened for that purpose.5 Nasiri'd-Din Mirza himself attended that [315] gathering. The presidency belonged to the Nizamu'l-'Ulama', who, as soon as the proceedings had begun, in the name of the assembly commissioned an officer of the army to introduce the Bab into their presence. A multitude of people had meanwhile besieged the entrance of the hall and were impatiently awaiting the time when they could catch a glimpse of His face. They were pressing forward in such large numbers that a passage had to be forced for Him through the crowd that had collected before the gate.

Upon His arrival, the Bab observed that every seat in that hall was occupied except one which had been reserved for the Vali-'Ahd. He greeted the assembly and, without the slightest hesitation, proceeded to occupy that vacant seat. The majesty of His gait,

the expression of overpowering confidence which sat upon His brow—above all, the spirit of power which shone from His whole being, appeared to have for a moment crushed the soul out of the body of those whom He had greeted. A deep, a mysterious silence, suddenly fell upon them. Not one soul in that distinguished assembly dared breathe a single word. At last the stillness which brooded over them was broken by the Nizamu'l-'Ulama'. "Whom do you claim to be," he asked the Bab, "and what is the message which you have brought?" "I am," thrice exclaimed the Bab, "I am, I am, the promised One! I am the One whose name you have for a thousand years invoked, at whose

[316] mention you have risen, whose advent you have longed to witness, and the hour of whose Revelation you have prayed God to hasten.

Verily I say, it is incumbent upon the peoples of both the East and the West to obey My word and to pledge allegiance to My person."

No one ventured to reply except Mulla Muhammad-i-Mamaqani, a leader of the shaykhi community who had been himself a disciple of Siyyid Kazim.

It was he on whose unfaithfulness and insincerity the siyyid had tearfully remarked, and the perversity of whose nature he had deplored.

Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunuzi, who had heard Siyyid Kazim make these criticisms, recounted to me the following: "I was greatly surprised at the tone of his reference to Mulla Muhammad, and was curious to know what his future behaviour would be so as to merit such expressions of pity and condemnation from his master.

Not until I discovered his attitude that day towards the Bab did I realise the extent of his arrogance and blindness.

I was standing together with other people outside the hall, and was able to follow the conversation of those who were within.

Mulla Muhammad was seated on the left hand of the Vali-'Ahd.

The Bab was occupying a seat between them.

Immediately after He had declared Himself to be the promised One, a feeling of awe seized those who were present.

They had dropped their heads in silent confusion.

The pallor of their faces betrayed the agitation of their hearts.

Mulla Muhammad, that one-eyed and white-bearded renegade, insolently reprimanded Him, saying: 'You wretched and immature lad of Shiraz!

You have already convulsed and [317] subverted Iraq; do you now wish to arouse a like turmoil in Adhirbayjan?' 'Your Honour,' replied the Bab, 'I have not come hither of My own accord.

I have been summoned to this place.' 'Hold your peace,' furiously retorted Mulla Muhammad, 'you perverse and contemptible follower of Satan!' 'Your Honour,' the Bab again answered, 'I maintain what I have already declared.'

"The Nizamu'l-'Ulama' uthought it best to challenge His Mission openly. 'The claim which you have advanced,' he told the Bab, 'is a stupendous one; it must needs be supported

by the most incontrovertible evidence.' 'The mightiest, the most convincing evidence of the truth of the Mission of the Prophet of God,' the Bab replied, 'is admittedly His own Word. He Himself testifies to this truth: "Is it not enough for them that We have sent down to Thee the Book?"6 The power to produce such evidence has been given to Me by God. Within the space of two days and two nights, I declare Myself able to reveal verses of such number as will equal the whole of the Qur'an.' 'Describe orally, if you speak the truth,' the Nizamu'l-'Ulama' requested, 'the proceedings of this gathering in language that will resemble the phraseology of the verses of the Qur'an so that the Vali-'Ahd and the assembled divines may bear witness to the truth of your claim.' The Bab readily acceded to his wish. No sooner had He uttered the words, 'In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, praise be to Him who has [318] created the heaven and the earth,' than Mulla Muhammad-i-Mamaqani interrupted and called His attention to an infraction of the rules of grammar. 'This self-appointed Qa'im of ours,' he cried in haughty scorn, 'has at the very start of his address betrayed his ignorance of the most rudimentary rules of grammar!' 'The Qur'an itself,' pleaded the Bab, 'does in no wise accord with the rules and conventions current amongst men. The Word of God can never be subject to the limitations

[319] of His creatures. Nay, the rules and canons which men have adopted have

been deduced from the text of the Word of God and are based upon it. These men have, in the very texts of that holy Book, discovered no less than three hundred instances of grammatical error, such as the one you now criticise. Inasmuch as it was the Word of God, they had no other alternative except to resign themselves to His will.'7

"He then repeated the same words He had uttered, to which Mulla Muhammad raised again the same objection. Shortly after, another person ventured to put this question to the Bab: 'To which tense does the word Ishtartanna belong?' In answer to him, the Bab quoted this verse of the Qur'an: 'Far be the glory of thy Lord, the Lord of all greatness, from what they impute to Him, and peace be upon His Apostles! And praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds.' Immediately after, He arose and left the gathering."8

The Nizamu'l-'Ulama' was sorely displeased at the manner in which the meeting had been conducted. "How shameful," he was heard to exclaim later, "is the discourtesy of the people of Tabriz! What could possibly be the connection between these idle remarks and the consideration of such weighty, such momentous issues?" A few others were likewise [320] inclined to denounce the disgraceful treatment meted out to the Bab on that occasion. Mulla Muhammad-i-Mamaqani, however, persisted in his vehement denunciations. "I warn you," he loudly protested, "if you allow this youth to pursue unhampered the course of his activities, the day will come when the entire population of Tabriz will have flocked to his standard. Should he, when that day arrives, signify his wish that all the ulamas of Tabriz, that the Vali-'Ahd himself, should be expelled from the city and that he should alone assume the reins of civil and ecclesiastical authority, no one of you, who now view with apathy his cause, will feel able to oppose him effectually. The entire city, nay the whole province of Adhirbayjan, will on that day unanimously support him."

The persistent denunciations of that evil plotter excited the apprehensions of the authorities of Tabriz. Those who held the reins of power in their grasp took counsel together as to the most effective measures to be taken to resist the progress of His Faith. Some urged that in view of the marked disrespect which the Bab had shown to the Vali-'Ahd in occupying his seat without his leave, and because of His failure to obtain the consent of the chairman of that gathering when He arose to depart, He should be summoned again to a like gathering and should receive from the hands of its members a humiliating punishment. Nasiri'd-Din Mirza, however, refused to entertain this proposal. Finally it was decided that the Bab should be brought to the home of Mirza 'Ali-Asghar, who was both the Shaykhu'l-Islam of Tabriz and a siyyid, and should receive at the hands of the governor's bodyguard the chastisement which He deserved. The guard refused to accede to this request, preferring not to interfere in a matter which they regarded as the sole concern of the ulamas of the city. The Shaykhu'l-Islam himself decided to inflict the punishment. He summoned the Bab to his home, and with his hand eleven times applied the rods to His feet.9
[321]

That same year this insolent tyrant was struck with paralysis, and, after enduring the most excruciating pain, died a miserable death. His treacherous, avaricious, and self-seeking character was universally recognised by the people of Tabriz. Notoriously cruel and sordid, he was feared and despised by the people who groaned under his yoke and prayed for deliverance. The abject circumstances of his death reminded both his friends and his opponents of the punishment which must necessarily await those whom neither the fear of God nor the voice of conscience can deter from behaving with such perfidious cruelty towards their fellow men. After his death the functions of the Shaykhu'l-Islam were abolished in Tabriz. Such was his infamy that the very name of the institution with which he had been associated came to be abhorred by the people.

And yet his behaviour, base and treacherous as it was, was only one instance of the villainous conduct which characterised the attitude of the ecclesiastical leaders among his countrymen towards the Bab. How far and how grievously have these erred from the path of fairness and justice! How contemptuously have they cast away the counsels of the Prophet of God and the admonitions of the imams of the Faith! Have not these explicitly declared that "should a [322] Youth from Bani-Hashim10 be made manifest and summon the people to a new Book and to new laws, all should hasten to Him and embrace His Cause"? Although these same imams have clearly stated that "most of His enemies shall be the ulamas," yet these blind and ignoble people have chosen to follow the example of their leaders and to regard their conduct as the pattern of righteousness and justice. They walk in their footsteps, implicitly obey their orders, and deem themselves the "people of salvation," the "chosen of God," and the "custodians of His Truth."

From Tabriz the Bab was taken back to Chihriq, where He was again entrusted to the keeping of Yahya Khan. His persecutors had fondly imagined that by summoning Him to their presence they would, through threats and intimidation, induce Him to abandon His Mission. That gathering enabled the Bab to set forth emphatically, in the presence of the most illustrious dignitaries assembled in the capital of Adhirbayjan, the distinguishing features of His claim, and to confute, in brief and convincing language, the arguments of His adversaries. The news of that momentous declaration, fraught with such far-reaching consequences, spread rapidly throughout Persia and stirred again more deeply the feelings of the disciples of the Bab. It reanimated their zeal, reinforced their position, and was a signal for the tremendous happenings that were soon to convulse that land.

[323] No sooner had the Bab returned to Chihriq than He wrote in bold and moving language a denunciation of the character and action of Haji Mirza Aqasi. In the opening passages of that epistle, which was given the name of the Khutbiy-i-Qahriyyih,11 the Author addresses the Grand Vazir of Muhammad Shah in these terms: "O thou who hast disbelieved in God and hast turned thy face away from His signs!" That lengthy epistle was forwarded to Hujjat, who, in those days, was confined in Tihran. He was instructed to deliver it in person to Haji

Mirza Aqasi.

I was privileged to hear the following account from the lips of Baha'u'llah while in the prison-city of 'Akka: "Mulla Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Zanjani, soon after he had delivered that Tablet to Haji Mirza Aqasi, came and visited me. I was in the company of Mirza Masih-i-Nuri and a number of other believers when he arrived. He recounted the circumstances attending the delivery of the Tablet, and recited before us the entire text, which was about three pages in length, and which he had committed to memory." The tone of Baha'u'llah's reference to Hujjat indicated how greatly pleased He was with the purity and nobleness of his life, and how much He admired his undaunted courage, his indomitable will, his unworldliness, and his unwavering constancy.

FOOTNOTES

18.1. Qur'an, 29:2.

18.2. The heir to the throne.

18.3. Literally meaning "great."

18.4. Born July 17, 1831; began to reign September, 1848, died 1896. "This Prince left Tihran to return to his government the twenty-third of January, 1848. His father having died the fourth of September, he returned to assume the title of Shah on the eighteenth of September of the same year." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 243, note 195.)

18.5. "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 19) mentions in addition the name of Mirza Ahmad, the Imam-Jum'ih.

18.6. Qur'an, 29:51.

18.7. "If anyone should raise an objection to the grammar or syntax of these verses, this objection is vain, because the rules of grammar should be taken from the verses and not the verses written in compliance with the rules of grammar. There is no doubt that the Master of these verses denied these rules, denied that he, himself, was ever aware of them." ("Le Bayan Persan," vol. 1, pp. 45-46.)

18.8. "And as for the Muslim accounts, those which we have before us do not bear the stamp of truth: they seem to be forgeries.

Knowing what we do of the Bab, it is probable that he had the best of the argument, and that the doctors and functionaries who attended the meeting were unwilling to put upon record their own fiasco." (Dr.

T.

K.

Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," p.

62.) "It is difficult to decide to what measure of credence the above narrative [the Muhammadan version of the examination of the Bab at Tabriz] is entitled.

Very probably such questions as are there recorded—and assuredly some of them are sufficiently frivolous and even indecent—were asked; but, even though the Bab may have been unable to answer them, it is far more likely that, as stated in the 'Tarikh-i-Jadid,' he preserved a dignified silence than that he gave utterance to the absurdities attributed to him by the Muhammadan writers.

These, indeed, spoil their own case; for, desiring to prove that the Bab was not endowed with superhuman wisdom, they represent him as displaying an ignorance which we can scarcely credit.

That the whole examination was a farce throughout, that the sentence was a foregone conclusion, that no serious attempt to apprehend the nature and evidence of the Bab's claim and doctrine was made, and that from first to last a systematic course of browbeating, irony, and mockery was pursued appear to me to be facts proved no less by the Muhammadan than by the Babi accounts of these inquisitorial proceedings." ("A Traveller's Narrative,"

Note M, p.

290.)

18.9. The following is Dr. Cormick's account of his personal impressions of Mirza 'Ali-Muhammad the Bab, extracted from letters written by him to the Rev. Benjamin Labaree, D.D. (Dr. Cormick was an English physician long resident in Tabriz, where he was highly respected. The document was communicated to Professor E. G. Browne, of Cambridge University, by Mr. W. A. Shedd, who wrote concerning it, in a letter dated March 1, 1911: "Dear Professor Browne, In going over papers of my father (the late Rev. J. H. Shedd, D.D., of the American Mission at Urumiyyih, Persia, of the same mission as Dr. Benjamin Labaree), I found something which I think may be of value from a historical point of view. I have no books here, nor are any accessible here, to be certain whether this bit of testimony has been used or not. I think probably not, and I am sure that I can do nothing better than send them to you, with the wish that you may use them as you think best. Of the authenticity of the papers there can be no doubt.")

"You ask me for some particulars of my interview with the founder of the sect known as Babis.

Nothing of any importance transpired in this interview, as the Bab was aware of my having been sent with two other Persian doctors to see whether he was of sane mind or merely a madman, to decide the question whether to put him to death or not.

With this knowledge he was loth to answer any questions put to him.

To all enquiries he merely regarded us with a mild look, chanting in a low melodious voice some hymns, I suppose.

Two other Siyyids, his intimate friends, were also present, who subsequently were put to death with him, besides a couple of government officials.

He only once deigned to answer me, on my saying that I was not a Musulman and was willing to know something about his religion, as I might perhaps be inclined to adopt it.

He regarded me very intently on my saying this, and replied that he had no doubt of all Europeans coming over to his religion.

Our report to the Shah at that time was of a nature to spare his life.

He was put to death some time after by the order of the Amir-Nizam Mirza Taqi Khan.

On our report he merely got the bastinado, in which operation a farrash, whether intentionally or not, struck him across the face with the stick destined for his feet, which produced a great wound and swelling of the face.

On being asked whether a Persian surgeon should be brought to treat him, he expressed a desire that I should be sent for, and I accordingly treated him for a few days, but in the interviews consequent on this I could never get him to have a confidential chat with me, as some government people were always present, he being a prisoner.

He was very thankful for my attentions to him.

He was a very mild and delicate-looking man, rather small in stature and very fair for a Persian, with a melodious soft voice, which struck me much.

Being a Siyyid, he was dressed in the habit of that sect, as were also his two companions.

In fact his whole look and deportment went far to dispose one in his favour.

Of his doctrine I heard nothing from his own lips, although the idea was that there existed in his religion a certain approach to Christianity.

He was seen by some Armenian carpenters, who were sent to make some repairs in his prison, reading the Bible, and he took no pains to conceal it, but on the contrary told them of it.

Most assuredly the Musulman fanaticism does not exist in his religion, as applied to Christians, nor is there that restraint of females that now exists."

In connection with this document, Professor Browne writes as follows: "The first of these two documents is very valuable as giving the personal impression produced by the Bab, during the period of his imprisonment and suffering, on a cultivated and impartial Western mind.

Very few Western Christians can have had the opportunity of seeing, still less of conversing with, the Bab, and I do not know of any other who has recorded his impressions." (E.

G.

Browne's "Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion," pp.

260-62, 264.)

18.10. Hashim was the great-grandfather of Muhammad.

18.11. Literally "Sermon of Wrath."

CHAPTER XIX
THE MAZINDARAN UPHEAVAL

[324] In the same month of Sha'ban that witnessed the indignities inflicted upon the Bab in Tabriz, and the afflictions which befell Baha'u'llah and His companions in Niyala, Mulla Husayn returned from the camp of Prince Hamzih Mirza to Mashhad, from which place he was to proceed seven days later to Karbila, accompanied by whomsoever he might desire. The prince offered him a sum to defray the expenses of his journey, an offer that he declined, sending the money back with a message requesting him to expend it for the relief of the poor and needy. 'Abdu'l-'Ali Khan likewise volunteered to provide all the requirements of Mulla Husayn's intended pilgrimage, and expressed his eagerness to pay also the expenses of whomsoever he might choose to accompany him. All that he accepted from him was a sword and a horse, both of which he was destined to utilise with consummate bravery and skill in repulsing the assaults of a treacherous enemy.

My pen can never adequately describe the devotion which Mulla Husayn had kindled in the hearts of the people of Mashhad, nor can it seek to fathom the extent of his influence. His house, in those days, was continually besieged by crowds of eager people who begged to be allowed to accompany him on his contemplated journey. Mothers brought their sons, and sisters their brothers, and tearfully implored him to accept them as their most cherished offerings on the Altar of Sacrifice.

Mulla Husayn was still in Mashhad when a messenger arrived bearing to him the Bab's turban and conveying the news that a new name, that of Siyyid 'Ali, had been conferred upon him by his Master. "Adorn your head," was the message, "with My green turban, the emblem of My lineage, and, with the Black Standard1 unfurled before you, [325] hasten to the Jaziriy-i-Khadra',2 and lend your assistance to My beloved Quddus."

As soon as that message reached him, Mulla Husayn arose to execute the wishes of his Master. Leaving Mashhad for a place situated at a farsang's3 distance from the city, he hoisted the Black Standard, placed the turban of the Bab upon his head, assembled his companions, mounted his steed, and gave the signal for their march to the Jaziriy-i-Khadra'. His companions, who were two hundred and two in number, enthusiastically followed him. That memorable day was the nineteenth of Sha'ban, in the year 1264 A.H.4 Wherever they tarried, at every village and hamlet through which they passed, Mulla Husayn and his fellow-disciples would fearlessly proclaim the message of the New Day, would invite the people to embrace its truth, and would select from among those who responded to their call a few whom they would ask to join them on their journey.

In the town of Nishapur, Haji 'Abdu'l-Majid, the father of Badi',5 who was a merchant of note, enlisted under the banner of Mulla Husayn. Though his father enjoyed an unrivalled prestige as the owner of the best-known turquoise mine of Nishapur, he, forsaking all the honours and material benefits that his native town had conferred upon him, pledged his undivided loyalty to Mulla Husayn. In the village of Miyamay, thirty among its inhabitants declared their faith

[326] and joined that company. All of them, with the exception of Mulla 'Isa, fell martyrs in the fort of Shaykh Tabarsi.6

Arriving at Chashmih-'Ali, a place situated near the town of Damghan and on the highroad to Mazindaran, Mulla Husayn decided to break his journey and to tarry there for a few days.

He encamped under the shadow of a big tree, by the side of a running stream. "We stand at the parting of the ways," he told his companions. "We shall await His decree as to which direction we should take."

Towards the end of the month of Shavval,7 a fierce gale arose and struck down a large branch of that tree; whereupon Mulla Husayn observed: "The tree of the sovereignty of Muhammad Shah has, by the will of God, been uprooted and hurled to the ground."

On the third day after he had uttered that prediction, a messenger, who was on his way to Mashhad, arrived from Tihran and reported the death of his sovereign.8 The following day, the company determined to leave for Mazindaran.

As their leader arose to depart, he pointed in the direction of Mazindaran and said: "This is the way that leads to our Karbila.

Whoever is unprepared for the great trials that lie before us, let him now repair to his home and give up the journey."

He several times repeated that warning, and, as he approached Savad-Kuh, explicitly declared: "I, together with seventy-two of my companions, shall suffer death for the sake of the Well-Beloved.

Whoso is unable to renounce the world, let him now, at this very moment, depart, for later on he will be unable to escape."

Twenty of his companions chose to return, feeling themselves powerless to withstand the trials to which their chief continually alluded.

[328] The news of their approach to the town of Barfurush alarmed the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama'.

The widespread and growing popularity of Mulla Husayn, the circumstances attending his departure from Mashhad, the Black Standard which waved before him—above all, the number, the discipline, and the enthusiasm of his companions, combined to arouse the implacable hatred of that cruel and overbearing mujtahid.

He bade the crier summon the people of Barfurush to the masjid and announce

that a sermon of such momentous consequence was to be delivered by him that no loyal adherent of Islam in that neighbourhood could afford to ignore it.

An immense crowd of men and women thronged the masjid, saw him ascend the pulpit, fling his turban to the ground, tear open the neck of his shirt, and bewail the plight into which the Faith had fallen. "Awake," he thundered from the pulpit, "for our enemies stand at our very doors, ready to wipe out all that we cherish as pure and holy in Islam!

Should we fail to resist them, none will be left to survive their onslaught.

He who is the leader of that band came alone, one day, and attended my classes.

He utterly ignored me and treated me with marked disdain in the presence of my assembled disciples.

As I refused to accord him the honours which he expected, he angrily arose and flung me his challenge.

This man had the temerity, at a time when Muhammad Shah was seated upon his throne and was at the height of his power, to assail me with so much bitterness.

What excesses this stirrer-up of mischief, who is now advancing at the head of his savage band, will not commit now that the protecting hand of Muhammad Shah has been suddenly withdrawn!

It is the duty of all the inhabitants of Barfurush, both young and old, both men and women, to arm themselves against these contemptible wreckers of Islam, and by every means in their power to resist their onset.

To-morrow, at the hour of dawn, let all of you arise and march out to exterminate their forces."

The entire congregation arose in response to his call. His passionate eloquence, the undisputed authority he exercised over them, and the dread of the loss of their own lives and property, combined to induce the inhabitants of that town to make every possible preparation for the coming [329] encounter. They armed themselves with every weapon which they could either find or devise, and set out at break of day from the town of Barfurush, fully determined to face and slay the enemies of their Faith and to plunder their property.9

As soon as Mulla Husayn had determined to pursue the way that led to Mazindaran, he, immediately after he had offered his morning prayer, bade his companions discard all their possessions. "Leave behind all your belongings," he urged them, "and content yourselves only with your steeds and swords, that all may witness your renunciation of all earthly things, and may realise that this little band of God's chosen companions has no desire to safeguard its own property, much less to covet the property of others." Instantly they all obeyed and, unburdening their steeds, arose and joyously followed him. The father of Badi' was the first to throw aside his satchel, which contained a considerable amount of turquoise which he had brought with him from the mine that belonged

to his father. One word from Mulla Husayn proved sufficient to induce him to fling by the roadside what was undoubtedly his most treasured possession, and to cling to the desire of his leader.

At a farsang's10 distance from Barfurush, Mulla Husayn and his companions encountered their enemies.

A multitude of people, fully equipped with arms and ammunition, had gathered, and blocked their way.

A fierce expression of savagery rested upon their countenances, and the foulest [330] imprecations fell unceasingly from their lips.

The companions, in the face of the uproar of this angry populace, made as if to unsheathe their swords. "Not yet," commanded their leader; "not until the aggressor forces us to protect ourselves must our swords leave their scabbards."

He had scarcely uttered these words when the fire of the enemy was directed against them.

Six of the companions were immediately hurled to the ground. "Beloved leader," exclaimed one of them, "we have risen and followed you with no desire except to sacrifice ourselves in the path of the Cause we have embraced.

Allow us, we pray you, to defend ourselves, and suffer us not to fall so disgracefully a victim to the fire of the enemy." "The time is not yet come," replied Mulla Husayn; "the number is as yet incomplete."

A bullet immediately after pierced the breast of one of his companions, a siyyid from Yazd11 who had walked all the way from Mashhad to that place, and who ranked among his staunchest supporters.

At the sight of that devoted companion fallen dead at his feet, Mulla Husayn raised his eyes to heaven and prayed: "Behold, O God, my God, the plight of Thy chosen companions, and witness the welcome which these people have accorded Thy loved ones.

Thou knowest that we cherish no other desire than to guide them to the way of Truth and to confer upon them the knowledge of Thy Revelation.

Thou hast Thyself commanded us to defend our lives against the assaults of the enemy.

Faithful to Thy command, I now arise with my companions to resist the attack which they have launched against us."12

Unsheathing his sword and spurring on his charger into the midst of the enemy, Mulla Husayn pursued, with marvellous intrepidity, the assailant of his fallen companion. His opponent, who was afraid to face him, took refuge behind a tree and, holding aloft his musket, sought to shield himself. Mulla Husayn immediately recognised him, rushed [331] forward, and with a single stroke of his sword cut across the trunk of the tree, the barrel of the musket, and the

body of his adversary.13 The astounding force of that stroke confounded the enemy and paralysed their efforts. All fled panic-stricken in the face of so extraordinary a manifestation of skill, of strength, and of courage. This feat was the first of its kind to attest to the prowess and heroism of Mulla Husayn, a feat which earned him the commendation of the Bab. Quddus likewise paid his tribute to the cool fearlessness which Mulla Husayn displayed on that occasion. He is reported to have quoted, when informed of the news, the following verse of the Qur'an: "So it was not ye who slew them, but God who slew them; and those shafts were God's, not thine! He would make trial of the faithful by a gracious trial from Himself: verily, God heareth, knoweth. This befell, that God might also bring to naught the craft of the infidels."

I myself, when in Tihran, in the year 1265 A.H.,14 a month after the conclusion of the memorable struggle of Shaykh Tabarsi, heard Mirza Ahmad relate the circumstances of this incident in the presence of a number of believers, among whom were Mirza Muhammad-Husayn-i-Hakamiy-i-Kirmani, Haji Mulla Isma'il-i-Farahani, Mirza Habibu'llah-i-Isfahani, and Siyyid Muhammad-i-Isfahani.

When, at a later time, I visited Khurasan and was staying at the home of Mulla Sadiq-i-Khurasani in Mashhad, where I had been invited to teach the Cause, I asked Mirza Muhammad-i-Furughi, [332] in the presence of a number of believers, among whom were Nabil-i-Akbar and the father of Badi', to enlighten me regarding the true character of that amazing report.

Mirza Muhammad emphatically declared: "I myself was a witness to this act of Mulla Husayn.

Had I not seen it with my own eyes, I never would have believed it."

In this connection, the same Mirza Muhammad related to us the following story: "After the engagement of Vas-Kas, when Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza was completely routed, and had fled barefooted from the face of the companions of the Bab, the Amir-Nizam15 severely rebuked him. 'I have charged you,' he wrote him, 'with the mission of subduing a handful of young and contemptible students.

I have placed at your disposal the army of the Shah, and yet you have allowed it to suffer such a disgraceful defeat.

What would have befallen you, I wonder, had I entrusted you with the mission of defeating the combined forces of the Russian and Ottoman governments?' The prince thought it best to entrust a messenger with the fragments of the barrel of that same rifle which was cleft in twain by the sword of Mulla Husayn, and to instruct him to present them, in person, to the Amir-Nizam. 'Such is,' was his message to the Amir, 'the contemptible strength of an adversary who, with a single stroke of his sword, has shattered into six pieces the tree, the musket, and its holder.'

"So convincing a testimony of the strength of his opponent constituted, in the eyes of the Amir-Nizam, a challenge [333] which no man of his position and authority could afford to ignore. He resolved to curb the power which, by so

daring an act, had sought to assert itself against his forces. Unable, in spite of the overwhelming number of his men, to defeat Mulla Husayn and his companions fairly and honourably, he meanly resorted to treachery and fraud as instruments for the attainment of his purpose. He ordered the prince to affix his seal to the Qur'an and pledge the honour of his officers that they would henceforth abstain from any act of hostility towards the occupants of the fort. By this means he was able to induce them to lay down their arms, and to inflict upon his defenceless opponents a crushing and inglorious defeat."

Such a remarkable display of dexterity and strength could not fail to attract the attention of a considerable number of observers whose minds had remained, as yet, untainted by prejudice or malice. It evoked the enthusiasm of poets who, in different cities of Persia, were moved to celebrate the exploits of the author of so daring an act. Their poems helped to diffuse the knowledge, and to immortalise the memory, of that mighty deed. Among those who paid their tribute to the valour of Mulla Husayn was a certain Rida-Quli Khan-i-Lalih-Bashi, who, in the "Tarikh-i-Nasiri," lavished his praise on the prodigious strength and the unrivalled skill which had characterised that stroke.

I ventured to ask Mirza Muhammad-i-Furughi whether he was aware that in the "Nasikhu't-Tavarikh" mention had been made of the fact that Mulla Husayn had, in his early youth, been instructed in the art of swordsmanship, that he had acquired his proficiency only after a considerable period of training. "This is sheer fabrication," affirmed Mulla Muhammad. "I have known him from his childhood, and have been associated with him, as a classmate and friend, for a long time. I have never known him to be possessed of such strength and power. I even deem myself superior in vigour and bodily endurance. His hand trembled as he wrote, and he often expressed his inability to write as fully and as frequently as he wished. He was greatly handicapped in this respect, and he continued to suffer from its effects until his journey to Mazindaran. The moment he unsheathed

[334] his sword, however, to repulse that savage attack, a mysterious power seemed to have suddenly transformed him. In all subsequent encounters, he was seen to be the first to spring forward and spur on his charger into the camp of the aggressor. Unaided, he would face and fight the combined forces of his opponents and would himself achieve the victory. We, who followed him in the rear, had to content ourselves with those who had already been disabled and were weakened by the blows they had sustained. His name alone was sufficient to strike terror into the hearts of his adversaries. They fled at mention of him; they trembled at his approach. Even those who were his constant companions were mute with wonder before him. We were stunned by the display of his stupendous force, his indomitable will and complete intrepidity. We were all convinced that he had ceased to be the Mulla Husayn whom we had known, and that in him resided a spirit which God alone could bestow."

This same Mirza Muhammad-i-Furughi related to me the following: "Mulla Husayn had no sooner dealt his memorable blow to his adversary than he disappeared from our sight. We knew not whither he had gone. His attendant, Qambar-'Ali,

alone could follow him. He subsequently informed us that his master threw himself headlong upon his enemies, and was able with a single stroke of his sword to strike down each of those who dared assail him. Unmindful of the bullets that rained upon him, he forced his way through the ranks of the enemy and headed for Barfurush. He rode straight to the residence of the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama', thrice made the circuit of his house, and cried out: 'Let that contemptible

[336] coward, who has incited the inhabitants of this town to wage holy warfare against us and has ignominiously concealed himself behind the walls of his house, emerge from his inglorious retreat. Let him, by his example, demonstrate the sincerity of his appeal and the righteousness of his cause. Has he forgotten that he who preaches a holy war must needs himself march at the head of his followers, and by his own deeds kindle their devotion and sustain their enthusiasm?'"

The voice of Mulla Husayn drowned the clamour of the multitude. The inhabitants of Barfurush surrendered and soon raised the cry, "Peace, peace!" No sooner had the voice of surrender been raised than the acclamations of the followers of Mulla Husayn, who at that moment were seen galloping towards Barfurush, were heard from every side. The cry of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!"16 which they shouted at the top of their voices, struck dismay into the hearts of those who heard it. The companions of Mulla Husayn, who had abandoned the hope of again finding him alive, were greatly surprised when they saw him seated erect upon his horse, unhurt and unaffected by the fierceness of that onset. Each reverently approached him and kissed his stirrups.

On the afternoon of that day, the peace which the inhabitants of Barfurush had implored was granted. To the crowd which had gathered about him, Mulla Husayn spoke these words: "O followers of the Prophet of God, and shi'ahs of the imams of His Faith! Why have you risen against us? Why deem the shedding of our blood an act meritorious in the sight of God? Did we ever repudiate the truth of your Faith? Is this the hospitality which the Apostle of God has enjoined His followers to accord to both the faithful and the infidel? What have we done to merit such condemnation on your part? Consider: I alone, with no other weapon than my sword, have been able to face the rain of bullets which the inhabitants of Barfurush have poured upon me, and have emerged unscathed from the midst of the fire with which you have besieged me. Both my person and my horse have escaped unhurt from your overwhelming attack. Except for the slight scratch which I received on my face, you have [337] been powerless to wound me. God has protected me and willed to establish in your eyes the ascendancy of His Faith."

Immediately afterwards, Mulla Husayn proceeded to the caravanserai of Sabzih-Maydan. He dismounted and, standing at the entrance of the inn, awaited the arrival of his companions. As soon as they had gathered and been accommodated in that place, he sent for bread and water. Those who had been commissioned to fetch them returned empty-handed, and informed him that they had been unable to procure either bread from the baker or water from the public square. "You have exhorted us," they told him, "to put our trust in God and to

resign ourselves to His will. 'Nothing can befall us but what God hath destined for us. Our liege Lord is He; and on God let the faithful trust!'"17

Mulla Husayn ordered that the gates of the caravanserai be closed. Assembling his companions, he begged them to remain gathered in his presence until the hour of sunset. As the evening approached, he asked whether any among them would be willing to arise and, renouncing his life for the sake of his Faith, ascend to the roof of the caravanserai and sound the adhan.18 A youth gladly responded. No sooner had the opening words of "Allah-u-Akbar" dropped from his lips than a bullet suddenly struck him and immediately caused his death. "Let another one among you arise," [338] Mulla Husayn urged them, "and, with the selfsame renunciation, proceed with the prayer which that youth was unable to finish." Another youth started to his feet, and had no sooner uttered the words, "I bear witness that Muhammad is the Apostle of God," than he also was struck down by another bullet from the enemy. A third youth, at the bidding of his chief, attempted to complete the prayer which his martyred companions had been forced to leave unfinished. He, too, suffered the same fate. As he was approaching the end of his prayer, and was uttering the words, "There is no God but God," he, in his turn, fell dead.

The fall of his third companion decided Mulla Husayn to throw open the gate of the caravanserai, and to arise, together with his friends, to repulse this unexpected attack from a treacherous enemy. Leaping on horseback, he gave the signal to charge upon the assailants who had massed before the gates and had filled the Sabzih-Maydan. Sword in hand, and followed by his companions, he succeeded in decimating the forces that had been arrayed against him. Those few who had escaped their swords fled before them in panic, again pleading for peace, again imploring mercy. With the approach of evening, the entire crowd had vanished. The Sabzih-Maydan, which a few hours before overflowed with a seething mass of opponents, was now deserted. The clamour of the multitude was stilled. Bestrewn with the bodies of the slain, the Maydan and its surroundings offered a sad and moving spectacle, a scene which bore witness to the victory of God over His enemies.

So startling a victory19 induced a number of the nobles and chiefs of the people to intervene and beseech the mercy of Mulla Husayn on behalf of their fellow-citizens.

They came on foot to submit to him their petition. "God is our witness," they pleaded, "that we harbour no intention but [339] that of establishing peace and reconciliation between us.

Remain seated on your charger for a while, until we have explained our motive."

Observing the earnestness of their appeal, Mulla Husayn dismounted and invited them to join him in the caravanserai. "We, unlike the people of this town, know how to receive the stranger in our midst," he said, as he invited them to be seated beside him and ordered that they be served with tea. "The Sa'idu'l-'Ulama'," they replied, "was alone responsible for having kindled the fire of so much mischief.

The people of Barfurush should in no wise be implicated in the crime which he has committed.

Let the past be now forgotten.

We would suggest, in the interest of both parties, that you and your companions leave to-morrow for Amul.

Barfurush is in the throes of great excitement; we fear lest they may again be instigated to attack you."

Mulla Husayn, though hinting at the insincerity of the people, consented to their proposal; whereupon 'Abbas-Quli Khan-i-Larijani20 and Haji Mustafa Khan arose together and, swearing by the Qur'an which they had brought with them, solemnly declared their intention to regard them as their guests that night, and the following day to instruct Khusraw-i-Qadi-Kala'i21 and a hundred horsemen to ensure their safe passage through Shir-Gah. "The malediction of God and His Prophets be upon us, both in this world and [340] in the next," they added, "if we ever allow the slightest injury to be inflicted upon you and your party."

As soon as they had made their declaration, their friends who had gone to fetch food for the companions and fodder for their horses, arrived. Mulla Husayn bade his fellow-believers break their fast, inasmuch as none of them that day, which was Friday, the twelfth of the month of Dhi'l-Qa'dih,22 had taken any meat or drink since the hour of dawn. So great was the number of notables and their attendants that had crowded into the caravanserai that day that neither he nor any of his companions had partaken of the tea which they had offered to their visitors.

That night, about four hours after sunset, Mulla Husayn, together with his friends, dined in the company of 'Abbas-Quli Khan and Haji Mustafa Khan. In the middle of that same night, the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama' summoned Khusraw-i-Qadi-Kala'i and confidentially intimated to him his desire that, at any time or place he himself might decide, the entire property of the party which had been entrusted to his charge should be seized, and that they themselves, without a single exception, should be put to death. "Are these not the followers of Islam?" Khusraw observed. "Have not these same people, as I have already learned, preferred to sacrifice three of their companions rather than leave unfinished the call to prayer which they had raised? How could we, who cherish such designs and perpetrate such acts, be regarded as worthy of that name?" That shameless miscreant insisted that his orders be faithfully obeyed. "Slay them," he said, as he pointed with his finger to his neck, "and be not afraid. I hold myself responsible for your act. I will, on the Day of Judgment, be answerable to God in your name. We, who wield the sceptre of authority, are surely better informed than you, and can better judge how best to extirpate this heresy."

At the hour of sunrise, 'Abbas-Quli Khan asked that Khusraw be conducted into his presence, and bade him exercise the utmost consideration towards Mulla Husayn and his companions, to ensure their safe passage through Shir-Gah, and

to refuse whatever rewards they might wish to offer him. [341] Khusraw feigned submission to these instructions and assured him that neither he nor his horsemen would relax in their vigilance or flinch in their devotion to them. "On our return," he added, "we shall show you his own written expression of satisfaction with the services we shall have rendered him."

When Khusraw was taken by 'Abbas-Quli Khan and Haji Mustafa Khan and other representative leaders of Barfurush into the presence of Mulla Husayn and was introduced to him, the latter remarked: "'If ye do well, it will redound to your own advantage; and if ye do evil, the evil will return upon you.'23 If this man should treat us well, great shall be his reward; and if he act treacherously towards us, great shall be his punishment. To God would we commit our Cause, and to His will are we wholly resigned."

Mulla Husayn spoke these words and gave the signal for departure. Once more Qambar-'Ali was heard to raise the call of his master, "Mount your steeds, O heroes of God!"— a summons which he invariably called out on such occasions. At the sound of those words, they all hurried to their steeds. A detachment of Khusraw's horsemen marched before them. They were immediately followed by Khusraw and Mulla Husayn, who rode abreast in the centre of the company. In their rear followed the rest of the companions, and on their right and left marched the remainder of the hundred horsemen whom Khusraw had armed as willing instruments for the execution of his design. It had been agreed that the party should start early in the morning from Barfurush and arrive on the same day at noon at Shir-Gah. Two hours after sunrise, they started for their destination. Khusraw intentionally took the way of the forest, a route which he thought would better serve his purpose.

As soon as they had penetrated it, he gave the signal for attack.

His men fiercely threw themselves upon the companions, seized their property, killed a number, among whom was the brother of Mulla Sadiq, and captured the rest.

As soon as the cry of agony and distress reached his ears, Mulla Husayn halted, and, alighting from his horse, protested against Khusraw's treacherous behaviour. "The hour of midday is long past," he told him; "we still have not attained [342] our destination.

I refuse to proceed further with you; I can dispense with your guidance and company and that of your men."

Turning to Qambar-'Ali, he asked him to spread his prayer-mat, that he might offer his devotions.

He was performing his ablutions, when Khusraw, who had also dismounted, called one of his attendants and bade him inform Mulla Husayn that if he wished to reach his destination safely, he should deliver to him both his sword and his horse.

Refusing to give a reply, Mulla Husayn proceeded to offer his prayer.

Shortly after, Mirza Muhammad-Taqiy-i-Juvayniy-i-Sabzivari, a man of literary accomplishments and fearless courage, went to an attendant who was preparing the qulyan,24 and requested him to allow him to take it in person to Khusraw; a request that was readily granted.

Mirza Muhammad-Taqi was bending to kindle the fire of the qulyan, when, thrusting his hand suddenly into Khusraw's bosom, he drew his dagger from his robe and plunged it hilt-deep into his vitals.25

Mulla Husayn was still in the act of prayer when the cry of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman"26 was raised again by his companions. They threw themselves upon their treacherous assailants and in one onslaught struck them all down except the attendant who had prepared the qulyan. Affrighted and defenceless, he fell at the feet of Mulla Husayn and implored his aid. He was given the bejewelled qulyan which belonged to his master and was bidden to return to Barfurush and recount to 'Abbas-Quli Khan all that he had witnessed. "Tell him," said Mulla Husayn, "how faithfully Khusraw discharged his mission. That false miscreant foolishly imagined that my mission had come to an end, that both my sword and my horse had fulfilled their function. Little did he know that their work had but just begun, that until the services which they can render are entirely accomplished, neither his power nor the power of any man beside him can wrest them from me."

As the night was approaching, the party decided to tarry in that spot until the hour of dawn. At daybreak, after Mulla Husayn had offered his prayer, he gathered his companions [343] together and said: "We are approaching our Karbila, our ultimate destination." Immediately after, he set out on foot towards that spot, and was followed by his companions. Finding that a few were attempting to carry with them the belongings of Khusraw and of his men, he ordered them to leave everything behind except their swords and horses. "It behoves you," he urged them, "to arrive at that hallowed spot in a state of complete detachment, wholly sanctified from all that pertains to this world."27 He had walked the distance of a maydan28 when he arrived at the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsi.29 The Shaykh had been one of the transmitters of the traditions ascribed to the imams of the Faith, and his burial-place was visited by the people of the neighbourhood. On reaching that spot, he recited the following verse of the Qur'an: "O

[344] my Lord, bless Thou my arrival at this place, for Thou alone canst vouchsafe such blessings."

The night preceding their arrival, the guardian of the shrine dreamed that the Siyyidu'sh-Shuhada', the Imam Husayn, had arrived at Shaykh Tabarsi, accompanied by no less than seventy-two warriors and a large number of his companions. He dreamed that they tarried in that spot, engaged in the most heroic of battles, triumphing in every encounter over the forces of the enemy, and that the Prophet of God, Himself, arrived one night and joined that blessed company. When Mulla Husayn arrived on the following day, the guardian immediately recognised him as the hero he had seen in his vision, threw himself

at his feet, and kissed them devoutly. Mulla Husayn invited him to be seated by his side, and heard him relate his story. "All that you [345] have witnessed," he assured the keeper of the shrine, "will come to pass. Those glorious scenes will again be enacted before your eyes." That servant threw in his lot eventually with the heroic defenders of the fort and fell a martyr within its walls.

On the very day of their arrival, which was the fourteenth of Dhi'l-Qa'dih,30 Mulla Husayn gave Mirza Muhammad-Baqir, who had built the Babiyyih, the preliminary instructions

regarding the design of the fort which was to be constructed for their defence. Towards the evening of the same day, they found themselves suddenly encompassed by an irregular multitude of horsemen who had emerged from the forest and were preparing to open fire upon them. "We are of the inhabitants of Qadi-Kala," they shouted. "We come to avenge the blood of Khusraw. Not until we have put you all to the sword shall we be satisfied." Besieged by a savage crowd ready to pounce upon them, the party had to draw [346] their swords again in self-defence. Raising the cry of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman," they leaped forward, repulsed the assailants, and put them to flight. So tremendous was the shout, that the horsemen vanished as suddenly as they had appeared. Mirza Muhammad-Taqiy-i-Juvayni had, at his own request, assumed the command of that encounter.

Fearing that their assailants might again turn on them and resort to a general massacre, they pursued them until they reached a village which they thought to be the village of Qadi-Kala. At the sight of them, all the men fled in wild terror. The mother of Nazar Khan, the owner of the village, was inadvertently killed in the darkness of the night, amid the confusion that ensued. The outcries of the women, who were violently protesting that they had no connection whatever with the people of Qadi-Kala, soon reached the ears of Mirza Muhammad-Taqi, who immediately ordered his companions to withhold their hands until they ascertained the name and character of the place. They soon found out that the village belonged to Nazar Khan and that the woman who had lost her life was his mother. Greatly distressed at the discovery of so grievous a mistake on the part of his companions, Mirza Muhammad-Taqi sorrowfully exclaimed: "We did not intend to molest either the men or the women of this village. Our sole purpose was to curb the violence of the people of Qadi-Kala, who were about to put us all to death." He apologised earnestly for the pitiful tragedy which his companions had unwittingly enacted.

Nazar Khan, who in the meantime had concealed himself in his house, was convinced of the sincerity of the regrets expressed by Mirza Muhammad-Taqi. Though suffering from this grievous loss, he was moved to call upon him and to invite him to his home. He even asked Mirza Muhammad-Taqi to introduce him to Mulla Husayn, and expressed a keen desire to be made acquainted with the precepts of a Cause that could kindle such fervour in the breasts of its adherents.

At the hour of dawn, Mirza Muhammad-Taqi, accompanied by Nazar Khan, arrived at the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsi, and found Mulla Husayn leading the congregational prayer. Such was the rapture that glowed upon his countenance [347] that Nazar Khan felt an irresistible impulse to join the worshippers and to repeat the very prayers that were then falling from their lips. After the completion of that prayer, Mulla Husayn was informed of the loss which Nazar Khan had sustained. He expressed in the most touching language the sympathy which he and the entire company of his fellow-disciples felt for him in his great bereavement. "God knows," he assured him, "that our sole intention was to protect our lives rather than disturb the peace of the neighbourhood." Mulla Husayn then proceeded to relate the circumstances that had led to the attack directed against them by the people of Barfurush, and explained the treacherous conduct of Khusraw. He again assured him of the sorrow which the death of his mother had caused him. "Afflict not your heart," Nazar Khan spontaneously replied. "Would that a hundred sons had been given me, all of whom I would have joyously placed at your feet and offered as a sacrifice to the Sahibu'z-Zaman!" He pledged, that very moment, his undying loyalty to Mulla Husayn, and hastened back to his village in order to return with whatever provisions might be required for the party.

Mulla Husayn ordered his companions to commence the building of the fort which had been designed. To every group he assigned a section of the work, and encouraged them to hasten its completion. In the course of these operations, they were continually harassed by the people of the neighbouring villages, who, at the persistent instigations of the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama', marched out and fell upon them. Every attack of the enemy ended in failure and shame. Undeterred by the fierceness of their repeated onsets, the companions valiantly withstood their assaults until they had succeeded in subjugating temporarily the forces which had hemmed them in on every side. When the work of construction was completed, Mulla Husayn undertook the necessary preparations for the siege which the fort was destined to sustain, and provided, despite the obstacles which stood in his way, whatever seemed essential for the safety of its occupants.

The work had scarcely been completed when Shaykh Abu-Turab arrived bearing the news of Baha'u'llah's arrival at the village of Nazar Khan. He informed Mulla Husayn [348] that he had been specially commanded by Baha'u'llah to inform them that they all were to be His guests that night and that He Himself would join them that same afternoon. I have heard Mulla Mirza Muhammad-i-Furughi recount the following: "The tidings which Shaykh Abu-Turab brought imparted an indefinable joy to the heart or Mulla Husayn. He hastened immediately to his companions and bade them bestir themselves for the reception of Baha'u'llah. He himself

joined them in sweeping and sprinkling with water the approaches to the shrine, and attended in person to whatever was necessary for the arrival of the beloved Visitor. As soon as he saw Him approaching with Nazar Khan, he rushed forward, tenderly embraced Him, and conducted Him to the place of honour which he had

reserved for His reception. We were too blind in those days to recognise the glory of Him whom our leader had introduced with such reverence and love into our midst. What Mulla Husayn had perceived, our [349] dull vision was as yet unable to recognise. With what solicitude he received Him in his arms! What feelings of rapturous delight filled his heart on seeing Him! He was so lost in admiration that he was utterly oblivious of us all. His soul was so wrapt in contemplation of that countenance that we who were awaiting his permission to be seated were kept standing a long time beside him. It was Baha'u'llah Himself who finally bade us be seated. We, too, were soon made to feel, however inadequately, the charm of His utterance, though none of us were even dimly aware of the infinite potency latent in His words.

Baha'u'llah, in the course of that visit, inspected the fort and expressed His satisfaction with the work that had been accomplished. In His conversation with Mulla Husayn, He explained in detail such matters as were vital to the welfare and safety of his companions. 'The one thing this fort and company require,' He said, 'is the presence of Quddus. His association with this company would render it complete and perfect.' He instructed Mulla Husayn to despatch Mulla Mihdiy-i-Khu'i with six people to Sari, and to demand Mirza Muhammad-Taqi that he immediately deliver Quddus into their hands. 'The fear of God and the dread of His punishment,' He assured Mulla Husayn, 'will prompt him to surrender unhesitatingly his captive.'

"Ere He departed, Baha'u'llah enjoined them to be patient and resigned to the will of the Almighty. 'If it be His will,' He added, 'We shall once again visit you at this same spot, and shall lend you Our assistance. You have been chosen of God to be the vanguard of His host and the establishers of His Faith. His host verily will conquer. Whatever may befall, victory is yours, a victory which is complete and certain.' With these words, He committed those valiant companions to the care of God, and returned to the village with Nazar Khan and Shaykh Abu-Turab. From thence He departed by way of Nur to Tihran."

Mulla Husayn set out immediately to carry out the instructions he had received. Summoning Mulla Mihdi, he bade him proceed together with six other companions to Sari and ask that the mujtahid liberate his prisoner. As soon as the message was conveyed to him, Mirza Muhammad-Taqi

[350] unconditionally acceded to their request. The potency with which that message had been endowed seemed to have completely disarmed him. "I have regarded him," he hastened to assure the messengers, "only as an honoured guest in my house. It would be unbecoming of me to pretend to have dismissed or released him. He is at liberty to do as he desires. Should he wish it, I would be willing to accompany him."

Mulla Husayn had in the meantime apprised his companions of the approach of Quddus, and had enjoined them to observe towards him a reverence such as they would feel prompted to show to the Bab Himself. "As to myself," he added, "you must consider me as his lowly servant. You should bear him such loyalty that if he were to command you to take my life, you would unhesitatingly obey. If you

waver or hesitate, you will have shown your disloyalty to your Faith. Not until he summons you to his presence must you in any wise venture to intrude upon him. You should forsake your desires and cling to his will and pleasure. You should refrain from kissing either his hands or his feet, for his blessed heart dislikes such evidences of reverent affection. Such should be your behaviour that I may feel proud of you before him. The glory and authority with which he has been invested must needs be duly recognised by even the most insignificant of his companions. Whoso departs from the spirit and letter of my admonitions, a grievous chastisement will surely overtake him."

The incarceration of Quddus in the home of Mirza Muhammad-Taqi, [351] Sari's most eminent mujtahid, to whom he was related, lasted five and ninety days. Though confined, Quddus was treated with marked deference, and was allowed to receive most of the companions who had been present at the gathering of Badasht. To none, however, did he grant permission to stay in Sari. Whoever visited him was urged, in the most pressing terms, to enlist under the Black Standard hoisted by Mulla Husayn. It was the same standard of which Muhammad, the Prophet of God, had thus spoken: "Should your eyes behold the Black Standards proceeding from Khurasan, hasten ye towards them, even though ye should have to crawl over the snow, inasmuch as they proclaim the advent of the promised Mihdi,31 the Vicegerent of God." That standard was unfurled at the command of the Bab, in the name of Quddus, and by the hands of Mulla Husayn. It was carried aloft all the way from the city of Mashhad to the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsi. For eleven months, from the beginning of Sha'ban, in the year 1264 A.H.,32 to the end of Jamadiyu'th-Thani, in the year 1265 A.H.,33 that earthly emblem of an unearthly sovereignty waved continually over the heads of that small and valiant band, summoning the multitude who gazed upon it to renounce the world and to espouse the Cause of God.

While in Sari, Quddus frequently attempted to convince Mirza Muhammad-Taqi of the truth of the Divine Message. He freely conversed with him on the most weighty and outstanding issues related to the Revelation of the Bab. His bold and challenging remarks were couched in such gentle, such persuasive and courteous language, and delivered with such geniality and humour, that those who heard him felt not in the least offended. They even misconstrued his allusions to the sacred Book as humorous observations intended to entertain his hearers. Mirza Muhammad-Taqi, despite the cruelty and wickedness that were latent in him and which he subsequently manifested by the stand he took in insisting upon the extermination of the remnants of the defenders of the fort of Shaykh Tabarsi, was withheld by an inner power from showing the least disrespect to Quddus while the latter was confined in his home. He even was prompted to prevent [352] the inhabitants of Sari from offending Quddus, and was often heard to rebuke them for the harm which they desired to inflict upon him.

The news of the impending arrival of Quddus bestirred the occupants of the fort of Tabarsi.

As he drew near his destination, he sent forward a messenger to announce his

approach.

The joyful tidings gave them new courage and strength.

Roused to a burst of enthusiasm which he could not repress, Mulla Husayn started to his feet and, escorted by about a hundred of his companions, hastened to meet the expected visitor.

He placed two candles in the hands of each, lighted them himself, and bade them proceed to meet Quddus.

The darkness of the night was dispelled by the radiance which those joyous hearts shed as they marched forth to meet their beloved.

In the midst of the forest of Mazindaran, their eyes instantly recognised the face which they had longed to behold.

They pressed eagerly around his steed, and with every mark of devotion paid him their tribute of love and undying allegiance.

Still holding the lighted candles in their hands, they followed him on foot towards their destination.

Quddus, as he rode along in their midst, appeared as the day-star that shines amidst its satellites.

As the company slowly wended its way towards the fort, there broke forth the hymn of glorification and praise intoned by the band of his enthusiastic admirers. "Holy, holy, the Lord our God, the Lord of the angels and the spirit!" rang their jubilant voices around him.

Mulla Husayn raised the glad refrain, to which the entire company responded.

The forest of Mazindaran re-echoed to the sound of their acclamations.

In this manner they reached the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsi. The first words that fell from the lips of Quddus after he had dismounted and leaned against the shrine were the following: "The Baqiyyatu'llah34 will be best for you if ye are of those who believe."35 By this utterance was fulfilled the prophecy of Muhammad as recorded in the following tradition: "And when the Mihdi36 is made manifest, He shall lean His back against the Ka'bih and shall address to the three hundred and thirteen followers who will have grouped around Him, these words: 'The Baqiyyatu'llah will be best for you if [353] ye are of those who believe.'" By "Baqiyyatu'llah" Quddus meant none other than Baha'u'llah. To this testified Mulla Mirza Muhammad-i-Furughi, who related to me the following: "I myself was present when Quddus alighted from his horse. I saw him lean against the shrine and heard him utter those same words. No sooner had he spoken them than he made mention of Baha'u'llah and, turning to Mulla Husayn, enquired about Him. He was informed that unless God decreed to the contrary, He had signified His intention to return to this place before the first day of Muharram.37

"Shortly after, Quddus entrusted to Mulla Husayn a number of homilies which he

asked him to read aloud to his assembled companions. The first homily he read was entirely devoted to the Bab, the second concerned Baha'u'llah, and the third referred to Tahirih. We ventured to express to Mulla Husayn our doubts whether the references in the second homily were applicable to Baha'u'llah, who appeared clothed in the garb of nobility. The matter was reported to Quddus, who assured us that, God willing, its secret would be revealed to us in due time. Utterly unaware, in those days, of the character of the Mission of Baha'u'llah, we were unable to understand the meaning of those allusions, and idly conjectured as to what could be their probable significance. In my eagerness to unravel the subtleties of the traditions concerning the promised Qa'im, I several times approached Quddus and requested him to enlighten me regarding that subject. Though at first reluctant, he eventually acceded to my wish. The manner of his answer, his convincing and illuminating explanations, served to heighten the sense of awe and of veneration which his presence inspired. He dispelled whatever doubts lingered in our minds, and such were the evidences of his perspicacity that we came to believe that to him had been given the power to read our profoundest thoughts and to calm the fiercest tumult in our hearts.

"Many a night I saw Mulla Husayn circle round the shrine within the precincts of which Quddus lay asleep. How often did I see him emerge in the mid-watches of the night from his chamber and quietly direct his steps to that spot and whisper the same verse with which we all had greeted [354] the arrival of the beloved visitor! With what feelings of emotion I can still remember him as he advanced towards me, in the stillness of those dark and lonely hours which I devoted to meditation and prayer, whispering in my ears these words: 'Banish from your mind, O Mulla Mirza Muhammad, these perplexing subtleties and, freed from their trammels, arise and seek with me to quaff the cup of martyrdom. Then will you be able to comprehend, as the year '8038 dawns upon the world, the secret of the things which now lie hidden from you.'"

Quddus, on his arrival at the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsi, charged Mulla Husayn to ascertain the number of the assembled companions. One by one he counted them and passed them in through the gate of the fort: three hundred and twelve in all. He himself was entering the fort in order to acquaint Quddus with the result, when a youth, who had hastened all the way on foot from Barfurush, suddenly rushed in and, seizing the hem of his garment, pleaded to be enrolled among the companions and to be allowed to lay down his life, whenever required, in the path of the Beloved. His wish was readily granted. When Quddus was informed of the total number of the companions, he remarked: "Whatever the tongue of the Prophet of God has spoken concerning the promised One must needs be fulfilled,39 that thereby His testimony may be complete in the eyes of those divines who esteem themselves as the sole interpreters of the law and traditions of Islam. Through them will the people recognise the truth and acknowledge the fulfilment of these traditions."40 [355]

Every morning and every afternoon during those days, Quddus would summon Mulla Husayn and the most distinguished among his companions and ask them to chant the writings of the Bab. Seated in the Maydan, the open square adjoining the

fort, and surrounded by his devoted friends, he would listen intently to the utterances of his Master and would occasionally be heard to comment upon them. Neither the threats of the enemy nor the fierceness of their successive onsets could induce him to abate the fervour, or to break the regularity, of his devotions. Despising all danger and oblivious of his own needs and wants, he continued, even under the most distressing circumstances, his daily communion with his Beloved, wrote his praises of Him, and roused to fresh exertions the defenders of the fort. Though exposed to the bullets that kept ceaselessly raining upon his besieged companions, he, undeterred by the ferocity of the attack, pursued his labours in a state of unruffled calm. "My soul is wedded to Thy mention!" he was wont to exclaim. "Remembrance of Thee is the stay and solace of my life! I glory in that I was the first to suffer ignominiously for Thy [356] sake in Shiraz. I long to be the first to suffer in Thy path a death that shall be worthy of Thy Cause."

He would sometimes ask his Iraqi companions to chant various passages of the Qur'an, to which he would listen with close attention, and would often be moved to unfold their meaning. In the course of one of their chantings, they came across the following verse: "With somewhat of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives and fruits, will We surely prove you: but bear good tidings to the patient." "These words," Quddus would remark, "were originally revealed with reference to Job and the afflictions that befell him. In this day, however, they are applicable to us, who are destined to suffer those same afflictions. Such will be the measure of our calamity that none but he who has been endowed with constancy and patience will be able to survive them."

The knowledge and sagacity which Quddus displayed on those occasions, the confidence with which he spoke, and the resource and enterprise which he demonstrated in the instructions he gave to his companions, reinforced his authority and enhanced his prestige.

These at first supposed that the profound [357] reverence which Mulla Husayn showed towards him was dictated by the exigencies of the situation rather than prompted by a spontaneous feeling of devotion to his person.

His own writings and general behaviour gradually dispelled such doubts and served to establish him still more firmly in the esteem of his companions.

In the days of his confinement in the town of Sari, Quddus, whom Mirza Muhammad-Taqi had requested to write a commentary on the Surih of Ikhlas, better known as the Surih of Qul Huva'llahu'l-Ahad, composed, in his interpretation of the Sad of Samad alone, a treatise which was thrice as voluminous as the Qur'an itself.

That exhaustive and masterly exposition had profoundly impressed Mirza Muhammad-Taqi and had been responsible for the marked consideration which he showed towards Quddus, although in the end he joined the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama' in compassing the death of the heroic martyrs of Shaykh Tabarsi.

Quddus continued, while besieged in that fort, to write his commentary on that

Surih, and was able, despite the vehemence of the enemy's onslaught, to pen as many verses as he had previously written in Sari in his interpretation of that same letter.

The rapidity and copiousness of his composition, the inestimable treasures which his writings revealed, filled his companions with wonder and justified his leadership in their eyes.

They read eagerly the pages of that commentary which Mulla Husayn brought to them each day and to which he paid his share of tribute.

The completion of the fort, and the provision of whatever was deemed essential for its defence, animated the enthusiasm of the companions of Mulla Husayn and excited the curiosity of the people of the neighbourhood.41 A few out of sheer curiosity, others in pursuit of material interest, and still others prompted by their devotion to the Cause which that building symbolised, sought to be admitted within its walls and marvelled at the rapidity with which it had been raised.

Quddus had no sooner ascertained the number of its occupants [358] than he ordered that no visitor be allowed to enter it.

The praises which those who had already inspected the fort had lavished upon it were transmitted from mouth to mouth until they reached the ears of the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama' and kindled within his breast the flame of unrelenting jealousy.

In his detestation of those who had been responsible for its erection, he issued the strictest prohibition against anyone's approaching its precincts and urged all to boycott the companions of Mulla Husayn.

Despite the stringency of his orders, a few were found to disregard his wishes and to render whatever assistance was in their power to those whom he had so undeservedly persecuted.

The afflictions to which these sufferers were subjected were such that at times they felt a distressing need of the bare necessities of life.

In their dark hour of adversity, however, there would suddenly break upon them the light of Divine deliverance opening before their face the door of unexpected relief.

The providential manner in which the occupants of the fort were relieved of the distress which weighed upon them fanned to fury the wrath of the wilful and imperious Sa'idu'l-'Ulama'.

Impelled by an implacable hatred, he addressed a burning appeal to Nasiri'd-Din Shah, who had recently ascended the throne, and expatiated upon the danger with which his dynasty, nay the monarchy itself, was menaced. "The standard of revolt," he pleaded, "has been raised by the contemptible sect of the Babis.

This wretched band of irresponsible agitators has dared to strike at the very foundations of the authority with which your Imperial Majesty has been

invested.

The inhabitants of a number of villages in the immediate vicinity of their headquarters have already flown to their standard and sworn allegiance to their cause.

They have built themselves a fort, and in that massive stronghold they have entrenched themselves, ready to direct a campaign against you.

With unswerving obstinacy they [359] have resolved to proclaim their independent sovereignty, a sovereignty that shall abase to the dust the imperial diadem of your illustrious ancestors.

You stand at the threshold of your reign.

What greater triumph could signalise the inauguration of your rule than to extirpate this hateful creed that has dared to conspire against you?

It will serve to establish your Majesty in the confidence of your people.

It will enhance your prestige, and invest your crown with imperishable glory.

Should you vacillate in your policy, should you betray the least indulgence towards them, I feel it my duty to warn you that the day is fast approaching when not only the province of Mazindaran but the whole of Persia, from end to end, will have repudiated your authority and will have surrendered to their cause."

Nasiri'd-Din Shah, as yet inexperienced in the affairs of State, referred the matter to the officers who commanded the army of Mazindaran and who were in attendance upon him.42 He instructed them to take whatever means they deemed fit for the eradication of the disturbers of his realm. Haji Mustafa Khan-i-Turkaman submitted his views to his sovereign: "I myself come from Mazindaran. I have been able to estimate the forces at their disposal. The handful of untrained and frail-bodied students whom I have seen are utterly powerless to withstand the forces which your Majesty can command. The army which you contemplate despatching is in my view unnecessary. A small detachment of that army will be sufficient to wipe them out. They are utterly unworthy of the care and consideration of my sovereign. Should your Majesty be willing to signify your desire, in an imperial message addressed to my brother 'Abdu'llah Khan-i-Turkaman, [360] that he should be given the necessary authority to subjugate that band, I am convinced that he will, within the space of two days, quell their rebellion and shatter their hopes."

The Shah gave his consent, and issued his farman43 to that same 'Abdu'llah Khan, bidding him to recruit without delay, from any part of his realm, the forces he might require for the execution of his purpose. He sent with his message a royal badge, which he bestowed upon him as a mark of confidence in his capacity to undertake that task. The

receipt of the imperial farman and the token of the honour which his sovereign had conferred upon him nerved him to fresh resolve to carry out his mission

befittingly. Within a short space of time, he had raised an army of about twelve thousand men, composed largely of the Usanlu, the Afghan, and the Kudar communities.44 He equipped them with whatever ammunition was required, and stationed them in the village of Afra, which was the property of Nazar Khan, and [361] which commanded the fort of Tabarsi. No sooner had he fixed his camp upon that eminence than he set out to intercept the bread which was being daily conveyed to the companions of Mulla Husayn. Even water was soon to be denied them, as it became impossible for the besieged to leave the fort under the fire of the enemy.

The army was ordered to set up a number of barricades in front of the fort and to open fire upon anyone who chanced to leave its gate. Quddus forbade his companions to go out in order to fetch water from the neighbourhood. "Our bread has been intercepted by our enemy," complained Rasul-i-Bahnimiri. "What will befall us if water should likewise be denied us?" Quddus, who was at that time, the hour of sunset, viewing the army of the enemy in company with Mulla Husayn from the terrace of the fort, turned to him and said: "The scarcity of water has distressed our companions. God willing, this very night a downpour of rain will overtake our opponents, followed by a heavy snowfall, which will assist us to repulse their contemplated assault."

That very night, the army of 'Abdu'llah Khan was surprised by a torrential rain which overwhelmed that section which lay close to the fort. Much of the ammunition was irretrievably ruined. There gathered within the walls of the fort an amount of water which, for a long period, was sufficient for the consumption of the besieged. In the course of the following night, a snowfall such as the people of the neighbourhood even in the depth of winter had never experienced, added considerably to the annoyance which the rain had caused. The next night, which was the evening preceding the fifth of Muharram, in the year 1265 A.H.,45 Quddus determined to leave the gate of the fort. "Praise be to God," he remarked to Rasul-i-Bahnimiri as he paced with calm and serenity the approaches to the gate, "who has graciously answered our prayer and caused both rain and snow to fall upon our enemies; a fall that has brought desolation into their camp and refreshment into our fort."

As the hour of the attack approached for which that numerous army, despite the losses it had sustained, was strenuously preparing, Quddus determined to sally out and [362] scatter its forces. Two hours after sunrise, he mounted his steed and, escorted by Mulla Husayn and three other of his companions, all of whom were riding beside him, marched out of the gate, followed by the entire company on foot behind them. As soon as they had emerged, there pealed out the cry of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!"46—a cry that diffused consternation through the camp of the enemy. The roar which these lion-hearted followers of the Bab raised amidst the forest of Mazindaran dispersed the affrighted enemy that lay in ambush within its recesses. The glitter of their bared weapons dazzled their sight, and its menace was sufficient to stun and overpower them. They fled in disgraceful rout

before their onrush, leaving all possessions behind them. Within the space of

forty-five minutes, the shout of victory had been raised. Quddus and Mulla Husayn had succeeded in bringing under their control the remnants of the defeated army. 'Abdu'llah Khan-i-Turkaman, with two of his officers, Habibu'llah Khan-i-Afghan and Nuru'llah Khan-i-Afghan, together with no less than four hundred and thirty of their men, had perished.

Quddus returned to the fort while Mulla Husayn was still engaged in pursuing the work which had been so valiantly performed. The voice of Siyyid 'Abdu'l-'Azim-i-Khu'i was soon raised summoning him, on behalf of Quddus, to return immediately to the fort. "We have repulsed the assailants," [363] Quddus remarked; "we need not carry further the punishment. Our purpose is to protect ourselves that we may be able to continue our labours for the regeneration of men. We have no intention whatever of causing unnecessary harm to anyone. What we have already achieved is sufficient testimony to God's invincible power. We, a little band of His followers, have been able, through His sustaining grace, to overcome the organised and trained army of our enemies."

Despite this defeat, not one of the followers of the Bab lost his life in the course of that encounter. No one except a man named Quli, who rode in advance of Quddus, was badly wounded. They were all commanded to take none of the property of their adversaries excepting their swords and horses.

As the signs of the reassembling of the forces which had been commanded by 'Abdu'llah Khan became apparent, Quddus bade his companions dig a moat around the fort as a safeguard against a renewed attack. Nineteen days elapsed during which they exerted themselves to the utmost for the completion of the task they had been charged to perform. They joyously laboured by day and by night in order to expedite the work with which they had been entrusted.

Soon after the work was completed, it was announced that Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza47 was advancing towards the fort at the head of a numerous army, and had actually encamped at Shir-Gah. A few days later, he had transferred his headquarters to Vas-Kas. On his arrival, he sent one of his men to inform Mulla Husayn that he had been commanded by the Shah to ascertain the purpose of his activities and to request that he be enlightened as to the object he had in view. "Tell your master," Mulla Husayn replied, "that we utterly disclaim any intention either of subverting

[365] the foundations of the monarchy or of usurping the authority of Nasiri'd-Din Shah. Our Cause concerns the revelation of the promised Qa'im and is primarily associated with the interests of the ecclesiastical order of this country. We can set forth incontrovertible arguments and deduce infallible proofs in support of the truth of the Message we bear." The passionate sincerity with which Mulla Husayn pleaded in defence of his Cause, and the details which he cited to demonstrate the validity of his claims, touched the heart of the messenger and brought tears to his eyes. "What are we to do?" he exclaimed. "Let the prince," Mulla Husayn replied, "direct the ulamas of both Sari and Barfurush to betake themselves to this place, and ask us to demonstrate the validity of the Revelation proclaimed by the Bab. Let the

Qur'an decide as to who speaks the truth. Let the prince himself judge our case and pronounce the verdict. Let him also decide as to how he should treat us if we fail to establish, by the aid of verses and traditions, the truth of this Cause." The messenger expressed his complete satisfaction with the answer he had received, and promised that before the lapse of three days the ecclesiastical dignitaries would be convened in the manner he had suggested.

The promise given by the messenger was destined to remain unfulfilled. Three days after, Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza prepared to launch his attack, on a scale hitherto unprecedented, upon the occupants of the fort. At the head of three regiments of infantry and several regiments of cavalry, he quartered his host upon a height that overlooked that spot, and gave the signal to open fire in that direction.

The day had not yet broken when at the signal, "Mount your steeds, O heroes of God!" Quddus ordered that the gates of the fort be again thrown open. Mulla Husayn and two hundred and two of his companions ran to their horses and followed Quddus as he rode out in the direction of Vas-Kas. Undaunted by the overwhelming forces arrayed against them, and undeterred by the snow and mud which had accumulated on the roads, they headed, without a pause, in the midst of the darkness that surrounded them, towards the stronghold which served as a base for the operations of the enemy.

[366] The prince, who was observing the movements of Mulla Husayn, saw him approaching, from his fort, and ordered his men to open fire upon him. The bullets which they discharged were powerless to check his advance. He forced his way through the gate and rushed into the private apartments of the prince, who, with a sudden sense that his life was in danger, threw himself from a back window into the moat and escaped barefooted.48 His host, deprived of their leader and struck with panic, fled in disgraceful rout before that little band which, despite their own overwhelming numbers and the resources which the imperial treasury had placed at their disposal, they were unable to subdue.49

As the victors were forcing their way through the section of the fort reserved for the prince, two other princes of royal blood50 fell in an attempt to strike down their opponents. As they penetrated his apartments, they discovered, in one [367] of his rooms, coffers filled with gold and silver, all of which they disdained to touch. With the exception of a pot of gunpowder and the favourite sword of the prince which they carried as an evidence of their triumph to Mulla Husayn, his companions ignored the costly furnishings which their owner had abandoned in his despair. When they took it to Mulla Husayn, they discovered that he had, as a result of the bullet which had struck his own sword, exchanged it for that of Quddus, with which he was engaged in repulsing the assailant.

They were throwing open the gate of the prison which had been in the hands of the enemy, when they heard the voice of Mulla Yusuf-i-Ardibili, who had been made a captive on his way to the fort and was languishing among the prisoners. He interceded for his fellow-sufferers and succeeded in obtaining their

immediate release.

On the morning of that memorable engagement, Mulla Husayn assembled his companions around Quddus in the outskirts of Vas-Kas, while he remained himself on horseback in anticipation of a renewed attack by the enemy.

He was watching their movements, when he suddenly observed an innumerable host rushing from both sides towards him.

All sprang to their feet and, raising again the cry of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!" pressed forward to face the challenge.

Mulla Husayn spurred his charger in one direction, and Quddus and his companions in another.

The detachment which was charging Mulla Husayn suddenly deflected its course and, fleeing from before him, joined forces with the rest of the enemy and encompassed Quddus and those who were with him.

At a given moment, they discharged a thousand bullets, one of which struck Quddus in the mouth, knocking out several of his teeth and wounding both his tongue and throat.

The loud noise which the simultaneous discharge of a thousand bullets produced, and which could be heard at a distance of ten farsangs,51 filled with apprehension Mulla Husayn, who hastened to the rescue of his friends.

As soon as he reached them, he alighted from his horse and, entrusting it to his attendant, Qambar-'Ali, ran towards Quddus.

The sight of blood dripping profusely from the mouth of his beloved chief [368] struck him with fear and dismay.

He raised his hands in horror and was on the point of beating himself upon the head when Quddus bade him desist.

Obeying his leader instantly, he begged him to be allowed to receive his sword from his hand, which, as soon as it had been delivered, was unsheathed from its scabbard and used to scatter the forces that had massed around him.

Followed by a hundred and ten of his fellow-disciples, he faced the forces arrayed against him.

Wielding in one hand the sword of his beloved leader and in the other that of his disgraced opponent, he fought a desperate battle against them, and within thirty minutes, during which he displayed marvellous heroism, he succeeded in putting the entire army to flight.

The disgraceful retreat of the army of Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza enabled Mulla Husayn and his companions to repair to the fort. With pain and regret, they conducted their wounded leader to the shelter of his stronghold. On his arrival, Quddus addressed a written appeal to his friends who were bewailing his injury, and by his words of cheer soothed their sorrow. "We should submit," he exhorted them, "to whatever is the will of God. We should stand firm and

steadfast in the hour of trial. The stone of the infidel broke the teeth of the Prophet of God; mine have fallen as a result of the bullet of the enemy. Though my body be afflicted, my soul is immersed in gladness. My gratitude to God knows no bounds. If you love me, suffer not that this joy be obscured by the sight of your lamentations."

This memorable engagement fell on the twenty-fifth of Muharram, 1265 A.H.52 In the beginning of that same month, Baha'u'llah, faithful to the promise He had given to Mulla Husayn, set out, attended by a number of His friends, from Nur for the fort of Tabarsi. Among those who accompanied Him were Haji Mirza Janiy-i-Kashani, Mulla Baqir-i-Tabrizi, one of the Letters of the Living, and Mirza Yahya, His brother. Baha'u'llah had signified His wish that they should proceed directly to their destination and allow no pause in their journey. His intention was to reach that spot at night, inasmuch as strict orders had been issued, ever since 'Abdu'llah [369] Khan had assumed the command, that no help should be extended, under any circumstances, to the occupants of the fort. Guards had been stationed at different places to ensure the isolation of the besieged. His companions, however, pressed Him to interrupt the journey and to seek a few hours of rest. Although He knew that this delay would involve a grave risk of being surprised by the enemy, He yielded to their earnest request. They halted at a lonely house adjoining the road. After supper, his companions all retired to sleep. He alone, despite the hardships He had endured, remained wakeful. He knew well the perils to which He and His friends were exposed, and was fully aware of the possibilities which His early arrival at the fort involved.

As He watched beside them, the secret emissaries of the enemy informed the guards of the neighbourhood of the arrival of the party, and ordered the immediate seizure of whatever they could find in their possession. "We have received strict orders," they told Baha'u'llah, whom they recognised instantly as the leader of the group, "to arrest every person we chance to meet in this vicinity, and are commanded to conduct him, without any previous investigation, to Amul and deliver him into the hands of its governor." "The matter has been misrepresented in your eyes," Baha'u'llah remarked. "You have misconstrued our purpose. I would advise you to act in a manner that will cause you eventually no regret." This admonition, uttered with dignity and calm, induced the chief of the guards to treat with consideration and courtesy those whom he had arrested. He bade them mount their horses and proceed with him to Amul. As they were approaching the banks of a river, Baha'u'llah signalled to His companions, who were riding at a distance from the guards, to cast into the water whatever manuscripts they had in their possession.

At daybreak, as they were approaching the town, a message was sent in advance to the acting governor, informing him of the arrival of a party that had been captured on their way to the fort of Tabarsi. The governor himself, together with the members of his body-guard, had been appointed to join the army of Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza, and had commissioned his kinsman to act in his absence. As [370] soon as the message reached him, he went to the masjid of

Amul and summoned the ulamas and leading siyyids of the town to gather and meet the party. He was greatly surprised as soon as his eyes saw and recognised Baha'u'llah, and deeply regretted the orders he had given. He feigned to reprimand Him for the action He had taken, in the hope

of appeasing the tumult and allaying the excitement of those who had gathered in the masjid. "We are innocent," Baha'u'llah declared, "of the guilt they impute to us. Our blamelessness will eventually be established in your eyes. I would advise you to act in a manner that will cause you eventually no regret." The acting governor asked the ulamas who were present to put any question they desired. [371] To their enquiries Baha'u'llah returned explicit and convincing replies. As they were interrogating Him, they discovered a manuscript in the possession of one of His companions which they recognised as the writings of the Bab and which they handed to the chief of the ulamas present at that gathering. As soon as he had perused a few lines of that manuscript, he laid it aside and, turning to those around him, exclaimed: "These people, who advance such extravagant claims, have, in this very sentence which I have read, betrayed their ignorance of the most rudimentary rules of orthography." "Esteemed and learned divine," Baha'u'llah replied, "these words which you criticise are not the words of the Bab. They have been uttered by no less a personage than the Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, in his reply to Kumayl-ibn-i-Ziyad, whom he had chosen as his companion."

The circumstances which Baha'u'llah proceeded to relate in connection with the reply, no less than the manner of His delivery, convinced the arrogant mujtahid of his stupidity and blunder. Unable to contradict so weighty a statement, he preferred to keep silent. A siyyid angrily interjected: "This very statement conclusively demonstrates that its author is himself a Babi and no less than a leading expounder of the tenets of that sect." He urged in vehement language that its followers be put to death. "These obscure sectarians are the sworn enemies," he cried, "both of the State and of the Faith of Islam! We must, at all costs, extirpate that heresy." He was seconded in his denunciation by the other siyyids who were present, and who, emboldened by the imprecations uttered at that gathering, insisted that the governor comply unhesitatingly with their wishes.

The acting governor was much embarrassed, and realised that any evidence of indulgence on his part would be fraught with grave consequences for the safety of his position. In his desire to hold in check the passions which had been aroused, he ordered his attendants to prepare the rods and promptly inflict a befitting punishment upon the captives. "We will afterwards," he added, "keep them in prison pending the return of the governor, who will send them to Tihran, [372] where they will receive, at the hands of the sovereign, the chastisement they deserve."

The first who was bound to receive the bastinado was Mulla Baqir. "I am only a groom of Baha'u'llah," he urged. "I was on my way to Mashhad when they suddenly arrested me and brought me to this place." Baha'u'llah intervened and succeeded in inducing his oppressors to release him. He likewise interceded for Haji

Mirza Jani, who He said was "a mere tradesman" whom He regarded as His "guest," so that He was "responsible for any charges brought against him." Mirza Yahya, whom they proceeded to bind, was also set free as soon as Baha'u'llah had declared him to be His attendant. "None of these men," He told the acting governor, "are guilty of any crime. If you insist on inflicting your punishment, I offer Myself as a willing Victim of your chastisement." The acting governor was reluctantly compelled to give orders that Baha'u'llah alone be chosen to suffer the indignity which he had intended originally for His companions.53

The same treatment that had been meted out to the Bab five months previously in Tabriz, Baha'u'llah suffered in the presence of the assembled ulamas of Amul. The first confinement that the Bab suffered at the hands of His enemies was in the house of 'Abdu'l-Hamid Khan, the chief constable of Shiraz; the first confinement of Baha'u'llah was in the home of one of the kad-khudas of Tihran. The Bab's second imprisonment was in the castle of Mah-Ku; that of Baha'u'llah was in the private residence of the governor of Amul. The Bab was scourged in the namaz-khanih54 of the Shaykhu'l-Islam of Tabriz; the same indignity was inflicted on Baha'u'llah in the namaz-khanih of the mujtahid of Amul. The Bab's third confinement was in the castle of Chihriq; Baha'u'llah's was in the Siyah-Chal55 of Tihran. The Bab, whose trials and sufferings had preceded, in almost every case,

[373] those of Baha'u'llah, had offered Himself to ransom His Beloved from the perils that beset that precious Life; whilst Baha'u'llah, on His part, unwilling that He who so greatly loved Him should be the sole Sufferer, shared at every turn the cup that had touched His lips. Such love no eye has ever beheld, nor has mortal heart conceived such mutual devotion. If the branches of every tree were turned into pens, and all the seas into ink, and earth and heaven rolled into one parchment, the immensity of that love would still remain unexplored, and the depths of that devotion unfathomed.

Baha'u'llah and His companions remained for a time imprisoned in one of the rooms that formed part of the masjid. [374] The acting governor, who was still determined to shield his Prisoner from the assaults of an inveterate enemy, secretly instructed his attendants to open, at an unsuspected hour, a passage through the wall of the room in which the captives were confined, and to transfer their Leader immediately to his home. He was himself conducting Baha'u'llah to his residence when a siyyid sprang forward and, directing his fiercest invectives against Him, raised the club which he held in his hand to strike Him. The acting governor immediately interposed himself and, appealing to the assailant, "adjured him by the Prophet of God" to stay his hand. "What!" burst forth the siyyid. "How dare you release a man who is the sworn enemy of the Faith of our fathers?" A crowd of ruffians had meanwhile gathered around him, and by their howls of derision and abuse added to the clamour which he had raised. Despite the growing tumult, the attendants of the acting governor were able to conduct Baha'u'llah in safety to the residence of their master, and displayed on that occasion a courage and presence of mind that were truly

surprising.

Despite the protestations of the mob, the rest of the prisoners were taken to the seat of government, and thus escaped from the perils with which they had been threatened. The acting governor offered profuse apologies to Baha'u'llah for the treatment which the people of Amul had accorded Him. "But for the interposition of Providence," he said, "no force would have achieved your deliverance from the grasp of this malevolent people. But for the efficacy of the vow which I had made to risk my own life for your sake, I, too, would have fallen a victim to their violence, and would have been trampled beneath their feet." He bitterly complained of the outrageous conduct of the siyyids of Amul, and denounced the baseness of their character. He expressed himself as being continually tormented by the effects of their malignant designs. He set about serving Baha'u'llah with devotion and kindness, and was often heard, in the course of his conversation with Him, to remark: "I am far from regarding you a prisoner in my home. This house, I believe, was built for the very purpose of affording you a shelter from the designs of your foes."

[375] I have heard Baha'u'llah Himself recount the following: "No prisoner has ever been accorded the treatment which I received at the hands of the acting governor of Amul. He treated Me with the utmost consideration and esteem. I was generously entertained by him, and the fullest attention was given to everything that affected My security and comfort. I was, however, unable to leave the gate of the house. My host was afraid lest the governor, who was related to 'Abbas-Quli Khan-i-Larijani, might return from the fort of Tabarsi and inflict injury upon Me. I tried to dispel his apprehensions. 'The same Omnipotence,' I assured him, 'who has delivered us from the hands of the mischief-makers of Amul, and has enabled us to be received with such hospitality by you in this house, is able to change the heart of the governor and to cause him to treat us with no less consideration and love.'

"One night we were suddenly awakened by the clamour of the people who had gathered outside the gate of the house. The door was opened, and it was announced that the governor had returned to Amul. Our companions, who were anticipating a fresh attack upon them, were completely surprised to hear the voice of the governor rebuking those who had denounced us so bitterly on the day of our arrival. 'For what reason,' we heard him loudly remonstrating, 'have these miserable wretches chosen to treat so disrespectfully a guest whose hands are tied and who has not been given the chance to defend himself? What is their justification for having demanded that he be immediately put to death? What evidence have they with which to support their contention? If they be sincere in their claims to be devotedly attached to Islam and to be the guardians of its interests, let them betake themselves to the fort of Shaykh Tabarsi and there demonstrate their capacity to defend the Faith of which they profess to be the champions.'"

What he had seen of the heroism of the defenders of the fort had quite changed the mind and heart of the governor of Amul. He returned filled with admiration for a Cause which he had formerly despised, and the progress of which he had

strenuously resisted. The scenes he witnessed had disarmed his wrath and chastened his pride. Humbly and [376] respectfully, he went to Baha'u'llah and apologised for the insolence of the inhabitants of a town that he had been chosen to govern. He served Him with extreme devotion, utterly ignoring his own position and rank. He paid a glowing tribute to Mulla Husayn, and expatiated upon his resourcefulness, his intrepidity, his skill, and nobleness of soul. A few days later, he succeeded in arranging for the safe departure of Baha'u'llah and His companions for Tihran.

Baha'u'llah's intention to throw in His lot with the defenders of the fort of Shaykh Tabarsi was destined to remain unfulfilled. Though Himself extremely desirous to lend every possible assistance in His power to the besieged, He was spared, through the mysterious dispensation of Providence, the tragic fate that was soon to befall the chief participators in that memorable struggle. Had He been able to reach the fort, had He been allowed to join the members of that heroic band, how could He have played His part in the great drama which He was destined to unfold? How could He have consummated the work that had been so gloriously conceived and so marvellously inaugurated? He was in the heyday of His life when the call from Shiraz reached Him. At the age of twenty-seven, He arose to consecrate His life to its service, fearlessly identified Himself with its teachings, and distinguished Himself by the exemplary part He played in its diffusion. No effort was too great for the energy with which He was endowed, and no sacrifice too woeful for the devotion with which His faith had inspired Him. He flung aside every consideration of fame, of wealth, and position, for the prosecution of the task He had set His heart to achieve. Neither the taunts of His friends nor the threats of His enemies could induce Him to cease championing a Cause which they alike regarded as that of an obscure and proscribed sect.

The first incarceration to which He was subjected as a result of the helping hand He had extended to the captives of Qazvin; the ability with which He achieved the deliverance of Tahirih; the exemplary manner in which He steered the course of the turbulent proceedings in Badasht; the manner in which He saved the life of Quddus in Niyala; the wisdom which He showed in His handling of the delicate situation created by the impetuosity of Tahirih, and the vigilance He [377] exercised for her protection; the counsels which He gave to the defenders of the fort of Tabarsi; the plan He conceived of joining the forces of Quddus to those of Mulla Husayn and his companions; the spontaneity with which He arose to support the exertions of those brave defenders; the magnanimity which prompted Him to offer Himself as a substitute for His companions who were under the threat of severe indignities; the serenity with which He faced the severity inflicted upon Him as a result of the attempt on the life of Nasiri'd-Din Shah; the indignities which were heaped upon Him all the way from Lavasan to the headquarters of the imperial army and from thence to the capital; the galling weight of chains which He bore as He lay in the darkness of the Siyah-Chal of Tihran—all these are but a few instances that eloquently testify to the unique position which He occupied as the prime Mover of the forces which were destined to reshape the face of His native land.

It was He who had released these forces, who steered their course, harmonised their action, and brought them finally to their highest consummation in the Cause He Himself was destined at a later time to reveal.

FOOTNOTES

19.1. Refer to p. 351.

19.2. Literally "Verdant Isle."

19.3. Refer to Glossary.

19.4. July 21, 1848 A.D.

19.5. Bearer of Baha'u'llah's Tablet to Nasiri'd-Din Shah.

19.6. "He (Mulla Husayn) arrived first at Miyamay where he rejoined thirty Babis whose chief, Mirza Zaynu'l-'Abidin, pupil of the late Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i, was an elderly, pious and respected gentleman. His zeal was so intense that he brought with him his son-in-law, a young man of eighteen years, who had been married to his daughter only a few days. 'Come,' he said to him, 'Come with me on my last journey. Come, because I must be a true father to you and make you partake of the joy of salvation!' "They departed therefore, and it was on foot that the aged man desired to travel the road which was to lead him to martyrdom." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 290.)

19.7. August 31-September 29, 1848 A.D.

19.8. Muhammad Shah died on the eve of the sixth of Shavval (September 4, 1848 A.D.). "There was an interregnum of about two months. A provisional government was formed comprising four administrators under the presidency of the widow of the deceased Shah. Finally, after much hesitation, the lawful heir, the young Prince Nasiri'd-Din Mirza, governor of Adhirbayjan, was permitted to ascend the throne." (Journal Asiatique, 1866, tome 7, p. 367.)

19.9. "The minister [Mirza Taqi Khan] with the utmost arbitrariness, without receiving any instructions or asking permission, sent forth commands in all directions to punish and chastise the Babis.

Governors and magistrates sought a pretext for amassing wealth, and officials a means of acquiring profits; celebrated doctors from the summits of their pulpits incited men to make a general onslaught; the powers of the religious and the civil law linked hands and strove to eradicate and destroy this people.

Now this people had not yet acquired such knowledge as was right and needful of the fundamental principles and hidden doctrines of the Bab's teachings, and did not recognise their duties.

Their conceptions and ideas were after the former fashion, and their conduct and behaviour in correspondence with ancient usage.

The way of approach to the Bab was, moreover, closed, and the flame of trouble visibly blazing on every side.

At the decree of the most celebrated of the doctors, the government, and indeed the common people, had, with irresistible power, inaugurated rapine and plunder on all sides, and were engaged in punishing and torturing, killing and despoiling, in order that they might quench this fire and wither these poor souls.

In towns where these were but a limited number all of them with bound hands became food for the sword, while in cities where they were numerous they arose in self-defence in accordance with their former beliefs, since it was impossible for them to make enquiry as to their duty, and all doors were closed." ("A Traveller's Narrative," pp.

34-5.)

19.10. See Glossary.

19.11. "The bullet struck Siyyid Rida full in the chest and killed him instantly. He was a man of pure and simple ways, of deep and sincere convictions. Out of respect for his master he always walked alongside of his horse ready to meet his every need." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 294.)

19.12. "No one is to be slain for unbelief, for the slaying of a soul is outside the religion of God; ... and if anyone commands it, he is not and has not been of the Bayan, and no sin can be greater for him than this." ("The Bayan." See Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Oct. 1889, art. 12, pp. 927-8.)

19.13. "But the pain and the anger redoubled the strength of Mulla Husayn who with one single blow of his weapon cut in two the gun, the man and the tree." (Mirza Jani adds that the Bushru'i used his left hand on this occasion.

The Mussulmans themselves do not question the authenticity of this anecdote.) (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p.

295 and note 215.) "Then Jinab-i-Babu'l-Bab turned himself about, saying: 'Now have they made it our duty to protect ourselves'; grasped the hilt of his sword; and, acquiescing in that which the providence of God had ordained, began to defend himself.

Notwithstanding his slender and fragile frame and trembling hand, such were his valour and prowess on that day that whosoever had eyes to discern the truth could clearly see that such strength and courage could only be from God, being beyond human capacity....

Then I saw Mulla Husayn unsheathe his sword and raise his face towards heaven, and heard him exclaim: 'O God, I have completed the proof to this host, but it

availeth not.' Then he began to attack us on the right and on the left.

I swear by God that on that day he wielded the sword in such wise as transcends the power of man.

Only the horsemen of Mazindaran held their ground and refused to flee.

And when Mulla Husayn was well warmed to the fray, he overtook a fugitive soldier.

The soldier sheltered himself behind a tree, and further strove to shield himself with his musket.

Mulla Husayn dealt him such a blow with his sword that he clave him and the tree and the musket into six pieces." (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," pp 49, 107-8.)

19.14. 1848-9 A.D.

19.15. Mirza Taqi Khan, I'timadu'd-Dawlih, Grand Vazir and successor to Haji Mirza Aqasi.

The following reference is made to him in "A Traveller's Narrative" (pp.

32-3): "Mirza Taqi Khan Amir-Nizam, who was Prime Minister and Chief Regent, seized in the grasp of his despotic power the reins of the affairs of the commonwealth, and urged the steed of his ambition into the arena of wilfulness and sole possession.

The minister was a person devoid of experience and wanting in consideration for the consequences of actions; bloodthirsty and shameless; and swift and ready to shed blood.

Severity in punishing he regarded as wise administration, and harshly entreating, distressing, intimidating, and frightening the people he considered as a fulcrum for the advancement of the monarchy.

And as His Majesty the King was in the prime of youthful years the minister fell into strange fancies and sounded the drum of absolutism in (the conduct of) affairs: on his own decisive resolution, without seeking permission from the Royal Presence or taking counsel with prudent statesmen, he issued orders to persecute the Babis, imagining that by overweening force he could eradicate and suppress matters of this nature, and that harshness would bear good fruit; whereas (in fact) to interfere with matters of conscience is simply to give them greater currency and strength; the more you strive to extinguish, the more will the fame be kindled, more specially in matters of faith and religion, which spread and acquire influence so soon as blood is shed, and strongly affect men's hearts."

19.16. See Glossary.

19.17. Qur'an, 9:52.

19.18. "'The Babu'l-Bab,' says our author, 'wishing to fulfill a religious duty and at the same time to give an example of the firm conviction of the

believers, of their contempt for life, and to show the world the impiety and irreligion of the so called Mussulmans, commanded one of his followers to ascend the terrace and intone the adhan.'" (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

295-6.) "It was at Marand," writes Lady Sheil, "that I first heard the adhan, or call of the Muslims to prayer, so solemn and impressive, specially when well chanted, for it is in fact a chant....

He turned towards Mecca, and placing his open hands to his head, proclaimed with a loud sonorous voice, 'Allah-u-Akbar,' which he repeated four times; then 'Ashhad-u-an-la-ilah-a-illa'llah'—(I bear witness there is no God but God), twice; then 'Ashhad-u-inna-Muhammadan-Rasu'llah' —(I bear witness that Muhammad is the Prophet of God), twice; then 'I bear witness that 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, is the friend of God.'...

The single toll in the knell for transporting the dead to their last earthly abode arouses, perhaps from association, ideas of profound solemnity; so too does the trumpet echoing through the camp when it ushers the dragoon to his grave; but above both, in solemn awe, is the keening as it sweeps afar over the dales and hills of Munster, announcing that a Gael has been gathered to his fathers.

The adhan excites a different impression.

It raises in the mind a combination of feelings, of dignity, solemnity, and devotion, compared with which the din of bells becomes insignificant.

It is an imposing thing to hear in the dead of the night the first sounds of the mu'adhdhin proclaiming 'Allah-u-Akbar—Mighty is the Lord—I bear witness there is no God but God!' St.

Peter's and St.

Paul's together can produce nothing equal to it." ("Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia," pp.

84, 85.)

19.19. "Sa'idu'l-'Ulama' wishing to have done at any cost, gathered together as many people as he could and again began the attack in front of the caravansary.

The struggle had been waging from five to six days when 'Abbas-Quli Khan Sardar-i-Larijani appeared.

In the meantime, and since the outbreak of the conflict, the ulamas of Barfurush exasperated by the numerous conversions which Quddus had been able to make in the city (three hundred in a week, the Muhammadan historians admit reluctantly), referred the case to the governor of the province, Prince Khanlan

Mirza.

He, however, paid no attention to their grievances, having many other preoccupations. "The death of Muhammad Shah worried him much more than the wrangling of the mullas and he made ready to go to Tihran to pay homage to the new king, whose favor he hoped to win. "Having failed in this attempt, under the pressure of events, the ulamas wrote a very urgent letter to the military chief of the province, 'Abbas-Quli Khan-i-Larijani.

He however, thinking it unnecessary to trouble himself, sent Muhammad Bik, yavar (captain), at the head of three hundred men, to restore order.

Thus it was that the Muhammadans began to attack the caravansary.

The struggle went on, but if ten Babis were killed, an infinitely larger number of aggressors bit the dust.

As things continued to drag along, 'Abbas-Quli Khan felt he should come himself in order to size up the situation." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

296-297.)

19.20. Gobineau describes him in the following terms: "The Turkish and Persian nomads pass their lives in hunting, often also in fighting and above all in talking of the hunt and of war. They are brave but not always and they are well described by Branttome who, in his war experience had often encountered that type of bravery which he called 'one day courage.' But this is what they are in a very regular and consistent manner, great talkers, great wreckers of towns, great assassins of heroes, great exterminators of multitudes, in a word, naive, very outspoken in their sentiments, very violent in the expression of anything which arouses them and extremely amusing. 'Abbas-Quli Khan-i-Larijani although well-born, was a perfect type of nomad." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 171.)

19.21. A notorious scoundrel who often rebelled against the government.

19.22. October 10, 1848 A.D.

19.23. Qur'an, 17:7.

19.24. See Glossary.

19.25. According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 36), it was Mirza Lutf-'Ali, the secretary, who drew his dagger and stabbed Khusraw.

19.26. See Glossary.

19.27. "Then turning to his companions he said: 'During these few days of life which remain to us, let us beware not to be divided and estranged by perishable

riches. Let all this be held in common and let everyone share in its benefits.' The Babis agreed with joy and it is this marvellous spirit of self-sacrifice and this complete self-abnegation which made their enemies say that they advocated collective ownership in earthly goods and even women!" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 299.)

19.28. See Glossary.

19.29. Shrine of Shaykh Ahmad-ibn-i-Abi-Talib-i-Tabarsi, situated about fourteen miles S.E. of Barfurush.

Professor Browne, of Cambridge University, visited the spot on September 26, 1888, and saw the name of the buried saint inscribed on a tablet with the form of words used for his "visitation," the tablet hanging suspended from the railings surrounding the tomb. "It consists at present," he writes, "of a flat, grassy enclosure surrounded by a hedge, and containing, besides the buildings of the shrine and another building at the gateway (opposite to which, but outside the enclosure, stands the house of the mutavalli, or custodian of the shrine), nothing but two or three orange trees and a few rude graves covered with flat stones, the last resting places, perhaps, of some of the Babi defenders.

The building at the gateway is two storeys high, is traversed by the passage giving access to the enclosure, and is roofed with tiles.

The buildings of the shrine, which stand at the farther end of the enclosure, are rather more elaborate.

Their greatest length (about 20 paces) lies east and west; their breadth is about ten paces; and, besides the covered portico at the entrance, they contain two rooms scantily lighted by wooden gratings over the doors.

The tomb of the Shaykh, from whom the place takes its name, stands surrounded by wooden railings in the centre of the inner room, to which access is obtained either by a door communicating with the outer chamber, or by a door opening externally into the enclosure." (For plans and sketches, see the author's translation of the "Tarikh-i-Jadid.") (E.

G.

Browne's "A Year Amongst the Persians," p.

565.)

19.30. October 12, 1848 A.D.

19.31. See Glossary.

19.32. July 3-August 1, 1848 A.D.

19.33. April 24-May 23, 1849 A.D.

19.34. Literally "Remnant of God."

19.35. Qur'an, 11:85.

19.36. See Glossary.

19.37. November 27, 1848 A.D.

19.38. Reference to the year 1280 A.H. (1863-4 A.D.), in which Baha'u'llah declared His Mission in Baghdad.

19.39. The assembling of three hundred and thirteen chosen supporters of the imam in Taliqan of Khurasan is one of the signs that must needs herald the advent of the promised Qa'im. (E. G. Browne's "A History of Persian Literature in Modern Times" [A.D. 1500-1924], p. 399.)

19.40. "Amongst them also was Rida Khan, the son of Muhammad Khan the Turkaman, Master of the Horse to his late Majesty Muhammad Shah.

And he was a youth graceful of form, comely of face, endowed with all manner of talents and virtues, dignified, temperate, gentle, generous, courageous, and manly.

For the love and service of His Supreme Holiness he forsook both his post and his salary, and shut his eyes alike to rank and name, fame and shame, reproaches of friends and revilings of foes.

At the first step he left behind him dignity, wealth, position, and all the power and consideration which he enjoyed, spent large sums of money (four or five thousand tumans at least) in the Cause, and repeatedly showed his readiness freely to lay down his life.

One of these occasions was when His Supreme Holiness arrived at the village of Khanliq near Tihran, and, to try the fidelity of His followers, said: 'Were there but a few horsemen who would deliver Me from the bonds of the froward and their devices, it were not amiss.' On hearing these words, several tried and expert horsemen, fully equipped and armed, at once prepared to set out, and, renouncing all that they had, hastily conveyed themselves before His Holiness.

Amongst these were Mirza Qurban-'Ali, of Astarabad, and Rida Khan.

When they were come before His Holiness, He smiled and said, 'The mountain of Adhirbayjan has also a claim on Me,' and bade them turn back.

After his return, Rida Khan devoted himself to the service of the friends of God, and his house was often the meeting place of the believers, amongst whom both Jinab-i-Quddus and Jinab-i-Babu'l-Bab were for a while his honoured guests.

Indeed, he neither spared himself nor fell short in the service of any of this circle, but, notwithstanding his high position, strove with heart and soul to further the objects of God's servants.

When, for instance, Jinab-i-Quddus first began to preach the doctrine in Mazindaran, and the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama', being informed of this, made strenuous efforts to do him injury, Rida Khan at once hastened to Mazindaran, and, whenever Jinab-i-Quddus went forth from his house, used, in spite of his high

position and the respect to which he was accustomed, to walk on foot before him with his drawn sword over his shoulder; seeing which, the malignants feared to take any liberty....

For some while, Rida Khan remained after this fashion in Mazindaran, until he accompanied Jinab-i-Quddus to Mashhad.

On his return thence, he was present at the troubles at Badasht, where he performed the most valuable services, and was entrusted with the most important and delicate commissions.

After the meeting at Badasht was dispersed, he fell ill, and, in company with Mirza Sulayman-Quli of Nur (a son of the late Shatir-bashi, also conspicuous for his virtues, learning, and devotion), came to Tihran.

Rida Khan's illness lasted for some while, and on his recovery the siege of the castle of Tabarsi had already waxed grievous.

He at once determined to go to the assistance of the garrison.

Being, however, a man of mark and well known, he could not leave the capital without giving some plausible reason.

He therefore pretended to repent his former course of action, and begged that he might be sent to take part in the war in Mazindaran, and thus make amends for the past.

The king granted his request, and he was appointed to accompany the force proceeding under Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza against the castle.

During the march thither, he was continually saying to the prince, 'I will do this,' and 'I will do that'; so that the prince came to entertain high hopes of him, and promised him a post commensurate with his services, for till the day when battle was inevitable and peace no longer possible, he was ever foremost in the army and most active in ordering its affairs.

But on the first day of battle he began to gallop his horse and practise other martial exercises, until, without having aroused suspicion, he suddenly gave it free rein and effected a junction with the Brethren of Purity.

On arriving in their midst, he kissed the knee of Jinab-i-Quddus and prostrated himself before him in thankfulness.

Then he once more returned to the battle-field, and began to revile and curse the prince, saying: 'Who is man enough to trample underfoot the pomp and circumstance of the world, free himself from the bonds of carnal lusts, and join himself, as I have done, to the saints of God?

I, for my part, shall be satisfied with my head only when it falls stained with dust and blood in this plain.' Then, like a ravening lion, he rushed upon them with naked brand, and quitted himself so manfully that all the royalist officers were astonished, saying: 'Such valour must have been newly granted him from on high, or else a new spirit hath been breathed into his frame.' For it

happened more than once that he cut down a gunner as he was in the very act of firing his gun, while so many of the chief officers of the royalist army fell by his hand that the prince and the other commanding officers desired more eagerly to revenge themselves on him than on any other of the Babis.

Therefore, on the eve of the day appointed for Jinab-i-Quddus to surrender himself at the royalist camp, Rida Khan, knowing that because of the fierce hatred which they bore him they would slay him with the most cruel tortures, went by night to the quarters of an officer in the camp who was an old and faithful friend and comrade.

After the massacre of the other Babis, search was made for Rida Khan, and he was at length discovered.

The officer who had sheltered him proposed to ransom him for the sum of two thousand tumans in cash, but his proposal was rejected, and though he offered to increase the sum, and strove earnestly to save his friend, it was of no avail, for the prince, because of the exceeding hatred he bore Rida Khan, ordered him to be hewn in pieces." (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," pp.

96-101.)

19.41. "According to the descriptions which I have heard, the fortress erected by Mulla Husayn soon became a very strong building. Its walls made of large stones reached a height of ten meters. On this base, they raised a construction made of enormous tree trunks in the middle of which they arranged a number of loopholes; they then surrounded it entirely with a deep ditch. In fact it was a kind of great tower having stones for the foundation while the higher stories were of wood and provided with three rows of loopholes where they could place as many tufang-chis as they wished, or rather, as they had. They made openings for many doors and postern gates in order to facilitate entrance and exit. "They dug wells, thus securing an abundance of water; underground passages were excavated in order to provide refuge in case of need; storehouses were built and filled with all sorts of provisions either bought, or perhaps taken in the neighboring villages. Finally, they manned the fortress with the most energetic Babis, the most devoted, and the most dependable available among them." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 156.)

19.42. "Thus, frantic about the maintenance of order, the Amir-Nizam disposed quickly of the Mazindaran question. When the leading men of this province came to Tihran to pay their respects to the king, they were ordered, as they departed, to take necessary measures to put an end to the sedition of the Babis. They promised to do their best and in fact, as soon as they returned, these chiefs began to gather their forces and to deliberate. They wrote to their relations to come and join them. Haji Mustafa Khan called for his brother 'Abdu'llah. 'Abbas-Quli Khan-i-Larijani sent for Muhammad-Sultan and 'Ali-Khan of Savad-Kuh. All of these worthies decided to attack the Babis in their fortress before they, themselves, could assume the defensive. The royal officers, seeing the chiefs of the country so willing, summoned a grand council

to which hastened the lords already mentioned and also Mirza Aqa, Mustawfi of Mazindaran, superintendent of finances, the head of the ulamas and many other men of high standing." (Ibid., pp. 160-161.)

19.43. See Glossary.

19.44. "On his side, the superintendent of finances raised a troop amongst the Afghans domiciled at Sari and added to it several men from the Turkish tribes under his administration. 'Ali-Abad, the village so severely punished by the Babis, which aspired to avenge itself, furnished what it could and was reinforced by a party of men from Qadi, who, being in the neighborhood, were willing to enlist." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 161.)

19.45. December 1, 1848 A.D.

19.46. See Glossary.

19.47. "The Amir-Nizam grew violently angry at the news of what had happened. The description of the terrors aroused his indignation. Too far from the scene of action to appraise the wild enthusiasm of the rebels, the only conclusion he could reach was that the Babis should be done away with before their courage could be further stimulated by real victories. The Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza, appointed lieutenant of the king in the threatened province, left with a grant of extraordinary powers. Instructions were given to draw up a list of the men who had died in the attack on the Babis' fortress and in the sacking of Ferra and pensions were promised to the survivors. "Haji Mustafa Khan, brother of 'Abdu'llah, received substantial tokens of the royal favor; in a word, all that was possible was done to restore the courage and confidence of the Mussulmans." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 163-164.)

19.48. "We have left Mihdi-Quli Mirza running away from his burning home and wandering alone in the country, in the snow and the darkness.

Toward dawn, he found himself in an unknown mountain pass, lost in a wild country, but in reality only a short distance away from the slaughter of battle.

The wind brought to his ears the noise of the volleys of musketry. "In this sad state, completely bewildered, he was met by a Mazindarani, mounted on a fairly good horse, who recognized him.

This man dismounted, placed the Prince on his horse and offered to serve him as guide.

He led him to a peasant's hut, settled him in the barn (this is not considered a place to frown upon in Persia) and while the Prince slept and ate, the Mazindarani mounted his horse and, covering the country side, gave out the glad tidings that the Prince was safe and well.

Thus he brought to him all his men, or at least a respectable number of them,

one band after another. "If Mihdi-Quli Mirza had been one of those proud spirits not easily broken by reverses, he would have considered his position only slightly altered by the mishaps of the previous evening; he could have believed that his men had been unfortunately surprised; then with the remainder of his forces he would have saved appearances and held the ground, for in fact, the Babis had retreated and were out of sight.

But the Shahzadih, far from priding himself on such firmness, was a weak character and, when he saw himself so well guarded, he left the barn and hurried to the village of Qadi-Kala whence he reached Sari in great haste.

This conduct strengthened in the whole province the impression caused by the defeat of Vaskas.

Panic ensued, open towns believed themselves exposed to every danger and, in spite of the rigor of the season, one could see caravans of non-combatants in great distress, taking their wives and children to the desert of Damavand to save them from the miserable dangers which the cautious conduct of Shahzadih seemed to foretell.

When the Asiatics lose their heads they do so completely." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp.

169-170.)

19.49. "In a few moments his army already in such confusion, was scattered by the three hundred men of Mulla Husayn! Was not this the sword of the Lord and of Gideon?" (Ibid., p. 167.)

19.50. According to Gobineau (p. 167), they were Sultan Husayn Mirza, son of Fath-'Ali Shah, and Dawud Mirza, son of Zillu's-Sultan, uncle of the Shah. A. L. M. Nicolas, in his "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab" (p. 308), adds Mustawfi Mirza 'Abdu'l-Baqi.

19.51. See Glossary.

19.52. December 21, 1848 A.D.

19.53. "O Shaykh! Things the like of which no eye hath seen have befallen this wronged one. Gladly and with the utmost resignation I have accepted to suffer, that thereby the souls of men may be enlightened and the Word of God be established. When we were imprisoned in the Land of Mim [Mazindaran], they one day delivered us into the hands of the ulamas. That which ensued, thou canst well imagine!" ("The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf," p. 57.)

19.54. Literally "prayer-house."

19.55. Literally "black pit," the subterranean dungeon in which Baha'u'llah was imprisoned.

CHAPTER XX
THE MAZINDARAN UPHEAVAL (Continued)

[378] The forces under the command of Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza meanwhile had

recovered from the state of utter demoralisation into which they had sunk, and were now diligently preparing to renew their attack upon the occupants of the fort of Tabarsi. The latter found themselves again encompassed by a numerous host, at the head of which marched 'Abbas-Quli Khan-i-Larijani and Sulayman Khan-i-Afshar-i-Shahriyari, who, together with several regiments of infantry and cavalry, had hastened to reinforce the company of the prince's soldiers.1 Their combined forces encamped in the neighbourhood of the fort,2 and proceeded to erect a series of seven barricades around it. With the utmost arrogance, they sought at first to display the extent of the forces at their command, and indulged with increasing zest in the daily exercise of their arms.

[379] The scarcity of water had, in the meantime, compelled those who were besieged to dig a well within the enclosure of the fort. On the day the work was to be completed, the eighth day of the month of Rabi'u'l-Avval,3 Mulla Husayn, who was watching his companions perform this task, remarked: "To-day we shall have all the water we require for our bath. Cleansed of all earthly defilements, we shall seek the court of the Almighty, and shall hasten to our eternal abode. Whoso is willing to partake of the cup of martyrdom, let him prepare himself and wait for the hour when he can seal with his life-blood his faith in his Cause. This night, ere the hour of dawn, let those who wish to join me be ready to issue forth from behind these walls and, scattering once again the dark forces which have beset our path, ascend untrammelled to the heights of glory."

That same afternoon, Mulla Husayn performed his ablutions, clothed himself in new garments, attired his head with the Bab's turban, and prepared for the approaching encounter. An undefinable joy illumined his face. He serenely alluded to the hour of his departure, and continued to his last moments to animate the zeal of his companions. Alone with Quddus, who so powerfully reminded him of his Beloved, he poured forth, as he sat at his feet in the closing moments of his earthly life, all that an enraptured soul could no longer restrain. Soon after midnight, as soon as the morning-star had risen, the star that heralded to him the dawning light of eternal reunion with his Beloved, he started to his feet and, mounting his charger, gave the signal that the gate of the fort be opened. As he rode out at the head of three hundred and thirteen of his companions to meet the enemy, the cry of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!"4 again broke forth, a cry so intense and powerful that forest, fort, and camp vibrated to its resounding echo.

Mulla Husayn first charged the barricade which was defended by Zakariyyay-i-Qadi-Kala'i, one of the enemy's most valiant officers. Within a short space of time, he had broken

[380] through that barrier, disposed of its commander, and scattered his men. Dashing forward with the same swiftness and intrepidity, he overcame the resistance of both the second and third barricades, diffusing, as he advanced, despair and consternation among his foes. Undeterred by the bullets which rained continually upon him and his companions, they pressed forward until the remaining barricades had all been captured and overthrown. In the midst of the

tumult which ensued, 'Abbas-Quli Khan-i-Larijani had climbed a tree, and, hiding himself in its branches, lay waiting in ambush for his opponents. Protected by the darkness which surrounded him, he was able to follow from his hiding place the movements of Mulla Husayn and his companions, who were exposed to the fierce glare of the conflagration which they had raised. The steed of Mulla Husayn suddenly became entangled in the rope of an adjoining tent, and ere he was able to extricate himself, he was struck in the breast by a bullet from his treacherous assailant. Though the shot was successful, 'Abbas-Quli Khan was unaware of the identity of the horseman he had wounded. Mulla Husayn, who was bleeding profusely, dismounted from his horse, staggered a few steps, and, unable to proceed further, fell exhausted upon the ground. Two of his young companions, of Khurasan, Quli, and Hasan, came to his rescue and bore him to the fort.5

[381] I have heard the following account from Mulla Sadiq and Mulla Mirza Muhammad-i-Furughi: "We were among those who had remained in the fort with Quddus.

As soon as Mulla Husayn, who seemed to have lost consciousness, was brought in, we were ordered to retire. 'Leave me alone with him,' were the words of Quddus as he bade Mirza Muhammad-Baqir close the door and refuse admittance to anyone desiring to see him. 'There are certain confidential matters which I desire him alone to know.' We were amazed a few moments later when we heard the voice of Mulla Husayn replying to questions from Quddus.

For two hours they continued to converse with each other.

We were surprised to see Mirza Muhammad-Baqir so greatly agitated. 'I was watching Quddus,' he subsequently informed us, 'through a fissure in the door.

As soon as he called his name, I saw Mulla Husayn arise and seat himself, in his customary manner, on bended knees beside him.

With bowed head and downcast eyes, he listened to every word that fell from the lips of Quddus, and answered his questions. "You have hastened the hour of your departure,"

I was able to hear Quddus remark, "and have abandoned me to the mercy of my foes.

Please God, I will ere long join you and taste the sweetness of heaven's ineffable delights."

I was able to gather the following words uttered by Mulla Husayn: "May my life be a ransom for you.

Are you well pleased with me?'" "A long time elapsed before Quddus bade Mirza Muhammad-Baqir open the door and admit his companions. 'I have bade my last farewell to him,' he said, as we entered the room. 'Things which previously I deemed it unallowable to utter I have now shared with him.' We found on our arrival that Mulla Husayn had expired.

A faint smile still lingered upon his face.

Such was the peacefulness of his countenance that he seemed to have fallen asleep.

Quddus attended to his burial, clothed him in his own shirt, and gave instructions to lay him to rest to the south of, and adjoining, the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsi.6 'Well is it with you to have remained to your last hour faithful to the Covenant [382] of God,' he said, as he laid a parting kiss upon his eyes and forehead. 'I pray God to grant that no division ever be caused between you and me.' He spoke with such poignancy that the seven companions who were standing beside him wept profusely, and wished they had been sacrificed in his stead.

Quddus, with his own hands, laid the body in the tomb, and cautioned those who were standing near him to maintain secrecy regarding the spot which served as his resting place, and to conceal it even from their companions.

He afterwards instructed them to inter the bodies of the thirty-six martyrs who had fallen in the course of that engagement in one and the same grave on the northern side of the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsi. 'Let the loved ones of God,' he was heard to remark as he consigned them to their tomb, 'take heed of the example of these martyrs of our Faith.

Let them in life be and remain as united as these are now in death.'"

No less than ninety of the companions were wounded that night, most of whom succumbed. From the day of their arrival at Barfurush to the day they were first attacked, which fell on the twelfth of Dhi'l-Qa'dih in the year 1264 A.H.,7 to the day of the death of Mulla Husayn, which took place at the hour of dawn on the ninth of Rabi'u'l-Avval in the year 1265 A.H.,8 the number of martyrs, according to the computation of Mirza Muhammad-Baqir, had reached a total of seventy-two.

From the time when Mulla Husayn was assailed by his enemies to the time of his martyrdom was a hundred and sixteen days, a period rendered memorable by deeds so heroic that even his bitterest foes felt bound to confess their wonder.

On four distinct occasions, he rose to such heights of courage and power as few indeed could attain.

The first encounter took place on the twelfth of Dhi'l-Qa'dih,9 in the outskirts of Barfurush; the second, in the immediate neighbourhood of the fort of Shaykh Tabarsi, on the fifth day of the month of Muharram,10 against the forces of 'Abdu'llah Khan-i-Turkaman; the third, in Vas-Kas, on the twenty-fifth day of Muharram,11 and was directed against the army of Prince [383] Mihdi-Quli Mirza.

The last and most memorable battle of all was directed against the combined forces of 'Abbas-Quli Khan, of Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza, and of Sulayman Khan-i-Afshar, assisted by a company of forty-five officers of tried ability and matured experience.

From each of these hot and fierce engagements Mulla Husayn emerged, in spite of the overwhelming forces arrayed against him, unscathed and triumphant.

In each encounter he distinguished himself by such acts of valour, of chivalry, of skill, and of strength that each one would alone suffice to establish for all time the transcendent character of a Faith for the protection of which he had so valiantly fought, and in the path of which he had so nobly died.

The traits of mind and of character which, from his very youth, he displayed, the profundity of his learning, the tenacity of his faith, his intrepid courage, his singleness of purpose, his high sense of justice and unswerving devotion, marked him as an outstanding figure among those who, by their lives, have borne witness to the glory and power of the new Revelation.

He was six and thirty years old when he quaffed the cup of martyrdom.

At the age of eighteen he made the acquaintance, in Karbila, of Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti.

For nine years he sat at his feet, and imbibed the lesson which was destined to prepare him for the acceptance of the Message of the Bab.

The nine remaining years of his life were spent in the midst of a restless, a feverish activity which carried him eventually to the field of martyrdom, in circumstances that have shed imperishable lustre upon his country's history.12

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So complete and humiliating a rout paralysed for a time the efforts of the enemy. Five and forty days passed before they could again reassemble their forces and renew their attack. During these intervening days, which ended with the day of Naw-Ruz, the intense cold which prevailed induced them to defer their venture against an opponent that had covered them with so much reproach and shame. Though their attacks had been suspended, the officers in charge of the remnants of the imperial army had given strict orders prohibiting the arrival of all manner of reinforcements at the fort. When the supply of their provisions was nearly exhausted, Quddus instructed Mirza Muhammad-Baqir to distribute among his companions the rice which Mulla Husayn had stored for such time as might be required. When each had received his portion, Quddus summoned them and said: "Whoever feels himself strong enough to withstand the calamities that are soon to befall us, let him remain with us in this fort. And whoever perceives in himself the least hesitation and fear, let him betake himself away from this place. Let him leave immediately ere the enemy has again assembled his forces and assailed us. The way will soon be barred before our face; we shall very soon encounter the severest hardship and fall a victim to devastating afflictions."

The very night Quddus had given this warning, a siyyid from Qum, Mirza Husayn-i-Mutavalli, was moved to betray his companions. "Why is it," he wrote to 'Abbas-Quli Khan-i-Larijani, "that you have left unfinished the work [385]

which you have begun? You have already disposed of a formidable opponent. By the removal of Mulla Husayn, who was the moving force behind these walls, you have demolished the pillar on which the strength and security of the fort depend. Had you been patient for one more day, you would have assuredly won for yourself the laurels of victory. With no more than a hundred men, I pledge my word that within the space of two days you will be able to capture the fort and secure the unconditional surrender of its occupants. They are worn with famine and are being grievously tested." The sealed letter was entrusted to a certain Siyyid 'Aliy-i-Zargar, who, as he carried with him the share of the rice he had received from Quddus, stole out of the fort at the hour of midnight and delivered it to 'Abbas-Quli Khan, with whom he was already acquainted. The message reached him at a time when he had sought refuge in a village situated at a distance of four farsangs13 from the fort, and knew not whether he should return to the capital and present himself after such a humiliating defeat to his sovereign, or repair to his home in Larijan, where he was sure to face the reproaches of his relations and friends.

He had just risen from his bed when, at the hour of sunrise, the siyyid brought him the letter. The news of the death of Mulla Husayn nerved him to a fresh resolve. Fearing [386] lest the messenger should spread the report concerning the death of so redoubtable an opponent, he instantly killed him, and then contrived by some strange device to divert from himself the suspicion of murder. Resolved to take the fullest advantage of the distress of the besieged and of the depletion of their forces, he undertook immediately the necessary preparations for the resumption of his attacks. Ten days before Naw-Ruz, he had encamped at half a farsang from the fort, and had ascertained the accuracy of the message that treacherous siyyid had brought him. In the hope of obtaining for himself every possible credit for the eventual surrender of his opponents, he refused to divulge, to even his closest officers, the information he had received.

The day had just broken when he hoisted his standard14 and, marching at the head of two regiments of infantry and cavalry, encompassed the fort and ordered his men to open fire upon the sentinels who were guarding the turrets. "The betrayer," Quddus informed Mirza Muhammad-Baqir, who had hastened to acquaint him with the gravity of the situation, "has announced the death of Mulla Husayn to 'Abbas-Quli Khan. Emboldened by his removal, he is now determined to storm our stronghold and to secure for himself the honour of being its sole conqueror. Sally out and, with the aid of eighteen men marching at your side, administer a befitting chastisement upon the aggressor and his host. Let him realise that though Mulla Husayn be no more, God's [387] invincible power still continues to sustain his companions and enable them to triumph over the forces of their enemies."

No sooner had Mirza Muhammad-Baqir selected his companions than he ordered that the gate of the fort be flung open. Leaping upon their chargers and raising the cry of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!" they plunged headlong into the camp of the enemy. The whole army fled in confusion before so terrific a charge. All but a few

were able to escape. They reached Barfurush utterly demoralised and laden with shame. 'Abbas-Quli Khan was so shaken with fear that he fell from his horse. Leaving, in his distress, one of his boots hanging from the stirrup, he ran away, half shod and bewildered, in the direction which the army had taken. Filled with despair, he hastened to the prince and confessed the ignominious reverse he had sustained.15 Mirza Muhammad-Baqir, on his part, emerging together with his eighteen companions unscathed from that encounter, and holding in his hand the [388] standard which an affrighted enemy had abandoned, repaired with exultation to the fort and submitted to his chief, who had inspired him with such courage, this evidence of his victory.

So complete a rout immediately brought relief to the hard-pressed companions. It cemented their unity and reminded them afresh of the efficacy of that power with which their Faith had endowed them. Their food, alas, was by this time reduced to the flesh of horses, which they had brought away with them from the deserted camp of the enemy. With steadfast fortitude they endured the afflictions which beset them from every side. Their hearts were set on the wishes of Quddus; all else mattered but little. Neither the severity of their distress nor the continual threats of the enemy could cause them to deviate a hairbreadth from the path which their departed companions had so heroically trodden. A few were found who subsequently faltered in the darkest hour of adversity. The faint-heartedness which this negligible element was compelled to betray paled, however, into insignificance before the radiance which the mass of their stout-hearted companions shed in the hour of realised doom.

[389] Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza, who was stationed in Sari, welcomed with keen delight the news of the defeat that had overtaken the forces under the immediate command of his colleague 'Abbas-Quli Khan. Though himself desirous of extirpating the band that had sought shelter behind the walls of the fort, he rejoiced at the knowledge that his rival had failed to secure the victory which he coveted.16 He wrote immediately to Tihran and demanded that reinforcements in the form of bomb-shells and camel-artillery, with all the necessary equipments, be despatched without delay to the neighbourhood of the fort, he being determined, this time, to effect the complete subjugation of its obstinate occupants.

Whilst their enemies were preparing for yet another and still fiercer attack upon their stronghold, the companions of Quddus, utterly indifferent to the gnawing distress that afflicted them, acclaimed with joy and gratitude the approach of Naw-Ruz. In the course of that festival, they gave free vent to their feelings of thanksgiving and praise in return for the manifold blessings which the Almighty had bestowed upon them. Though oppressed with hunger, they indulged in songs and merriment, utterly disdaining the danger with which they were beset. The fort resounded with the ascriptions of glory and praise which, both in the daytime and in the night-season, ascended from the hearts of that joyous band. The verse, "Holy, holy, the Lord our God, the Lord of the angels and the spirit," issued unceasingly from their lips, heightened their enthusiasm, and reanimated their courage.

All that remained of the cattle they had brought with them to the fort was a cow which Haji Nasiru'd-Din-i-Qazvini had set aside, and the milk of which he made into a pudding every day for the table of Quddus. Unwilling to [390] deny his hunger-stricken friends their share of the delicacy which his devoted companion prepared for him, Quddus would, after partaking of a few teaspoonfuls of that dish, invariably distribute the rest among them. "I have ceased to enjoy," he was often heard to remark, "since the departure of Mulla Husayn, the meat and drink which they prepare for me. My heart bleeds at the sight of my famished companions, worn and wasted around me." Despite these adverse circumstances, he unfailingly continued further to elucidate in his commentary the significance of the Sad of Samad, and to exhort his friends to persevere till the vary end in their heroic endeavours. At morn and at eventide, Mirza Muhammad-Baqir would chant, in the presence of the assembled believers, verses from that commentary, the reading of which would quicken their enthusiasm and brighten their hopes.

I have heard Mulla Mirza Muhammad-i-Furughi testify to the following: "God knows that we had ceased to hunger for food. Our thoughts were no longer concerned with matters pertaining to our daily bread. We were so enraptured by the entrancing melody of those verses that, were we to have continued for years in that state, no trace of weariness and fatigue could possibly have dimmed our enthusiasm or marred our gladness. And whenever the lack of nourishment would tend to sap our vitality and weaken our strength, Mirza Muhammad-Baqir would hasten to Quddus and acquaint him with our plight. A glimpse of his face, the magic of his words, as he walked amongst us, would transmute our despondency into golden joy. We were reinforced with a strength of such intensity that, had the hosts of our enemies appeared suddenly before us, we felt ourselves capable of subjugating their forces."

On the day of Naw-Ruz, which fell on the twenty-fourth of Rabi'u'th-Thani in the year 1265 A.H.,17 Quddus alluded, in a written message to his companions, to the approach of such trials as would bring in their wake the martyrdom of a considerable number of his friends.

A few days later, an innumerable host,18 commanded by Prince Mihdi-Quli [391] Mirza19 and seconded by the joint forces of Sulayman Khan-i-Afshar, of 'Abbas-Quli Khan-i-Larijani, and of Ja'far-Quli Khan, assisted by about forty other officers, encamped in the neighbourhood of the fort, and set about constructing a series of trenches and barricades in its immediate vicinity.20 On the ninth day of the month of Baha,21 the commanding officer gave orders to those in charge of his artillery to open fire in the direction of the besieged.

While the bombardment was in progress, Quddus emerged from his room and walked to the centre of the fort.

His face was wreathed in smiles, and his demeanour breathed forth the utmost tranquillity.

As he was pacing the floor, a cannon-ball fell suddenly before him. "How utterly unaware," he calmly remarked, as he rolled it with his foot, "are these

boastful aggressors of the power of God's avenging wrath!

Have they forgotten that a creature as insignificant as the gnat was capable of extinguishing [392] the life of the all-powerful Nimrod?

Have they not heard that the roaring of the tempest was sufficient to destroy the people of 'Ad and Thamud and to annihilate their forces?

Seek they to intimidate the heroes of God, in whose sight the pomp of royalty is but an empty shadow, with such contemptible evidences of their cruelty?" "You are," he added, as he turned to his friends, "those same companions of whom Muhammad, the Apostle of God, has thus spoken: 'Oh, how I long to behold the countenance of my brethren; my brethren who will appear in the end of the world!

Blessed are we, blessed are they; greater is their blessedness than ours.' Beware lest you allow the encroachments of self and desire to impair so glorious a station.

Fear not the threats of the wicked, neither be dismayed by the clamour of the ungodly.

Each one of you has his appointed hour, and when that time is come, neither the assaults of your enemy nor the endeavours of your friends will be able either to retard or to advance that hour.

If the powers of the earth league themselves against you, they will be powerless, ere that hour strikes, to lessen by one jot or tittle the span of your life.

Should you allow your hearts to be agitated for but one moment by the booming of these guns which, with increasing violence, will continue to shower their shot upon this fort, you will have cast yourselves out of the stronghold of Divine protection."

So powerful an appeal could not fail to breathe confidence into the hearts of those who heard it. A few, however, whose countenances betrayed vacillation and fear, were seen huddled together in a sheltered corner of the fort, viewing with envy and surprise the zeal that animated their companions.22

[393] The army of Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza continued for a few days to fire in the direction of the fort. His men were surprised to find that the booming of their guns had failed to silence the voice of prayer and the acclamations of joy which the besieged raised in answer to their threats. Instead of the unconditional surrender which they expected, the call of the muadhdhin,23 the chanting of the verses of the Qur'an, and the chorus of gladsome voices intoning hymns of thanksgiving and praise reached their ears without ceasing.

Exasperated by these evidences of unquenchable fervour and impelled by a burning desire to extinguish the enthusiasm which swelled within the breasts of his opponents, Ja'far-quli Khan erected a tower, upon which he stationed his cannon,24 and from that eminence directed his fire into the heart of the fort.

Quddus immediately summoned Mirza Muhammad-Baqir and instructed him to sally again and inflict upon the "boastful newcomer" a humiliation no less crushing than the one which 'Abbas-Quli Khan had suffered. [394] "Let him know," he added, "that God's lion-hearted warriors, when pressed and driven by hunger, are able to manifest deeds of such heroism as no ordinary mortals can show. Let him know that the greater their hunger, the more devastating shall be the effects of their exasperation."

Mirza Muhammad-Baqir again ordered eighteen of his companions to hurry to their steeds and follow him. The gates of the fort were thrown open, and the cry of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!" —fiercer and more thrilling than ever—diffused panic and consternation in the ranks of the enemy. Ja'far-Quli Khan, with thirty of his men, fell before the sword of their adversary, who rushed to the tower, captured the guns, and hurled them to the ground. Thence they threw themselves upon the barricade which had been erected, demolished a number of them, and would, but for the approaching darkness, have captured and destroyed the rest.

Triumphant and unhurt, they repaired to the fort, carrying back with them a number of the stoutest and best-fed stallions which had been left behind. A few days elapsed during which there was no sign of a counter-attack.25 A sudden explosion in one of the ammunition stores of the enemy, which had caused the death of several artillery officers and a number of their fellow-combatants, forced them for one whole month to suspend their attacks upon the garrison.26 This lull enabled a number of the companions to emerge occasionally from their stronghold and gather such grass as they could find in the field as the only means wherewith to [395] allay their hunger. The flesh of horses, even the leather of their saddles, had been consumed by these hard-pressed companions. They boiled the grass and devoured it with piteous avidity.27 As their strength declined, as they languished exhausted within the walls of their fort, Quddus multiplied his visits to them, and endeavoured by his words of cheer and of hope to lighten the load of their agony.

The month of Jamadiyu'th-Thani28 had just begun when the artillery of the enemy was heard again discharging its showers of balls upon the fort.

Simultaneously with the booming of the cannons, a detachment of the army, headed by a number of officers and consisting of several regiments of infantry and cavalry, rushed to storm it.

The sound of their approach impelled Quddus to summon promptly his valiant lieutenant, Mirza Muhammad-Baqir, and to bid him emerge with thirty-six of his companions and repulse their attack. [396] "Never since our occupation of this fort," he added, "have we under any circumstances attempted to direct any offensive against our opponents.

Not until they unchained their attack upon us did we arise to defend our lives.

Had we cherished the ambition of waging holy war against them, had we harboured the least intention of achieving ascendancy through the power of our arms over the unbelievers, we should not, until this day, have remained besieged within

these walls.

The force of our arms would have by now, as was the case with the companions of Muhammad in days past, convulsed the nations of the earth and prepared them for the acceptance of our Message.

Such is not the way, however, which we have chosen to tread.

Ever since we repaired to this fort, our sole, our unalterable purpose has been the vindication, by our deeds and by our readiness to shed our blood in the path of our Faith, of the exalted character of our mission.

The hour is fast approaching when we shall be able to consummate this task."

Mirza Muhammad-Baqir once more leaped on horseback and, with the thirty-six companions whom he had selected, confronted and scattered the forces which had beset him. He carried with him, as he re-entered the gate, the banner which an alarmed enemy had abandoned as soon as the reverberating cry of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!" had been raised. Five of his companions suffered martyrdom in the course of that engagement, all of whom he bore to the fort and interred in one tomb close to the resting place of their fallen brethren.

Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza, astounded by this further evidence of the inexhaustible vitality of his opponents, took counsel with the chiefs of his staff, urging them to devise such means as would enable him to bring that costly enterprise to a speedy end. For three days he deliberated with them, and finally came to the conclusion that the most advisable course to take would be to suspend all manner of hostilities for a few days in the hope that the besieged, exhausted with hunger and goaded by despair, would decide to emerge from their retreat and submit to an unconditional surrender.

As the prince was waiting for the consummation of the plan he had conceived, there arrived from Tihran a messenger [397] bearing to him the farman29 of his sovereign. This man was a resident of the village of Kand, a place not far from the capital. He succeeded in obtaining leave from the prince to enter the fort and attempt to induce two of its occupants, Mulla Mihdi and his brother Mulla Baqir-i-Kandi, to escape from the imminent danger to which their lives were exposed. As he approached its walls, he called the sentinels and asked them to inform Mulla Mihdiy-i-Kandi that an acquaintance of his desired to see him. Mulla Mihdi reported the matter to Quddus, who permitted him to meet his friend.

I have heard Aqay-i-Kalim give the following account, as related to him by that same messenger whom he met in Tihran: "'I saw,' the messenger informed me, 'Mulla Mihdi appear above the wall of the fort, his countenance revealing an expression of stern resolve that baffled description.

He looked as fierce as a lion, his sword was girded on over a long white shirt after the manner of the Arabs, and he had a white kerchief around his head. "What is it that you seek?" he impatiently enquired. "Say it quickly, for I fear that my master will summon me and find me absent."

The determination that glowed in his eyes confused me.

I was dumbfounded at his looks and manner.

The thought suddenly flashed through my mind that I would awaken a dormant sentiment in his heart.

I reminded him of his infant child, Rahman, whom he had left behind in the village, in his eagerness to enlist under the standard of Mulla Husayn.

In his great affection for the child, he had specially composed a poem which he chanted as he rocked his cradle and lulled him to sleep. "Your beloved Rahman,"

I said, "longs for the affection which you once lavished upon him.

He is alone and forsaken, and yearns to see you." "Tell him from me," was the father's instant reply, "that the love of the true Rahman,30 a love that transcends all earthly affections, has so filled my heart that it has left no place for any other love besides His."

The poignancy with which he uttered these words brought tears to my eyes. "Accursed,"

I indignantly exclaimed, "be those who consider you and your fellow-disciples as having strayed from the path of God!" [398] "What,"

I asked him, "if I venture to enter the fort and join you?" "If your motive be to seek and find the Truth," he calmly replied, "I will gladly show you the way.

And if you seek to visit me as an old and lifelong friend, I will accord you the welcome of which the Prophet of God has spoken: 'Welcome your guests though they be of the infidels.' I will, faithful to that injunction, offer you the boiled grass and the churned bones which serve as my meat, the best I can procure for you.

But if your intention be to harm me, I warn you that I will defend myself and will hurl you from the heights of these walls to the ground."

His unswerving obstinacy convinced me of the futility of my efforts.

I could feel that he was fired with such enthusiasm that, were the divines of the realm to assemble and endeavour to dissuade him from the course he had chosen to pursue, he would, alone and unaided, baffle their efforts.

Neither, was I convinced, could all the potentates of the earth succeed in luring him away from the Beloved of his heart's desire. "May the cup,"

I was moved to say, "which your lips have tasted, bring you all the blessings you seek." "The prince,"

I added, "has vowed that whoever steps out of this fort will be secure from danger, that he will even receive a safe passage from him, as well as whatever expenses he may require for the journey to his home."

He promised to convey the prince's message to his fellow-companions. "Is there anything further you wish to tell me?" he added. "I am impatient to join my master." "May God,"

I replied, "assist you in accomplishing your purpose." "He has indeed assisted me!" he burst forth in exultation. "How else could I have been delivered from the darkness of my prison-home in Kand?

How could I have reached this exalted stronghold?"

No sooner had he uttered these words than, turning his face away from me, he vanished from my sight.'"

As soon as he had joined his companions, Mulla Mihdi conveyed the prince's message to them. On the afternoon of that same day, Siyyid Mirza Husayn-i-Mutavalli, accompanied by his servant, left the fort and went directly to join the prince in his camp. The next day, Rasul-i-Bahnimiri and a few other of his companions, unable to resist the ravages of famine, and encouraged by the explicit assurances [399] of the prince, sadly and reluctantly separated themselves from their friends. No sooner had they stepped out of the fort than they were all instantly slain at the order of 'Abbas-Quli Khan-i-Larijani.

During the few days that elapsed after that incident, the enemy, still encamped in the neighbourhood of the fort, refrained from any act of hostility towards Quddus and his companions. On Wednesday morning, the sixteenth of Jamadiyu'th-Thani,31 an emissary of the prince arrived at the fort and requested that two representatives be delegated by the besieged to conduct confidential negotiations with them in the hope of arriving at a peaceful settlement of the issues outstanding between them.32

Accordingly, Quddus instructed Mulla Yusuf-i-Ardibili and Siyyid Riday-i-Khurasani to act as his representatives, and bade them inform the prince of his readiness to accede to his wish.

Mihdi-Quli Mirza courteously received them, and invited them to partake of the tea which he had prepared. "We should," they said, as they declined his offer, "feel it to be an act of disloyalty on our part were we to partake of either meat or drink whilst our beloved leader languishes worn and famished in the fort." "The hostilities between us," the prince remarked, "have been unduly prolonged.

We, on both sides, have fought long and suffered grievously.

It is my fervent wish to achieve an amicable settlement of our differences."

He took hold of a copy of the Qur'an that lay beside him, and wrote, with his own hand, in confirmation of his statement, the following words on the margin of the opening Surih: "I swear by this most holy Book, by the righteousness of God who has revealed it, and the Mission of Him who was inspired with its verses, that I cherish no other purpose than to promote peace and friendliness between us.

Come forth from your stronghold and rest assured that no hand will be stretched forth against you.

You yourself [400] and your companions, I solemnly declare, are under the sheltering protection of the Almighty, of Muhammad, His Prophet, and of Nasiri'd-Din Shah, our sovereign.

I pledge my honour that no man, either in this army or in this neighbourhood, will ever attempt to assail you.

The malediction of God, the omnipotent Avenger, rest upon me if in my heart I cherish any other desire than that which I have stated."

He affixed his seal to his statement and, delivering the Qur'an into the hands of Mulla Yusuf, asked him to convey his greetings to his leader and to present him this formal and written assurance. "I will," he added, "in pursuance of my declaration, despatch to the gate of the fort, this very afternoon, a number of horses, which I trust he and his leading companions will accept and mount, in order to ride to the neighbourhood of this camp, where a special tent will have been pitched for their reception. I would request them to be our guests until such time as I shall be able to arrange for their return, at my expense, to their homes."

Quddus received the Qur'an from the hand of his messenger, kissed it reverently, and said: "O our Lord, decide between us and between our people with truth; for the best to decide art Thou."33 Immediately after, he bade the rest of his companions prepare themselves to leave the fort. "By our response to their invitation," he told them, "we shall enable them to demonstrate the sincerity of their intentions."

As the hour of their departure approached, Quddus attired his head with the green turban which the Bab had sent to him at the time He sent the one that Mulla Husayn wore on the day of his martyrdom. At the gate of the fort, they mounted the horses which had been placed at their disposal, Quddus mounting the favourite steed of the prince which the latter had sent for his use. His chief companions, among whom were a number of siyyids and learned divines, rode behind him, and were followed by the rest, who marched on foot, carrying with them all that was left of their arms and belongings. As the company, who were two hundred and two in number, reached the tent which the prince had ordered to be pitched for Quddus in the vicinity of the public bath [401] of the village of Dizva, overlooking the camp of the enemy, they alighted and proceeded to occupy their lodgings in the neighbourhood of that tent.

Soon after their arrival, Quddus emerged from his tent and, gathering together his companions, addressed them in these words: "You should show forth exemplary renunciation, for such behaviour on your part will exalt our Cause and redound to its glory. Anything short of complete detachment will but serve to tarnish the purity of its name and to obscure its splendour. Pray the Almighty to grant that even to your

last hour He may graciously assist you to contribute your share to the

exaltation of His Faith."

A few hours after sunset, they were served with dinner brought from the camp of the prince. The food that was offered them in separate trays, each of which was assigned to a group of thirty companions, was poor and scanty. "Nine of us," those who were with Quddus subsequently related, "were summoned by our leader to partake of the dinner which had been served in his tent. As he refused to taste it, we too, following his example, refrained from eating. The attendants who waited upon us were delighted to partake of the dishes which we had refused to touch, and devoured their contents with appreciation and avidity." A few of the companions [402] who were dining outside the tent were heard remonstrating with the attendants, pleading that they were willing to buy from them, at however exorbitant a price, the bread which they needed. Quddus strongly disapproved of their conduct and rebuked them for the request they had made. But for the intercession of Mirza Muhammad-Baqir, he would have severely punished them for having so completely disregarded his earnest exhortations.

At daybreak a messenger arrived, summoning Mirza Muhammad-Baqir to the presence of the prince.

With the consent of Quddus, he responded to that invitation, and returned an hour later, informing his chief that the prince had, in the presence of Sulayman Khan-i-Afshar, reiterated the assurances he had given, and had treated him with great consideration and kindness. "'My oath,' he assured me,"

Mirza Muhammad-Baqir explained, "'is irrevocable and sacred.' He cited the case of Ja'far-Quli Khan, who, notwithstanding his shameless massacre of thousands of soldiers of the imperial army, in the course of the insurrection fomented by the Salar, was pardoned by his sovereign and promptly invested with fresh honours by Muhammad Shah.

To-morrow the prince intends to accompany you in the morning to the public bath, from whence he will proceed to your tent, after which he will provide the horses required to convey the entire company to Sang-Sar, from where they will disperse, some returning to their homes in 'Iraq, and others proceeding to Khurasan.

At the request of Sulayman Khan, who urged that the presence of such a large gathering at such a fortified centre as Sang-Sar would be fraught with risk, the prince decided that the party should disperse, instead, at Firuz-Kuh.

I am of opinion that what his tongue professes, his heart does not believe at all."

Quddus, who shared his view, bade his companions disperse that very night, and stated that he himself would soon proceed to Barfurush.

They hastened to implore him not to separate himself from them, and begged to be allowed to continue to enjoy the blessings of his companionship.

He counselled them to be calm and patient, and assured them that, whatever afflictions the future might yet reveal, they would meet again. "Weep not,"

were his parting words; "the reunion which will follow this separation [403] will be such as shall eternally endure.

We have committed our Cause to the care of God; whatever be His will and pleasure, the same we joyously accept."

The prince failed to redeem his promise. Instead of joining Quddus in his tent, he called him, with several of his companions, to his headquarters, and informed him, as soon as they reached the tent of the Farrash-Bashi,34 that he himself would summon him at noon to his presence. Shortly after, a number of the prince's attendants went and told the rest of the companions that Quddus permitted them to join him at the army's headquarters. Several of them were deceived by this report, were made captives, and were eventually sold as slaves. These unfortunate victims constitute the remnant of the companions of the fort of Shaykh Tabarsi, who survived that heroic struggle and were spared to transmit to their countrymen the woeful tale of their sufferings and trials.

Soon after, the prince's attendants brought pressure to bear upon Mulla Yusuf to inform the remainder of his companions of the desire of Quddus that they immediately disarm. "What is it that you will tell them exactly?" they asked him, as he was being conducted to a place at some distance from the army's headquarters. "I will," was the bold reply, "warn them that whatever be henceforth the nature of the message you choose to deliver to them on behalf of their leader, that message is naught but downright falsehood." These words had hardly escaped his lips when he was mercilessly put to death.

From this savage act they turned their attention to the fort, plundered it of its contents, and proceeded to bombard and demolish it completely.35 They then immediately encompassed the remaining companions and opened fire upon them. Any who escaped the bullets were killed by the swords of the officers and the spears of their men.36 In the [404] very throes of death, these unconquerable heroes were still heard to utter the words, "Holy, holy, O Lord our God, Lord of the angels and the spirit," words which in moments of exultation had fallen from their lips, and which they now repeated with undiminished fervour at this crowning hour of their lives.

As soon as these atrocities hath been perpetrated, the prince ordered those who had been retained as captives to be ushered, one after another, into his presence. Those among them who were men of recognised standing, such as the father of Badi',37 Mulla Mirza Muhammad-i-Furughi, and Haji Nasir-i-Qazvini,38 he charged his attendants to conduct to Tihran and obtain in return for their deliverance a ransom from each one of them in direct proportion to their capacity and wealth. As to the rest, he gave orders to his executioners that they be immediately put to death. A few were cut to pieces with the sword,39 others were torn asunder, a number were bound to trees and riddled with bullets, and still others were blown [405] from the mouths of cannons and consigned to the flames.40

This terrible butchery had hardly been concluded when three of the companions of Quddus, who were residents of Sang-Sar, were ushered into the presence of

the prince. One of them was Siyyid Ahmad, whose father, Mir Muhammad-'Ali, a devoted admirer of Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i, had been a man of great learning and distinguished merit. He, accompanied by this same Siyyid Ahmad and his brother, Mir Abu'l-Qasim, who met his death the very night on which Mulla Husayn was slain, had departed for Karbila in the year preceding the declaration of the Bab, with the intention of introducing his two sons to Siyyid Kazim. Ere his arrival, the siyyid had departed this life. He immediately determined to leave for Najaf. While in that city, the Prophet Muhammad one night appeared to him in a dream, bidding the Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, announce to him that after his death both his sons, Siyyid Ahmad and Mir Abu'l-Qasim, would attain the presence of the promised Qa'im and would each suffer martyrdom in His path. As soon as he awoke, he called for his son Siyyid Ahmad and acquainted him with his will and last wishes. On the seventh day after that dream he died.

In Sang-Sar two other persons, Karbila'i 'Ali and Karbila'i Abu-Muhammad, both known for their piety and spiritual insight, strove to prepare the people for the acceptance of [406] the promised Revelation, the advent of which they felt was fast approaching. In the year 1264 A.H.,41 they publicly announced that in that very year a man named Siyyid 'Ali would, preceded by a Black Standard and accompanied by a number of his chosen companions, set forth from Khurasan and proceed to Mazindaran. They urged every loyal adherent of Islam to arise and lend him every possible assistance. "The standard which he will hoist," they declared, "will be none other than the standard of the promised Qa'im; he who will unfurl it, none other than His lieutenant and chief promoter of His Cause. Whoso follows him will be saved, and he who turns away will be among the fallen." Karbila'i Abu-Muhammad urged his two sons, Abu'l-Qasim and Muhammad-'Ali, to arise for the triumph of the new Revelation and to sacrifice every material consideration for the attainment of that end. Both Karbila'i Abu-Muhammad and Karbila'i 'Ali died in the spring of that same year.

These two sons of Karbila'i Abu-Muhammad were the two companions who had been ushered, together with Siyyid Ahmad, into the presence of the prince.

Mulla Zaynu'l-'Abidin-i-Shahmirzadi, one of the trusted and learned counsellors of the government, acquainted the prince with their story and related the experiences and activities of their respective fathers. "For what reason,"

Siyyid Ahmad was asked, "have you chosen to tread a path that has involved you and your kinsmen in such circumstances of wretchedness and disgrace?

Could you not have been satisfied with the vast number of erudite and illustrious divines who are to be found in this land and in 'Iraq?" "My faith in this Cause," he fearlessly retorted, "is born not of idle imitation.

I have dispassionately enquired into its precepts, and am convinced of its truth.

When in Najaf, I ventured to request the preeminent mujtahid of that city, Shaykh Muhammad-Hasan-i-Najafi, to expound for me certain truths connected with

the secondary principles underlying the teachings of Islam.

He refused to accede to my request.

I reiterated my appeal, whereupon he angrily rebuked me and persisted in his refusal.

How can I, in the light of such experience, be expected to seek enlightenment on the abstruse articles of the Faith [407] of Islam from a divine, however illustrious, who refuses to answer my question on such simple and ordinary matters and who expresses his indignation at my having put such questions to him?" "What is your belief concerning Haji Muhammad-'Ali?" asked the prince. "We believe," he replied, "Mulla Husayn to have been the bearer of the standard of which Muhammad has spoken: 'Should your eyes behold the Black Standards proceeding from Khurasan, hasten ye towards them, even though ye should have to crawl over the snow.' For this reason we have renounced the world and have flocked to his standard, a standard which is but a symbol of our Faith.

If you wish to bestow upon me a favour, bid your executioner put an end to me and enable me to be gathered to the company of my immortal companions.

For the world and all its charms have ceased to allure me.

I long to depart this life and return to my God."

The prince, who was reluctant to take the life of a siyyid, refused to order his execution.

His two companions, however, were immediately put to death.

He, with his brother Siyyid Abu-Talib, was delivered into the hands of Mulla Zaynu'l-'Abidin, who was instructed to conduct them to Sang-Sar.

Meanwhile Mirza Muhammad-Taqi, accompanied by seven of the ulamas of Sari, set out from that town to share in the meritorious act of inflicting the punishment of death upon the companions of Quddus. When they found that they had already been put to death, Mirza Muhammad-Taqi urged the prince to reconsider his decision and to order the immediate execution of Siyyid Ahmad, pleading that his arrival at Sari would be the signal for fresh disturbances as grave as those which had already afflicted them. The prince eventually yielded, on the express condition that he be regarded as his guest until his own arrival at Sari, at which time he would take whatever measures were required to prevent him from disturbing the peace of the neighbourhood.

No sooner had Mirza Muhammad-Taqi taken the direction of Sari than he proceeded to vilify Siyyid Ahmad and his father. "Why ill-treat a guest," his captive pleaded, "whom the prince has committed to your charge? Why ignore the Prophet's injunction, 'Honour thy guest though he be an infidel'?" Roused to a burst of fury, Mirza Muhammad-Taqi, [408] together with his seven companions, drew their swords and cut his body to pieces. With his last breath Siyyid Ahmad was heard invoking the aid of the Sahibu'z-Zaman. As to his brother Siyyid Abu-Talib, he was safely conducted to Sang-Sar by Mulla Zaynu'l-'Abidin, and to

this day resides with his brother Siyyid Muhammad-Rida in Mazindaran. Both are engaged in the service of the Cause and are accounted among its active supporters.

As soon as his work was completed, the prince, accompanied by Quddus, returned to Barfurush. They arrived on Friday afternoon, the eighteenth of Jamadiyu'th-Thani.42 The Sa'idu'l-'Ulama', together with all the ulamas of the town, came out to welcome the prince and to extend their congratulations on his triumphal return. The whole town was beflagged to celebrate the victory, and the bonfires which blazed at night witnessed to the joy with which a grateful population greeted the return of the prince. Three days of festivities elapsed during which he gave no indication as to his intention regarding the fate of Quddus. He vacillated in his policy, and was extremely reluctant to ill-treat his captive. He at first refused to allow the people to gratify their feelings of unrelenting hatred, and was able to restrain their fury. He had originally intended to conduct him to Tihran and, by delivering him into the hands of his sovereign, to relieve himself of the responsibility which weighed upon him.

The Sa'idu'l-'Ulama"s unquenchable hostility, however, interfered with the execution of this plan.

The hatred with which Quddus and his Cause inspired him blazed into furious rage as he witnessed the increasing evidences of the prince's inclination to allow so formidable an opponent to slip from his grasp.

Day and night he remonstrated with him and, with every cunning that his resourceful brain could devise, sought to dissuade him from pursuing a policy which he thought to be at once disastrous and cowardly.

In the fury of his despair, he appealed to the mob and sought, by inflaming their passions, to awaken the basest sentiments of revenge in their hearts.

The whole of Barfurush had been aroused by the persistency of his call.

His diabolical skill [409] soon won him the sympathy and support of the masses. "I have vowed," he imperiously protested, "to deny myself both food and sleep until such time as I am able to end the life of Haji Muhammad-'Ali with my own hands!"

The threats of an agitated multitude reinforced his plea and succeeded in arousing the apprehensions of the prince.

Fearing that his own life might be endangered, he summoned to his presence the leading ulamas of Barfurush for the purpose of consulting as to the measures that should be taken to allay the tumult of popular excitement.

All those who had been invited responded with the exception of Mulla Muhammad-i-Hamzih, who pleaded to be excused from attending that meeting.

He had previously, on several occasions, endeavoured, during the siege of the fort, to persuade the people to refrain from violence.

To him Quddus, a few days before his abandonment of the fort, had committed,

through one of his trusted companions of Mazindaran, a locked saddlebag containing the text of his own interpretation of the Sad of Samad as well as all his other writings and papers that he had in his possession, the fate of which remains unknown until the present day.

No sooner had the ulamas assembled than the prince gave orders for Quddus to be brought into their presence.

Since the day of his abandoning the fort, Quddus, who had been delivered into the custody of the Farrash-Bashi, had not been summoned to his presence.

As soon as he arrived, the prince arose and invited him to be seated by his side.

Turning to the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama', he urged that his conversations with him be dispassionately and conscientiously conducted. "Your discussions," he asserted, "must revolve around, and be based upon, the verses of the Qur'an and the traditions of Muhammad, by which means alone you can demonstrate the truth or falsity of your contentions." "For what reason," the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama' impertinently enquired, "have you, by choosing to place a green turban upon your head, arrogated to yourself a right which only he who is a true descendant of the Prophet can claim?

Do you not know that whoso defies this sacred tradition is accursed of God?" "Was Siyyid Murtada,"

Quddus calmly replied, "whom all the recognised ulamas praise and esteem, a descendant of [410] the Prophet through his father or his mother?"

One of those present at that gathering instantly declared the mother alone to have been a siyyid. "Why, then, object to me," retorted Quddus, "since my mother was always recognised by the inhabitants of this town as a lineal descendant of the Imam Hasan?

Was she not, because of her descent, honoured, nay venerated, by every one of you?"

No one dared to contradict him. The Sa'idu'l-'Ulama' burst forth into a fit of indignation and despair. Angrily he flung his turban to the ground and arose to leave the meeting. "This man," he thundered, ere he departed, "has succeeded in proving to you that he is a descendant of the Imam Hasan. He will, ere long, justify his claim to be the mouthpiece of God and the revealer of His will!" The prince was moved to make this declaration: "I wash my hands of all responsibility for any harm that may befall this man. You are free to do what you like with him. You will yourselves be answerable to God on the Day of Judgment." Immediately after he had spoken these words, he called for his horse and, accompanied by his attendants, departed for Sari. Intimidated by the imprecations of the ulamas and forgetful of his oath, he abjectly surrendered Quddus to the hands of an unrelenting foe, those ravening wolves who panted for the moment when they could pounce, with uncontrolled violence, upon their prey, and let loose on him the fiercest passions of revenge and hate.

No sooner had the prince freed them from the restraints which he had exercised than the ulamas and the people of Barfurush, acting under orders from the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama',43 arose to perpetrate upon the body of their victim acts of such atrocious cruelty as no pen can describe. By the testimony of Baha'u'llah, that heroic youth, who was still on the threshold of his life, was subjected to such tortures and suffered [411] such a death as even Jesus had not faced in the hour of His greatest agony. The absence of any restraint on the part of the government authorities, the ingenious barbarity which the torture-mongers of Barfurush so ably displayed, the fierce fanaticism which glowed in the breasts of its shi'ah inhabitants, the moral support accorded to them by the dignitaries of Church and State in the capital—above all, the acts of heroism which their victim and his companions had accomplished and which had served to heighten their exasperation, all combined to nerve the hand of the assailants and to add to the diabolical ferocity which characterised his martyrdom.

Such were its circumstances that the Bab, who was then confined in the castle of Chihriq, was unable for a period of six months either to write or to dictate. The deep grief which he felt had stilled the voice of revelation and silenced His pen. How deeply He mourned His loss! What cries of anguish He must have uttered as the tale of the siege, the untold sufferings, the shameless betrayal, and the wholesale massacre of the companions of Shaykh Tabarsi reached His ears and was unfolded before His eyes! What pangs of sorrow He must have felt when He learned of the shameful treatment which His beloved Quddus had undergone in his hour of martyrdom at the hands of the people of Barfurush; how he was stripped of his clothes; how the turban which He had bestowed upon him had been befouled; how, barefooted, bareheaded, and loaded with chains, he was paraded through the streets, followed and scorned by the entire population of the town; how he was execrated and spat upon by the howling mob; how he was assailed with the knives and axes of the scum of its female inhabitants; how his body was pierced and mutilated, and how eventually it was delivered to the flames!

Amidst his torments, Quddus was heard whispering forgiveness to his foes. "Forgive, O my God," he cried, "the trespasses of this people. Deal with them in Thy mercy, for they know not what we already have discovered and cherish. I have striven to show them the path that leads to their salvation; behold how they have risen to overwhelm and kill me! Show them, O God, the way of Truth, and turn their ignorance into faith." In his hour of agony, the Siyyid-i-Qumi, [412] who had so treacherously deserted the fort, was seen passing by his side. Observing his helplessness, he smote him in the face. "You claimed," he cried in haughty scorn,

"that your voice was the voice of God. If you speak the truth, burst your bonds asunder and free yourself from the hands of your enemies." Quddus looked steadfastly into his [413] face, sighed deeply, and said: "May God requite you for your deed, inasmuch as you have helped to add to the measure of my afflictions." Approaching the Sabzih-Maydan, he raised his voice and said: "Would that my mother were with me, and could see with her own eyes the

splendour of my nuptials!" He had scarcely spoken these words when the enraged multitude fell upon him and, tearing his body to pieces, threw the scattered members into the fire which they had kindled for that purpose. In the middle of the night, what still remained of the fragments of that burned and mutilated body was gathered by the hand of a devoted friend44 and interred in a place not far distant from the scene of his martyrdom.45

It would be appropriate at this juncture to place on record the names of those martyrs who participated in the defence of the fort of Shaykh Tabarsi, in the hope that generations yet to come may recall with pride and gratitude the names, no less than the deeds, of those pioneers who, by their life and death, have so greatly enriched the annals of God's immortal Faith.

Such names as I have been able to collect from various sources, and for which I am particularly indebted [414] to Ismu'llahu'l-Mim, Ismu'llahu'l-Javad, and Ismu'llahu'l-Asad, I now proceed to enumerate, trusting that even as in the world beyond their souls have been invested with the light of unfading glory, their names may likewise linger for ever on the tongues of men; that their mention may continue to evoke a like spirit of enthusiasm and devotion in the hearts of those to whom this priceless heritage has been transmitted.

From my informants I not only have been able to gather the names of most of those who fell in the course of that memorable siege, but have also succeeded in obtaining a representative, though incomplete, list of all those martyrs who, from the year '6046 until the present day, the latter part of the month of Rabi'u'l-Avval in the year 1306 A.H.,47 have laid down their lives in the path of the Cause of God.

It is my intention to make mention of each of these names in connection with the particular event with which it is chiefly connected.

As to those who quaffed the cup of martyrdom while defending the fort of Tabarsi, their names are as follows:

1. First and foremost among them stands Quddus, upon whom the Bab bestowed the name of Ismu'llahu'l-Akhar.48 He, the Last Letter of the Living and the Bab's chosen companion [415] on His pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, was, together with Mulla Sadiq and Mulla 'Ali-Akbar-i-Ardistani, the first to suffer persecution on Persian soil for the sake of the Cause of God. He was only eighteen years of age when he left his native town of Barfurush for Karbila. For about four years he sat at the feet of Siyyid Kazim, and at the age of twenty-two met and recognised his Beloved in Shiraz. Five years later, on the twenty-third day of Jamadiyu'th-Thani in the year 1265 A.H.,49 he was destined to fall, in the Sabzih-Maydan of Barfurush, a victim of the most refined and wanton barbarity at the hands of the enemy. The Bab and, at a later time, Baha'u'llah have mourned in unnumbered Tablets and prayers his loss, and have lavished on him their eulogies. Such was the honour accorded to him by Baha'u'llah that in His commentary on the verse of Kullu't-Ta'am,50 which He revealed while in Baghdad, He conferred upon him the unrivalled station of the Nuqtiy-i-Ukhra,51 a station second to none except that of the Bab Himself.52

2. Mulla Husayn, surnamed the Babu'l-Bab, the first to recognise and embrace the new Revelation. At the age of eighteen, he, too, departed from his native town of Bushruyih in Khurasan for Karbila, and for a period of nine years [416] remained closely associated with Siyyid Kazim. Four years prior to the Declaration of the Bab, acting according to the instructions of Siyyid Kazim, he met in Isfahan the learned mujtahid Siyyid Baqir-i-Rashti and in Mashhad Mirza 'Askari, to both of whom he delivered with dignity and eloquence the messages with which he had been entrusted by his leader. The circumstances attending his martyrdom evoked the Bab's inexpressible sorrow, a sorrow that found vent in eulogies and prayers of such great number as would be equivalent to thrice the volume of the Qur'an. In one of His visiting Tablets, the Bab asserts that the very dust of the ground where the remains of Mulla Husayn lie buried is endowed with such potency as to bring joy to the disconsolate and healing to the sick. In the Kitab-i-Iqan, Baha'u'llah extols with still greater force the virtues of Mulla Husayn. "But for him," He writes, "God would not have been established upon the seat of His mercy, nor have ascended the throne of eternal glory!"53

3. Mirza Muhammad-Hasan, the brother of Mulla Husayn.

4. Mirza Muhammad-Baqir, the nephew of Mulla Husayn. He, as well as Mirza Muhammad-Hasan, accompanied Mulla Husayn from Bushruyih to Karbila and from thence to Shiraz, where they embraced the Message of the Bab and were enrolled among the Letters of the Living. With the exception of the journey of Mulla Husayn to the castle of Mah-Ku, they continued to be with him until the time they suffered martyrdom in the fort of Tabarsi.

5. The brother-in-law of Mulla Husayn, the father of Mirza Abu'l-Hasan and Mirza Muhammad-Husayn, both of whom are now in Bushruyih, and into whose hands the care of the Varaqatu'l-Firdaws, Mulla Husayn's sister, is committed. Both are firm and devoted adherents of the Faith.

6. The son of Mulla Ahmad, the elder brother of Mulla Mirza Muhammad-i-Furughi. He, unlike his uncle, Mulla Mirza Muhammad, suffered martyrdom and was, as testified by the latter, a youth of great piety and distinguished for his learning and his integrity of character.

7. [417] Mirza Muhammad-Baqir, known as Harati, though originally a resident of Qayin. He was a close relative of the father of Nabil-i-Akbar, and was the first in Mashhad to embrace the Cause. It was he who built the Babiyyih, and who devotedly served Quddus during his sojourn in that city. When Mulla Husayn hoisted the Black Standard, he, together with his child, Mirza Muhammad-Kazim, eagerly enrolled under his banner and went forth with him to Mazindaran. That child was saved eventually, and has now grown up into a fervent and active supporter of the Faith in Mashhad. It was Mirza Muhammad-Baqir who acted as the standard-bearer of the company, who designed the plan of the fort, its walls and turrets and the moat which surrounded it, who succeeded Mulla Husayn in organising the forces of his companions and in leading the charge against the enemy, and who acted as the intimate companion, the lieutenant and trusted

counsellor of Quddus until the hour when he fell a martyr in the path of the Cause.

8. Mirza Muhammad-Taqiy-i-Juvayni, a native of Sabzihvar, who was distinguished for his literary accomplishments and was often entrusted by Mulla Husayn with the task of leading the charge against the assailants. His head and that of his fellow-companion, Mirza Muhammad-Baqir, were impaled on spears and paraded through the streets of Barfurush, amid the shouts and howling of an excited populace.

9. Qambar-'Ali, the fearless and faithful servant of Mulla Husayn, who accompanied him on his journey to Mah-Ku and who suffered martyrdom on the very night on which his master fell a victim to the bullets of the enemy.

10. Hasan and

11. Quli, who, together with a man named Iskandar, a native of Zanjan, bore the body of Mulla Husayn to the fort on the night of his martyrdom and placed it at the feet of Quddus. He it was, the same Hasan, who, by the orders of the chief constable of Mashhad, was led by a halter through the streets of that city.

12. Muhammad-Hasan, the brother of Mulla Sadiq, whom the comrades of Khusraw slew on the way between Barfurush and the fort of Tabarsi. He distinguished himself [418] by his unwavering constancy, and had been one of the servants of the shrine of the Imam Rida.

13. Siyyid Rida, who, with Mulla Yusuf-i-Ardibili, was commissioned by Quddus to meet the prince, and who brought back with him the sealed copy of the Qur'an bearing the oath which the prince had written. He was one of the well-known siyyids of Khurasan, and was recognised for his learning as well as for the integrity of his character.

14. Mulla Mardan-'Ali, one of the noted companions from Khurasan, a resident of the village of Miyamay, the site of a well-fortified fortress situated between Sabzihvar and Shah-Rud. He, together with thirty-three companions, enlisted under the banner of Mulla Husayn on the day of the latter's passage through that village. It was in the masjid of Miyamay, to which Mulla Husayn had repaired in order to offer the Friday congregational prayer, that he delivered his soul-stirring appeal in which he laid stress upon the fulfilment of the tradition relating to the hoisting of the Black Standard in Khurasan, and in which he declared himself to be its bearer. His eloquent address profoundly impressed his hearers, so much so that on that very day the majority of those who heard him, most of whom were men of distinguished merit, arose and followed him. Only one of those thirty-three companions, a Mulla 'Isa, survived, whose sons are at present in the village of Miyamay, actively engaged in the service of the Cause. The names of the martyred companions of that village are as follows:

15. Mulla Muhammad-Mihdi,

16. Mulla Muhammad-Ja'far,

17. Mulla Muhammad-ibn-i-Mulla Muhammad,

18. Mulla Rahim,
19. Mulla Muhammad-Rida,
20. Mulla Muhammad-Husayn,
21. Mulla Muhammad,
22. Mulla Yusuf,
23. Mulla Ya'qub,
24. Mulla 'Ali,
25. Mulla Zaynu'l-'Abidin,
26. Mulla Muhammad, son of Mulla Zaynu'l-'Abidin,
27. Mulla Baqir,
28. [419] Mulla 'Abdu'l-Muhammad,
29. Mulla Abu'l-Hasan,
30. Mulla Isma'il,
31. Mulla 'Abdu'l-'Ali,
32. Mulla Aqa-Baba,
33. Mulla 'Abdu'l-Javad,
34. Mulla Muhammad-Husayn,
35. Mulla Muhammad-Baqir,
36. Mulla Muhammad,
37. Haji Hasan,
38. Karbila'i 'Ali,
39. Mulla Karbila'i 'Ali,
40. Karbila'i Nur-Muhammad,
41. Muhammad-Ibrahim,
42. Muhammad-Sa'im,
43. Muhammad-Hadi,
44. Siyyid Mihdi,
45. Abu-Muhammad.

Of the companions of the village of Sang-Sar, which forms part of the district of Simnan, eighteen were martyred. Their names are as follows:

46. Siyyid Ahmad, whose body was cut to pieces by Mirza Muhammad-Taqi and the seven ulamas of Sari. He was a noted divine and greatly esteemed for his eloquence and piety.

47. Mir Abu'l-Qasim, Siyyid Ahmad's brother, who won the crown of martyrdom on the very night on which Mulla Husayn met his death.

48. Mir Mihdi, the paternal uncle of Siyyid Ahmad,

49. Mir Ibrahim, the brother-in-law of Siyyid Ahmad,

50. Safar-'Ali, the son of Karbila'i 'Ali, who, together with Karbila'i Muhammad, had so strenuously endeavoured to awaken the people of Sang-Sar from their sleep of heedlessness. Both of them, owing to their infirmities, were unable to proceed to the fort of Tabarsi.
51. Muhammad-'Ali, the son of Karbila'i Abu-Muhammad,
52. Abu'l-Qasim, the brother of Muhammad-'Ali,
53. Karbila'i Ibrahim,

54. 'Ali-Ahmad,
55. [420] Mulla 'Ali-Akbar,
56. Mulla Husayn-'Ali,
57. 'Abbas-'Ali,
58. Husayn-'Ali,
59. Mulla 'Ali-Asghar,
60. Karbila'i Isma'il,
61. 'Ali Khan,
62. Muhammad-Ibrahim,
63. 'Abdu'l-'Azim.

From the village of Shah-Mirzad, two fell in defending the fort:

64. Mulla Abu-Rahim and
65. Karbila'i Kazim.

As to the adherents of the Faith in Mazindaran, twenty-seven martyrs have thus far been recorded:

66. Mulla Riday-i-Shah,
67. 'Azim,
68. Karbila'i Muhammad-Ja'far,
69. Siyyid Husayn,
70. Muhammad-Baqir,
71. Siyyid Razzaq,
72. Ustad Ibrahim,
73. Mulla Sa'id-i-Zirih-Kinari,
74. Riday-i-'Arab,
75. Rasul-i-Bahnimiri,
76. Muhammad-Husayn, the brother of Rasul-i-Bahnimiri,
77. Tahir,
78. Shafi',
79. Qasim,
80. Mulla Muhammad-Jan,
81. Masih, the brother of Mulla Muhammad-Jan,
82. Ita-Baba,
83. Yusuf,
84. Fadlu'llah,
85. Baba,
86. Safi-Quli,
87. Nizam,
88. Ruhu'llah,
89. 'Ali-Quli,
90. [421] Sultan,
91. Ja'far,
92. Khalil.

Of the believers of Savad-Kuh, the five following names have thus far been ascertained:

93. Karbila'i Qambar-Kalish,
94. Mulla Nad-'Aliy-i-Mutavalli,
95. 'Abdu'l-Haqq,
96. Itabaki-Chupan,
97. Son of Itabaki-Chupan.

From the town of Ardistan, the following have suffered martyrdom:

98. Mirza 'Ali-Muhammad, son of Mirza Muhammad-Sa'id,
99. Mirza 'Abdu'-Vasi', son of Haji 'Abdu'l-Vahhab,
100. Muhammad-Husayn, son of Haji Muhammad-Sadiq,
101. Muhammad-Mihdi, son of Haji Muhammad-Ibrahim,
102. Mirza Ahmad, son of Muhsin,
103. Mirza Muhammad, son of Mir Muhammad-Taqi.

From the city of Isfahan, thirty have thus far been recorded:

104. Mulla Ja'far, the sifter of wheat, whose name has been mentioned by the Bab in the Persian Bayan.
105. Ustad Aqa, surnamed Buzurg-Banna,
106. Ustad Hasan, son of Ustad Aqa,
107. Ustad Muhammad, son of Ustad Aqa,
108. Muhammad-Husayn, son of Ustad Aqa, whose younger brother Ustad Ja'far was sold several times by his enemies until he reached his native city, where he now resides.
109. Ustad Qurban-'Aliy-i-Banna,
110. 'Ali-Akbar, son of Ustad Qurban-'Aliy-i-Banna,
111. 'Abdu'llah, son of Ustad Qurban-'Ali-i-Banna,
112. Muhammad-i-Baqir-Naqsh, the maternal uncle of Siyyid Yahya, son of Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Nahri. He was fourteen years old and was martyred the very night that Mulla Husayn met his death.
113. Mulla Muhammad-Taqi,
114. Mulla Muhammad-Rida, both brothers of the late 'Abdu's-Salih, the gardener of the Ridvan at 'Akka.
115. Mulla Ahmad-i-Saffar,
116. [422] Mulla Husayn-i-Miskar,
117. Ahmad-i-Payvandi,
118. Hasan-i-Sha'r-Baf-i-Yazdi,
119. Muhammad-Taqi,
120. Muhammad-'Attar, brother of Hasan-i-Sha'r-Baf,
121. Mulla 'Abdu'l-Khaliq, who cut his throat in Badasht and whom Tahirih named Dhabih.
122. Husayn,
123. Abu'l-Qasim, brother of Husayn,
124. Mirza Muhammad-Rida,
125. Mulla Haydar, brother of Mirza Muhammad-Rida,
126. Mirza Mihdi,
127. Muhammad-Ibrahim,
128. Muhammad-Husayn, surnamed Dastmal-Girih-Zan,

129. Muhammad-Hasan-i-Chit-Saz, a well-known cloth manufacturer who attained the presence of the Bab.
130. Muhammad-Husayn-i-'Attar,
131. Ustad Haji Muhammad-i-Banna,
132. Mahmud-i-Muqari'i, a noted cloth dealer. He was newly married and had attained the presence of the Bab in the castle of Chihriq. The Bab urged him to proceed to the Jaziriy-i-Khadra and to lend his assistance to Quddus. While in Tihran, he received a letter from his brother announcing the birth of a son and entreating him to hasten to Isfahan to see him, and then to proceed to whichever place he felt inclined. "I am too much fired," he replied, "with the love of this Cause to be able to devote any attention to my son. I am impatient to join Quddus and to enlist under his banner."

133. Siyyid Muhammad-Riday-i-Pa-Qal'iyi, a distinguished siyyid and a highly esteemed divine, whose declared purpose to enlist under the banner of Mulla Husayn caused a great tumult among the ulamas of Isfahan.

Among the believers of Shiraz, the following attained the station of martyrdom:

134. Mulla 'Abdu'llah, known also by the name of Mirza Salih, 135. Mulla Zaynu'l-'Abidin,
136. Mirza Muhammad.

Of the adherents of the Faith in Yazd, only four have thus far been recorded:

137. [423] The siyyid who walked on foot all the way from Khurasan to Barfurush, where he fell a victim to the bullet of the enemy.

138. Siyyid Ahmad, the father of Siyyid Husayn-i-'Aziz, the amanuensis of the Bab,

139. Mirza Muhammad-'Ali, son of Siyyid Ahmad, whose head was blown off by the ball from a cannon as he was standing at the entrance of the fort, and who, because of his tender age, was greatly loved and admired by Quddus.

140. Shaykh 'Ali, son of Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Khaliq-i-Yazdi, a resident of Mashhad, a youth whose enthusiasm and untiring energy were greatly praised by Mulla Husayn and Quddus.

Of the believers of Qazvin, the following were martyred:

141. Mirza Muhammad-'Ali, a noted divine, whose father, Haji Mulla 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, was one of the most distinguished mujtahids in Qazvin. He attained the presence of the Bab in Shiraz, and was enrolled as one of the Letters of the Living.

142. Muhammad-Hadi, a noted merchant, son of Haji 'Abdu'l-Karim, surnamed Baghban-Bashi,

143. Siyyid Ahmad,
144. Mirza 'Abdu'l-Jalil, a noted divine,
145. Mirza Mihdi.
146. From the village of Lahard, a man named Haji Muhammad-'Ali, who had

greatly suffered as a result of the murder of Mulla Taqi in Qazvin.

Of the believers of Khuy, the following have suffered martyrdom:

147. Mulla Mihdi, a distinguished divine, who had been one of the esteemed disciples of Siyyid Kazim. He was noted for his learning, his eloquence, and his staunchness of faith.

148. Mulla Mahmud-i-Khu'i, brother of Mulla Mihdi, one of the Letters of the Living and a distinguished divine.

149. Mulla Yusuf-i-Ardibili, one of the Letters of the Living, noted for his learning, his enthusiasm and eloquence.

It was he who had aroused the apprehensions of Haji Karim Khan on his arrival at Kirman, and who struck terror to the hearts of his adversaries. "This man,"

Haji Karim Khan was heard to say to his congregation, "must needs be expelled from this town, for if he be allowed to remain, he will assuredly [424] cause the same tumult in Kirman as he has already done in Shiraz.

The injury he will inflict will be irreparable.

The magic of his eloquence and the force of his personality, if they do not already excel those of Mulla Husayn, are certainly not inferior to them."

By this means he was able to force him to curtail his stay in Kirman and to prevent him from addressing the people from the pulpit.

The Bab gave him the following instructions: "You must visit the towns and cities of Persia and summon their inhabitants to the Cause of God.

On the first day of the month of Muharram in the year 1265 A.H.,54 you must be in Mazindaran and must arise to lend every assistance in your power to Quddus."

Mulla Yusuf, faithful to the instructions of his Master, refused to prolong his stay beyond a week in any of the towns and cities which he visited.

On his arrival in Mazindaran, he was made captive by the forces of Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza, who immediately recognised him and gave orders that he be imprisoned.

He was eventually released, as we have already observed, by the companions of Mulla Husayn on the day of the battle of Vas-Kas.

150. Mulla Jalil-i-Urumi, one of the Letters of the Living, noted for his learning, his eloquence, and tenacity of faith.

151. Mulla Ahmad, a resident of Maraghih, one of the Letters of the Living, and a distinguished disciple of Siyyid Kazim.

152. Mulla Mihdiy-i-Kandi, a close companion of Baha'u'llah, and a tutor to the children of His household.

153. Mulla Baqir, brother of Mulla Mihdi, both of whom were men of considerable learning, to whose great attainments Baha'u'llah testifies in the

"Kitab-i-Iqan."

154. Siyyid Kazim, a resident of Zanjan, and one of its noted merchants. He attained the presence of the Bab in Shiraz, and accompanied Him to Isfahan. His brother, Siyyid Murtada, was one of the Seven Martyrs of Tihran.

155. Iskandar, also a resident of Zanjan, who, together with Hasan and Quli, bore the body of Mulla Husayn to the fort.

156. Isma'il,
157. Karbila'i 'Abdu'l-'Ali,
158. [425] 'Abdu'l-Muhammad,
159. Haji Abbas,
160. Siyyid Ahmad—all residents of Zanjan.
161. Siyyid Husayn-i-Kulah-Duz, a resident of Barfurush, whose head was impaled on a lance and was paraded through its streets.

162. Mulla Hasan-i-Rashti,
163. Mulla Hasan-i-Bayajmandi,
164. Mulla Ni'matu'llah-i-Barfurushi,
165. Mulla Muhammad-Taqiy-i-Qarakhili,
166. Ustad Zaynu'l-'Abidin,
167. Ustad Qasim, son of Ustad Zaynu'l-'Abidin,
168. Ustad 'Ali-Akbar, brother of Ustad Zaynu'l-'Abidin.

The last three were masons by profession, were natives of Kirman, and resided in Qayin in the province of Khurasan.

169 and 170. Mulla Riday-i-Shah and a young man from Bahnimir were slain two days after the abandonment of the fort by Quddus, in the Panj-Shanbih-Bazar of Barfurush. Haji Mulla Muhammad-i-Hamzih, surnamed the Shari'at-Madar, succeeded in burying their bodies in the neighbourhood of the Masjid-i-Kazim-Big, and in inducing their murderer to repent and ask forgiveness.

171. Mulla Muhammad-i-Mu'allim-i-Nuri, an intimate companion of Baha'u'llah who was closely associated with Him in Nur, in Tihran, and in Mazindaran. He was famed for his intelligence and learning, and was subjected, Quddus only excepted, to the severest atrocities that have ever befallen a defender of the fort of Tabarsi. The prince had promised that he would release him on condition that he would execrate the name of Quddus, and had pledged his word that, should he be willing to recant, he would take him back with him to Tihran and make him the tutor of his sons. "Never will I consent," he replied, "to vilify the beloved of God at the bidding of a man such as you. Were you to confer upon me the whole of the kingdom of Persia, I would not for one moment turn my face from my beloved leader. My body is at your mercy, my soul you are powerless to subdue. Torture me as you will, that I may be enabled to demonstrate to you the truth of the verse, 'Then, wish for death, if ye be men of [426] truth.'"55 The prince, infuriated by his answer, gave orders that his body be cut to pieces and that no effort be spared to inflict upon him a most humiliating punishment.

172. Haji Muhammad-i-Karradi, whose home was situated in one of the palm groves

adjoining the old city of Baghdad, a man of great courage who had fought and led a hundred men in the war against Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt. He had been a fervent disciple of Siyyid Kazim, and was the author of a long poem in which he expatiated upon the virtues and merits of the siyyid. He was seventy-five years old when he embraced the Faith of the Bab, whom he likewise eulogised in an eloquent and detailed poem. He distinguished himself by his heroic acts during the siege of the fort, and eventually became a victim of the bullets of the enemy.

173. Sa'id-i-Jabbavi, a native of Baghdad, who displayed extraordinary courage during the siege. He was shot in the abdomen, and, though severely wounded, managed to walk until he reached the presence of Quddus. He joyously threw himself at his feet and expired.

The circumstances of the martyrdom of these last two companions were related by Siyyid Abu-Talib-i-Sang-Sari, one of those who survived that memorable siege, in a communication he addressed to Baha'u'llah. In it he relates, in addition, his own story, as well as that of his two brothers, Siyyid Ahmad and Mir Abu'l-Qasim, both of whom were martyred while defending the fort. "On the day on which Khusraw was slain," he wrote, "I happened to be the guest of a certain Karbila'i 'Ali-Jan, the kad-khuda56 of one of the villages in the neighbourhood of the fort. He had gone to assist in the protection of Khusraw, and had returned and was relating to me the circumstances attending his death. On that very day, a messenger informed me that two Arabs had arrived at that village and were anxious to join the occupants of the fort. They expressed their fear of the people of the village of Qadi-Kala, and promised that they would amply reward whoever would be willing to conduct them to their destination. I recalled the counsels of my father, Mir Muhammad-'Ali, who exhorted me to arise and [427] help in the promotion of the Cause of the Bab. I immediately decided to seize the opportunity that had presented itself to me, and, together with these two Arabs, and with the aid and assistance of the Kad-khuda, reached the fort, met Mulla Husayn, and determined to consecrate the remaining

days of my life to the service of the Cause he had chosen to follow."

The names of some of the officers who distinguished themselves among the opponents of the companions of Quddus are as follows:

1. Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza, brother of the late Muhammad Shah,
2. [428] Sulayman Khan-i-Afshar,
3. Haji Mustafa Khan-i-Sur-Tij,
4. 'Abdu'llah Khan, brother of Haji Mustafa Khan,
5. 'Abbas-Quli Khan-i-Larijani, who shot Mulla Husayn,
6. Nuru'llah Khan-i-Afghan,

7. Habibu'llah Khan-i-Afghan,
8. Dhu'l-Faqar Khan-i-Karavuli,
9. 'Ali-Asghar Khan-i-Du-Dungi'i,
10. Khuda-Murad Khan-i-Kurd,
11. Khalil Khan-i-Savad-Kuhi,

12. Ja'far-Quli Khan-i-Surkh-Karri'i,
13. The Sartip of the Fawj-i-Kalbat,
14. [429] Zakariyyay-i-Qadi-Kala'i, a cousin of Khusraw, and his successor.

As to those believers who participated in that memorable siege and survived its tragic end, I have been thus far unable to ascertain in full either their names or their number. I have contented myself with a representative, though incomplete, list of the names of its martyrs, trusting that in the days to come the valiant promoters of the Faith will arise to fill this gap, and will, by their research and industry, be able to remedy the imperfections of this altogether inadequate description of what must ever remain as one of the most moving episodes of modern times.

FOOTNOTES

20.1. "Thus perplexed and not knowing which way to turn, Shah-zadih, poor man, gave orders to gather together new soldiers and raise another army.

The population was not eager to serve under a chief whose worth and intrepidity had not brilliantly stood the test.

Nevertheless, by the help of money and through promises, the mullas particularly, who did not lose sight of their interests, and who had the most at stake, displayed such zeal that in the end a fair number of tufang-chis were assembled.

As for the mounted soldiers of the various tribes, from the moment their chiefs mount their horses, they do likewise without even asking why. "'Abbas-Quli Khan-i-Larijani obeyed without hesitation the order to send new recruits.

This time, however, either through distrust of a Prince whose ineptitude might endanger the lives of his relatives and subjects, or because ambitious to distinguish himself, he no longer gave anyone the command of his forces.

He led them himself by a daring move and, instead of rejoining the royal army, he went straight on to attack the Babis in their refuge.

Then he gave notice to the Prince that he had arrived at the fortress of Shaykh Tabarsi and that he was besieging it.

Besides, he notified him that he had no need of assistance nor of support, that his forces were more than adequate and that, if his Royal Highness would see for himself how he, 'Abbas-Quli Khan-i-Larijani, was about to treat the rebels, he would be both honored and gratified." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp.

170-171.)

20.2. "Mihdi-Quli Mirza could not pass for a bold warrior, as we have just seen, but he substituted for an excessive intrepidity another quality very useful to a general: he did not take literally the boastings of his lieutenants. Therefore, fearing that ill might befall this impudent nomad, he sent him reinforcements immediately. Thus departed in great haste Muhsin

Khan-i-Ashrafi with his cavalry, a troop of Afghans, Muhammad-Karim Khan-i-Suriti with some of the tufang-chis of the town, and Khalil Khan of Savad-Kuh with the men of Qadi-Kala." (Ibid., p. 171.)

20.3. February 1, 1849 A.D.

20.4. See Glossary.

20.5. "Although seriously wounded, the Babi chief continued, nevertheless, to give orders and to lead and stimulate his men until, seeing that little more could be gained, he gave the signal to retreat, remaining himself with the rear guard." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 174.)

20.6. "His [Mulla Husayn's] mortal remains still repose in the little inner room of the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsi where, at the direction of Mulla Muhammad-'Ali Barfurushi, they were reverently laid by the hands of his sorrowing comrades in the beginning of the year A.D. 1849." ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note F, p. 245.)

20.7. October 10, 1848 A.D.

20.8. February 2, 1849 A.D.

20.9. October 10, 1848 A.D.

20.10. December 1, 1848 A.D.

20.11. December 21, 1848 A.D.

20.12. "Among them was Mulla Husayn, who was made the recipient of the effulgent glory of the Sun of Revelation.

But for him, God would not have been established upon the seat of His mercy, nor ascended the throne of eternal glory." (The "Kitab-i-Iqan," p.

188.) See note 5, p.

23. "Frail of form, but a gallant soldier and an impassioned lover of God, he combined qualities and characteristics which even in the spiritual aristocracy of Persia are seldom found united in the same person." (Dr.

T.

K.

Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," p.

83.) "At last," writes Gobineau, "he passed away.

The new religion, which found in him its first martyr, lost, in the same stroke, a man whose moral strength and ability would have been of great value to it, had he lived longer.

The Muhammadans naturally feel a hatred for the memory of this leader, which is as deep as the love and veneration shown for him by the Babis.

They can both justify their opposing sentiments.

What is certain is that Mulla Husayn-i-Bushru'i was the first to give to Babism, in the Persian empire, the status which a religious or political body acquires in the eyes of the people only after it has demonstrated its warlike strength." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p.

176.) "The late Haji Mirza Jani writes: 'I myself met him [Mirza Muhammad-Hasan, the younger brother of Mulla Husayn] when he was bringing his mother and sister from Karbila to Qazvin and from Qazvin to Tihran.

His sister was the wife of Shaykh Abu-Turab of Qazvin, who was a scholar and philosopher such as is rarely met with, and believed with the utmost sincerity and purity of purpose, while such was his love and devotion to the Bab that if anyone did so much as mention the name of His Supreme Holiness (the souls of all beside him be His sacrifice) he could not restrain his tears.

Often have I seen him, when engaged in the perusal of the writings of His Supreme Holiness, become almost beside himself with rapture, and nearly faint with joy.

Of his wife he used to say: "I married her three years ago in Karbila.

She was then but an indifferent scholar even in Persian, but now she can expound texts from the Qur'an and explain the most difficult questions and most subtle points of the doctrine of the Divine Unity in such wise that I have never seen a man who was her equal in this, or in readiness of apprehension.

These gifts she has obtained by the blessing of His Holiness the Supreme and through converse with her holiness the Pure (Qurratu'l-'Ayn).

I have seen in her a patience and resignation rare even in the most self-denying men, for during these three years, though I have not sent her a single dinar for her expenses, and she has supported herself only with the greatest difficulty, she has never uttered a word; and now that she has come to Tihran, she refrains altogether from speaking of the past, and though, in accordance with the wishes of Jinab-i-Babu'l-Bab, she now desires to proceed to Khurasan, and has literally nothing to put on save the one well-worn dress which she wears, she never asks for clothes or travelling-money, but ever seeks reasonable excuses wherewith to set me at my ease and prevent me from feeling ashamed.

Her purity, chastity, and virtue are boundless, and during all this while no unprivileged person hath so much as heard her voice."

But the virtues of the daughter were surpassed by those of the mother, who possessed rare attainments and accomplishments, and had composed many poems and eloquent elegies on the afflictions of her sons.

Although Jinab-i-Babu'l-Bab had warned her of his approaching martyrdom and foretold to her all the impending calamities, she still continued to exhibit

the same eager devotion and cheerful resignation, rejoicing that God had accepted the sacrifice of her sons, and even praying that they might attain to this great dignity and not be deprived of so great blessedness.

It is indeed wonderful to meditate on this virtuous and saintly family, the sons so conspicuous for their single-minded devotion and self-sacrifice, the mother and daughter so patient and resigned.

When I, Mirza Jani, met Mirza Muhammad-Hasan, he was but seventeen years of age, yet I observed in him a dignity, gravity, composure, and virtue which amazed me.

After the death of Jinab-i-Babu'l-Bab, Hadrat-i-Quddus bestowed on him the sword and turban of that glorious martyr, and made him captain of the troops of the True King.

As to his martyrdom, there is a difference of opinion as to whether he was slain at the breakfast-table in the camp, or suffered martyrdom with Jinab-i-Quddus in the square of Barfurush.'" (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," pp.

93-5.) The sister of Mulla Husayn was surnamed "Varaqatu'l-Firdaws," and was intimately associated, while in Karbila, with Tahirih. ("Memorials of the Faithful," p.

270.)

20.13. See Glossary.

20.14. "This time the terror knew no bounds; throughout the province the people, deeply aroused by the repeated defeats of Islam, were beginning to lean toward the new religion.

The military leaders felt their authority tottering, the religious chiefs saw their power over souls waning; the situation was extremely critical and the least incident might place the province completely under the influence of the Reformer." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p.

315.) "But when the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama' was informed of this, he (fearing lest the Babis should enter Barfurush and mete out to him the punishment which he deserved) was overcome with trouble and consternation, and wrote several successive letters to 'Abbas-Quli Khan, saying: 'I congratulate you on your courage and discretion, but how much to be deplored it is that after you have been at such pains, lost so many of your kinsmen, and gained at length so signal a victory, you did not follow it up.

You have made a great multitude food for the sword, and have returned, leaving only a few decrepit old men as survivors.

Alas, that, after all your efforts and perseverance, the prince is now prepared to march against the castle and take captive these few poor wretches, so that after all he will get the credit of this signal victory, and will appropriate to himself all the money and property of the vanquished!

You must make it your first and most important business to return to the castle ere he has set out, for the government of a province like Mazindaran is not a thing to be trifled with.

Strive, then, to gain the entire credit of this victory, and let your exertions accomplish what your zeal has begun.' He also wrote at great length to the clergy of Amul, urgently exhorting them to use their best endeavours to make the Sartip 'Abbas-Quli Khan start at once without further delay.

So they continued to remind him incessantly that it was his duty to march with all speed against the castle; and the Sartip, though he knew that what the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama' had written to him was utterly false and baseless, was eager, if it should be possible, to make some amends for what had passed, and so to clear himself in some measure of the disgrace which he had incurred in the eyes of the Larijani women whose husbands he had sacrificed, and of the government.

But inwardly he was consumed with anxiety, fearing that, as in the previous campaign, he might fail to accomplish anything.

Most of his men, too, were wounded, while many had fled and concealed themselves in the surrounding villages distant four or five farsangs from the city.

So, as a makeshift, he wrote to the clergy of Amul, saying: 'If indeed this be a religious war, you, who are such zealous champions of the Faith, and to whom men look for example, should take the lead, and make the first move, so that others may follow you.' The clergy, not being prepared with a suitable answer, and seeing no way of excusing themselves, were obliged to send a message to the effect that the war was a religious war.

A great company of tradesmen, common people, and roughs was assembled, and these, with the clergy and students, set out, ostensibly for the accomplishment of a religious duty, but really bent on plunder and rapine.

Most of these went to Barfurush and there joined the advance of Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza, who, on reaching a village distant one farsang from the castle, sent a body of his men to reconnoitre and collect information about the movements of the Babi garrison." (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," pp.

72-3.)

20.15. "The reverend divines, who with their pupils, had come to take part in the holy war, were scarce able to sleep at night for fear (though their quarters were in a place distant two farsangs from the castle), and continually in their conversation would they roundly abuse the prince and 'Abbas-Quli Khan and curse the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama'; 'for,' said they, 'these have, without sufficient reason, taken us away from our studies, our discussions, and the

earning of our livelihood, besides bringing us into dire peril; since to fight with men like these, who have renounced the world and carry their lives in their hands, is to incur great risk.' So the holy verse, 'Cast not yourselves into peril with your own hands,' became their daily utterance.

One said: 'Certain circumstances exonerate me from the duty of taking part in this war at present.' Another (adducing thirty different pretexts) said: 'I am lawfully excused and am compelled to turn back.' A third said: 'I have little children dependent on me; what can I do?' A fourth said: 'I have made no provision for my wife, so I must go, but, should it be necessary, I will return again.' A fifth said: 'My accounts with certain persons are not yet settled; should I fall a martyr, my wealth will be wasted, and an injustice will be done to my wife and children; and both waste and injustice are condemned as repugnant to our holy religion and displeasing to God.' A sixth said: 'I owe money to certain persons, and have none to acquit me of my debt.

Should I fall, my debt will not allow me to cross the Bridge of Sirat.' A seventh said: 'I came away without the knowledge of my mother, and she had said to me: "Shouldst thou go, I will make the milk wherewith I nourished thee unlawful to thee."

I fear, therefore, that I may be cast off as undutiful by my mother.' An eighth wept, saying: 'I have made a vow to visit Karbila this year; one circumambulation of the holy sepulchre of the Chief of Martyrs is equivalent in merit to a hundred thousand martyrdoms or a thousand pilgrimages to Mecca.

I fear to fail in the fulfilment of my vow, and so to be disappointed of this great blessing.' Others said: 'We, for our part, have neither seen in these people, nor heard of them, aught that showeth them to be unbelievers, for they also say: "There is no god but God, Muhammad is the Apostle of God, and 'Ali is the Friend of God."

At most, they maintain that the advent of the Imam Mihdi has taken place.

Let them be; for at all events they are no worse than the sunnis, who reject the twelve Imams and the fourteen immaculate saints, recognise such an one as 'Umar as caliph, prefer 'Uthman to 'Ali-ibn-i-Abi-Talib, and accept Abu-Bakr as the successor of our holy Prophet.

Why should our divines leave those alone, and fight with these about matter whereof the rights and wrongs have not been properly determined?' In short, throughout the camp, murmurs arose from every tongue, and complaints from every mouth; each one sang a different tune and devised a different pretext; and all awaited but some plausible excuse to betake themselves to flight.

So when 'Abbas-Quli Khan perceived this to be the case, he, fearing lest the contagion of their terror might spread to his soldiers, was forced to accept the excuses of these reverend divines and their disciples and followers, who forthwith departed, rejoicing greatly, and uttering prayers for the Sartip's success." (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," pp.

74-6.)

20.16. "Mihdi-Quli Mirza was somewhat surprised. He felt deeply disappointed, but what impressed him even more was that the Sardar could be considered as having been defeated as well as he, and this thought, flattering to his self-love, brought him no little pleasure. Not only did he no longer fear that one of his lieutenants might have won an enviable glory in taking the fortress of the Babis; but it was not he himself alone who had failed; he had a companion in misfortune and a companion whom he would succeed in proving responsible for the two defeats. Overjoyed he called together his chiefs great and small and apprised them of the news, deploring, of course, the tragic fate of the Sardar and expressing the ardent hope that this valiant soldier might be more fortunate in the future." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 179.)

20.17. 1849 A.D.

20.18. "The Prince assigned to each one his post during the siege; he entrusted Haji Khan Nuri and Mirza 'Abdu'llah Navayy with the responsibility of securing adequate supplies. As military leaders, he selected the Sardar 'Abbas-Quli Khan-i-Larijani, towards whom, since his recent failure, he was showing more sympathy; then Nasru'llah Khan-i-Bandibi, another chieftain, and Mustafa Khan from 'Ashraf to whom he gave the command of the brave tufang-chis of that city and also the command of the suritis. Other lesser lords led the men of Dudankih and Bala-Rastaq as well as several Turkish and Kurdish nomads who were not included in the bands of the great chiefs. These nomads were entrusted with the special duty of watching every move of the enemy. Past experience had convinced them that they should be more vigilant in the future. Turks and Kurds were given therefore the responsibility of following, night and day, the operations of the enemy and to be ever on the alert in order to prevent possible surprises." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp.180-181.)

20.19. "Mihdi-Quli Mirza, however, wished to combine recent strategy with old military technique and ordered to be brought from Tihran two cannon and two mortars with the necessary ammunition. He also enlisted the assistance of a man from Hirat who had discovered an explosive substance which could project flames to a distance of seven hundred meters and set fire to anything combustible within that radius. A trial test was made and it proved satisfactory; the burning material was shot out into the fort, a conflagration started immediately and all the dwellings or shelters whether of wood, of reeds, or of straw, which the Babis had erected, either within the enclosure or upon the walls, were reduced to ashes. "While this destruction went on, the bombs and bullets shot from the mortars seriously damaged a building hastily erected by men who were neither architects nor engineers and had never anticipated an artillery attack. In a very short time, the outer defences of the fortress were dismantled; nothing was left of them but fallen girders, smoked and burning timbers, scattered stones." (Ibid., pp. 181-182.)

20.20. "After taking these precautions, they dug holes and trenches for the use of the tufang-chis who were ordered to shoot down any Babis who might appear. They built large towers as high as the various levels of the fortress or even higher and, through a continuous plunging fire, they rendered the circulation of the Babis within their fort extremely dangerous. It was a decided advantage for the besiegers, but, in a few days, the Babi chiefs, taking advantage of the long nights, raised their fortifications so that their height exceeded that of the attacking towers of the enemy." (Ibid., p. 181.)

20.21. The ninth day after Naw-Ruz.

20.22. "Once, indeed, some few of them did go out to try to obtain a little tea and sugar for Jinab-i-Quddus.

The most notable of these was Mulla Sa'id of Zarkanad.

Now he was a man so accomplished in science that when certain learned men of the kindred of Mulla Muhammad-Taqi of Nur addressed to Jinab-i-Quddus in writing certain questions touching the sciences of divination and astrology, the latter said to Mulla Sa'id: 'Do you speedily write for them a brief and compendious reply, that their messenger be not kept waiting, and a more detailed answer shall be written subsequently.' So Mulla Sa'id, though hurried by the presence of the messenger, and distracted by the turmoil of the siege, rapidly penned a most eloquent address, wherein, while replying to the questions asked, he introduced nearly a hundred well-authenticated traditions bearing on the truth of the new Manifestation of the promised Proof, besides several which foreshadowed the halting of those who had believed in the Lord about Tabarsi, and their martyrdom.

The learned men of Nur were amazed beyond all measure at his erudition, and said: 'Candour compels us to admit that such a presentation of these matters is a great miracle, and that such erudition and eloquence are far beyond the Mulla Sa'id whom we knew.

Assuredly this talent hath been bestowed on him from on high, and he in turn hath made it manifest to us.' Now Mulla Sa'id and his companions, while they were without the castle, fell into the hands of the royal troops, and were by them carried before the prince.

The prince strove by every means to extract from them some information about the state of the Babi garrison, their numbers, and the amount of their munitions; but, do what he would, he could gain nothing.

So, when he perceived Mulla Sa'id to be a man of talent and understanding, he said to him: 'Repent, and I will release you and not suffer you to be slain.' To this Mulla Sa'id replied: 'Never did anyone repent of obedience to God's command; why, then, should I?

Rather do you repent, who are acting contrary to His good pleasure, and more evilly than anyone hath heretofore done.' And he spoke much more after the same fashion.

So at length they sent him to Sari in chains and fetters, and there slew him, under circumstances of the utmost cruelty, along with his companions, who appear to have been five in number." (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," pp.

79-80.)

20.23. See Glossary.

20.24. "Thus the latter constructed four towers on the four sides of the castle, and raised them so high that they were able to command the interior of the fortress with their guns, and to make the garrison targets for their bullets. Then the faithful, seeing this, began to dig subterranean passages and to retreat thither. But the ground of Mazindaran lies near the water and is saturated with moisture, added to which rain fell continually, increasing the damage, so that these poor sufferers dwelt amidst mud and water till their garments rotted away with damp.... Whenever one of their comrades quaffed the draught of martyrdom before their eyes, instead of grieving they rejoiced. Thus, for instance, on one occasion a bomb-shell fell on the roof of a hut, which caught fire. Shaykh Salih of Shiraz went to extinguish the fire. A bullet struck his head and shattered his skull. Even as they were raising his corpse, a second bullet carried away the hand of Aqa Mirza Muhammad-'Ali, the son of Siyyid Ahmad, who was the father of Aqa Siyyid Husayn, 'the beloved.' So, too, was Aqa Siyyid Husayn, 'the beloved,' a child ten years of age, slain before his father's eyes, and he fell rolling in mud and gore, with limbs quivering like those of a half-killed bird." (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," pp. 81-3.)

20.25. "This state of affairs had lasted four months. The Shah began to grow impatient. The success of the Babis aroused his anger which according to the Persian historian he expressed thus: 'We thought that our army would go without hesitation through fire and water, that, fearless, it would fight a lion or a whale, but we have sent it to fight a handful of weak and defenseless men and it has achieved nothing! Do the notables of Mazindaran think that we approve of this delay? Is it their policy to allow this conflagration to spread in order to magnify their importance in case they later put an end to it? Very well, let them know that I shall act as though Allah had never created Mazindaran and I shall exterminate its inhabitants to the last man!" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 322.)

20.26. "The siege had been going on for four months and had made no visible progress. The old fortifications had been destroyed but, with indomitable energy, the Babis had built new ones and, night and day, they restored and enlarged them. It was impossible to foresee the outcome of this situation, the more so because, as I have already said, Mazindaran was not the only region in Persia where the devotees of the new Faith were giving evidence of their zeal and their daring. The King and the prime minister, in their anxiety, burst forth into abuse against their lieutenants. Not only did they charge them with incompetence, in the most bitter terms, but they threatened to extend to them the same treatment planned for the Babis, if a final settlement were not reached without delay. Thereupon, the command was taken from Mihdi-Quli Mirza

and given to the Afshar Sulayman Khan, a man of acknowledged firmness and of great influence, not only in his own tribe, one of the noblest in Persia, but throughout the military circles who knew him and held him in high esteem. He was given the most rigorous orders." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 183-184.)

"Those who remained firm had already consumed not only all their food supply, but such grass as they could find in the enclosure and the bark of all the trees. There remained only the leather of their belts and the scabbards of their swords. They had to resort to the expedient recommended by the Spanish ambassador to the soldiers of the league besieged in Paris; they ground the bones of the dead and made flour with the dust thereof. At last, desperate, they were reduced to perpetrate a sort of profanation. The horse of Mulla Husayn had died of the wounds suffered during that fatal night which witnessed the death of its master. The Babis had buried it out of regard for their holy leader and a little of the deep veneration which all felt for him hovered over the grave of the poor animal. They held council and, deploring the necessity for such a discussion, they debated the question whether extreme distress could justify them to disinter the sacred charger and eat the remains. With deep sorrow, they agreed that the deed was justifiable. They cooked the remains of the horse with the flour made from the bones of the dead, they ate this strange mixture and took up their guns once more!" (Ibid., pp 186-187.)

20.27. 'Abdu'l-Baha refers, in the "Memorials of the Faithful" (pp. 16-17), to the hardships and sufferings endured by the heroic defenders of the fort of Shaykh Tabarsi. He pays a glowing tribute to the constancy, the zeal and courage of the besieged, mentioning in particular Mulla Sadiq-i-Muqaddas. "For eighteen days," He says, "they remained without food. They lived on the leather of their shoes. This too was soon consumed, and they had nothing left but water. They drank a mouthful every morning, and lay famished and exhausted in their fort. When attacked, however, they would instantly spring to their feet, and manifest in the face of the enemy a magnificent courage and astonishing resistance.... Under such circumstances to maintain an unwavering faith and patience is extremely difficult, and to endure such dire afflictions a rare phenomenon."

20.28. April 24-May 23, 1849 A.D.

20.29. See Glossary.

20.30. Reference to God, the word Rahman meaning "merciful."

20.31. May 9, 1849 A.D.

20.32. "This stark and desperate bravery, this unquenchable enthusiasm gave grave concern to the leaders of the imperial army. Despairing to break through the fortification after repeated defeats, they thought of resorting to shrewdness. The Prince was naturally shrewd and Sulayman Khan-i-Afshar, recently sent by the Shah, was urging such a method, fearful that longer delays might endanger his prestige and his life." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid

'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 325.)

20.33. Qur'an, 7:88.

20.34. See Glossary.

20.35. "All the fortifications constructed by the Babis were razed to the ground and even the ground was leveled to remove any evidences of the heroic defense of those who had died for their Faith. They imagined that this would silence history." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 327.)

20.36. "They formed them in a line and made sport of cutting open their stomachs. This amused them the more because, from the perforated intestines, issued grass still undigested, striking evidence of the sufferings they had endured and also of the faith that had sustained them. Some, very few, succeeded in escaping into the forest." (Ibid.)

20.37. Haji 'Abdu'l-Majid-i-Nishaburi, who was eventually martyred in Khurasan.

20.38. "It was then, says Mirza Jani, that Islam gave a shameful exhibition to the world.

The victors, if they can be so called, wished to enjoy the intoxication of their triumph.

They bound in chains Quddus, Mirza Muhammad-Hasan Khan, brother of the Babu'l-Bab, Akhund Mulla Muhammad-Sadiq-i-Khurasani, Mirza Muhammad Sadiq-i-Khurasani, Haji Mirza Hasan-i-Khurasani, Shaykh Ni'matu'llah-i-Amuli, Haji Nasir-i-Qazvini, Mulla Yusuf-i-Ardibili, Aqa Siyyid 'Abdu'l-'Azim-i-Khu'i and several others.

These they placed at the center of the parade which started out at the sound of the trumpets, and, every time they went through an inhabited section, they struck them." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

327-328.) "The cruelty went further still.

If a few escaped death, having been sold into slavery, others were tortured until they died.

Those who found kindly masters were Akhund Mulla Muhammad-Sadiq-i-Khurasani, Mulla Muhammad-i-Mahvalatiy-i-Dugh-Abadi, Aqa Siyyid 'Azim-i-Khu'i, Haji Nasir-i-Qazvini, Haji 'Abdu'l-Majid-i-Nishaburi, and Mirza Husayn-i-Matavalliy-i-Qumi.

Four Babis suffered martyrdom at Barfurush, two were sent to Amul; one of these was Mulla Ni'matu'llah-i-Amuli, the other Mirza

Muhammad-Baqir-i-Khurasaniy-i-Qa'ini, cousin of our Babi author. "Qa'ini lived previously at Mashhad, on the avenue called Khiyaban-Bala, and his house, which had been named 'Babiyyih,' was the rendezvous of the secretaries as well as the home for the co-religionists journeying through.

It is there that Quddus and the Babu'l-Bab sojourned on their way to Khurasan.

Besides his religious knowledge, Qa'ini was very skillful with his hands and it was he who designed the fortifications of Shaykh-Tabarsi." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p.

329.)

20.39. "As to the other prisoners they were made to lie down on the ground and the executioners cut open their stomachs. It was noticed that several of these unfortunates had raw grass in their intestines. This massacre completed, they found that there was still more to be done and they assassinated the fugitives who had already been pardoned. There were women and children and even fifty were not spared and their throats were cut. It was indeed a full day with much killing and no risk!" (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 189.) "On his arrival at Amul, Mulla Ni'matu'llah was tortured with ruthless ferocity. Apparently, this scene threw Qa'ini into a fit of rage. In any case, when the executioner approached, Qa'ini, breaking his bonds, jumped upon him, snatched his sword and struck him with such violence that his head rolled about fifteen feet away. The crowd rushed upon him but, terrible in his strength, he mowed down all those who came within his reach and they had finally to shoot him with a rifle in order to subdue him. After his death, they found in his pocket a piece of roasted horse flesh proof of the misery that he had endured for his faith !" (Ibid., pp. 329-330.)

20.40. "The whole world marvelled at the manner of their sacrifice.... The mind is bewildered at their deeds, and the soul marvelleth at their fortitude and bodily endurance.... These holy lights have, for eighteen years, heroically endured the showers of afflictions which, from every side, have rained upon them. With what love, what devotion, what exultation and holy rapture they sacrificed their lives in the path of the All-Glorious! To the truth of this all witness. And yet how can they belittle this Revelation? Hath any age witnessed such momentous happenings? If these companions be not the true strivers after God, who else could be called by this name? Have these companions been seekers after power or glory? Have they ever yearned for riches? Have they cherished any desire except the good pleasure of God? If these companions, with all their marvellous testimonies and wondrous works, be false, who, then, is worthy to claim for himself the truth? By God! their very deeds are a sufficient testimony, and an irrefutable proof unto all the peoples of the earth, were men to ponder in their hearts the mysteries of Divine Revelation. 'And they who act unjustly shall soon know what a lot awaiteth

them!'" (The "Kitab-i-Iqan," pp. 189-91.)

20.41. 1847-8 A.D.

20.41. May 11, 1849 A.D.

20.43. "The Babis call attention to the fact that shortly afterwards a strange disease afflicted Sa'idu'l-'Ulama'. In spite of the furs which he wore, in spite of the fire which burned constantly in his room, he shivered with cold yet, at the same time, his fever was so high, that nothing could quench his intolerable thirst. He died, and his house, which was very beautiful, was abandoned and finally crumbled into ruins. Little by little, the practice grew of dumping refuse on the site where it had once so proudly stood. This so impressed the Mazindaranis that when they quarrel among themselves, the final insult frequently is, 'May thy house meet the same fate as the house of Sa'idu'l-'Ulama!'" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 330.)

20.44. "At all events it appears that after the martyrdom of Jinab-i-Quddus, a pious divine, Haji Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Hamzih by name, whose skill in exegesis and spiritual gifts was recognised by all, secretly sent several persons to bury the mutilated remains in the ruined college already mentioned. And he, far from approving the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama"s conduct, used to curse and revile him, and never himself pronounced sentence of death against any Babi, but, on the contrary, used to obtain decent burial for those slain by the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama'. And when men questioned him concerning the garrison of the castle, he would reply: 'I do not condemn them or speak evil of them.' For this reason half of Barfurush remained neutral, for at first he used to forbid men to traduce or molest the Babis, though later, when the trouble waxed great, he deemed it prudent to be silent and shut himself up in his house. Now his austerity of life, piety, learning, and virtue were as well known to the people of Mazindaran as were the irreligion, immorality, and worldliness of the Sa'idu'l-'Ulama'." (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," p. 92.)

20.45. "He who knew Quddus and who made the pilgrimage with him is the one upon whom 'eight unities' have passed and God honored him among His angels in the heavens, because of the way in which he had withdrawn himself from all and because he was without blame in the sight of God." ("Le Bayan Persan," vol.

2, p.

164.) "Yet more wonderful than the events above described is the account of them given by 'Abbas-Quli Khan, with many expressions of admiration, to Prince Ahmad Mirza.

The late Haji Mirza Jani writes: 'About two years after the disaster of Shaykh Tabarsi, I heard one, who, though not a believer, was honest, truthful, and worthy of credit, relate as follows: "We were sitting together when some allusion was made to the war waged by some of those present against Hadrat-i-Quddus and Jinab-i-Babu'l-Bab.

Prince Ahmad Mirza and 'Abbas-Quli Khan were amongst the company.

The prince questioned 'Abbas-Quli Khan about the matter, and he replied thus: 'The truth of the matter is that anyone who had not seen Karbila would, if he had seen Tabarsi, not only have comprehended what there took place, but would have ceased to consider it; and had he seen Mulla Husayn of Bushruyih, he would have been convinced that the Chief of Martyrs had returned to earth; and had he witnessed my deeds, he would assuredly have said: "This is Shimr come back with sword and lance."

I swear by the sacred plume of His Majesty the Centre of the Universe that one day Mulla Husayn, having on his head a green turban, and over his shoulder a shroud, came forth from the castle, stood forth in the open field, and, leaning on a lance which he held in his hand, said: "O people, why, without enquiry, and under the influence of passion and prejudiced misrepresentation, do ye act so cruelly towards us, and strive without cause to shed innocent blood?

Be ashamed before the Creator of the universe, and at least give us passage, that we may depart out of this land."

Seeing that the soldiers were moved, I opened fire, and ordered the troops to shout so as to drown his voice.

Again I saw him lean on his lance and heard him cry: "Is there any who will help me?" three times, so that all heard his cry.

At that moment all the soldiers were silent, and some began to weep, and many of the horsemen were visibly affected.

Fearing that the army might be seduced from their allegiance, I again ordered them to fire and shout.

Then I saw Mulla Husayn unsheathe his sword, raise his face towards heaven, and heard him exclaim: "O God I have completed the proof to this host, but it availeth not."

Then he began to attack us on the right and on the left.

I swear by God that on that day he wielded the sword in such wise as transcends the power of man.

Only the horsemen of Mazindaran held their ground and refused to flee.

And when Mulla Husayn was well warmed to the fray, he overtook a fugitive soldier.

The soldier sheltered himself behind a tree, and further strove to shield himself with his musket.

Mulla Husayn dealt him such blow with his sword that he clave him and the tree and the musket into six pieces.

And, during all that war, not once was his sword-stroke at fault, but every blow that he struck fell true.

And by the nature of their wounds I could recognise all whom Mulla Husayn had cut down with his sword, and since I had heard and knew that none could rightly wield the sword save the Chief of Believers, and that it was well-nigh impossible for sword to cut so true, therefore I forbade all who were aware of this thing to mention it or make it known, lest the troops should be discouraged and should wax faint in the fight.

But in truth I know not what had been shown to these people, or what they had seen, that they came forth to battle with such alacrity and joy, and engaged so eagerly and gladly in the strife, without displaying in their countenances any trace of fear or apprehension.

One would imagine that in their eyes the keen sword and blood-spilling dagger were but means to the attainment of everlasting life, so eagerly did their necks and bosoms welcome them as they circled like salamanders round the fiery hail of bullets.

And the astonishing thing was that all these men were scholars and men of learning, sedentary recluses of the college and the cloister, delicately nurtured and of weakly frame, inured indeed to austerities, but strangers to the roar of cannon, the rattle of musketry, and the field of battle.

During the last three months of the siege, moreover, they were absolutely without bread and water, and were reduced to the extreme of weakness through lack of even such pittance of food as is sufficient to sustain life.

Notwithstanding this, it seemed as if in time of battle a new spirit were breathed into their frames, insomuch that the imagination of man cannot conceive the vehemence of their courage and valour.

They used to expose their bodies to the bullets and cannon-balls not only fearlessly and courageously, but eagerly and joyously, seeming to regard the battle-field as a banquet, and to be bent on casting away their lives."""" (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," pp.

106-9.)

20.46. 1844 A.D.

20.47. November-December, 1888 A.D.

20.48. Literally "The Last Name of God."

20.49. May 16, 1849 A.D.

20.50. Qur'an, 3:93.

20.51. Literally "The Last Point."

20.52. Refer to note 2, p. 413.

20.53. Refer to note 1, p. 383.

20.54. November 27, 1848 A.D.

20.55. Qur'an, 2:94.

20.56. See Glossary.

CHAPTER XXI
THE SEVEN MARTYRS OF TIHRAN

[430] The news of the tragic fate which had befallen the heroes of Tabarsi brought immeasurable sorrow to the heart of the Bab. Confined in His prison-castle of Chihriq, severed from the little band of His struggling disciples, He watched with keen anxiety the progress of their labours and prayed with unremitting zeal for their victory. How great was His sorrow when, in the early days of Sha'ban in the year 1265 A.H.,1 He came to learn of the trials that had beset their path, of the agony they had suffered, of the betrayal to which an exasperated enemy had felt compelled to resort, and of the abominable butchery with which their career had ended.

"The Bab was heart-broken," His amanuensis, Siyyid Husayn-i-'Aziz, subsequently related, "at the receipt of this unexpected intelligence. He was crushed with grief, a grief that stilled His voice and silenced His pen. For nine days He refused to meet any of His friends. I myself, though His close and constant attendant, was refused admittance. Whatever meat or drink we offered Him, He was disinclined to touch. Tears rained continually from His eyes, and expressions of anguish dropped unceasingly from His lips. I could hear Him, from behind the curtain, give vent to His feelings of sadness as He communed, in the privacy of His cell, with His Beloved. I attempted to jot down the effusions of His sorrow as they poured forth from His wounded heart. Suspecting that I was attempting to preserve the lamentations He uttered, He bade me destroy whatever I had recorded. Nothing remains of the moans and cries with which that heavy-laden heart sought to relieve itself of the pangs that had seized it. For a period of five months He languished, immersed in an ocean of despondency and sorrow."

[431] With the advent of Muharram in the year 1266 A.H.,2 the Bab again resumed the work He had been compelled to interrupt. The first page He wrote was dedicated to the memory of Mulla Husayn. In the visiting Tablet revealed in his honour, He extolled, in moving terms, the unswerving fidelity with which he served Quddus throughout the siege of the fort of Tabarsi. He lavished His eulogies on his magnanimous conduct, recounted his exploits, and asserted his undoubted reunion in the world beyond with the leader whom he had so nobly served. He too, He wrote, would soon join those twin immortals, each of whom had, by his life and death, shed imperishable lustre on the Faith of God. For one whole week the Bab continued to write His praises of Quddus, of Mulla Husayn, and of His other companions who had gained the crown of martyrdom at Tabarsi.

No sooner had He completed His eulogies of those who had immortalised their names in the defence of the fort, than He summoned, on the day of 'Ashura,3 Mulla Adi-Guzal,4 one of the believers of Maraghih, who for the last two months had been acting as His attendant instead of Siyyid Hasan, the brother of Siyyid

Husayn-i-'Aziz. He affectionately received him, bestowed upon him the name Sayyah, entrusted to his care the visiting Tablets He had revealed in memory of the martyrs of Tabarsi, and bade him perform, on His behalf, a pilgrimage to that spot. "Arise," He urged him, "and with complete detachment proceed, in the guise of a traveller, to Mazindaran, and there visit, on My behalf, the spot which enshrines the bodies of those immortals who, with their blood, have sealed their faith in My Cause. As you approach the precincts of that hallowed ground, put off your shoes and, bowing your head in reverence to their memory, invoke their names and prayerfully make the circuit of their shrine. Bring back to Me, as a remembrance of your visit, a handful of that holy earth which covers the remains of My beloved ones, Quddus and Mulla [432] Husayn. Strive to be back ere the day of Naw-Ruz, that you may celebrate with Me that festival, the only one I probably shall ever see again."

Faithful to the instructions he had received, Sayyah set out on his pilgrimage to Mazindaran. He reached his destination on the first day of Rabi'u'l-Avval in the year 1266 A.H.,5 and by the ninth day of that same month,6 the first anniversary of the martyrdom of Mulla Husayn, he had performed his visit and acquitted himself of the mission with which he had been entrusted. From thence he proceeded to Tihran.

I have heard Aqay-i-Kalim, who received Sayyah at the entrance of Baha'u'llah's home in Tihran, relate the following: "It was the depth of winter when Sayyah, returning from his pilgrimage, came to visit Baha'u'llah. Despite the cold and snow of a rigorous winter, he appeared attired in the garb of a dervish, poorly clad, barefooted, and dishevelled. His heart was set afire with the flame that pilgrimage had kindled. No sooner had Siyyid Yahyay-i-Darabi, surnamed Vahid, who was then a guest in the home of Baha'u'llah, been informed of the return of Sayyah from the fort of Tabarsi, than he, oblivious of the pomp and circumstance to which a man of his position had been accustomed, rushed forward and flung himself at the feet of the pilgrim. Holding his legs, which had been covered with mud to the knees, in his arms, he kissed them devoutly. I was amazed that day at the many evidences of loving solicitude which Baha'u'llah evinced towards Vahid. He showed him such favours as I had never seen Him extend to anyone. The manner of His conversation left no doubt in me that this same Vahid would ere long distinguish himself by deeds no less remarkable than those which had immortalised the defenders of the fort of Tabarsi."

Sayyah tarried a few days in that home. He was, however, unable to perceive, as did Vahid, the nature of that power which lay latent in his Host. Though himself the recipient of the utmost favour from Baha'u'llah, he failed to apprehend the significance of the blessings that were being showered upon him. I have heard him recount his experiences, during his sojourn in Famagusta: "Baha'u'llah overwhelmed [433] me with His kindness. As to Vahid, notwithstanding the eminence of his position, he invariably gave me preference over himself whenever in the presence of his Host. On the day of my arrival from Mazindaran, he went so far as to kiss my feet. I was amazed at the reception accorded me in that home. Though immersed in an ocean of bounty, I

failed, in those days, to appreciate the position then occupied by Baha'u'llah, nor was I able to suspect, however dimly, the nature of the Mission He was destined to perform."

Ere the departure of Sayyah from Tihran, Baha'u'llah entrusted him with an epistle, the text of which He had dictated to Mirza Yahya,7 and sent it in his name. Shortly after, a reply, penned in the Bab's own handwriting, in which He commits Mirza Yahya to the care of Baha'u'llah and urges that attention be paid to his education and training, was received. That communication the people of the Bayan8 have misconstrued as an evidence of the exaggerated claims9 which they have advanced in favour of their leader. Although the text of that reply is absolutely devoid of such pretensions, and does not, beyond the praise it bestows upon Baha'u'llah and the request it makes for the upbringing of Mirza Yahya, contain any reference to his alleged position, yet his followers have idly imagined that that letter constitutes an assertion of the authority with which they have invested him.10

At this stage of my narrative, when I have already recounted the outstanding events that occurred in the course [434] of the year 1265 A.H.,11 I am reminded that that very year witnessed the most significant event in my own life, an event which marked my spiritual rebirth, my deliverance from the fetters of the past, and my acceptance of the message of this Revelation.

I seek the indulgence of the reader if I dwell too long on the circumstances of my early life, and recount with too great detail the events that led to my conversion.

My father belonged to the tribe of Tahiri, who led a nomadic life in the province of Khurasan.

His name was Ghulam 'Ali, son of Husayn-i-'Arab.

He married the daughter of Kalb-'Ali, and by her had three sons and three daughters.

I was his second son, and was given the name of Yar-Muhammad.

I was born on the eighteenth of Safar in the year 1247 A.H.,12 in the village of Zarand.

I was a shepherd by profession, and was given in my early days a most rudimentary education.

I longed to devote more time to my studies, but was unable to do so, owing to the exigencies of my situation.

I read the Qur'an with eagerness, committed several of its passages to memory, and chanted them whilst I followed my flock over the fields.

I loved solitude, and watched the stars at night with delight and wonder.

In the quiet of the wilderness, I recited certain prayers attributed to the Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, and, as I turned my face towards the

Qiblih,13 supplicated the Almighty to guide my steps and enable me to find the Truth.

My father oftentimes took me with him to Qum, where I became acquainted with the teachings of Islam and the ways and manners of its leaders. He was a devout follower of that Faith, and was closely associated with the ecclesiastical leaders who congregated in that city. I watched him as he prayed at the Masjid-i-Imam-Hasan and performed, with scrupulous care and extreme piety, all the rites and ceremonies prescribed by his Faith. I heard the preaching of several eminent mujtahids who had arrived from Najaf, attended their lectures, and listened to their disputations. Gradually I came to perceive their insincerity and to loathe the baseness of their character. Eager as I was to ascertain the trustworthiness of the creeds and dogmas which they strove to impose upon me, I could neither find the time nor obtain the [435] facilities with which to satisfy my desire. I was often rebuked by my father for my temerity and restlessness. "I fear," he often remarked, "that your aversion to these mujtahids may some day involve you in great difficulties and bring upon you reproach and shame."

I was in the village of Rubat-Karim, on a visit to my maternal uncle, when, on the twelfth day after Naw-Ruz, in the year 1263 A.H.,14 I accidentally overheard, in the masjid of that village, a conversation between two men which first made me acquainted with the Revelation of the Bab. "Have you heard," one of them remarked, "that the Siyyid-i-Bab has been conducted to the village of Kinar-Gird and is on his way to Tihran?" Finding his friend ignorant of that episode, he proceeded to relate the whole story of the Bab, giving a detailed account of the circumstances attending His Declaration, of His arrest in Shiraz, His departure for Isfahan, the reception which both the Imam-Jum'ih and Manuchihr Khan had extended to Him, the prodigies and wonders He had manifested, and the verdict that the ulamas of Isfahan had pronounced against Him. Every detail of that story excited my curiosity and stirred in me a keen admiration for a Man who could throw such a spell over His countrymen. His light seemed to have flooded my soul; I felt as if I were already a convert to His Cause.

From Rubat-Karim I returned to Zarand.

My father remarked upon my restlessness, and expressed his surprise at my behaviour.

I had lost my appetite and sleep, and was determined to conceal the secret of my inner agitation from my father, lest its disclosure might interfere with the eventual realisation of my hopes.

I remained in that state until a certain Siyyid Husayn-i-Zavari'i arrived at Zarand and was able to enlighten me on a subject which had become the ruling passion of my life.

Our acquaintance speedily ripened into a friendship which encouraged me to share with him the longings of my heart.

To my great surprise, I found him already enthralled by the secret of the theme which I had begun to disclose to him. "One of my cousins," he proceeded to relate, "Siyyid Isma'il-i-Zavari'i by name, convinced me of the truth of the Message proclaimed by the Siyyid-i-Bab. [436] He informed me that he had several times met the Siyyid-i-Bab in the house of the Imam-Jum'ih of Isfahan, and had seen Him actually reveal, in the presence of His host, a commentary on the Surih of Va'l-'Asr.15 The rapidity of the Bab's composition, and the force and originality of His style, had excited his surprise and admiration.

He was amazed to find that, whilst revealing His commentary, and without lessening the speed of His writing, He was able to answer whatever questions those who were present were moved to ask Him.

The fearlessness with which my cousin arose to preach the Message aroused the hostility of the kad-khudas16 and siyyids of Zavarih, who compelled him to return to Isfahan, where he had of late been residing.

I too, unable to remain in Zavarih, departed for Kashan, in which town I spent the winter and met Haji Mirza Jani, of whom my cousin had spoken, and who gave me a treatise written by the Bab, entitled 'Risaliy-i-'Adliyyih,' urging me to read it carefully and return it to him after a few days.

I was so charmed by the theme and language of that treatise that I proceeded immediately to transcribe the whole text.

When I returned it to its owner, he, to my profound regret, informed me that I had just missed the opportunity of meeting its Author. 'The Siyyid-i-Bab Himself,' he said, 'arrived on the eve of the day of Naw-Ruz and spent three nights as a Guest in my home.

He is now on His way to Tihran, and if you start immediately, you will certainly overtake Him.' Straightway I arose and departed, walking all the way from Kashan to a fortress in the neighbourhood of Kinar-Gird.

I was resting under the shadow of its walls when a pleasant-looking man emerged from that fortress and asked me who I was and whither I was going. 'I am a poor siyyid,' I replied, 'a wayfarer and stranger to this place.' He took me to his home and invited me to spend the night as his guest.

In the course of his conversation with me, he said: 'I suspect you to be a follower of the Siyyid who was staying for a few days in this fortress, from whence He was transferred to the village of Kulayn, and who, three days ago, left for Adhirbayjan.

I esteem myself as one of His adherents.

My name is Haji Zaynu'l-'Abidin.

I intended not to separate myself [437] from Him, but He bade me remain in this place and convey to any of His friends whom I might meet His loving greetings, and dissuade them from following Him. "Tell them,"

He instructed me, "to consecrate their lives to the service of My Cause, that

haply the barriers that hinder the progress of this Faith may be removed, so that My followers may, with safety and freedom, worship their God and observe the precepts of their Faith."

I immediately abandoned my project and, instead of returning to Qum, decided to come to this place.'"

The story which this Siyyid Husayn-i-Zavari'i related to me served to allay my agitation. He shared with me the copy of the "Risaliy-i-'Adliyyih" he had brought with him, the reading of which imparted strength and refreshment to my soul. In those days I was a pupil of a siyyid who taught me the Qur'an and whose incapacity to enlighten me on the tenets of his Faith became more and more evident in my eyes. Siyyid Husayn, whom I asked for further information about the Cause, advised me to meet Siyyid Isma'il-i-Zavari'i, whose invariable practice it was to visit, every spring, the shrines of the imam-zadihs17 of Qum. I induced my father, who was reluctant to separate himself from me, to send me to that city with the object of perfecting my knowledge of the Arabic language. I was careful to conceal from him my real purpose, fearing that its disclosure might involve him in embarrassments with the Qadi18 and the ulamas of Zarand and prevent me from achieving my end.

While I was in Qum, my mother, my sister, and my brother came to visit me in connection with the festival of Naw-Ruz, and stayed with me for about a month. In the course of their visit, I was able to enlighten my mother and my sister about the new Revelation, and succeeded in kindling in their hearts the love of its Author. A few days after their return to Zarand, Siyyid Isma'il, whom I impatiently awaited, arrived, and was able, in the course of his discussions with me, to set forth in detail all that was required to win me over completely to the Cause. He laid stress on the continuity of Divine Revelation, asserted the fundamental oneness of the Prophets of the past, and explained their close relationship [438] to the Mission of the Bab. He also disclosed the nature of the work accomplished by Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i and Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti, neither of whom I had previously heard. I asked as to the duty incumbent at the present time upon every loyal adherent of the Faith. "The injunction of the Bab," he replied, "is that all those who have accepted His Message should proceed to Mazindaran and lend their assistance to Quddus, who is now hemmed in by the forces of an unrelenting foe." I expressed my eagerness to join him,

[439] as he himself was intending to journey to the fort of Tabarsi. He advised me, however, to remain in Qum together with a certain Mirza Fathu'llah-i-Hakkak, a lad of my age whom he had recently guided to the Cause, until the receipt of his message from Tihran.

I waited in vain for that message, and, finding that no word came from him, decided to leave for the capital. My friend Mirza Fathu'llah subsequently followed me. He was eventually arrested and shared the fate of those who were put to death in the year 1268 A.H.19 as a result of the attempt on the life of the Shah. Arriving in Tihran, I proceeded directly to the Masjid-i-Shah, which was opposite a madrisih,20 at the entrance of which I, later on, unexpectedly

encountered Siyyid Isma'il-i-Zavari'i, who hastened to inform me that he had just written me the letter and was on the point of despatching it to Qum.

We were preparing ourselves to leave for Mazindaran, when the news reached us that the defenders of the fort of Tabarsi had been treacherously slaughtered and that the fort itself had been levelled with the ground. We were filled with distress at the receipt of the appalling news, and mourned the tragic fate of those who had so heroically defended their beloved Cause. One day I unexpectedly came across my maternal uncle, Naw-Ruz-'Ali, who had come on purpose to fetch me. I informed Siyyid Isma'il, who advised me to leave for Zarand and not to arouse further hostility on the part of those who insisted upon my return.

On my arrival at my native village, I was able to win over my brother to the Cause, which my mother and my sister had already embraced. I also succeeded in inducing my father to allow me to leave again for Tihran. I took up my residence in the same madrisih where I had been accommodated on my previous visit, and there met a certain Mulla 'Abdu'l-Karim, whom, I subsequently learned, Baha'u'llah had named Mirza Ahmad. He affectionately received me and told me that Siyyid Isma'il had entrusted me to his care and wished me to remain in his company until the former's return to Tihran. The days of my companionship with Mirza Ahmad will never be forgotten. I found him [440] the very incarnation of love and kindness. The words with which he inspired me and animated my faith are indelibly graven upon my heart.

Through him I was introduced to the disciples of the Bab, with whom I associated and from whom I obtained fuller information regarding the teachings of the Faith. Mirza Ahmad was in those days earning his livelihood as a scribe, and devoted his evenings to copying the Persian Bayan and other writings of the Bab. The copies which he so devotedly prepared were given by him as gifts to his fellow-disciples. I myself was several times the bearer of such

gifts from him to the wife of Mulla Mihdiy-i-Kandi, who had forsaken his infant son and hastened to join the occupants of the fort of Tabarsi.

During those days I was informed that Tahirih, who, ever since the dispersal of the gathering at Badasht, had been living in Nur, had arrived at Tihran and was confined in the house of Mahmud Khan-i-Kalantar, where, although a prisoner, she was treated with consideration and courtesy.

One day Mirza Ahmad conducted me to the house of Baha'u'llah, whose wife, the Varaqatu'l-'Ulya,21 the mother of the Most Great Branch,22 had already healed my eyes with an ointment which she herself had prepared and sent to me [441] by this same Mirza Ahmad. The first one I met in that house was that same beloved Son of hers, who was then a child of six. He smiled His welcome to me as He was standing at the door of the room which Baha'u'llah occupied. I passed that door, and was ushered into the presence of Mirza Yahya, utterly unaware of the station of the Occupant of the room I had left behind me. When brought face to face with Mirza Yahya, I was startled, immediately I observed his features and noted his conversation, at his utter unworthiness of the position that had been

claimed for him.

On another occasion, when I visited that same house, I was on the point of entering the room that Mirza Yahya occupied, when Aqay-i-Kalim, whom I had previously met, approached and requested me, since Isfandiyar, their servant, had gone to market and had not yet returned, to conduct "Aqa"23 to the Madrisiy-i-Mirza-Salih in his stead and then return to this place.

I gladly consented, and as I was preparing to leave, I saw the Most Great Branch, a child of exquisite beauty, wearing the kulah24 and cloaked in the jubbiy-i-hizari'i,25 emerge from the room which His Father occupied, and descend the steps leading to the gate of the house.

I advanced and stretched forth my arms to carry Him. "We shall walk together,"

He said, as He took hold of my hand and led me out of the house.

We chatted together as we walked hand in hand in the direction of the madrisih known in those days by the name of Pa-Minar.

As we reached His classroom, He turned to me and said: "Come again this afternoon and take me back to my home, for Isfandiyar is unable to fetch me.

My Father will need him to-day."

I gladly acquiesced, and returned immediately to the house of Baha'u'llah.

There again I met Mirza Yahya, who delivered into my hands a letter which he asked me to take to the Madrisiy-i-Sadr and hand to Baha'u'llah, whom I was told I would find in the room occupied by Mulla Baqir-i-Bastami.

He asked me to bring back the reply immediately.

I fulfilled the commission and returned to the madrisih in time to conduct the Most Great Branch to His home.

One day Mirza Ahmad invited me to meet Haji Mirza [442] Siyyid 'Ali, the Bab's maternal uncle, who had recently returned from Chihriq and was staying in the home of Muhammad Big-i-Chaparchi, in the neighbourhood of the gate of Shimiran. I was struck, when I gazed at his face, with the nobility of his features and the serenity of his countenance. My subsequent visits to him served to heighten my admiration for the sweetness of his temper, his mystical piety and strength of character. I well remember how on one occasion Aqay-i-Kalim urged him, at a certain gathering, to leave Tihran, which was then in a state of great ferment, and escape its dangerous atmosphere. "Why fear for my safety?"

he confidently replied. "Would that I too could share in the banquet which the hand of Providence is spreading for His chosen ones!"

Shortly after, the stirrers-up of mischief were able to kindle a grave turmoil in that city. Its immediate cause was the action of a certain siyyid from Kashan, who was living in the Madrisiy-i-Daru'sh-Shafa' and whom the well-known Siyyid Muhammad had taken into his confidence and claimed to have converted to the Bab's teachings. Mirza Muhammad-Husayn-i-Kirmani, who lodged in that same

madrisih and who was a well-known lecturer on the metaphysical doctrines of Islam, attempted several times to induce Siyyid Muhammad, [443] who was one of his pupils, to break off his acquaintance with that siyyid, whom he believed to be unreliable, and to refuse him admittance to the gathering of the believers. Siyyid Muhammad refused, however, to be admonished by this warning, and continued to associate with him until the beginning of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani in the year 1266 A.H.,26 at which time the treacherous siyyid went to a certain Siyyid Husayn, one of the ulamas of Kashan, and delivered into his hands the names and addresses of about fifty of the

believers who were then residing in Tihran. That same list was immediately submitted by Siyyid Husayn to Mahmud Khan-i-Kalantar, who ordered that all of them be arrested. Fourteen of them were seized and brought before the authorities.

On the day they were captured, I happened to be with my brother and my maternal uncle, who had arrived from Zarand and had lodged in a caravanserai outside the gate of Naw. The next morning they departed for Zarand, and [444] as I returned to the Madrisiy-i-Daru'sh-Shafa', I discovered in my room a package upon which was placed a letter addressed to me by Mirza Ahmad. That letter informed me that the treacherous siyyid had at last denounced us and had raised a violent commotion in the capital. "The package which I have left in this room," he wrote, "contains all the sacred writings that are in my possession. If you ever reach this place in safety, take them to the caravanserai of Haji Nad-'Ali, where you will find in one of its rooms a man bearing that name, a native of Qazvin, to whom you will deliver the package together with the letter which accompanies it. From thence you will proceed immediately to the Masjid-i-Shah, where I hope to be able to meet you." Following his directions, I delivered the package to the Haji and succeeded in reaching the masjid, where I met Mirza Ahmad and heard him relate how he had been assailed and had sought refuge in the masjid, in the precincts of which he was immune from further attack.

In the meantime, Baha'u'llah had sent from the Madrisiy-i-Sadr a message to Mirza Ahmad informing him of the designs of the Amir-Nizam, who had, already on three different occasions, demanded his arrest from the Imam-Jum'ih. He was also warned that the Amir, ignoring the right of asylum with which the masjid had been invested, intended to arrest those who had sought refuge in that sanctuary. Mirza Ahmad was urged to leave in disguise for Qum, and was charged to direct me to return to my home in Zarand.

Meanwhile, my relations, who had recognised me in the Masjid-i-Shah, pressed me to leave for Zarand, pleading that my father, who had been misinformed of my arrest and impending execution, was in grave distress, and that it was my duty to hasten and relieve him of his anxieties. Acting on the advice of Mirza Ahmad, who counselled me to seize this God-sent opportunity, I left for Zarand and celebrated the Feast of Naw-Ruz with my family, a Feast that was doubly blessed inasmuch as it coincided with the fifth day of Jamadiyu'l-Avval in the year 1266 A.H.,27 the anniversary of the day on which the Bab had declared His Mission. The Naw-Ruz of that year has been mentioned in the

"Kitab-i-Panj-Sha'n," [445] one of the last works of the Bab. "The sixth Naw-Ruz," He wrote in that Book, "after the Declaration of the Point of the Bayan,28 has fallen on the fifth day of Jamadiyu'l-Avval, in the seventh lunar year after that same Declaration." In that same passage, the Bab alludes to the fact that the Naw-Ruz of that year would be the last He was destined to celebrate on this earth.

In the midst of the festivities which my relatives celebrated in Zarand, my heart was set upon Tihran, and my thoughts centred round the fate which might have befallen my fellow-disciples in that agitated city. I longed to hear of their safety. Though in the house of my father, and surrounded with the solicitude of my parents, I felt oppressed by the thought of being severed from that little band, whose perils I could well imagine and whose afflictions I longed to share. The terrible suspense under which I lived, while confined in my home, was unexpectedly relieved by the arrival of Sadiq-i-Tabrizi, who came from Tihran and was received in the house of my father. Though delivering me from the uncertainties which had been weighing so heavily upon me, he, to my profound horror, unfolded to my ears a tale of such terrifying cruelty that the anxieties of suspense paled before the ghastly light which that lurid story cast upon my heart.

The circumstances of the martyrdom of my arrested brethren in Tihran—for such was their fate—I now proceed to relate. The fourteen disciples of the Bab, who had been captured, remained incarcerated in the house of Mahmud Khan-i-Kalantar from the first to the twenty-second day of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani.29 Tahirih was also confined on the upper floor of that same house. Every kind of ill treatment was inflicted upon them. Their persecutors sought, by every device, to induce them to supply the information they required, but failed to obtain a satisfactory answer. Among the captives was a certain Muhammad-Husayn-i-Maraghi'i, who obstinately refused to utter a single word despite the severe pressure that was brought to bear upon him. They tortured him, they resorted to every possible measure in order to extort from him any hint that could [446] serve their purpose, but failed to achieve their end. Such was his unswerving obstinacy that his oppressors thought him to be dumb. They asked Haji Mulla Isma'il, who had converted him to his Faith, whether or not he could talk. "He is mute, but not dumb," he replied; "he is fluent of speech and is free from any impediment." He had no sooner called him by his name than the victim answered, assuring him of his readiness to abide by his will.

Convinced of their powerlessness to bend their will, they referred the matter to Mahmud Khan, who, in his turn, submitted their case to the Amir-Nizam, Mirza Taqi Khan,30 the Grand Vazir of Nasiri'd-Din Shah. The sovereign in those days refrained from direct interference in matters pertaining to the affairs of the persecuted community, and was often ignorant of the decisions that were being made with regard to its members. His Grand Vazir was invested with plenary powers to deal with them as he saw fit. No one questioned his decisions, nor dared disapprove of the manner in which he exercised his authority. He

immediately issued a peremptory order threatening with execution whoever among these fourteen prisoners was unwilling to recant his faith. Seven were compelled to yield to the pressure that was brought to bear upon them, and were immediately released. The remaining seven constitute the Seven Martyrs of Tihran:

1. Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, surnamed Khal-i-A'zam,31 the Bab's maternal uncle, and one of the leading merchants of Shiraz. It was this same uncle into whose custody the Bab, after the death of His father, was entrusted, and who, on his Nephew's return from His pilgrimage to Hijaz and His arrest by Husayn Khan, assumed undivided responsibility for Him by pledging his word in writing. It was he who surrounded Him, while under his care, with unfailing solicitude, who served Him with such devotion, and who acted as intermediary between Him and the hosts of His followers who flocked to Shiraz to see Him. His only child, a Siyyid Javad, died in infancy. Towards the middle of the year 1265 A.H.,32 [447] this same Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali left Shiraz and visited the Bab in the castle of Chihriq. From thence he went to Tihran and, though having no special occupation, remained in that city until the outbreak of the sedition which brought about eventually his martyrdom.

Though his friends appealed to him to escape the turmoil that was fast approaching, he refused to heed their counsel and faced, until his last hour, with complete resignation, the persecution to which he was subjected.

A considerable number among the more affluent merchants of his acquaintance offered to pay his ransom, an offer which he rejected.

Finally he was brought before the Amir-Nizam. "The Chief Magistrate of this realm," the Grand Vazir informed him, "is loth to inflict the slightest injury upon the Prophet's descendants.

Eminent merchants of Shiraz and Tihran are willing, nay eager, to pay your ransom.

The Maliku't-Tujjar has even interceded in your behalf.

A word of recantation from you is sufficient to set you free and ensure your return, with honours, to your native city.

I pledge my word that, should you be willing to acquiesce, the remaining days of your life will be spent with honour and dignity under the sheltering shadow of your sovereign." "Your Excellency," boldly replied Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, "if others before me, who quaffed joyously the cup of martyrdom, have chosen to reject an appeal such as the one you now make to me, know of a certainty that I am no less eager to decline such a request.

My repudiation of the truths enshrined in this Revelation would be tantamount to a rejection of all the Revelations that have preceded it.

To refuse to acknowledge the Mission of the Siyyid-i-Bab would be to apostatise from the Faith of my forefathers and to deny the Divine character of the Message which Muhammad, Jesus, Moses, and all the Prophets of the past have

revealed.

God knows that whatever I have heard and read concerning the sayings and doings of those Messengers, I have been privileged to witness the same from this Youth, this beloved Kinsman of mine, from His earliest boyhood to this, the thirtieth year of His life.

Everything in Him reminds me of His illustrious Ancestor and of the imams of His Faith whose lives our recorded traditions have portrayed.

I only request of you that you allow me to be [448] the first to lay down my life in the path of my beloved Kinsman."

The Amir was stupefied by such an answer. In a frenzy of despair, and without uttering a word, he motioned that he be taken out and beheaded. As the victim was being conducted to his death, he was heard, several times, to repeat these words of Hafiz: "Great is my gratitude to Thee, O my God, for having granted so bountifully all I have asked of Thee." "Hear me, O people," he cried to the multitude that pressed around him; "I have offered myself up as a willing sacrifice in the path of the Cause of God. The entire province of Fars, as well as 'Iraq, beyond the confines of Persia, will readily testify to my uprightness of conduct, to my sincere piety and noble lineage. For over a thousand years, you have prayed and prayed again that the promised Qa'im be made manifest. At the mention of His name, how often have you cried, from the depths of your hearts: 'Hasten, O God, His coming; remove every barrier that stands in the way of His appearance!' And now that He is come, you have driven Him to a hopeless exile in a remote and sequestered corner of Adhirbayjan and have risen to exterminate His companions. Were I to invoke the malediction of God upon you, I am certain that His avenging wrath would grievously afflict you. Such is not, however, my prayer. With my last breath, I pray that the Almighty may wipe away the stain of your guilt and enable you to awaken from the sleep of heedlessness."33

These words stirred his executioner to his very depths. Pretending that the sword he had been holding in readiness in his hands required to be resharpened, he hastily went away, determined never to return again. "When I was appointed to this service," he was heard to complain, weeping bitterly the while, "they undertook to deliver into my hands only those who had been convicted of murder and highway robbery. I am now ordered by them to shed the blood of [449] one no less holy than the Imam Musay-i-Kazim34 himself!" Shortly after, he departed for Khurasan and there sought to earn his livelihood as a porter and crier. To the believers of that province, he recounted the tale of that tragedy, and expressed his repentance of the act which he had been compelled to perpetrate. Every time he recalled that incident, every time the name of Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali was mentioned to him, tears which he could not repress flowed from his eyes, tears that were a witness to the affection which that holy man had instilled into his heart.

2. Mirza Qurban-'Ali,35 a native of Barfurush in the province of Mazindaran, and an outstanding figure in the community known by the name of Ni'matu'llahi.

He was a man of sincere piety and endowed with great nobleness of nature. Such was the purity of his life that a considerable number among the notables of Mazindaran, of Khurasan and Tihran had pledged him their loyalty, and regarded him as the very embodiment of virtue. Such was the esteem in which he was held by his countrymen that, on the occasion of his pilgrimage to Karbila, a vast concourse of devoted admirers thronged his route in order to pay their homage to him. In Hamadan, as well as in Kirmanshah, a great number of people were influenced by his personality and joined the company of his followers. Wherever he went, he was greeted with the acclamations of the people. These demonstrations of popular enthusiasm were, however, extremely distasteful to him. He avoided the crowd and disdained the pomp and circumstance of leadership. On his way to Karbila, while passing through Mandalij, a shaykh of considerable influence became so enamoured of him that he renounced all that he had formerly cherished and, leaving his friends and disciples, followed him as far as Ya'qubiyyih. Mirza Qurban-'Ali, however, succeeded in inducing him to return to Mandalij and resume the work which he had abandoned.

On his return from his pilgrimage, Mirza Qurban-'Ali met Mulla Husayn and through him embraced the truth of the Cause.

Owing to illness, he was unable to join the defenders [450] of the fort of Tabarsi, and, but for his unfitness to travel to Mazindaran, would have been the first to join its occupants.

Next to Mulla Husayn, among the disciples of the Bab, Vahid was the person to whom he was most attached.

During my visit to Tihran, I was informed that the latter had consecrated his life to the service of the Cause and had risen with exemplary devotion to promote its interests far and wide.

I often heard Mirza Qurban-'Ali, who was then in the capital, deplore that illness. "How greatly I grieve,"

I heard him several times remark, "to have been deprived of my share of the cup which Mulla Husayn and his companions have quaffed!

I long to join Vahid and enrol myself under his banner and strive to make amends for my previous failure."

He was preparing to leave Tihran, when he was suddenly arrested.

His modest attire witnessed to the degree of his detachment.

Clad in a white tunic, after the manner of the Arabs, cloaked in a coarsely woven aba,36 and wearing the head-dress of the people of 'Iraq, he seemed, as he walked the streets, the very embodiment of renunciation.

He scrupulously adhered to all the observances of his Faith, and with exemplary piety performed his devotions. "The Bab Himself conforms to the observances of His Faith in their minutest details," he often remarked. "Am I to neglect on my part the things which are observed by my Leader?"

When Mirza Qurban-'Ali was arrested and brought before the Amir-Nizam, a commotion such as Tihran had rarely experienced was raised.

Large crowds of people thronged the approaches to the headquarters of the government, eager to learn what would befall him. "Since last night," the Amir, as soon as he had seen him, remarked, "I have been besieged by all classes of State officials who have vigorously interceded in your behalf.37 From what I learn of the position you occupy and the influence your words exercise, you are not [451] much inferior to the Siyyid-i-Bab Himself.

Had you claimed for yourself the position of leadership, better would it have been than to declare your allegiance to one who is certainly inferior to you in knowledge." "The knowledge which I have acquired," he boldly retorted, "has led me to bow down in allegiance before Him whom I have recognised to be my Lord and Leader.

Ever since I attained the age of manhood, I have regarded justice and fairness as the ruling motives of my life.

I have judged Him fairly, and have reached the conclusion that should this Youth, to whose transcendent power friend and foe alike testify, be false, every Prophet of God, from time immemorial down to the present day, should be denounced as the very embodiment of falsehood!

I am assured of the unquestioning devotion of over a thousand admirers, and yet I am powerless to change the heart of the least among them.

This Youth, however, has proved Himself capable of transmuting, through the elixir of His love, the souls of the most degraded among His fellow men.

Upon a thousand like me He has, unaided and alone, exerted such influence that, without even attaining His presence, they have flung aside their own desires and have clung passionately to His will.

Fully conscious of the inadequacy of the sacrifice they have made, these yearn to lay down their lives for His sake, in the hope that this further evidence of their devotion may be worthy of mention in His Court."

"I am loth," the Amir-Nizam remarked, "whether your words be of God or not, to pronounce the sentence of death against the possessor of so exalted a station." "Why hesitate?" burst forth the impatient victim. "Are you not aware that all names descend from Heaven? He whose name is 'Ali,38 in whose path I am laying down my life, has [452] from time immemorial inscribed my name, Qurban-'Ali,39 in the scroll of His chosen martyrs. This is indeed the day on which I celebrate the Qurban festival, the day on which I shall seal with my life-blood my faith in His Cause. Be not, therefore, reluctant, and rest assured that I shall never blame you for your act. The sooner you strike off my head, the greater will be my gratitude to you." "Take him away from this place!" cried the Amir. "Another moment, and this dervish will have cast his spell over me!" "You are proof against that magic," Mirza Qurban-'Ali replied, "that can captivate only the pure in heart. You and your like can never be made to

realise the entrancing power of that Divine elixir which, swift as the twinkling of an eye, transmutes the souls of men."

Exasperated by the reply, the Amir-Nizam arose from his seat and, his whole frame shaking with anger, exclaimed: "Nothing but the edge of the sword can silence the voice of this deluded people!" "No need," he told the executioners who were in attendance upon him, "to bring any more members of this hateful sect before me. Words are powerless to overcome their unswerving obstinacy. Whomever you are able to induce to recant his faith, release him; as for the rest, strike off their heads."

As he drew near the scene of his death, Mirza Qurban-'Ali, intoxicated with the prospect of an approaching reunion with his Beloved, broke forth into expressions of joyous exultation. "Hasten to slay me," he cried with rapturous delight, "for through this death you will have offered me the chalice of everlasting life. Though my withered breath you now extinguish, with a myriad lives will my Beloved reward me; lives such as no mortal heart can conceive!" "Hearken to my words, you who profess to be the followers of the Apostle of God," he pleaded, as he turned his gaze to the concourse of spectators. "Muhammad, the Day-Star of Divine guidance, who in a former age arose above the horizon of Hijaz, has to-day, in the person of 'Ali-Muhammad, again risen from the Day-Spring of Shiraz, shedding the same radiance and imparting the same warmth. A rose is a rose in whichever garden, and at whatever time, it may bloom." Seeing on [453] every side how the people were deaf to his call, he cried aloud: "Oh, the perversity of this generation! How heedless of the fragrance which that imperishable Rose has shed! Though my soul brim over with ecstasy, I can, alas, find no heart to share with me its charm, nor mind to apprehend its glory."

At the sight of the body of Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, beheaded and bleeding at his feet, his fevered excitement rose to its highest pitch. "Hail," he shouted as he flung himself upon it, "hail the day of mutual rejoicing, the day of our reunion with our Beloved!" "Approach," he cried to the executioner, as he held the body in his arms, "and strike your blow, for my faithful comrade is unwilling to release himself from my embrace, and calls me to hasten together with him to the court of the Well-Beloved." A blow from the executioner fell immediately upon the nape of his neck. A few moments later, and the soul of that great man had passed away. That cruel stroke stirred in the bystanders feelings of mingled indignation and sympathy. Cries of sorrow and lamentation ascended from the hearts of the multitude, and provoked a distress that was reminiscent of the outbursts of grief with which every year the populace greets the day of 'Ashura.40

3. Then came the turn of Haji Mulla Isma'il-i-Qumi, who was a native of Farahan.

In his early youth, he departed for Karbila in quest of the Truth which he was diligently striving to discover.

He had associated with all the leading ulamas of Najaf and Karbila, had sat at

the feet of Siyyid Kazim, and had acquired from him the knowledge and understanding which enabled him, a few years later when in Shiraz, to acknowledge the Revelation of the Bab.

He distinguished himself by the tenacity of his faith and the fervour of his devotion.

As soon as the injunction of the Bab, bidding His [454] followers hasten to Khurasan, reached him, he enthusiastically responded, joined the companions who were proceeding to Badasht, and there received the appellation of Sirru'l-Vujud.

Whilst in their company, his understanding of the Cause grew deeper and his zeal for its promotion correspondingly increased.

He grew to be the very embodiment of detachment, and felt more and more impatient to demonstrate in a befitting manner the spirit with which his Faith had inspired him.

In the exposition of the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an and the traditions of Islam, he displayed an insight which few could rival, and the eloquence with which he set forth those truths won him the admiration of his fellow-disciples.

In the days when the fort of Tabarsi had become the rallying centre for the disciples of the Bab, he languished disconsolate upon a sick-bed, unable to lend his assistance and play his part for its defence.

No sooner had he recovered than, finding that that memorable siege had ended with the massacre of his fellow-disciples, he arose, with added determination, to make up by his self-sacrificing labours for the loss which the Cause had sustained.

That determination carried him eventually to the field of martyrdom and won him its crown.

Conducted to the block and waiting for the moment of his execution, he turned his gaze towards those twin martyrs who had preceded him and who still lay entwined in each other's embrace. "Well done, beloved companions!" he cried, as he fixed his gaze upon their gory heads. "You have turned Tihran into a paradise! Would that I had preceded you!" Drawing from his pocket a coin, which he handed to his executioner, he begged him to purchase for him something with which he could sweeten his mouth. He took some of it and gave the rest to him, saying: "I have forgiven you your act; approach and deal your blow. For thirty years I have yearned to witness this blessed day, and was fearful lest I should carry this wish with me unfulfilled to the grave." "Accept me, O my God," he cried, as he turned his eyes to heaven, "unworthy though I be, and deign to inscribe my name upon the scroll of those immortals who have laid down their lives on the altar of sacrifice." He was[455] still offering his devotions when the exec utioner, at his request, suddenly cut short his prayer.41

4. He had hardly expired when Siyyid Husayn-i-Turshizi, the mujtahid, was conducted in his turn to the block.

He was a native of Turshiz, a village in Khurasan, and was highly esteemed for his piety and rectitude of conduct.

He had studied for a number of years in Najaf, and was commissioned by his fellow-mujtahids to proceed to Khurasan and there propagate the principles he had been taught.

When he arrived at Kazimayn, he met Haji Muhammad-Taqiy-i-Kirmani, an old acquaintance of his, who ranked among the foremost merchants of Kirman, and who had opened a branch of his business in Khurasan.

As he was on his way to Persia, he decided to accompany him.

This Haji Muhammad-Taqi had been a close friend of Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, the Bab's maternal uncle, through whom he had been converted to the Cause in the year 1264 A.H.,42 while preparing to leave Shiraz on a pilgrimage to Karbila.

When informed of the projected journey of Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali to Chihriq for the purpose of visiting the Bab, he expressed his eager desire to accompany him.

Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali advised him to carry out his original purpose and proceed to Karbila and there await his letter, which would inform him whether it would be advisable to join him.

From Chihriq, Haji Mirza Siyyid 'Ali was ordered to depart for Tihran, in the hope that after a short stay in the capital he would be able to renew his visit to his Nephew.

Whilst in Chihriq, he expressed his reluctance to return to Shiraz, inasmuch as he could no longer endure the increasing arrogance of its inhabitants. [456] Upon his arrival in Tihran, he requested Haji Muhammad-Taqi to join him.

Siyyid Husayn accompanied him from Baghdad to the capital and through him was converted to the Faith.

As he faced the multitude that had gathered round him to witness his martyrdom, Siyyid Husayn raised his voice and said: "Hear me, O followers of Islam!

My name is Husayn, and I am a descendant of the Siyyidu'sh-Shuhada, who also bore that name.43 The mujtahids of the holy cities of Najaf and Karbila have unanimously testified to my position as the authorised expounder of the law and teachings of their Faith.

Not until recently had I heard the name of the Siyyid-i-Bab.

The mastery I have obtained over the intricacies of the Islamic teachings has enabled me to appreciate the value of the Message which the Siyyid-i-Bab has brought.

I am convinced that, were I to deny the Truth which He has revealed, I should, by this very act, have renounced my allegiance to every Revelation that has preceded it.

I appeal to every one of you to call upon the ulamas and mujtahids of this city and to convene a gathering, at which I will undertake in their presence to establish the truth of this Cause.

Let them then judge whether I am able to demonstrate the validity of the claims advanced by the Bab.

If they be satisfied with the proofs which I shall adduce in support of my argument, let them desist from shedding the blood of the innocent; and if I fail, let them inflict upon me the punishment I deserve."

These words had scarcely dropped from his lips when an officer in the service of the Amir-Nizam haughtily interjected: "I carry with me your death-warrant signed and sealed by seven of the recognised mujtahids of Tihran, who have in their own handwriting pronounced you an infidel.

I will myself be answerable to God on the Day of Judgment for your blood, and will lay the responsibility upon those leaders in whose judgment we have been asked to put our trust and to whose decisions we have been compelled to submit."

With these words he drew out his dagger and stabbed him with such force that he immediately fell dead at his feet.

5. Soon after, Haji Muhammad-Taqiy-i-Kirmani was led [457] to the scene of execution. The ghastliness of the sight he beheld provoked his violent indignation. "Approach, you wretched and heartless tyrant," he burst forth as he turned to his persecutor, "and hasten to slay me, for I am impatient to join my beloved Husayn. To live after him is a torture I cannot endure."

6. No sooner had Haji Muhammad-Taqi uttered these words than Siyyid Murtada, who was one of the noted merchants of Zanjan, hastened to take precedence of his companions. He flung himself over the body of Haji Muhammad-Taqi, and pleaded that, being a siyyid, his martyrdom would be more meritorious in the sight of God than that of Haji Muhammad-Taqi. As the executioner [458] unsheathed his sword, Siyyid Murtada invoked the memory of his martyred brother, who had struggled side by side with Mulla Husayn; and such were his references that the onlookers marvelled at the unyielding tenacity of the faith with which he was inspired.

7. In the midst of the turmoil which the stirring words of Siyyid Murtada had raised, Muhammad-Husayn-i-Maraghi'i rushed forward and begged that he be allowed to be martyred immediately ere his companions were put to the sword. As soon as his eyes fell upon the body of Haji Mulla Isma'il-i-Qumi, for whom he entertained a deep affection, he impulsively threw himself upon him and, holding him in his embrace, exclaimed: "Never will I consent to separate myself from my dearly beloved friend, in whom I have reposed the utmost confidence and from whom I have received so many evidences of a sincere and deep-felt affection!"

Their eagerness to precede one another in laying down their lives for their

Faith astonished the multitude who wondered which of the three would be preferred to his companions. They pleaded with such fervour that eventually they were beheaded, all three, at one and the same moment.

So great a faith, such evidences of unbridled cruelty, human eye has rarely beheld. Few as they were in number, yet when we recall the circumstances of their martyrdom, we are compelled to acknowledge the stupendous character of that force which could evoke so rare a spirit of self-sacrifice. When we remember the exalted rank these victims had occupied, when we observe the degree of their renunciation and the vitality of their faith, when we recall the pressure which from influential quarters had been exerted to avert the danger with which their lives were threatened, above all when we picture to our minds the spirit that defied the atrocities which a heartless enemy so far bemeaned themselves as to inflict upon them, we are impelled to look upon that episode as one of the most tragic occurrences in the annals of this Cause.44

[459] At this stage of my narrative I was privileged to submit to Baha'u'llah such sections of my work as I had already revised and completed. How abundantly have my labours been rewarded by Him whose favour alone I seek, and for whose satisfaction I have addressed myself to this task! He graciously summoned me to His presence and vouchsafed me His blessings. I was in my home in the prison-city of 'Akka, and lived in the neighbourhood of the house of Aqay-i-Kalim, when the summons of my Beloved reached me. That day, the seventh of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani in the year 1306 A.H.,45 I shall never forget. I here reproduce the gist of His words to me on that memorable occasion:

"In a Tablet which We yesterday revealed, We have explained the meaning of the words, 'Turn your eyes away,'46 in the course of Our reference to the circumstances attending the gathering at Badasht. We were celebrating, in the company of a number of distinguished notables, the nuptials of one of the princes of royal blood in Tihran, when Siyyid Ahmad-i-Yazdi, father of Siyyid Husayn, the Bab's amanuensis, appeared suddenly at the door. He beckoned to Us, and seemed to be the bearer of an important message which he wished immediately to deliver. We were, however, unable at that moment to leave the gathering, and motioned to him to wait. When the meeting had dispersed, he informed [460] Us that Tahirih had been placed in strict confinement in Qazvin, and that her life was in great danger. We immediately summoned Muhammad-Hadiy-i-Farhadi, and gave him the necessary directions to release her from her captivity, and escort her to the capital. As the enemy had seized Our house, We were unable to accommodate her indefinitely in Our home. Accordingly, We arranged for her transference from Our house to that of the Minister of War,47 who, in those days, had been disgraced by his sovereign and had been deported to Kashan. We requested his sister, who still was numbered among Our friends, to act as hostess to Tahirih.

"She remained in her company until the call of the Bab, bidding Us proceed to Khurasan, reached Our ears. We decided that Tahirih should proceed immediately to that province, and commissioned Mirza48 to conduct her to a place outside the gate of the city, and from thence to any locality he deemed advisable in

that neighbourhood. She was taken to an orchard in the vicinity of which was a deserted building, where they found an old man who acted as its caretaker. Mirza Musa returned and informed Us of the reception which had been accorded to them, and highly praised the beauty of the surrounding landscape. We subsequently arranged for her departure for Khurasan, and promised that We would follow within the space of a few days.

"We soon joined her at Badasht, where We rented a garden for her use, and appointed the same Muhammad-Hadi who had achieved her deliverance, as her doorkeeper. About seventy of Our companions were with Us and lodged in a place in the vicinity of that garden.

"We fell ill one day, and were confined to bed. Tahirih sent a request to call upon Us. We were surprised at her message, and were at a loss as to what We should reply. Suddenly We saw her at the door, her face unveiled before Us. How well has Mirza Aqa Jan49 commented upon that incident. 'The face of Fatimih,' he said, 'must needs be revealed on the Day of Judgment and appear unveiled before the eyes of men. At that moment the voice of the Unseen [461] shall be heard saying: "Turn your eyes away from that which ye have seen."'

"How great was the consternation that seized the companions on that day! Fear and bewilderment filled their hearts. A few, unable to tolerate that which was to them so revolting a departure from the established customs of Islam, fled in horror from before her face. Dismayed, they sought refuge in a deserted castle in that neighbourhood. Among those who were scandalised by her behaviour and severed from her entirely were the Siyyid-i-Nahri50 and his brother Mirza Hadi, to both of whom We sent word that it was unnecessary for them to desert their companions and seek refuge in a castle.

"Our friends eventually dispersed, leaving Us at the mercy of Our enemies. When, at a later time, We went to Amul, such was the turmoil which the people had raised that above four thousand persons had congregated in the masjid and had crowded onto the roofs of their houses. The leading mulla of the town denounced Us bitterly. 'You have perverted the Faith of Islam,' he cried in his mazindarani dialect, 'and sullied its fame! Last night I saw you in a dream enter the masjid, which was thronged by an eager multitude that had gathered to witness your arrival. As the crowd pressed round you, I beheld, and, lo, the Qa'im was standing in a corner with His gaze fixed upon your countenance, His features betraying great surprise. This dream I regard as evidence of your having deviated from the path of Truth.' We assured him that the expression of surprise on that countenance was a sign of the Qa'im's strong disapproval of the treatment he and his fellow-townsmen had accorded Us. He questioned Us regarding the Mission of the Bab. We informed him that, although We had never met Him face to face, yet We cherished, none the less, a great affection for Him. We expressed Our profound conviction that He had, under no circumstances, acted contrary to the Faith of Islam.

"The mulla and his followers, however refused to believe Us, and rejected Our testimony as a perversion of the truth. They eventually placed Us in

confinement, and forbade Our [462] friends to meet Us. The acting governor of Amul succeeded in effecting Our release from captivity. Through an opening in the wall that he ordered his men to make, he enabled Us to leave that room, and conducted Us to his house. No sooner were the inhabitants informed of this act than they arose against Us, besieged the governor's residence, pelted Us with stones, and hurled in Our face the foulest invectives.

"At the time We purposed to send Muhammad-Hadiy-i-Farhadi to Qazvin, in order to achieve the deliverance of Tahirih and conduct her to Tihran, Shaykh Abu-Turab wrote Us, insisting that such an attempt was fraught with grave risks and might occasion an unprecedented tumult. We

refused to be deflected from Our purpose. That Shaykh was a kind-hearted man, was simple and lowly in temper, and behaved with great dignity. He lacked courage and determination, however, and betrayed weakness on certain occasions."

A word should now be added regarding the closing stages of the tragedy that witnessed to the heroism of the Seven Martyrs of Tihran. For three days and three nights they remained abandoned in the Sabzih-Maydan, which adjoined the imperial palace, exposed to untold indignities which an unrelenting foe heaped upon them. Thousands of devout shi'ahs gathered round their corpses, kicked them with their [463] feet, and spat upon their faces. They were pelted, cursed, and mocked by the angry multitude. Heaps of refuse were flung upon their remains by the bystanders, and the foulest atrocities were perpetrated upon their bodies. No voice was raised in protest, no hand was stretched to stay the arm of the barbarous oppressor.

Having allayed the tumult of their passion, they buried them outside the gate of the capital, in a place which lay beyond the limits of the public cemetery, adjoining the moat, between the gates of Naw and of Shah 'Abdu'l-'Azim. They were all laid in the same grave, thus remaining united in body, as they had been in spirit during the days of their earthly life.51

The news of their martyrdom came as an added blow to the Bab, who was already plunged in sorrow at the fate that had befallen the heroes of Tabarsi. In the detailed Tablet He revealed in their honour, every word of which testified to the exalted position they occupied in His eyes, He referred to them as those very "Seven Goats" spoken of in the traditions of Islam, who on the Day of Judgment shall "walk in front of the promised Qa'im." They shall symbolise by their life the noblest spirit of heroism, and by their death shall manifest true acquiescence in His will. By preceding the Qa'im, the Bab explained, is meant that their martyrdom will precede that of the Qa'im Himself, who is their Shepherd. What the Bab had predicted came to be fulfilled, inasmuch as His own martyrdom occurred four months later in Tabriz.

That memorable year witnessed, in addition to the martyrdom of the Bab and that of His seven companions in Tihran, the momentous happenings of Nayriz which culminated in the death of Vahid. Towards the end of that same year, Zanjan likewise became the centre of a storm which raged with exceptional violence

throughout the surrounding district, bringing in its wake the massacre of a vast number of [464] the Bab's staunchest disciples. That year, rendered memorable by the magnificent heroism which those staunch supporters of His Faith displayed, not to speak of the marvellous circumstances that attended His own martyrdom, must ever remain as one of the most glorious chapters ever recorded in that Faith's blood-stained history. The entire face of the land was blackened by the atrocities in which a cruel and rapacious enemy freely and persistently indulged. From Khurasan, on the eastern confines of Persia, as far west as Tabriz, the scene of the Bab's martyrdom, and from the northern cities of Zanjan and Tihran, stretching south as far as Nayriz, in the province of Fars, the whole country was enveloped in darkness, a darkness that heralded the dawning light of the Revelation which the expected Husayn was soon to manifest, a Revelation mightier and more glorious than that which the Bab Himself had proclaimed.52

FOOTNOTES

21.1. June 22-July 21, 1849 A.D.

21.2. November 17-December 17, 1849 A.D.

21.3. The tenth of Muharram, the anniversary of the martyrdom of the Imam Husayn, which fell in that year on November 26, 1849 A.D.

21.4. According to the "Kashful'l-Ghita'" (p. 241), his full name was Mirza 'Aliy-i-Sayyah-i-Maraghih'i. He had acted as the servant of the Bab in Mah-Ku, ranked among His leading companions, and subsequently embraced the Message of Baha'u'llah.

21.5. January 15, 1850 A.D.

21.6. January 23, 1850 A.D.

21.7. Surnamed Subh-i-Azal.

21.8. Followers of Mirza Yahya.

21.9. "The claims of this young man were based on a nomination-document now in the possession of Prof. Browne, and have been supported by a letter given in a French version by Mons. Nicolas. Forgery, however, has played such a great part in written documents of the East that I hesitate to recognize the genuineness of this nomination. And I think it very improbable that any company of intensely earnest men should have accepted the document in preference to the evidence of their own knowledge respecting the inadequate endowments of Subh-i-Azal.... The probability is that the arrangement already made was further sanctioned, viz. that Baha'u'llah was for the present to take the private direction of affairs and exercise his great gifts as a teacher, while Subh-i-Azal (a vain young man) gave his name as ostensible head, especially with a view to outsiders and to agents of the government." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," pp. 118-19.)

21.10. "I adjure thee by God, the One, the Mighty, the Omnipotent, to ponder in

thine heart those writings which were sent in his [Mirza Yahya's] name to the Primal Point [the Bab], that thou mayest recognise and distinguish, as manifest as the sun, the signs of the True One." ("The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf," p. 125.)

21.11. 1848-9 A.D.

21.12. July 29, 1831 A.D.

21.13. See Glossary.

21.14. 1847 A.D.

21.15. Qur'an, 103.

21.16. See Glossary.

21.17. See Glossary.

21.18. See Glossary.

21.19. 1851-2 A.D.

21.20. See Glossary.

21.21. Literally "The Most Exalted Leaf."

21.22. Title of 'Abdu'l-Baha.

21.23. Meaning "Master" by which title 'Abdu'l-Baha was then designated.

21.24. See Glossary.

21.25. A kind of overcoat.

21.26. February 14-March 15, 1850 A.D.

21.27. 1850 A.D.

21.28. One of the titles of the Bab.

21.29. February 14-March 15, 1850 A.D.

21.30. He was the son of Qurban, the head cook of the Qa'im-Magam, the predecessor of Haji Mirza Aqasi.

21.31. Literally, "The Greatest Uncle."

21.32. 1848-9 A.D.

21.33. "He took off his turban, and, raising his face towards heaven, exclaimed, 'O God, Thou art witness of how they are slaying the son of Thy most honourable Prophet without fault on his part.' Then he turned to the executioner and recited this verse: 'How long shall grief of separation from Him slay me? Cut off my head, that Love may bestow on me a head.'" (Mathnavi, Book 6, p. 649, 1, 2; ed. 'Ala'u'd-Dawlih.) ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note B, p. 174.)

21.24. The Seventh Imam.

21.35. According to Haji Mu'inu's-Saltanih's narrative (p. 131), Mirza Qurban-'Ali the dervish, met the Bab in the village of Khanliq.

21.36. See Glossary.

21.37. "Mirza Qurban-'Ali was famous amongst mystics and dervishes, and had many friends and disciples in Tihran, besides being well known to most of the nobles and chief men, and even to the Shah's mother. She, because of her friendship for him and the compassion she felt for his plight, said to his Majesty the king: 'He is no Babi, but has been falsely accused.' So they sent and brought him out, saying: 'Thou art a dervish, a scholar, and a man of learning; thou dost not belong to this misguided sect; a false charge has been preferred against thee.' He replied: 'I reckon myself one of the followers and servants of His Holiness, though whether or no He hath accepted me as such, I wot not.' When they continued to persuade him, holding out hopes of a pension and salary, he said: 'This life and these drops of blood of mine are of but small account; were the empire of the world mine, and had I a thousand lives, I would freely cast them all at the feet of His friends:
'To sacrifice the head for the Beloved,
In mine eyes appears an easy thing indeed;
Close thy lips, and cease to speak of mediation,
For of mediation lovers have no need.'
So at length they desisted in despair, and signified that he should die." (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," p. 254.)

21.38. Reference to the Bab.

21.39. Qurban means "Sacrifice"; hence, "Sacrifice for the Bab."

21.40. "When he was brought to the foot of the execution-pole, the headman raised his sword and smote him on the neck from behind. The blow only bowed his head, and caused the dervish's turban which he wore to roll some paces from him on the ground. Immediately, as it were with his last breath, he sent a fresh pang through the heart of everyone capable of emotion by reciting these verses:
'Happy he whom love's intoxication
So hath overcome that scarce he knows
Whether at the feet of the Beloved
It be head or turban which he throws!'"
(The "Tarikh-i-Jadid", pp. 254-5.)

21.41. "Now when they were ready to begin their work of decapitation and slaughter, and it was Haji Mulla Isma'il's turn to die, one came to him, saying: 'Such an one of your friends will give such-and-such a sum of money to save you from death, on condition of your recanting, that thus they may be induced to spare you. In a case of dire necessity, when it is a question of saving your life, what harm is there in merely saying, "I am not a Babi," so that they may have a pretext for releasing you?' He replied: 'Were I willing to recant, even without money none would touch me.' Being further pressed and greatly importuned, he drew himself up to his full height amidst the crowd, and exclaimed, so that all might hear:

'Zephyr, prithee bear for me a message
To that Ishmael who was not slain:
"Living from the street of the Beloved
Love permits not to return again.""
(The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," pp. 253-4.)

21.42. 1847-8 A.D.

21.43. The Imam Husayn.

21.44. "After detailing the occurrences briefly set forth above, the Babi historian proceeds to point out the special value and unique character of the testimony given by the 'Seven Martyrs.' They were men representing all the more important classes in Persia—divines, dervishes, merchants, shopkeepers, and government officials; they were men who had enjoyed the respect and consideration of all; they died fearlessly, willingly, almost eagerly, declining to purchase life by that mere lip-denial which, under the name of kitman or taqiyyih, is recognised by the shi'ahs as a perfectly justifiable subterfuge in case of peril; they were not driven to despair of mercy as were those who died at Shaykh Tabarsi and Zanjan; and they sealed their faith with their blood in the public square of the Persian capital wherein is the abode of the foreign ambassadors accredited to the court of the Shah.

And herein the Babi historian is right: even those who speak severely of the Babi movement generally, characterising it as a communism destructive of all order and all morality, express commiseration for these guiltless victims.

To the day of their martyrdom we may well apply Gobineau's eloquent reflection on a similar tragedy enacted two years later: 'This eventful day brought to the Bab more secret followers than many sermons could have done.

I have just said that the impression created by the prodigious endurance of the martyrs was deep and lasting.

I have often heard repeated the story of that day by eye witnesses, by men close to the government, some even important officials.

From their accounts, one might easily have believed that they were all Babis, so great was the admiration they felt for memories which were not to the honor of Islam, and so high was the esteem they entertained for the resourcefulness, the hopes and the chances of success of the new doctrine.'" ("A Traveller's Narrative,"

Note B, pp.

175-176.)

21.45. December 11, 1888 A.D.

21.46. According to Islamic traditions, Fatimih, Muhammad's daughter, will appear unveiled as she crosses the bridge "Sirat" on the Day of Judgment. At her appearance a voice from heaven will declare: "Turn your eyes away, O concourse of people!"

21.47. Mirza Aqa Khan-i-Nuri, who succeeded the Amir-Nizam as Grand Vazir of Nasiri'd-Din Shah.

21.48. Aqay-i-Kalim, brother of Baha'u'llah.

21.49. Baha'u'llah's amanuensis.

21.50. Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Nahri.

21.51. "When the executioners had completed their bloody work, the rabble onlookers, awed for a while by the patient courage of the martyrs, again allowed their ferocious fanaticism to break out in insults to the mortal remains of those whose spirits had now passed beyond the power of their malice. They cast stones and filth at the motionless corpses, abusing them, and crying out, 'This is the recompense of the people of affection and of such as pursue the Path of Wisdom and Truth!' Nor would they suffer their bodies to be interred in a burial-ground, but cast them into a pit outside the Gate of Shah 'Abdu'l-'Azim, which they then filled up." ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note B, pp. 174-5.)

21.52. "While these developments were taking place in the north of Persia, the provinces of the center and the south were deeply stirred by the enthusiastic appeals of the missionaries of the new doctrine. The people— light, credulous, ignorant, superstitious in the extreme—were dumbfounded by the accounts of continuous miracles of which they heard every minute; the mullas, deeply concerned, feeling that their wavering flock was ready to escape their control, multiplied their slanders and defamation; the grossest lies, the most cruel fictions were circulated among the bewildered masses, divided between terror and admiration." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 387.)

CHAPTER XXII
THE NAYRIZ UPHEAVAL

[465] In the early days of the siege of the fort of Tabarsi, Vahid was engaged in spreading the teachings of the Cause in Burujird as well as in the province of Kurdistan. He had resolved to win the majority of the inhabitants of those regions to the Faith of the Bab, and had intended to proceed from thence to Fars and there continue his labours. As soon as he had learned of Mulla Husayn's departure for Mazindaran, he hastened to the capital and undertook the necessary preparations for his journey to the fort of Tabarsi. He was preparing to leave, when Baha'u'llah arrived from Mazindaran and informed him of the impossibility of joining his brethren. He was greatly saddened at this news, and his only consolation in those days was to visit Baha'u'llah frequently, and to obtain the benefit of His wise and priceless counsels.1

Vahid eventually determined to proceed to Qazvin and to resume the work in which he had been engaged. From thence he left for Qum and Kashan, where he met his fellow-disciples and was able to stimulate their enthusiasm and reinforce their efforts. He continued his journey to Isfahan, to Ardistan and Ardikan, and in each of these cities he proclaimed, with zest and fearlessness, the

fundamental teachings of his Master and succeeded in winning over a considerable [466] number of able supporters to the Cause. He reached Yazd in time to celebrate the festivities of Naw-Ruz with his brethren, who expressed their joy at his arrival and were greatly encouraged by his presence among them. Being a man of renowned influence, he possessed, in addition to his house in Yazd, where his wife and her four sons had settled, a home in Darab, which was the abode of his ancestors, and another one in Nayriz, which was superbly furnished.

He arrived at Yazd on the first day of the month of Jamadiyu'l-Avval, in the year 1266 A.H.,2 the fifth day of which, the anniversary of the Bab's Declaration, coincided

with the feast of Naw-Ruz. The leading ulamas and notables of the city all came on that day to greet him and to offer their best wishes. Navvab-i-Radavi, the meanest and most prominent among his adversaries, was present on that occasion, and maliciously hinted at the extravagance and splendour of that reception. "The Shah's imperial banquet," he was heard to remark, "can scarcely hope to rival the sumptuous repast you have spread before us. I suspect that in addition to this national festival which to-day we are celebrating, you commemorate another one besides it." Vahid's bold and sarcastic retort provoked the laughter of those who were present. All applauded, in view of the avarice [467] and wickedness of the Navvab, the appropriateness of his remark. The Navvab, who had never encountered the ridicule of so large and distinguished a company, was stung by that answer. The smouldering fire which he nourished in his mind against his opponent now blazed forth with added intensity, and impelled him to satisfy his thirst for revenge.

Vahid seized the occasion to proclaim, fearlessly and without reserve, in that gathering, the basic principles of his Faith, and to demonstrate their validity. The majority of those who heard him were but partially acquainted with the distinguishing features of the Cause, and were ignorant of its full import. Certain ones among them were irresistibly attracted, and readily embraced it; the rest, unable to challenge its claims publicly, denounced it in their hearts and swore to extirpate it by every means in their power. His eloquence and fearless exposition of the Truth inflamed their hostility and strengthened their determination to seek, without delay, the overthrow of his influence. That very day witnessed the combination of their forces against him, and marked the beginning of an episode that was destined to bring in its wake so much suffering and distress.3

To destroy the life of Vahid became the paramount object of their activity. They spread the news that, on the day of Naw-Ruz, in the midst of the assembled dignitaries of the city, both civil and ecclesiastical, Siyyid Yahyay-i-Darabi had had the temerity to unveil the challenging features of the Faith of the Bab and had adduced, for the purpose of his argument, proofs and evidences gleaned both from the Qur'an and from the traditions of Islam. "Though his listeners," they urged, "ranked among the most illustrious of the mujtahids of the city, no one could be found in that assemblage to venture a protest against his vehement

assertions of the [468] claims of his creed. The silence kept by those who heard him has been responsible for the wave of enthusiasm which has swept over the city in his favour, and has brought no less than half of its inhabitants to his feet, while the remainder are being fast attracted."

This report spread like wildfire throughout Yazd and the surrounding district. It kindled, on the one hand, the flame of bitter hatred, and, on the other, was instrumental in adding considerable numbers to those who had already identified themselves with that Faith. From Ardikan and Manshad, as well as from the more distant towns and villages, crowds of people, eager to hear of the new Message, flocked to the house of Vahid. "What are we to do?" they asked him. "In what manner do you advise us to show forth the sincerity of our faith and the intensity of our devotion?" From morning till night, Vahid was absorbed in resolving their perplexities and in directing their steps in the path of service.

For forty days, this feverish activity persisted on the part of his zealous supporters, both men and women. His house had become the rallying centre of an innumerable host of devotees who yearned to demonstrate worthily the spirit of the Faith that had fired their souls. The commotion that ensued provided the Navvab-i-Radavi with a fresh pretext for enlisting the support of the governor of the city,4 who was young and inexperienced in the affairs of State, in his efforts against his adversary. He soon fell a victim to the intrigues and machinations of that evil plotter, who succeeded in inducing him to despatch a force of armed men to besiege the house of Vahid. While a regiment of the army was proceeding to that spot, a mob composed of the degraded elements of the city were, at the instigation of the Navvab, directing their steps towards that same place, determined by their threats and imprecations to intimidate its occupants.

Though hemmed in by hostile forces on every side, Vahid continued, from the window of the upper floor of his house, to animate the zeal of his supporters and to clarify whatever remained obscure in their minds.

At the sight of a whole regiment, reinforced by an infuriated mob, preparing to attack [469] them, they turned to Vahid in their distress and begged him to direct their steps. "This very sword that lies before me," was his answer, as he remained seated beside the window, "was given me by the Qa'im Himself.

God knows, had I been authorised by Him to wage holy warfare against this people, I would, alone and unaided, have annihilated their forces.

I am, however, commanded to refrain from such an act." "This very steed," he added, as his eyes fell upon the horse which his servant Hasan had saddled and brought to the front of his house, "the late Muhammad Shah gave me, that with it I might undertake the mission with which he entrusted me, of conducting an impartial investigation into the nature of the Faith proclaimed by the Siyyid-i-Bab.

He asked me to report personally to him the results of my enquiry, inasmuch as

I was the only one among the ecclesiastical leaders of Tihran in whom he could repose implicit confidence.

I undertook that mission with the firm resolution of confuting the arguments of that siyyid, of inducing Him to abandon His ideas and to acknowledge my leadership, and of conducting Him with me to Tihran as a witness to the triumph I was to achieve.

When I came into His presence, however, and heard His words, the opposite of that which I had imagined took place.

In the course of my first audience with Him, I was utterly abashed and confounded; by the end of the second, I felt as helpless and ignorant as a child; the third found me as lowly as the dust beneath His feet.

He had indeed ceased to be the contemptible siyyid I had previously imagined.

To me, He was the manifestation of God Himself, the living embodiment of the Divine Spirit.

Ever since that day, I have yearned to lay down my life for His sake.

I rejoice that the day I have longed to witness is fast approaching."

Seeing the agitation that had seized his friends, he exhorted them to be calm and patient, and to rest assured that the omnipotent Avenger would ere long inflict, with His own invisible hand, a crushing defeat upon the forces arrayed against His loved ones. No sooner had he uttered these words than the news arrived that a certain Muhammad-'Abdu'llah, whom no one suspected of being still alive, had suddenly emerged with a number of his comrades, who had [470] likewise disappeared from sight, and, raising the cry of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!"[5] had flung themselves upon their assailants and dispersed their forces. He displayed such courage that the whole detachment, abandoning their arms, had

sought refuge, together with the governor, in the fort of Narin.

That night, Muhammad-'Abdu'llah asked to be introduced into the presence of Vahid. He assured him of his [471] faith in the Cause, and acquainted him with the plans he had conceived of subjugating the enemy. "Although your intervention," Vahid replied, "has to-day averted from this house the danger of an unforeseen calamity, yet you must recognise that until now our contest with these people was limited to an argument centering round the Revelation of the Sahibu'z-Zaman. The Navvab, however, will henceforth be induced to instigate the people against us, and will contend that I have arisen to establish my undisputed sovereignty over the entire province and intend to extend it over the whole of Persia." Vahid advised him to leave the city immediately, and to commit him to the care and protection of the Almighty. "Not until our appointed time arrives," he assured him, "will the enemy be able to inflict upon us the slightest injury." Muhammad-'Abdu'llah, however, preferred to ignore the advice of Vahid. "It would be cowardly of me," he was heard to remark as he retired, "to abandon my friends to the mercy of an irate and murderous adversary. What, then, would be the difference between me and those who forsook the

Siyyidu'sh-Shuhada6 on the day of 'Ashura,7 and left him companionless on the field of Karbila? A merciful God will, I trust, be indulgent towards me and will forgive my action."

With these words, he directed his steps to the fort of Narin and compelled the forces that had massed in its vicinity to seek an inglorious refuge within the walls of the fort; and succeeded in keeping the governor confined along with those who were besieged. He himself kept watch, ready to intercept whatever reinforcements might seek to reach them.

Meanwhile the Navvab had succeeded in raising a general upheaval in which the mass of the inhabitants took part. They were preparing to attack the house of Vahid when he summoned Siyyid 'Abdu'l-'Azim-i-Khu'i, surnamed the Siyyid-i-Khal-Dar, who had participated for a few days in the defence of the fort of Tabarsi, and whose dignity of bearing attracted widespread attention, and bade him mount his own steed and address publicly, through the streets and [472] bazaars, an appeal on his behalf to the entire populace, and urge them to embrace the Cause of the Sahibu'z-Zaman. "Let them know," he added, "that I disclaim any intention of waging holy warfare against them. Let them be warned, however, that if they persist in besieging my house and continue their attacks upon me, in utter defiance of my position and lineage, I shall be constrained, as a measure of self-defence, to resist and disperse their forces. If they choose to reject my counsel and yield to the whisperings of the crafty Navvab, I will order seven of my companions to repulse their forces shamefully and to crush their hopes."

The Siyyid-i-Khal-Dar leaped upon the steed and, escorted by four of his chosen brethren, rode out through the market and pealed out, in accents of compelling majesty, the warning he had been commissioned to proclaim. Not content with the message with which he had been entrusted, he ventured to add, in his own inimitable manner, a few words by which he sought to heighten the effect which the proclamation had produced. "Beware," he thundered, "if you despise our plea. My lifted voice, I warn you, will prove sufficient to cause the very walls of your fort to tremble, and the strength of my arm will be capable of breaking down the resistance of its gates!"

His stentorian voice rang out like a trumpet, and diffused consternation in the hearts of those who heard it. With one voice, the affrighted population declared their intention to lay down their swords and cease to molest Vahid, whose lineage they said they would henceforth recognise and respect.

Constrained by the blank refusal of the people to fight against Vahid, the Navvab induced them to direct their attack against Muhammad-'Abdu'llah and his comrades, who were stationed in the neighbourhood of the fort. The clash of these forces induced the governor to sally from his refuge and to instruct the besieged detachment to join hands with those who had been recruited by the Navvab. Muhammad-'Abdu'llah had begun to disperse the mob that had rushed forth from the city against him, when he was suddenly assailed by the fire which the troops opened upon him by order of the governor. A bullet struck his foot and

threw him to the ground. A number of his supporters were also [473] wounded. His brother hurriedly got him away to a place of safety, and from thence carried him, at his request, to the house of Vahid.

The enemy followed him to that house, fully determined to seize and slay him. The clamour of the people that had massed around his house compelled Vahid to order Mulla Muhammad-Riday-i-Manshadi, one of the most enlightened ulamas of Manshad, who had discarded his turban and offered himself as his doorkeeper, to sally forth and, with the aid of six companions, whom he would choose, to scatter their forces. "Let each one of you raise his voice," he commanded them, "and repeat seven times the words 'Allah-u-Akbar,'8 and on your seventh invocation spring forward at one and the same moment into the midst of your assailants."

Mulla Muhammad-Rida, whom Baha'u'llah had named Rada'r-Ruh, sprang to his feet and, with his companions, straightway proceeded to fulfil the instructions he had received. Those who accompanied him, though frail of form and inexperienced in the art of swordsmanship, were fired with a faith that made them the terror of their adversaries. Seven of the most redoubtable among the enemy perished that day, which was the twenty-seventh of the month of Jamadiyu'th-Thani.9 "No sooner had we routed the enemy," Mulla Muhammad-Rida related, "and returned to the house of Vahid, than we found Muhammad-'Abdu'llah lying wounded before us. He was carried to our leader, and partook of the food with which the latter had been served. Afterwards he was borne to a hiding place, where he remained concealed until he recovered from his wound. Eventually he was seized and slain by the enemy."

That very night, Vahid bade his companions disperse and exercise the utmost vigilance to secure their safety. He advised his wife to remove, with her children and all their belongings, to the home of her father, and to leave behind whatever was his personal property. "This palatial residence," he informed her, "I have built with the sole intention that it should be eventually demolished in the path of the Cause, and the stately furnishings with which I have adorned it have been purchased in the hope that one day I shall be [474] able to sacrifice them for the sake of my Beloved. Then will friend and foe alike realise that he who owned this house was endowed with so great and priceless a heritage that an earthly mansion, however sumptuously adorned and magnificently equipped, had no worth in his eyes; that it had sunk, in his estimation, to the state of a heap of bones to which only the dogs of the earth could feel attracted. Would that such compelling evidence of the spirit of renunciation were able to open the eyes of this perverse people, and to stir in them the desire to follow in the steps of him who showed that spirit!"

In the mid-watches of that same night, Vahid arose and, collecting the writings of the Bab that were in his possession, as well as the copies of all the treatises that he himself had composed, entrusted them to his servant Hasan, and ordered him to convey them to a place outside the gate of the city where the road branches off to Mihriz. He bade him await his arrival, and warned him

that, were he to disregard his instructions, he would never again be able to meet him.

No sooner had Hasan mounted his horse and prepared to leave than the cries of the sentinels, who kept watch at the entrance of the fort, reached his ears. Fearing lest they should capture him and seize the precious manuscripts in his possession, he decided to follow a different route from the one which his master had instructed him to take. As he was passing behind the fort, the sentinels recognised him, shot his horse, and captured him.

Meanwhile Vahid was preparing to depart from Yazd. Leaving his two sons, Siyyid Isma'il and Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad, in the care of their mother, he left, accompanied by his two other sons, Siyyid Ahmad and Siyyid Mihdi, together with two of his companions who were both residents of Yazd and had asked permission to accompany him on his journey. The first, who was named Ghulam-Rida, was a man of exceptional courage, while the latter, Ghulam-Riday-i-Kuchik, had distinguished himself in the art of marksmanship. He chose the same route that he had advised his servant to take, and, arriving safely at that spot, was surprised to find that Hasan was missing. Vahid knew immediately that he had disregarded his directions and had been captured by the [475] enemy. He deplored his fate, and was reminded of the action of Muhammad-'Abdu'llah, who had similarly acted against his will and had in consequence suffered injury. They were subsequently informed that on the morning of that same day Hasan was blown from the mouth of a cannon10 and that a certain Mirza Hasan, who had been the imam of one of the quarters of Yazd, and who was a man of renowned piety, had an hour later also been captured and subjected to the same fate as his comrade.

The departure of Vahid from Yazd roused the enemy to fresh exertions. They rushed to his house, plundered his possessions, and demolished it completely.11 He himself was meanwhile directing his steps towards Nayriz. Though unaccustomed to walking, he covered, that night, seven farsangs12 on foot, while his sons were carried part of the way by his two companions. In the course of the ensuing day, he concealed himself within the recesses of a neighbouring mountain. As soon as his brother, who resided in that vicinity and entertained a deep affection for him, was informed of his arrival, he secretly despatched to him whatever provisions he required. That same day a body of the governor's mounted attendants, who had set out in pursuit of Vahid, arrived at that village, searched the house of his brother, where they suspected that he was concealed, and appropriated a large amount of his property. Unable to find him, they retraced their steps to Yazd.

Vahid, in the meantime, made his way through the mountains until he reached the district of Bavanat-i-Fars. Most of its inhabitants, who were numbered among his fervent admirers, readily embraced the Cause, among whom was the [476] well-known Haji Siyyid Isma'il, the Shaykhu'l-Islam of Bavanat. A considerable number of these people accompanied him as far as the village of Fasa, where the inhabitants refused to respond to the Message which he invited them to follow.

All along his route, wherever he tarried, Vahid's first thought, as soon as he had dismounted, was to seek the neighbouring masjid, wherein he would summon the people to hear him announce the tidings of the New Day. Utterly oblivious of the fatigues of his journey, he would promptly ascend the pulpit and fearlessly proclaim to his congregation the character of the Faith he had risen to champion. He would spend only one night in that place if he had succeeded in winning to the Cause souls upon whom he could rely to propagate it after his departure. Otherwise he would straightway resume his march and refuse further to associate with them. "Through whichever village I pass," he often remarked, "and fail to inhale from its inhabitants the fragrance of belief, its food and its drink are both distasteful to me."

Arriving at the village of Runiz, in the district of Fasa, Vahid decided to tarry for a few days. Those hearts which he found receptive to his call he strove to attract and to inflame with the fire of God's love. As soon as the news of his arrival reached Nayriz, the entire population of the Chinar-Sukhtih quarter hastened out to meet him. People from other quarters likewise, impelled by their love and admiration for him, decided to join them. Fearing lest Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan, the governor of Nayriz, should object to their visit, the majority of them set out at night. From the quarter of Chinar-Sukhtih alone more than a hundred students, preceded by their leader, Haji Shaykh 'Abdu'l-'Ali, the father-in-law of Vahid, and a judge of recognised standing throughout that district, were moved to join a number of the most distinguished among the notables of Nayriz in greeting the expected visitor ere his arrival at their town. Among these figured Mulla 'Abdu'l-Husayn, a venerable man of eighty who was highly esteemed for his piety and learning; Mulla Baqir, who was the imam of the Chinar-Sukhtih quarter; Mirza Husayn-i-Qutb, the kad-khuda13 of the Bazar quarter, [477] with all his relatives; Mirza Abu'l-Qasim, a relative of the governor; Haji Muhammad-Taqi, who has been mentioned by Baha'u'llah in the "Suriy-i-Ayyub," together with his son-in-law; Mirza Nawra and Mirza 'Ali-Rida, both of the Sadat quarter.14

All of these, some by day and others by night, went as far as the village of Runiz in order to extend their welcome to the visitor, and to assure him of their unalterable devotion. Although the Bab had revealed a general Tablet addressed specially to those who had newly embraced His Cause in Nayriz, yet its recipients remained ignorant of its significance and fundamental principles. It was given to Vahid to enlighten them regarding its true purpose and set forth its distinguishing features.

No sooner had Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan been made aware of the considerable exodus that had taken place for the purpose of welcoming the arrival of Vahid, than he despatched a special messenger to overtake and inform those who had already departed of his determination to take the life, capture the wives, and confiscate the property of everyone who persisted in giving allegiance to him. Not one of those who departed heeded the warning, but rather did they cling still more passionately to their leader. Their unyielding determination and disdainful neglect of his messenger filled the governor with dismay. Fearful

lest these should arise against him, he decided to transfer his residence to the village of Qutrih, where his original home had been, and which lay at a distance of eight farsangs15 from Nayriz. He chose that [478] village because in its vicinity there stood a massive fortress which he could utilise as a place of refuge in case of danger. He was, moreover, assured that its inhabitants were trained in the art of marksmanship and could be relied upon whenever summoned to defend him.

Vahid had meanwhile left Runiz for the shrine of Pir-Murad, which was situated outside the village of Istahbanat. Despite the interdiction pronounced by the ulamas of that village against his admittance, no less than twenty of its inhabitants went out to welcome him, and accompanied him as far as Nayriz. When they arrived, in the forenoon of

the fifteenth of Rajab,16 the first thing Vahid did, as soon as he reached his native quarter of Chinar-Sukhtih, even before going to his own house, was to enter the masjid and summon the congregation that had gathered to acknowledge and embrace the Message of the Bab. Impatient to face the multitude that awaited him, still wearing his dust-laden garments, he ascended the pulpit and spoke with such convincing eloquence that the whole audience was electrified by his appeal.17 No less than a thousand persons, all natives [479] of the Chinar-Sukhtih quarter, and five hundred others from other sections of Nayriz, all of whom had thronged the building, spontaneously responded. "We have heard and we obey!" cried, with unrestrained enthusiasm, the jubilant multitude, as they came forward to assure him of their homage and gratitude. The spell which that impassioned address threw over the hearts of those who heard it was such as Nayriz had never before experienced.

"My sole purpose," Vahid went on, explaining to

his audience, as soon as the first flush of excitement had subsided, "in coming to Nayriz is to proclaim the Cause of God. I thank and glorify Him for having enabled me to touch your hearts with His Message. No need for me to tarry any longer in your midst, for if I prolong my stay, I fear that the governor will ill-treat you because of me. He may seek reinforcement

[480] from Shiraz and destroy your homes and subject you to untold indignities." "We are ready and resigned to the will of God," answered, with one voice, the congregation. "God grant us His grace to withstand the calamities that may yet befall us. We cannot, however, reconcile ourselves to so abrupt and hasty a separation from you."

No sooner had these words escaped their lips than men and women joined hands in conducting Vahid triumphantly to his home. Wild with excitement and exultant with joy, they pressed round him and, with cheers and acclamations, escorted him to the very entrance of his house.

The few days Vahid consented to tarry in Nayriz were spent mostly in the masjid, where he continued with his customary [481] eloquence and without the least reservation to propound the fundamental teachings which he had received

from his Master. Every day witnessed an increase in the number of his audience, and from every side evidences of his marvellous influence became more and more manifest.

The fascination which he exerted over the people could not fail to fan to fury the dormant hostility of Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan. He was roused to new exertions, and gave orders that an army be raised for the avowed purpose of eradicating a Cause which he felt was fast undermining his own position. He soon succeeded in recruiting about a thousand men, consisting of both cavalry and infantry, all of whom were well trained in the art of warfare and were equipped with an ample store of munitions. His plan was, by a sudden onset, to make him a prisoner.

Vahid, as soon as he was informed of the designs of the governor, ordered those twenty companions who had left Istahbanat to welcome him, and who had accompanied him as far as Nayriz, to occupy the fort of Khajih, which was situated in the vicinity of the Chinar-Sukhtih quarter. He appointed Shaykh Hadi, son of Shaykh Muhsin, as the leader of the band, and urged his followers who resided in that quarter to fortify the gates, the turrets, and the walls of that stronghold.

The governor had meanwhile transferred his seat to his own house in the Bazar quarter. The force he had raised accompanied him and occupied the fort situated in its vicinity. Its towers and walls, which he began to reinforce, overlooked the whole town. Having compelled Siyyid Abu-Talib, the kad-khuda18 of that quarter and one of the companions of Vahid, to evacuate his house, he fortified its roof and, stationing upon it a number of his men, under the command of Muhammad-'Ali Khan, he gave orders to open fire upon his adversary. The first to suffer was that same Mulla 'Abdu'l-Husayn who, despite his advanced age, had walked out to welcome Vahid. He was offering his prayer on the roof of his house when a bullet struck his right foot, causing him to bleed profusely. That cruel blow evoked the sympathy of Vahid, who hastened, in a written message to the sufferer, [482] to express his grief at the injury he had sustained, and to cheer him with the thought that he, at this advanced stage of his life, was the first to be chosen to fall a victim in the path of the Cause.

The suddenness of the attack dismayed a number of the companions who had hastily embraced the Message and had failed to appreciate its full meaning. Their faith was so severely shaken that a few were induced, in the dead of night, to separate themselves from their companions and join forces with the enemy. Vahid had no sooner been informed of their action than he arose at the hour of dawn and, mounting his steed and accompanied by a number of his supporters, rode out to the fort of Khajih, where he fixed his residence.

His arrival was the signal for a fresh attack upon him. Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan immediately despatched his elder brother, 'Ali-Asghar Khan, together with a thousand men, all armed and well trained, to lay siege to that fort, in which seventy-two companions had already taken shelter. At the hour of sunrise, a certain number of them, acting in accordance with the instructions of Vahid, sallied forth, and with extraordinary rapidity forced the besiegers to

disperse.

No more than three of the companions met their death in the course of that encounter. The first was Taju'd-Din, a man renowned for his fearlessness, whose business was the manufacture of the woollen kulah;19 the second was Zaynil, son of Iskandar, who was an agriculturist by profession; the third was Mirza Abu'l-Qasim, who was a man of distinguished merit.

This complete and sudden rout aroused the apprehensions of Prince Firuz Mirza, the Nusratu'd-Dawlih, governor of Shiraz, who gave orders for the prompt extermination of the occupants of the fort. Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan despatched one of the prince's attendants to Vahid, urging him, in view of the strained relations between them, to depart from Nayriz, in the hope that the mischief that had been kindled might soon be extinguished. "Tell him," replied Vahid, "that my two children, together with their two attendants, are all the company I have with me. If my presence in this town will cause mischief, I am willing to depart. Why is it that, instead [483] of according us the welcome which befits a descendant of the Prophet, he has deprived us of water and has incited his men to besiege and attack us? If he persists in denying us the necessities of life, I warn him that seven of my companions, whom he regards as the most contemptible among men, will inflict upon his combined forces a humiliating defeat."

Finding that Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan ignored his warning, Vahid ordered his companions to emerge from the fort and punish their assailants. With admirable courage and confidence, they succeeded, though extremely young in years, and utterly inexperienced in the use of arms, in demoralising a trained and organised army. 'Ali-Asghar Khan himself perished, and two of his sons were captured. Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan disgracefully retreated, with what still remained of his scattered forces, to the village of Qutrih, acquainted the prince with the gravity of the situation, and begged him to send immediate reinforcements, stressing in particular the need for heavy artillery and a large detachment of both infantry and cavalry.

Vahid, on his part, finding that the enemy was bent on their extermination, gave orders that the defences of the fort be strengthened, that a water-cistern be constructed within its enclosure, and that the tents they had carried away be pitched outside its gates. That day certain of his companions had assigned to them special functions and duties. Karbila'i Mirza Muhammad was made the gatekeeper of the fort; Shaykh Yusuf, the custodian of the funds; Karbila'i Muhammad, son of Shamsu'd-Din, the superintendent of the gardens adjoining the fort and its barricades; Mirza Ahmad, the uncle of 'Aliy-i-Sardar, was appointed the officer in charge of the tower of the mill known by the name of Chinar, situated in the vicinity of the fort; Shaykhay-i-Shivih-Kash to be the executioner; Mirza Muhammad-Ja'far, cousin of Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan, the chronicler; Mirza Fadlu'llah as the reader of these records; Mashhadi Taqi-Baqqal to be the gaoler; Haji Muhammad-Taqi, the registrar; and Ghulam-Riday-i-Yazdi to be the captain of the forces. In addition to the seventy-two companions who were with him within the fort and had accompanied

him [484] from Istahbanat to Nayriz, Vahid was induced, at the instance of Siyyid Ja'far-i-Yazdi, a well-known divine, and Shaykh 'Abdu'l-'Ali, Vahid's father-in-law, to admit to the fort a number of the residents of the Bazar quarter, together with several of his own kindred.

Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan again renewed his appeal to the prince, and enclosed this time with his petition, which pleaded for urgent and adequate reinforcements, the sum of five thousand tumans20 as his personal gift to him. He entrusted his letter to one of his intimate friends, Mulla Baqir, allowed him to mount his own steed, and instructed him to deliver it in person to the prince. He chose him for his intrepidity, his fluency of speech, and tactfulness. Mulla Baqir took an unfrequented route, and after a day's journey reached a place called Hudashtak, in the neighbourhood of which was a fort around which tribes who roved the country sometimes pitched their tents.

Mulla Baqir dismounted near one of these tents, and whilst he was talking with its occupants, Haji Siyyid Isma'il, the Shaykhu'l-Islam of Bavanat, arrived.

He had obtained leave from Vahid to proceed to his native village on some urgent affair, and to return immediately to Nayriz.

After his lunch, he saw that a richly caparisoned horse was tethered to the ropes of one of the neighbouring tents.

Being informed that it belonged to one of the friends of Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan, who had arrived from Nayriz and was on his way to Shiraz, Haji Siyyid Isma'il, who was a man of exceptional courage, immediately went to that tent, mounted the horse, and, unsheathing his sword, sternly spoke these words to the owner of the tent with whom Mulla Baqir was still conversing: "Arrest this scoundrel, who has fled from before the face of the Sahibu'z-Zaman.21 Tie his hands and deliver him to me."

Affrighted by the words and manner of Haji Mulla Isma'il, the occupants of the tent immediately obeyed.

They bound his hands and delivered the rope with which they had tied him to Haji Siyyid Isma'il, who spurred on his charger in the direction of Nayriz and compelled his captive to follow him.

At a distance of two farsangs from that town, he reached the village of Rastaq and delivered his [485] captive into the hands of its kad-khuda, whose name was Haji Akbar, urging that he be conducted into the presence of Vahid.

When brought before him, the latter enquired as to the purpose of his journey to Shiraz, to which he gave a frank and detailed reply.

Though Vahid was willing to forgive him, yet Mulla Baqir, by reason of his attitude towards him, was eventually put to death at the hands of the companions.

Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan, far from relaxing in his determination to solicit the aid he needed from Shiraz, appealed this time with increased vehemence to the

prince, begging him to redouble his efforts for the extermination of what he regarded as the gravest menace to the security of his province. Not content with his earnest entreaty, he despatched to Shiraz a number of his trusted men, whom he loaded with presents for the prince, hoping thereby to induce him to act with promptness. In a further effort to ensure the success of his endeavours, he addressed several appeals to the leading ulamas and siyyids of Shiraz, wherein he glaringly misrepresented the aims of Vahid, expatiated upon his subversive activities, and urged them to intercede with the prince and entreat him to expedite the despatch of reinforcements.

The prince readily granted their request. He instructed 'Abdu'llah Khan, the Shuja'u'l-Mulk, to set out at once for Nayriz, accompanied by the Hamadani and Silakhuri regiments, headed by several officers, and provided with an adequate force of artillery. He, moreover, instructed his representative in Nayriz to recruit all the able-bodied men from the surrounding district, including the villages of Istahbanat, Iraj, Panj-Ma'adin, Qutrih, Bashnih, Dih-Chah, Mushkan, and Rastaq. To these he added the members of the tribe known by the name of Visbaklariyyih, whom he commanded to join the army of Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan.

An innumerable host suddenly surrounded the fort in which Vahid and his companions were besieged, and began to dig trenches around it and to set up barricades along those trenches.22 No sooner was the work accomplished than they [486] opened fire on them. A bullet struck the horse on which one of Vahid's attendants was riding as he was keeping watch at the gate. Another bullet followed immediately upon the first, and penetrated the turret above that gate. In the course of that bombardment, one of the companions, aiming with his rifle at the officer in charge of the artillery, shot him dead instantly, as a result of which the roar of the guns was immediately silenced. The assailants meanwhile retreated and hid themselves within their trenches. That night neither the besieged nor those who attacked them ventured to sally forth from their places of shelter.

The second night, however, Vahid summoned Ghulam-Riday-i-Yazdi and instructed him, together with fourteen of his companions, to sally forth from the fort and drive off the enemy. Those who were called upon to perform that task were for the most part men of advanced age, whom no one would have thought capable of bearing the brunt of so fierce a struggle. Among them was a shoemaker who, though more than ninety years of age, showed such enthusiasm and vigour as no youth could hope to exceed. The rest of the fourteen were mere lads, as yet wholly unprepared to face the perils and endure the strain which such a sally entailed. Age, however, to those heroes, whom a dauntless will and an immovable confidence in the high destiny of their Cause had wholly transformed, mattered but little. They were instructed by their leader to divide immediately after they left the cover of the fort and, raising simultaneously the cry of "Allah-u-Akbar!"23 to spring into the midst of the enemy.

No sooner had the signal been given than they arose and, hurrying to their steeds and rifles, marched out of the gate of the fort.

Undaunted by the fire which spouted from the mouths of the cannons and by the bullets which rained upon their heads, they plunged headlong into the midst of their adversaries.

This sudden encounter lasted for no less than eight hours, during which that fearless band was able to demonstrate such skill and bravery as amazed the veterans in the ranks of the enemy.

From the town of Nayriz, as well as from its surrounding fortifications, reinforcements rushed to the aid of the small company that had withstood so valiantly [487] the combined forces of a whole army.

As the scope of the struggle extended, the voices of the women of Nayriz, who had rushed to the roofs of their houses to acclaim the heroism which was being so strikingly displayed, were raised from every side.

Their exulting cheers swelled the roar of the guns, which acquired added intensity by the shout of "Allah-u-Akbar!" which the companions, in a frenzy of excitement, raised amidst that tumult.

The uproar caused by their womenfolk, their amazing audacity and self-confidence, utterly demoralised their opponents and paralysed their efforts.

The camp of the enemy was desolate and forsaken, and offered a sad spectacle as the victors retraced their steps to the fort.

They carried with them, in addition to those who were grievously wounded, no less than sixty dead, among whom were the following:

1. Ghulam-Riday-i-Yazdi (not to be confounded with the captain of the forces who bore the same name),
2. Brother of Ghulam-Riday-i-Yazdi,
3. 'Ali, son of Khayru'llah,
4. Khajih Husayn-i-Qannad, son of Khajih Ghani,
5. Asghar, son of Mulla Mihdi,
6. Karbila'i 'Abdu'l-Karim,
7. Husayn, son of Mashhadi Muhammad,
8. Zaynu'l-'Abidin, son of Mashhadi Baqir-i-Sabbagh,
9. Mulla Ja'far-i-Mudhahhib,
10. 'Abdu'llah, son of Mulla Musa,
11. Muhammad, son of Mashhadi Rajab-i-Haddad,
12. Karbila'i Hasan, son of Karbila'i Shamsu'd-Din-i-Maliki-Duz,
13. Karbila'i Mirza Muhammad-i-Zari',
14. Karbila'i Baqir-i-Kafsh-Duz,
15. Mirza Ahmad, son of Mirza Husayn-i-Kashi-Saz,
16. Mulla Hasan, son of Mulla 'Abdu'llah,
17. Mashhadi Haji Muhammad,
18. Abu-Talib, son of Mir Ahmad-i-Nukhud-Biriz,
19. Akbar, son of Muhammad-i-'Ashur,
20. Taqiy-i-Yazdi,

21. Mulla 'Ali, son of Mulla Ja'far,
22. Karbila'i Mirza Husayn,
23. Husayn Khan, son of Sharif,
24. [488] Karbila'i Qurban,
25. Khajih Kazim, son of Khajih 'Ali,
26. Aqa, son of Haji 'Ali,
27. Mirza Nawra, son of Mirza Mu'ina.

So complete a failure convinced Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan and his staff of the futility of their efforts to compel, in an open contest, the submission of their adversaries.24 As was the case with the army of Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza, who had miserably failed to subdue his opponents fairly in the field, treachery and fraud proved eventually the sole weapons with which a cowardly people could conquer an invincible enemy. By the devices to which Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan and his staff eventually resorted, they betrayed their powerlessness, despite the vast resources at their disposal and the moral support which the governor of Fars and the inhabitants of the whole province had extended to them, to vanquish what to outward appearance seemed but a handful of untrained and contemptible people. In their hearts, they were convinced that behind the walls of that fort were clustered a band of volunteers which no force at their command could face and defeat.

By raising the cry of peace, they sought, through such base cunning, to beguile those pure and noble hearts.

For a few days they suspended all manner of hostility, after which they addressed a solemn and written appeal to the besieged, which in substance ran as follows: "Hitherto, as we were ignorant of the true character of your Faith, we have allowed the mischief-makers to induce us to believe that every one of you has violated the sacred precepts of Islam.

Therefore did we arise against you, and have endeavoured to extirpate your Faith.

During the last few days, we have been made aware of the fact that your activities are untinged by any political motive, that none of you cherish any inclination to subvert the foundations of the State.

We also have been convinced of the fact that your teachings do not involve any grave departure from the fundamental teachings of Islam.

All that you seem to uphold is the claim that a man has [489] appeared whose words are inspired and whose testimony is certain, and whom all the followers of Islam must recognise and support.

We can in no wise be convinced of the validity of this claim unless you consent to repose the utmost confidence in our sincerity, and accept our request to allow certain of your representatives to emerge from the fort and meet us in this camp, where we can, within the space of a few days, ascertain the character of your belief.

If you prove yourselves able to demonstrate the true claims of your Faith, we too will readily embrace it, for we are not the enemies of Truth, and none of us wish to deny it.

Your leader we have always recognised as one of the ablest champions of Islam, and we regard him as our example and guide.

This Qur'an, to which we affix our seals, is the witness to the integrity of our purpose.

Let that holy Book decide whether the claim you advance is true or false.

The malediction of God and His Prophet rest upon us if we should attempt to deceive you.

Your acceptance of our invitation will save a whole army from destruction, whilst your refusal will leave them in suspense and doubt.

We pledge our word that as soon as we are convinced of the truth of your Message, we shall strive to display the same zeal and devotion you already have so strikingly manifested.

Your friends will be our friends, and your enemies our enemies.

Whatever your leader may choose to command, the same we pledge ourselves to obey.

On the other hand, if we fail to be convinced of the truth of your claim, we solemnly promise that we shall in no wise interfere with your safe return to the fort, and shall be willing to resume our contest against you.

We entreat you to refuse to shed more blood before attempting to establish the truth of your Cause."

Vahid received the Qur'an with great reverence and kissed it devoutly. "Our appointed hour has struck," he remarked. "Our acceptance of their invitation will surely make them feel the baseness of their treachery." "Though I am well aware of their designs," he added, as he turned to his companions, "I feel it my duty to accept their call and take the opportunity to attempt once again to unfold the verities of my beloved Faith." He bade them continue to discharge their duties, and place no reliance whatever on [490] what their adversaries might profess to believe. He, moreover, ordered them to suspend all manner of hostilities until further notice from him.

With these words he bade farewell to his companions and, accompanied by five attendants, among whom were Mulla 'Aliy-i-Mudhahhib and the treacherous Haji Siyyid 'Abid, set out for the camp of the enemy. Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan, accompanied by Shuja'u'l-Mulk and all the members of his staff, came out to welcome him. They ceremoniously received him, conducted him to a tent that had been specially pitched for his reception, and introduced him to the rest of the officers. He seated himself upon a chair, while the rest of the company, with the exception of Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan, Shuja'u'l-Mulk, and another officer, whom he motioned to be seated, all stood before him. The words in which he

addressed them were such that even a stone-hearted man could not fail to feel their power. Baha'u'llah, in the "Suriy-Sabr," has immortalised that noble appeal and revealed the full measure of its significance. "I am come to you," Vahid declared, "armed with the testimony with which my Lord has entrusted me. Am I not a descendant of the Prophet of God? Wherefore should you have risen to slay me? For what reason have you pronounced my death-sentence, and refused to recognise the undoubted rights with which my lineage has invested me?"

The majesty of his bearing, combined with his penetrating eloquence, confounded his hearers. For three days and three nights, they lavishly entertained him and treated him with marked respect. In their congregational prayer, they invariably followed his lead, and attentively listened to his discourse. Though outwardly they seemed to be bowing to his will, yet they were secretly plotting against his life and were conspiring to exterminate the remnant of his companions. They knew full well that, were they to inflict upon him the least injury while his companions remained entrenched behind the walls of their fort, they would be exposing themselves to a peril still greater than the one they had already been compelled to face. They trembled at the fury and vengeance of their women no less than at the bravery and skill of their men. They realised that all the resources of [491] the army had been powerless to subdue a handful of immature lads and decrepit old men. Nothing short of a bold and well-conceived stratagem could ensure their ultimate victory. The fear that filled their hearts was to a great extent inspired by the words of Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan, who, with unrelaxing determination, sought to maintain undiminished the hatred with which he had inflamed their souls. Vahid's repeated exhortations had aroused his apprehensions lest he should succeed, by the magic of his words, in inducing them to transfer their allegiance to so eloquent an opponent.

Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan and his friends at last decided to request Vahid to address in his own handwriting a message to his companions who were still within the fort, to inform them that an amicable settlement of their differences had been effected, and to urge them either to join him at the headquarters of the army or to return to their homes. Though reluctant to give his assent to such a request, Vahid was eventually forced to submit. In addition to this message, he confidentially informed his companions, in a second letter, of the evil designs of the enemy, and warned them not to allow themselves to be deceived. He entrusted both letters to Haji Siyyid 'Abid, instructing him to destroy the former and deliver the latter to his companions. He charged him, moreover, to urge them to choose the ablest among their number, and to sally forth in the dead of night and scatter the forces of the enemy.

No sooner had Haji Siyyid 'Abid received these directions than he treacherously communicated them to Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan. The latter immediately sought to induce him to urge the occupants of the fort, in the name of their leader, to disperse, promising that he would in return abundantly reward him. The disloyal messenger delivered the first letter to Vahid's companions, and informed them that their leader had succeeded in winning over to his Faith the entire army,

and that in view of this conversion he had advised them to leave for their homes.

Though extremely bewildered by such a message, the companions felt unable to disregard the wishes Vahid had so clearly expressed. They reluctantly dispersed, leaving all the fortifications unguarded. Obedient to the commands

[493] written by their leader, several of them discarded their arms, and directed their steps towards Nayriz.

Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan, anticipating the immediate evacuation of the fort, despatched a detachment of his forces to intercept their entry into the town. They were soon encompassed by a multitude of armed men, who were being continually reinforced from the army's headquarters. Finding themselves thus unexpectedly hemmed in, they determined by every means in their power to repulse the attack and gain the Masjid-i-Jami' as swiftly as possible. By the aid of swords and rifles which some of them were carrying, others with sticks and stones only, they sought to force their way to the town. The cry of "Allah-u-Akbar!"25 rose again, fiercer and more compelling than ever. A few among them suffered martyrdom, as they forced their way through the ranks of their treacherous assailants. The rest, though wounded and harassed by fresh reinforcements which had beset them from every side, eventually succeeded in attaining the shelter of the masjid.

Meanwhile the notorious Mulla Hasan, the son of Mulla Muhammad-'Ali, an officer in the army of Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan, succeeded, together with his men, in outdistancing his opponents and, concealing himself in one of the minarets of that masjid, lay in wait for the fugitives. No sooner had the scattered band approached the masjid than he opened fire upon them. A certain Mulla Husayn recognised him and, raising the cry of "Allah-u-Akbar!" scaled the minaret, aimed his rifle at that cowardly officer, and hurled him to the ground. His friends carried him away to a place where he was enabled to recover from his wound.

The companions, unable any longer to obtain shelter in the masjid, were compelled to hide in whatever place of safety they could find, until such time as they might ascertain the fate of their leader. Their first thought after their betrayal was to seek his presence and follow whatever instructions he might wish to give them. They were, however, unable to discover what had befallen him, and trembled at the thought that he might have been put to death.

Meanwhile Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan and his staff, emboldened [494] by the dispersal of the companions, were strenuously exerting themselves to discover means whereby they could evade the obligations of their solemn oath and proceed unhindered to slay their chief opponent. They endeavoured by some specious device to set aside their sacred promises and to hasten the fulfilment of a long-cherished desire. In the midst of their deliberations, 'Abbas-Quli Khan, a man notorious for his ruthlessness and cruelty, assured his comrades that if the thought of having taken that oath perplexed them, he himself had in no wise participated in that declaration, and was ready to execute what they felt

unable to perform. "I can arrest at any time," he burst forth in a fit of indignation, "and put to death whomever I deem guilty of having violated the laws of the land." He immediately afterwards called upon all those whose kinsmen had perished to execute the sentence of death pronounced against Vahid. The first to present himself was Mulla Rida, whose brother Mulla Baqir had been captured by the Shaykhu'l-Islam of Bavanat; the next was a man named Safar, whose brother Sha'ban had perished; the third was Aqa Khan, whose father, 'Ali-Asghar Khan, elder brother of Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan, had suffered the same fate.

In their eagerness to carry out the suggestion of 'Abbas-Quli Khan, these men snatched the turban from the head of Vahid, wound it around his neck, and, binding him to a horse, dragged him ignominiously through the streets.26 The indignities that were heaped upon him reminded those who witnessed that awful spectacle of the tragic end of the Imam Husayn, whose body was abandoned to the mercy of an infuriated enemy, and upon which a multitude of horsemen pitilessly trampled. The women or Nayriz, stirred to the highest pitch of excitement by the shouts of triumph which a murderous enemy was raising, pressed from every side around the corpse, and, to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals, gave free vent to their feelings of unrestrained fanaticism. [495] They danced merrily around it, scornful of the words which Vahid, in the midst of his agony, had spoken, words which the Imam Husayn, in a former age and in similar circumstances, had uttered: "Thou knowest, O my Beloved, that I have abandoned the world for Thy sake, and have placed my trust in Thee alone. I am impatient to hasten to Thee, for the beauty of Thy countenance has been unveiled to my eyes. Thou dost witness the evil designs which my wicked persecutor has cherished against me. Nay, never will I submit to his wishes or pledge my allegiance to him."

Thus was brought to an end a noble and heroic life.

Such an eventful and brilliant career, distinguished by such vast learning,27 such dauntless courage, and so rare a spirit of self-sacrifice, surely required for crown a death as glorious as that which completed his martyrdom.28 The extinction of that life was the signal for a fierce onslaught on the lives and property of those who had identified themselves with his Faith.

No less than five thousand men were commissioned for that villainous task.

The men were seized, chained, ill-treated, and eventually slaughtered.

The women and children were captured and subjected to brutalities which no pen dare describe.

Their property was confiscated, and their houses were destroyed.

The fort of Khajih was burned to the ground.

The majority of the men were first conducted in chains to Shiraz, and there, for the most part, suffered a cruel death.29 Those whom Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan, for purposes [496] of personal benefit, had plunged into dark and subterranean

dungeons were, as soon as his object had been achieved, delivered into the hands of his myrmidons, who perpetrated upon them acts of unspeakable cruelty.30 They were paraded at first through the streets of Nayriz, after which they were subjected to atrocious treatment in the hope of extracting from them whatever material advantage their persecutors had hitherto been unable to obtain.

These having satisfied their greed, each victim was made to suffer an agonising death.

Every instrument of torture their executioners could devise was utilised to quench their thirst for revenge.

They were branded, their nails were pulled out, their bodies were lashed, an incision was made in the nose through which a string was driven, nails were hammered into their hands and feet, and in that piteous state each of them was dragged through the streets, an object of contempt and derision to all the people.

Among them was a certain Siyyid Ja'far-i-Yazdi, who in former days had exercised immense influence and had been

[498] greatly honoured by the people. So great was the respect they owed him that Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan gave him precedence over himself and treated him with extreme deference and courtesy. He gave orders that the turban of that same man be befouled and flung into the fire. Shorn of the emblem of his lineage, he was exposed to the eyes or the public, who marched before him and overwhelmed him with abuse and ridicule.31

Another victim of their tyranny was Haji Muhammad-Taqi, who had enjoyed, in days past, such a reputation for honesty and justice that his opinion was invariably regarded by the judges of the court as the determining word in their judgment. So great and esteemed a man was, in the depth of winter, stripped of his clothes, thrown into a pond, and lashed severely. Siyyid Ja'far and Shaykh 'Abdu'l-'Ali, who [499] was Vahid's father-in-law and the leading divine of Nayriz, as well as a judge of great reputation, together with Siyyid Husayn, one of the notables of the town, were doomed to suffer the same fate. While they were exposed to the cold, the scum of the people was hired to heap upon their shivering bodies abominable cruelties. Many a poor man, who hastened to obtain the reward promised for this vile deed, revolted when informed of the nature of the task he was called upon to perform, and, rejecting the money, turned away with loathing and contempt.32

The day of Vahid's martyrdom was the eighteenth of the month of Sha'ban, in the year 1266 A.H.33 Ten days later, the Bab was shot in Tabriz.

FOOTNOTES

22.1. "When, after the lapse of some time," writes Mirza Jani, "I again had the honour of meeting Aqa Siyyid Yahya in Tihran, I observed in his august countenance the signs of a glory and power which I had not noticed during my

first journey with him to the capital, nor on other occasions of meeting, and I knew that these signs portended the near approach of his departure from the world. Subsequently he said several times in the course of conversation: 'This is my last journey, and hereafter you will see me no more'; and often, explicitly or by implication, he gave utterance to the same thought. Sometimes when we were together, and the conversation took an appropriate turn, he would remark: 'The saints of God are able to foretell coming events, and I swear, by that loved One in the grasp of whose power my soul lies, that I know and could tell where and how I shall be slain, and who it is that shall slay me. And how glorious and blessed a thing it is that my blood should be shed for the uplifting of the Word of Truth!'" (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," p. 115.)

22.2. 1850 A.D.

22.3. "Carried away by his zeal and overflowing with the love of God, he was eager to reveal to Persia the glory and joy of the one eternal Truth. 'To love and to conceal one's secret is impossible,' says the poet; so our Siyyid began to preach openly in the mosques, in the streets, in the bazaars, on the public squares, in a word, wherever he could find listeners. Such an enthusiasm brought forth fruit, and the conversions were numerous and sincere. The mullas, deeply troubled, violently denounced the sacrilege to the governor of the city." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 390.)

22.4. His name was Aqa Khan.

22.5. See Glossary.

22.6. The Imam Husayn.

22.7. The tenth of Muharram, the day on which the Imam Husayn was martyred.

22.8. "God is the Most Great."

22.9. May 10, 1850 A.D.

22.10. "When they would have bound him with his back towards the gun, he said: 'Bind me, I pray you, with my face towards the gun, that I may see it fired.' The gunners and those who stood by looking on were all astonished at his composure and cheerfulness, and indeed one who can be cheerful in such a plight must needs have great faith and fortitude." (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," p. 117.)

22.11. "When Aqa Khan had verified the disappearance of the rebel, he gave a sigh of relief. Besides, he felt that to pursue the fugitives would involve some peril and that, therefore, it would be infinitely more practical, more beneficial, more profitable and less dangerous to torture the Babis, or those presumed to be Babis—provided that they were wealthy—who had remained in the city. He sought out the most prosperous, ordered their execution, and confiscated their possessions, avenging thus his outraged religion, a matter perhaps of little concern to him, and filling his coffers, which pleased him immensely." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 391.)

22.12. See Glossary.

22.13. See Glossary.

22.14. "The Nayrizis welcomed Siyyid Yahya with the greatest enthusiasm. Barely two days after his arrival, a large number came to see him by night out of fear of the government, says the Fars-Namih, and offered their services, for they hated their rulers. Others, mostly residents of the district of Chinar-Sukhtih, were converted in great numbers. Their example was contagious and soon the Babis could count, in their midst, the tullabs of Chinar-Sukhtih who numbered about one hundred, their chief Haji Shaykh 'Abdu'l-'Ali—father of the wife of Siyyid Yahya—, the late Akhund Mulla 'Abdu'l-Husayn, an aged gentleman well versed in religious literature, Akhund Mulla Baqir, Pish-namaz of the district, Mulla 'Ali Katib, another Mulla 'Ali with his four brothers, and the kad-khuda, and the Rish-Safid, and other citizens from the quarter called 'Bazar', such as the late Mashhadi Mirza Husayn called Qutb, with all of his family and his relatives, Mirza Abu'l-Qasim who was the nephew of the Governor, Haji Muhammad-Taqi, surnamed Ayyub and his son-in-law, Mirza Husayn, and many others from the quarter of the Siyyids, and the son of Mirza Nawra, and Mirza 'Ali-Rida, son of Mirza Husayn, and the son of Haji 'Ali, etc., etc. All were converted, some at night in deadly fear, others openly and fearlessly." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 393.)

22.15. See Glossary.

22.16. May 27, 1850 A.D.

22.17. "He ascended the pulpit and cried out: 'Am I not he whom you have always considered your shepherd and your guide? Have you not always depended on my teaching for the direction of your conscience in the path of salvation? Am I not he whose words of counsel you have always obeyed? What has happened that you should treat me as though I were your enemy and the enemy of your religion? What lawful deeds have I forbidden? What illicit action have I permitted? With what impiety can you charge me? Have I ever led you into error? And behold! That because I have told you the truth, because I have loyally sought to instruct you, I am oppressed and persecuted! My heart burns with love for you and you persecute me! Remember! Remember well, whosoever saddens me, saddens my ancestor Muhammad, the glorious Prophet, and whosoever helps me, helps him also. In the name of all that is sacred to you, let all those who love the Prophet follow me!'" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 395.)

22.18. See Glossary.

22.19. See Glossary.

22.20. See Glossary.

22.21. See Glossary.

22.22. "The author of Nasikhu't-Tavarikh affirms without the least sorrow that the imperial troops were poorly trained and not at all eager to fight; so, with no thought of attacking, they established a camp which they hastened to fortify

immediately." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 401.)

22.23. See Glossary.

22.24. "Although the losses were almost even this time, the imperial troops were none-the-less frightened; things were dragging on and might moreover end in the general confusion of the Mussulmans, so they resolved to resort to deceit." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 403.)

22.25. See Glossary.

22.26. "He took hold of the green belt of Yahya, symbol of his holy ancestry, tied it in a knot about his neck and began to drag him on the ground. Then came Safar, whose brother Sha'ban had fallen during the war, then Aqa Jan, son of 'Ali-Asghar Khan, brother of Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan, and the Muhammadans, aroused by the scene, stoned and beat to death the unfortunate man. They then severed the head, tore off the skin, stuffed it with straw and sent that trophy to Shiraz!" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 406.)

22.27. According to 'Abdu'l-Baha's testimony, he had committed to memory no less than thirty thousand traditions. (Manuscript entitled "Baha'i Martyrs".)

22.28. Baha'u'llah refers to him as "that unique and peerless figure of his age." (The "Kitab-i-Iqan," p. 188.) The Bab, in the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih," refers to him in the following terms: "Behold again the number of the name of God (Siyyid Yahya). This man was living a holy, peaceful life in such a way that no one could deny his talents or his sanctity; all admired his greatness in the sciences and the heights he had attained in philosophy. Refer to the commentary of the Suratu'l-Kawthar (Qur'an: S. 108) and to the other treatises written for him, which prove how high a place he occupies in the sight of God!" ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," translated by A. L. M. Nicolas, pp. 54-55.)

22.29. "Siyyid Yahya was strangled with his own girdle by one whose two brothers had been killed during the siege, and the other Babis likewise died by the hands of the executioner.

The heads of the victims were stuffed with straw, and, bearing with them these grim trophies of their prowess, together with some forty or fifty Babi women and one child of tender age as captives, the victorious army returned to Shiraz.

Their entry into that city was made the occasion of general rejoicings; the captives were paraded through the streets and bazaars and finally brought before Prince Firuz Mirza, who was feasting in a summer-house called Kulah-i-Farangi.

In his presence Mihr-'Ali Khan, Mirza Na'im, and the other officers recounted the details of their victory, and received congratulations and marks of favour.

The captive women were finally imprisoned in an old caravanserai outside the Isfahan gate.

What treatment they experienced at the hands of their captors is left to our

conjecture." ("A Traveller's Narrative,"

Note H, p.

190.) "This day was a fete day, so an eye witness tells us.

The inhabitants were scattered about through the countryside, bringing with them their food and many among them drinking, on the sly, whole bottles of wine.

The air was filled with musical strains, the songs of musicians, the screaming and laughter of the lewd women.

The bazaars were adorned with flags, joy was general.

Suddenly there was absolute silence.

They saw coming thirty-two camels, each carrying an unfortunate prisoner, a woman or a child, bound and thrown crosswise over the saddle like a bundle.

All around them were soldiers carrying long lances and upon each lance was impaled the head of a Babi who had been slain at Nayriz.

The hideousness of the sight deeply affected the holiday population of Shiraz and they returned, saddened, to their dwellings.

The horrible caravan passed through the bazaars and continued to the palace of the governor.

This personage was in his garden where he had gathered in his kiosk (called Kulah-i-Farangi) the rich, the eminent citizens of Shiraz.

The music ceased, the dancing stopped and Muhammad-'Ali Khan as well as Mirza Na'im, two small tribal chiefs who had taken part in the campaign, came to tell of their brave deeds and to name one by one the prisoners." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p.

407.)

22.30. "It would seem, alas, that all this bloodshed would have been sufficient to appease the hatred and the lust of the Muhammadans. Not at all! Mirza Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan, finding himself threatened with a desire for revenge on those he had betrayed and vanquished, gave neither truce nor rest to the surviving ones of the sect. His hatred knew no bounds and it was to last as long as he lived. It was actually the very poor that had been sent to Shiraz, the rich had been kept back. Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan had entrusted them to a guard who was ordered to walk them through the city beating them as they went. The people of Nayriz were greatly entertained that time. They hung the Babis by four nails and everyone came to gloat over their anguish. They placed burning weeds under the nails of these unfortunate martyrs, they branded them with hot

irons, they deprived them of bread and water, they cut holes through their noses, and running through them a cord they led them as one would a bear!" (Ibid., p. 408.)

22.31. "Aqa Siyyid Ja'far-i-Yazdi saw the executioners burn his turban, and then they took him from door to door making him beg for money." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 408.)

22.32. "Aqa Siyyid Abu-Talib, who was very wealthy, was bound with chains and sent by the governor of Nayriz to Ma'dan, and there poisoned by Haji Mirza Nasir, the same man who had ordered the Bab to kiss the hand of Shaykh Abu-Turab. Two Babi women, rather than be taken prisoners, threw themselves in a well and perished. Some Babis, eager to see Mirza Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan punished, started for Tihran to protest to his Majesty against the atrocities which had been committed. They were but two or three stations away from the capital and, after the fatigue of the journey, were enjoying a little rest, when a caravan of Shirazi people went by and recognized them. They were all arrested except Zaynu'l-'Abidin who succeeded in reaching Tihran. The others were taken to Shiraz where the Prince immediately ordered them executed, and so these men, Karbila'i Abu'l-Hasan, a dealer in crockery, Aqa Shaykh Hadi, uncle of the wife of Vahid, Mirza 'Ali and Abu'l-Qasim-ibn-i-Haji-Zayna, Akbar-ibn-i-'Abid, Mirza Hasan and his brother Mirza Baba all died for their faith at this time. (Ibid., pp. 408-409.)

22.33. June 29, 1850 A.D.

CHAPTER XXIII
MARTYRDOM OF THE BAB

[500] The tale of the tragedy that marked the closing stages of the Nayriz upheaval spread over the length and breadth of Persia and kindled a startling enthusiasm in the hearts of those who heard it.

It plunged the authorities of the capital into consternation and nerved them to a resolve of despair.

The Amir-Nizam, the Grand Vazir of Nasiri'd-Din Shah, was particularly overawed by these recurrent manifestations of an indomitable will, of a fierce and inflexible tenacity of faith.

Though the forces of the imperial army had everywhere triumphed, though the companions of Mulla Husayn and Vahid had successively been mowed down in a ruthless carnage at the hands of its officers, yet to the shrewd minds of the rulers of Tihran it was clear and evident that [501] the spirit responsible for such rare heroism was by no means vanquished, that its might was far from broken.

The loyalty which the remnants of that scattered band bore to their captive Leader still remained unimpaired.

Nothing had as yet been successful, despite the appalling losses they had sustained, in sapping that loyalty or in undermining that faith.

Far from being extinguished, that spirit had blazed more intense and devastating than ever.

Galled by the memory of the indignities they had suffered, that persecuted band clung ever more passionately to its Faith and looked with increasing fervour and hope to its Leader.1 Above all, He who had kindled that flame and nourished that spirit was still alive, and, despite His isolation, was able to exercise the full measure of His influence.

Even a sleepless vigilance had been powerless to stem the tide that had swept over the entire face of the land, and which had as its motive force the continued existence of the Bab.

Extinguish that light, choke the stream at its very source, and the torrent that had brought so much devastation in its wake would run dry.

Such was the thought that swayed the Grand Vazir of Nasiri'd-Din Shah.

To do Him to death seemed to that foolish minister the most efficacious means for the recovery of his country from the shame into which he thought it had sunk.2

[502] Bestirred to action, he summoned his counsellors, shared with them his fears and his hopes, and acquainted them with the nature of his plans. "Behold," he exclaimed, "the storm which the Faith of the Siyyid-i-Bab has provoked in the hearts of my fellow-countrymen! Nothing short of his public execution can, to my mind, enable this distracted country to recover its tranquillity and peace. Who dare compute the forces that have perished in the course of the engagements at Shaykh Tabarsi? Who can estimate the efforts exerted to secure that victory? No sooner had the mischief that convulsed Mazindaran been suppressed, than the flames of another sedition blazed forth in the province of Fars, bringing in its wake so much suffering to my people. We had no sooner succeeded in quelling the revolt that had ravaged the south, than another insurrection breaks out in the north, sweeping in its vortex Zanjan and its surroundings. If you are able to advise a remedy, acquaint me with it, for my sole purpose is to ensure the peace and honour of my countrymen."

Not a single voice dared venture a reply, except that of Mirza Aqa Khani-i-Nuri, the Minister of War, who pleaded

[504] that to put to death a banished siyyid for the deeds committed by a band of irresponsible agitators would be an act of manifest cruelty. He recalled the example of the late Muhammad Shah, whose invariable practice it had been to disregard the base calumnies the enemies of that siyyid brought continually to his attention. The Amir-Nizam was sorely displeased. "Such considerations," he protested, "are wholly irrelevant to the issue with which we are faced. The interests of the State are in jeopardy, and we can in no wise tolerate these periodic upheavals. Was not the Imam Husayn, in view of the paramount necessity for safeguarding the unity of the State, executed by those same persons who had seen him more than once receive marks of exceptional affection from Muhammad, his Grandfather? Did they not in such circumstances refuse to consider the

rights which his lineage had conferred upon him? Nothing short of the remedy I advocate can uproot this evil and bring us the peace for which we long."

Disregarding the advice of his counsellor, the Amir-Nizam despatched his orders to Navvab Hamzih Mirza, the governor of Adhirbayjan, who was distinguished among the princes of royal blood for his kind-heartedness and rectitude of conduct, to summon the Bab to Tabriz.3 He was careful not to divulge to the prince his real purpose. The Navvab, assuming that the intention of the minister was to enable his Captive to return to His home, immediately directed one of his trusted officers, together with a mounted escort, to proceed to Chihriq, where the Bab still lay confined, and to bring Him back to Tabriz. He recommended Him to their care, urging them to exercise towards Him the utmost consideration.

Forty days before the arrival of that officer at Chihriq, the Bab collected all the documents and Tablets in His possession and, placing them, with His pen-case, His seals, and agate rings, in a coffer, entrusted them to the care of Mulla Baqir, one of the Letters of the Living. To him He also delivered a letter addressed to Mirza Ahmad, His amanuensis, [505] in which He enclosed the key to that coffer. He urged him to take the utmost care of that trust, emphasised the sacredness of its character, and bade him conceal its contents from anyone except Mirza Ahmad.

Mulla Baqir departed forthwith for Qazvin.

Within eighteen days he reached that town and was informed that Mirza Ahmad had departed for Qum.

He left immediately for that destination and arrived towards the middle of the month of Sha'ban.4 I was then in Qum, together with a certain Sadiq-i-Tabrizi, whom Mirza Ahmad had sent to fetch me from Zarand.

I was living in the same house with Mirza Ahmad, a house which he had hired in the Bagh-Panbih quarter.

In those days Shaykh 'Azim, Siyyid Isma'il, and a number of other companions likewise were dwelling with us.

Mulla Baqir delivered the trust into the hands of Mirza Ahmad, who, at the insistence of Shaykh 'Azim, opened it before us.

We marvelled when we beheld, among the things which that coffer contained, a scroll of blue paper, of the most delicate texture, on which the Bab, in His own exquisite handwriting, which was a fine shikastih script, had penned, in the form of a pentacle, what numbered about five hundred verses, all consisting of derivatives from the word "Baha."5 That scroll was in a state of perfect preservation, was spotlessly clean, and gave the impression, at first sight, of being a printed rather than a written page.

So fine and intricate was the penmanship that, viewed at a distance, the writing appeared as a single wash of ink on the paper.

We were overcome with admiration as we gazed upon a masterpiece which no calligraphist, we believed, could rival.

That scroll was replaced in the coffer and handed back to Mirza Ahmad, who, on the very day he received it, proceeded to Tihran.

Ere he departed, he informed us that all he could divulge of that letter was the injunction that the trust was to be delivered into the hands of Jinab-i-Baha6 in Tihran.7 [506] As to me, I was instructed by Mirza Ahmad to proceed to Zarand and join my father, who anxiously awaited my return.

Faithful to the instructions he had received from Navvab Hamzih Mirza, that officer conducted the Bab to Tabriz and showed Him the utmost respect and consideration. The prince had instructed one of his friends to accommodate Him in his home and to treat Him with extreme deference. Three days after the Bab's arrival, a fresh order was received from the Grand Vazir, commanding the prince to carry out the execution of his Prisoner on the very day the farman8 would reach him. Whoever would profess himself His follower was likewise to be condemned to death. The Armenian regiment of Urumiyyih, whose colonel was Sam Khan, was ordered to shoot Him, in the courtyard of the barracks of Tabriz, which were situated in the centre of the city.

The prince expressed his consternation to the bearer of the farman, Mirza Hasan Khan, the Vazir-Nizam and brother of the Grand Vazir. "The Amir," he told him, "would do better to entrust me with services of greater merit than the one with which he has now commissioned me. The task I am called upon to perform is a task that only ignoble people would accept. I am neither Ibn-i-Ziyad nor Ibn-i-Sa'd9 that he should call upon me to slay an innocent descendant of the Prophet of God." Mirza Hasan Khan reported these sayings of the prince to his brother, who thereupon ordered him to follow, himself, without delay and in their entirety, the instructions he had already given. "Relieve us," the Vazir urged his brother, "from this anxiety that weighs upon our hearts, and let this affair be brought to an end ere the month of Ramadan breaks upon us, that we may enter the period of fasting with undisturbed tranquillity." Mirza Hasan Khan attempted to acquaint the prince with these fresh instructions, but failed in his efforts, as the prince, pretending to be ill, refused to meet him. Undeterred by this refusal, he issued his instructions for the immediate transfer of the Bab and those in His company from the house [507] in which He was staying to one of the rooms of the barracks. He, moreover, directed Sam Khan to despatch ten of his men to guard the entrance of the room in which He was to be confined.

Deprived of His turban and sash, the twin emblems of His noble lineage, the Bab, together with Siyyid Husayn, His amanuensis, was driven to yet another confinement which He well knew was but a step further on the way leading Him to the goal He had set Himself to attain.

That day witnessed a tremendous commotion in the city of Tabriz.

The great convulsion associated in the ideas of its inhabitants with the Day of

Judgment seemed at last to have come upon them.

Never had that city experienced a turmoil so fierce and so mysterious as the one which seized its inhabitants on the day the Bab was led to that place which was to be the scene of His martyrdom.

As He approached the courtyard of the barracks, a youth suddenly leaped forward who, in his eagerness to overtake Him, had forced his way through the crowd, utterly ignoring the risks and perils which such an attempt might involve.

His face was haggard, his feet were bare, and his hair dishevelled.

Breathless with excitement and exhausted with fatigue, he flung himself at the feet of the Bab and, seizing the hem of His garment, passionately implored Him: "Send me not from Thee, O Master.

Wherever Thou goest, suffer me to follow Thee." "Muhammad-'Ali," answered the Bab, "arise, and rest assured that you will be with Me.10 To-morrow you shall witness what God has decreed."

Two other companions, unable to contain themselves, rushed forward and assured Him of their unalterable loyalty.

These, together with Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Zunuzi, were seized and placed in the same cell in which the Bab and Siyyid Husayn were confined.

I have heard Siyyid Husayn bear witness to the following: "That night the face of the Bab was aglow with joy, a joy such as had never shone from His countenance. Indifferent to the storm that raged about Him, He conversed with us with gaiety and cheerfulness. The sorrows that had weighed [508] so heavily upon Him seemed to have completely vanished. Their weight appeared to have dissolved in the consciousness of approaching victory. 'To-morrow,' He said to us, 'will be the day of My martyrdom. Would that one of you might now arise and, with his own hands, end My life. I prefer to be slain by the hand of a friend rather than by that of the enemy.' Tears rained from our eyes as we heard Him express that wish. We shrank, however, at the thought of taking away with our own hands so precious a life. We refused, and remained silent. Mirza Muhammad-'Ali suddenly sprang to his feet and announced himself ready to obey whatever the Bab might desire. 'This same youth who has risen to comply with My wish,' the Bab declared, as soon as we had intervened and forced him to abandon that thought, 'will, together with Me, suffer martyrdom. Him will I choose to share with Me its crown.'"

Early in the morning, Mirza Hasan Khan ordered his farrash-bashi11 to conduct the Bab into the presence of the leading mujtahids of the city and to obtain from them the authorisation required for His execution.12 As the Bab was leaving the barracks, Siyyid Husayn asked Him what he should do. "Confess not your faith," He advised him. "Thereby you will be enabled, when the hour comes, to convey to those who are destined to hear you, the things of which you alone are aware." He was engaged in a confidential conversation with him when the farrash-bashi suddenly [509] interrupted and, holding Siyyid Husayn by the

hand, drew him aside and severely rebuked him. "Not until I have said to him all those things that I wish to say," the Bab warned the farrash-bashi, "can any earthly power silence Me. Though all the world be armed against Me, yet shall they be powerless to deter Me from fulfilling, to the last word, My intention." The farrash-bashi was amazed at such a bold assertion. He made, however, no reply, and bade Siyyid Husayn arise and follow him.

When Mirza Muhammad-'Ali was ushered into the presence of the mujtahids, he was repeatedly urged, in view

of the position which his stepfather, Siyyid 'Aliy-i-Zunuzi, occupied, to recant his faith. "Never," he exclaimed, "will I renounce my Master. He is the essence of my faith, and the object of my truest adoration. In Him I have found my paradise, and in the observance of His law I recognise the ark of my salvation." "Hold your peace!" thundered Mulla Muhammad-i-Mamaqani, before whom that youth was brought. "Such words betray your madness; I can well excuse the words for which you are not responsible." "I am not mad," he retorted. "Such a charge should rather be brought against you who have sentenced to death a man no less holy than the promised Qa'im. He is not a fool who [510] has embraced His Faith and is longing to shed his blood in His path."

The Bab was, in His turn, brought before Mulla Muhammad-i-Mamaqani. No sooner had he recognised Him than he seized the death-warrant he himself had previously written and, handing it to his attendant, bade him deliver it to the farrash-bashi. "No need," he cried, "to bring the Siyyid-i-Bab into my presence. This death-warrant I penned the very day I met him at the gathering presided over by the Vali-'Ahd. He surely is the same man whom I saw on that occasion, and has not, in the meantime, surrendered any of his claims."

From thence the Bab was conducted to the house of Mirza Baqir, the son of Mirza Ahmad, to whom he had recently succeeded. When they arrived, they found his attendant standing at the gate and holding in his hand the Bab's death-warrant. "No need to enter," he told them. "My master is already satisfied that his father was right in pronouncing the sentence of death. He can do no better than follow his example."

Mulla Murtada-Quli, following in the footsteps of the other two mujtahids, had previously issued his own written testimony and refused to meet face to face his dreaded opponent. No sooner had the farrash-bashi secured the necessary documents than he delivered his Captive into the hands of Sam Khan, assuring him that he could proceed with his task now that he had obtained the sanction of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of the realm.

Siyyid Husayn had remained confined in the same room in which he had spent the previous night with the Bab. They were proceeding to place Mirza Muhammad-'Ali in that same room, when he burst forth into tears and entreated them to allow him to remain with his Master. He was delivered into the hands of Sam Khan, who was ordered to execute him also, if he persisted in his refusal to deny his Faith.

Sam Khan was, in the meantime, finding himself increasingly affected by the behaviour of his Captive and the treatment that had been meted out to Him. He was seized with great fear lest his action should bring upon him the

[512] wrath of God. "I profess the Christian Faith," he explained to the Bab, "and entertain no ill will against you. If your Cause be the Cause of Truth, enable me to free myself from the obligation to shed your blood." "Follow your instructions," the Bab replied, "and if your intention be sincere, the Almighty is surely able to relieve you from your perplexity."

Sam Khan ordered his men to drive a nail into the pillar that lay between the door of the room that Siyyid Husayn occupied and the entrance to the adjoining one, and to make fast two ropes to that nail, from which the Bab and His companion were to be separately suspended.13 Mirza Muhammad-'Ali begged Sam Khan to be placed in such a manner that his own body would shield that of the Bab.14 He was eventually suspended in such a position that his head reposed on the breast of his Master. As soon as they were fastened, a regiment of soldiers ranged itself in three files, each of two hundred and fifty men, each of which was ordered to open fire in its turn until the whole detachment had discharged the volleys of its bullets.15 The smoke of the firing of the seven hundred and fifty rifles was such as to turn the light of the noonday sun into darkness. There had crowded onto [513] the roof of the barracks, as well as the tops of the adjoining houses, about ten thousand people, all of whom were witnesses to that sad and moving scene.

As soon as the cloud of smoke had cleared away, an astounded multitude were looking upon a scene which their eyes could scarcely believe. There, standing before them alive and unhurt, was the companion of the Bab, whilst He Himself had vanished uninjured from their sight. Though the cords with which they were suspended had been rent in pieces by the bullets, yet their bodies had miraculously escaped the volleys.16 Even the tunic which Mirza Muhammad-'Ali was wearing had, despite the thickness of the smoke, remained unsullied. "The Siyyid-i-Bab has gone from our sight!" rang out the voices of the bewildered multitude. They set out in a frenzied search for Him, and found Him, eventually, seated in the same room which He had occupied the night before, engaged in completing His interrupted conversation, with Siyyid Husayn. An expression of unruffled calm was upon His face. His body had emerged unscathed from the shower of bullets which the regiment had directed against Him. "I have finished My conversation with Siyyid Husayn," the Bab told the farrash-bashi. "Now you may proceed to fulfil your intention." The man was too much shaken to resume what he had already attempted. Refusing to accomplish his duty, he, that same moment, left that scene and resigned his post. He related all that he had seen to [514] his neighbour, Mirza Siyyid Muhsin, one of the notables of Tabriz, who, as soon as he heard the story, was converted to the Faith.

I was privileged to meet, subsequently, this same Mirza Siyyid Muhsin, who conducted me to the scene of the Bab's martyrdom and showed me the wall where He had been suspended. I was taken to the room in which He had been found conversing with Siyyid Husayn, and was shown the very spot where He had been

seated. I saw the very nail which His enemies had hammered into the wall and to which the rope which had supported His body had been attached.

Sam Khan was likewise stunned by the force of this tremendous revelation. He ordered his men to leave the barracks immediately, and refused ever again to associate himself and his regiment with any act that involved the least injury to the Bab. He swore, as he left that courtyard, never again to resume that task even though his refusal should entail the loss of his own life.

No sooner had Sam Khan departed than Aqa Jan Khan-i-Khamsih, colonel of the body-guard, known also by the names of Khamsih and Nasiri, volunteered to carry out the order for execution. On the same wall and in the same manner, the Bab and His companion were again suspended, while the regiment formed in line to open fire upon them. Contrariwise to the previous occasion, when only the cord with which they were suspended had been shot into pieces, this time their bodies were shattered and were blended into one mass of mingled flesh and bone.17 "Had you believed in Me, O wayward generation," were the last words of the Bab to the gazing multitude as the regiment was preparing to fire the final volley, "every one of you would have followed the example of this youth, who stood in rank above most of you, and willingly would have sacrificed himself in My path. The day will come when you will have recognised Me; that day I shall have ceased to be with you."18

[515] The very moment the shots were fired, a gale of exceptional severity arose and swept over the whole city. A whirlwind of dust of incredible density obscured the light of the sun and blinded the eyes of the people. The entire city remained enveloped in that darkness from noon till night. Even so strange a phenomenon, following immediately in the wake of that still more astounding failure of Sam Khan's regiment to injure the Bab, was unable to move [516] the hearts of the people of Tabriz, and to induce them to pause and reflect upon the significance of such momentous events. They witnessed the effect which so marvellous an occurrence had produced upon Sam Khan; they beheld the consternation of the farrash-bashi and saw him make his irrevocable decision; they could even examine that tunic which, despite the discharge of so many bullets, had remained whole and stainless; they could read in the face of [517] the Bab, who had emerged unhurt from that storm, the expression of undisturbed serenity as He resumed His conversation with Siyyid Husayn; and yet none of them troubled himself to enquire as to the significance of these unwonted signs and wonders.

The martyrdom of the Bab took place at noon on Sunday, the twenty-eighth of Sha'ban, in the year 1266 A.H.,19 thirty-one lunar years, seven months, and twenty-seven days from the day of His birth in Shiraz.

On the evening of that same day, the mangled bodies of the Bab and His companion were removed from the courtyard [518] of the barracks to the edge of the moat outside the gate of the city. Four companies, each consisting of ten sentinels, were ordered to keep watch in turn over them. On the morning following the day of martyrdom, the Russian consul in Tabriz, accompanied by an

artist, went to that spot and ordered that a sketch be made of the remains as they lay beside the moat.20

I have heard Haji 'Ali-'Askar relate the following: "An official of the Russian consulate, to whom I was related, showed me that same sketch on the very day it was drawn. It was such a faithful portrait of the Bab that I looked upon! No bullet had struck His forehead, His cheeks, or His lips. I gazed upon a smile which seemed to be still lingering upon His countenance. His body, however, had been severely mutilated. I could recognise the arms and head of His companion, who seemed to be holding Him in his embrace. As I gazed horror-struck upon that haunting picture, and saw how those noble traits had been disfigured, my heart sank within me. I turned away my face in anguish and, regaining my house, locked myself within my room. For three days and three nights, I could neither sleep nor eat, so overwhelmed was I with emotion. That short and tumultuous life, with all its sorrows, its turmoils, its banishments, and eventually the awe-inspiring martyrdom with which it had been crowned, seemed again to be re-enacted before my eyes. I tossed upon my bed, writhing in agony and pain."

On the afternoon of the second day after the Bab's martyrdom, Haji Sulayman Khan, son of Yahya Khan, arrived at Bagh-Mishih, a suburb of Tabriz, and was received at the house of the Kalantar,21 one of his friends and confidants, [519] who was a dervish and belonged to the sufi community.

As soon as he had been informed of the imminent danger that threatened the life of the Bab, Haji Sulayman Khan had left Tihran with the object of achieving His deliverance.

To his dismay, he arrived too late to carry out his intention.

No sooner had his host informed him of the circumstances that had led to the arrest and condemnation of the Bab, and related to him the events of His martyrdom, than he instantly resolved to carry away the bodies of the victims, even at the risk of endangering his own life.

The Kalantar advised him to wait and follow his suggestion rather than expose himself to what seemed to him would be inevitable death.

He urged him to transfer his residence to another house and to wait for the arrival, that evening, of a certain Haji Allah-Yar, who, he said, would be willing to carry out whatever he might wish him to do.

At the appointed hour, Haji Sulayman Khan met Haji Allah-Yar, who succeeded, in the middle of that same night, in bearing the bodies from the edge of the moat to the silk factory owned by one of the believers of Milan; laid them, the next day, in a specially constructed wooden case, and transferred them, according to Haji Sulayman Khan's directions, to a place of safety.

Meanwhile the sentinels sought to justify themselves by pretending that, while they slept, wild beasts had carried away the bodies.22 Their superiors, on their part, unwilling to compromise their own honour, concealed the truth and did not divulge it to the authorities.23

Haji Sulayman Khan immediately reported the matter [520] to Baha'u'llah, who was then in Tihran and who instructed Aqay-i-Kalim to despatch a special messenger to Tabriz for the purpose of transferring the bodies to the capital. This decision was prompted by the wish the Bab Himself had expressed

[521] in the "Ziyarat-i-Shah-'Abdu'l-'Azim," a Tablet He had revealed while in the neighbourhood of that shrine and which He delivered to a certain Mirza Sulayman-i-Khatib, who was instructed by Him to proceed together with a number of believers to that spot and to chant it within its precincts.24 "Well is it with you," the Bab addressed the buried saint in words such as these, in the concluding passages of that Tablet, "to have found your resting place in Rayy, under the shadow of My Beloved. Would that I might be entombed within the precincts of that holy ground!"

I was myself in Tihran, in the company of Mirza Ahmad, when the bodies of the Bab and His companion arrived. Baha'u'llah had in the meantime departed for Karbila, in pursuance of the instructions of the Amir-Nizam. Aqay-i-Kalim, together with Mirza Ahmad, transferred those remains from the Imam-Zadih-Hasan,25 where they were first taken, to a place the site of which remained unknown to anyone excepting themselves. That place remained secret until the departure of Baha'u'llah for Adrianople, at which time Aqay-i-Kalim was charged to inform Munir, one of his fellow-disciples, of the actual site where the bodies had been laid. In spite of his search, he was unable to find it. It was subsequently discovered by Jamal, an old adherent of the Faith, to whom that secret was confided while Baha'u'llah [522] was still in Adrianople. That spot is, until now, unknown to the believers, nor can anyone conjecture where the remains will eventually be transferred.

The first in Tihran to hear of the circumstances attending that cruel martyrdom, after the Grand Vazir, was Mirza Aqa Khan-i-Nuri, who had been banished to Kashan by Muhammad Shah when the Bab was passing through that city. He had assured Haji Mirza Jani, who had acquainted him with the precepts of the Faith, that if the love he bore for the new Revelation would cause him to regain his lost position, he would exert his utmost endeavour to secure the well-being and safety of the persecuted community. Haji Mirza Jani reported the matter to his Master, who charged him to assure the disgraced minister that ere long he would be summoned to Tihran and would be invested, by his sovereign, with a position that would be second to none except that of the Shah himself. He was warned not to forget his promise, and to strive to carry out his intention. He was delighted with that message, and renewed the assurance he had given.

When the news of the Bab's martyrdom reached him, he had already been promoted, had received the title of I'timadu'd-Dawlih, and was hoping to be raised to the position of Grand Vazir. He hastened to inform Baha'u'llah, with whom he was intimately acquainted, of the news he had received, expressing the hope that the fire he feared would one day bring untold calamity upon Him, was at last extinguished. "Not so," Baha'u'llah replied. "If this be true, you can be certain that the flame that has been kindled will, by this very act, blaze

forth more fiercely than ever, and will set up a conflagration such as the combined forces of the statesmen of this realm will be powerless to quench." The significance of these words Mirza Aqa Khan was destined to appreciate at a later time. Scarcely did he imagine, when that prediction was uttered, that the Faith which had received so staggering a blow could survive its Author. He himself had, on one occasion, been cured by Baha'u'llah of an illness from which he had given up all hope of recovery.

His son, the Nizamu'l-Mulk, one day asked him whether he did not think that Baha'u'llah, who, of all the sons of the late Vazir, had shown Himself the most capable, had failed [523] to live up to the tradition of His father and had disappointed the hopes that had been reposed in Him. "My son," he replied, "do you really believe him to be an unworthy son of his father?

All that either of us can hope to achieve is but a fleeting and precarious allegiance which will vanish as soon as our days are ended.

Our mortal life can never be free from the vicissitudes that beset the path of earthly ambition.

Should we even succeed in ensuring, in our lifetime, the honour of our name, who can tell whether, after our death, calumny may not stain our memory and undo the work we have achieved?

Even those who, while we are still living, honour us with their lips would, in their hearts, condemn and vilify us were we, for but one moment, to fail to promote their interests.

Not so, however, with Baha'u'llah.

Unlike the great ones of the earth, whatever be their race or rank, he is the object of a love and devotion such as time cannot dim nor enemy destroy.

His sovereignty the shadows of death can never obscure nor the tongue of the slanderer undermine.

Such is the sway of his influence that no one among his lovers dare, in the stillness of night, evoke the memory of the faintest desire that could, even remotely, be construed as contrary to his wish.

Such lovers will greatly increase in number.

The love they bear him will never grow less, and will be transmitted from generation to generation until the world shall have been suffused with its glory."

The malicious persistence with which a savage enemy sought to ill-treat and eventually to destroy the life of the Bab brought in its wake untold calamities upon Persia and its inhabitants.

The men who perpetrated these atrocities fell victims to gnawing remorse, and in an incredibly short period were made to suffer ignominious deaths.

As to the great mass of its people, who watched with sullen indifference the

tragedy that was being enacted before their eyes, and who failed to raise a finger in protest against the hideousness of those cruelties, they fell, in their turn, victims to a misery which all the resources of the land and the energy of its statesmen were powerless to alleviate.

The wind of adversity blew fiercely upon them, and shook to its foundations their material prosperity.

From the very day the hand of the assailant was stretched forth against the Bab, and sought to [524] deal its fatal blow to His Faith, visitation upon visitation crushed the spirit out of that ungrateful people, and brought them to the very brink of national bankruptcy.

Plagues, the very names of which were almost unknown to them except for a cursory reference in the dust-covered books which few cared to read, fell upon them with a fury that none could escape.

That scourge scattered devastation wherever it spread.

Prince and peasant alike felt its sting and bowed to its yoke.

It held the populace in its grip, and refused to relax its hold upon them.

As malignant as the fever which decimated the province of Gilan, these sudden afflictions continued to lay waste the land.

Grievous as were these calamities, the avenging wrath of God did not stop at the misfortunes that befell a perverse and faithless people.

It made itself felt in every living being that breathed on the surface of that stricken land.

It affected the life of plants and animals alike, and made the people feel the magnitude of their distress.

Famine added its horrors to the stupendous weight of afflictions under which the people were groaning.

The gaunt spectre of starvation stalked abroad amidst them, and the prospect of a slow and painful death haunted their vision.

People and government alike sighed for the relief which they could nowhere obtain.

They drank the cup of woe to its dregs, utterly unregardful of the hand which had brought it to their lips, and of the Person for whose sake they were made to suffer.

The first who arose to ill-treat the Bab was none other than Husayn Khan, the governor of Shiraz. His disgraceful treatment of his Captive cost him the lives of thousands who had been committed to his protection and who connived at his acts. His province was ravaged by a plague which brought it to the verge of destruction. Impoverished and exhausted, Fars languished helpless beneath its weight, calling for the charity of its neighbours and the assistance of its

friends. Husayn Khan himself witnessed with bitterness the undoing of all his labours, was condemned to lead in obscurity the remaining days of his life, and tottered to his grave, abandoned and forgotten, alike by his friends and his enemies.

The next who sought to challenge the Faith of the Bab [525] and to stem its progress was Haji Mirza Aqasi. It was he who, for selfish purposes and in order to court the favour of the abject ulamas of his time, interposed between the Bab and Muhammad Shah and endeavoured to prevent their meeting. It was he who pronounced the banishment of his dreaded Captive to a sequestered corner of Adhirbayjan and, with dogged vigilance, kept watch over His isolation. It was he who was made the recipient of that denunciatory Tablet in which his Prisoner foreshadowed his doom and exposed his infamy. Barely a year and six months had passed after the Bab had reached the neighbourhood of Tihran, when Divine vengeance hurled him from power and drove him to seek shelter within the inglorious precincts of the shrine of Shah-'Abdu'l-'Azim, a refugee from the wrath of his own people. From thence the hand of the Avenger drove him into exile beyond the confines of his native land, and plunged him into an ocean of afflictions until he met his death in circumstances of abject poverty and unspeakable distress.

As to the regiment which, despite the unaccountable failure of Sam Khan and his men to destroy the life of the Bab, had volunteered to renew that attempt, and which eventually riddled His body with its bullets, two hundred and fifty of its members met their death in that same year, together with their officers, in a terrible earthquake.

While they were resting on a hot summer day under the shadow of a wall on their way between Ardibil and Tabriz, absorbed in their games and pleasures, the whole structure suddenly collapsed and fell upon them, leaving not one survivor.

The remaining five hundred suffered the same fate as that which their own hands had inflicted upon the Bab.

Three years after His martyrdom, that regiment mutinied, and its members were thereupon mercilessly shot by command of Mirza Sadiq Khan-i-Nuri.

Not content with a first volley, he ordered that a second one be fired in order to ensure that none of the mutineers had survived.

Their bodies were afterwards pierced with spears and lances, and left exposed to the gaze of the people of Tabriz.

That day many of the inhabitants of the city, recalling the circumstances of the Bab's martyrdom, wondered at that same fate which had overtaken those who had slain Him. "Could it be, by any chance, the vengeance [526] of God," a few were heard to whisper to one another, "that has brought the whole regiment to so dishonourable and tragic an end?

If that youth had been a lying impostor, why should his persecutors have been

so severely punished?"

These expressed misgivings reached the ears of the leading mujtahids of the city, who were seized with great fear and ordered that all those who entertained such doubts should be severely punished.

Some were beaten, others were fined, all were warned to cease such whisperings, which could only revive the memory of a terrible adversary and rekindle enthusiasm for His Cause.

The prime mover of the forces that precipitated the Bab's martyrdom, the Amir-Nizam, and also his brother, the Vazir-Nizam, his chief accomplice, were, within two years of that savage act, subjected to a dreadful punishment, which ended miserably in their death. The blood of the Amir-Nizam stains, to this very day, the wall of the bath of Fin,26 a witness to the atrocities his own hand had wrought.27

FOOTNOTES

23.1. "It was only too well known that Babis were to be found everywhere. Persia was full of them and, if the minds concerned about transcendental questions, if the philosophers in search of new formulas, if the bruised souls shocked by the injustices and weaknesses of the present day had given themselves up eagerly to the thought and to the promises of a new and more satisfactory world order, one could properly think that the turbulent imaginations eager for action, even at the price of failure, the brave and militant hearts, and finally the daring and ambitious would easily be tempted to throw themselves in with an army which revealed itself so well supplied with soldiers fit to constitute dauntless battalions. "Mirza Taqi Khan, cursing the laxity with which his predecessor Haji Mirza Aqasi had allowed so great a peril to grow, realized that this weak policy should not continue and decided to destroy the evil to its very roots. He became convinced that the main cause was the Bab himself, father of all the doctrines which were arousing the people, and he decided to remove that cause." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 210-11.)

23.2. "In the meantime, Haji Mirza Taqi resolved to strike at the very head of this monster of Babism and he imagined that, after such a blow which would definitely remove the instigator of that agitation and silence his appeal, the old order would be restored.

Nevertheless, strange phenomenon in an Asiatic government, and especially in a statesmen like Mirza Taqi Khan who could indulge in excessive severity without scruple, this minister did not order the death of the reformer!

He thought that the most effective way to destroy him was to ruin him morally; to bring him out of his retreat in Chihriq where a halo of suffering, holiness, science and eloquence made him radiate like a sun; to show him to the people just as he was—that is to say, just as he thought he was—was the best way to render him harmless by destroying his prestige. "He was picturing him as a vulgar charlatan, a weak dreamer who did not have courage enough to conceive,

still less to direct the daring enterprises of his three apostles, or even to take part in them.

Such a man, taken to Tihran and brought face to face with the most subtle dialecticians of Islam, could not but surrender shamefully.

His influence would vanish the more rapidly than if while destroying his body, one allowed to linger in the minds of the people the phantom of a superiority which death would have consecrated.

It was therefore decided to arrest him and bring him to Tihran and, on the way, to exhibit him publicly in chains and humiliated; to make him debate everywhere with the mullas, silencing him whenever he would become too audacious; briefly, to engage him in a series of unequal encounters in which he would inevitably meet defeat, as he would have been previously demoralized and heartbroken.

It was a lion that they were eager to unnerve, hold in chains and strip of claws and teeth, then turn him over to the dogs to show how easily they could overpower him.

Once defeated, his ultimate fate was of little importance. "This plan was not devoid of sense, but it rested upon premises which were far from proven.

It was not enough to imagine that the Bab was without courage and firmness, it was necessary that he be really so.

But his conduct in the fort of Chihriq gave no such evidence.

He prayed and worked unceasingly.

His meekness was unfailing.

Those who came near him felt, in spite of themselves, the fascinating influence of his personality, of his manner and of his speech.

His guards were not free from that weakness.

He (the Bab) felt that his death was near and he would frequently refer to it as to a thought that was not only familiar but even pleasant.

Suppose, for a moment, that thus exhibited throughout Persia he would still remain undaunted?

Suppose he would display neither arrogance nor fear but would rise far above his misfortune?

Suppose that he succeeded in throwing into confusion the learned, subtle, and eloquent doctors arraigned against him?

Suppose he would remain more than ever the Bab for his old followers and become so for the indifferent and even for his enemies?

It was risking much in order to gain much, without doubt, but also perhaps to lose much and, after having weighed the matter with care, they dared not take the chance." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans

l'Asie Centrale," pp.

211-213.)

23.3. "The prime minister, having summoned Sulayman Khan, the Afshar, asked him to carry to Tabriz, to the Prince Hamzih Mirza, governor of Adhirbayjan, the order to take the Bab out of the fort of Chihriq and to imprison him in the citadel of Tabriz where he would later be apprised of his fate." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 213.)

23.4. June 12-July 11, 1850 A.D.

23,5. According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 42), the Bab had produced no less than three hundred and sixty derivatives from the word "Baha."

23.6. Title by which Baha'u'llah was designated in those days.

23.7. "The end of the Bab's earthly Manifestation is now close upon us. He knew it himself before the event, and was not displeased at the presentiment. He had already 'set his house in order,' as regards the spiritual affairs of the Babi community, which he had, if I mistake not, confided to the intuitive wisdom of Baha'u'llah.... It is impossible not to feel that this is far more probable than the view which makes Subh-i-Azal the custodian of the sacred writings and the arranger of a resting-place for the sacred remains. I much fear that the Azalis have manipulated tradition in the interest of their party." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," pp. 65-6.)

23.8. See Glossary.

23.9. Persecutors of the descendants of Muhammad.

23.10. "It is no doubt a singular coincidence that both 'Ali-Muhammad and Jesus Christ are reported to have addressed these words to a disciple: 'To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.'" (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," p. 185.)

23.11. See Glossary.

23.12. "On the following day, early in the morning, the people of Hamzih Mirza, having opened the doors of the prison, brought out the Bab and his disciples.

They made sure that the irons which they had around their necks and on their wrists were secure; they tied to the iron collar of each one a long cord the end of which was held by a farrash.

Then, so that everyone could see them well and recognize them, they walked them about the town, through the streets and the bazaars, overwhelming them with blows and insults.

The crowd filled the streets and the people climbed upon each others' shoulders better to see this man who was so much talked about.

The Babis, scattered in all directions, were trying to arouse among some of the onlookers a little pity or some feeling of sympathy which might have helped

them to save their Master.

The indifferent ones, the philosophers, the Shaykhis, the Sufis, turned away from the sight with disgust and returned to their houses, or on the contrary waited for the Bab at a street corner and simply watched him with silent curiosity.

The tattered crowd, restless and excitable, flung insulting words at the three martyrs, but they were all ready to change their minds with any sudden change of circumstances. "Finally, the victorious Muhammadans pursued the prisoners with insults, tried to break through the guard in order to strike them in the face or on the head and when they succeeded, or when a missile thrown by some child would strike the Bab or one of his companions in the face, the guard and the crowd would burst into laughter." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p.

220.)

23.13. "The Bab remained silent. His pale handsome face framed by a black beard and small mustache, his appearance and his refined manners, his white and delicate hands, his simple but very neat garments—everything about him awakened sympathy and compassion." (Journal Asiatique, 1866. tome 7, p. 378.)

23.14. "Proof of the devotion and steadfastness of this noble man is afforded by a letter in his own blessed writing which was in the possession of his brother Mulla 'Abdu'llah, who still lives in Tabriz.

This letter he wrote from the prison, three days or two days before his martyrdom, in reply to his brother, who had written to him counselling him to turn aside from his devotion and thraldom; and therein he makes his apology.

And since the martyr was the younger of the two brethren, therefore he adopts a respectful tone in his letter.

The text of this letter of reply is as follows: 'He is the Compassionate.

O my Qiblih!

Thanks be to God, I have no fault to find with my circumstances, and "to every travail rest succeeds."

As to what you wrote, that this matter hath no end, what matter, then, hath an end?

We, at least, have no discontent therein; being, indeed, unable sufficiently to express our gratitude for this blessing.

At most we can but be slain for God's sake, and, oh, what happiness were this!

The Lord's will must be accomplished through His servants, neither can prudence avert predestined fate.

What God wills comes to pass: there is no strength save in God.

O my Qiblih!

The end of the life of the world is death: "every soul shall taste of death."

If the appointed destiny which the Lord (mighty and glorious is He) hath decreed should overtake me, then God is the guardian of my family, and thou art my trustee; act in such wise as accords with God's good pleasure.

Forgive any failure in the respect or duty owed to an elder brother of which I may have been guilty, seek pardon for me from all those of my household, and commend me to God.

God is my portion, and how good is He as a guardian!'" (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," pp.

301-3.)

23.15. "When the condemned are shot in Persia, they are bound to a post looking away from the spectators so that they are not able to see the signals for execution given by the officer." (Journal Asiatique, 1866, tome 7, p. 377.)

23.16. "An intense clamor arose from the crowd at this moment as the onlookers saw the Bab freed from his bonds advancing towards them.

Amazing to believe, the bullets had not struck the condemned but, on the contrary, had broken his bonds and he was delivered.

It was a real miracle and God alone knows what would have happened without the fidelity and calm of the Christian regiment on this occurrence.

The soldiers in order to quiet the excitement of the crowd which, being extremely agitated, was ready to believe the claims of a religion which thus demonstrated its truth, showed the cords broken by the bullets, implying that no miracle had really taken place.

At the same time, they seized the Bab and tied him again to the fatal post.

This time the execution was effective.

Muhammadan justice and ecclesiastical law had asserted themselves.

But the crowd, vividly impressed by the spectacle they had witnessed, dispersed slowly, hardly convinced that the Bab was a criminal.

After all his crime was only a crime for the legalists and the world is indulgent toward crimes which it does not understand." (M.C.

Huart's "La Religion du Bab," pp.

3-4.) "An extraordinary thing happened, unique in the annals of the history of humanity: the bullets cut the cords that held the Bab and he fell on his feet without a scratch." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p.

375.) "By a strange coincidence, the bullet only touched the cords which bound the Bab, they were broken and he felt himself free.

Uproar and shouts arose on all sides, no one understanding at first what it was all about." (Ibid., p.

379.)

23.17. According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 45), "the breasts [of the victims] were riddled, and their limbs were completely dissected, except their faces, which were but little marred."

23.18. "Praise be to God who manifested the Point [the Bab] and caused to proceed therefrom the knowledge of all that was and shall be....

He is that Point which God hath made to be an Ocean of Light unto the faithful among His servants, and a Ball of Fire unto the deniers among His creatures and the impious among His people." (Baha'u'llah, the "Ishraqat," p.

3.) "In His interpretation of the letter 'Ha,' He craved martyrdom, saying: 'Methinks I heard a voice calling in My inmost being: "Do Thou sacrifice the thing which Thou lovest most in the path of God, even as Husayn, peace be upon him, hath offered up his life for My sake."

And were I not regardful of this inevitable mystery, by Him in whose hand is My soul, even if all the kings of the earth were to be leagued together, they would be powerless to take from Me a single letter; how much less can such servants as these, who are worthy of no attention, and who verily are of the outcast? that all may know the degree of My patience, My resignation and self-sacrifice in the path of God.'" (Idem, the "Kitab-i-Iqan," p.

195.) "The Bab, the Lord most high, may the life of all be a sacrifice unto Him, hath specifically revealed an Epistle unto the ulamas of every city, wherein He hath fully set forth the character of the denial and repudiation of each of them.

Wherefore, take ye good heed, ye who are men of insight!" (Ibid., p.

193.) "This illustrious Soul arose with such power that He shook the supports of the religion, of the morals, the conditions, the habits, and the customs of Persia, and instituted new rules, new laws, and a new religion.

Though the great personages of the State, nearly all the clergy, and the public men, arose to destroy and annihilate Him, He alone withstood them, and moved the whole of Persia....

He imparted Divine education to an unenlightened multitude and produced marvellous results on the thoughts, morals, customs, and conditions of the Persians." ('Abdu'l-Baha, "Some Answered Questions," pp.

30-31.) "Christians believe that if Jesus Christ had wished to come down from the cross he could have done so easily; he died of his own free will because it was written that he should and in order that the prophecies might be fulfilled.

The same is true of the Bab, so the Babis say, who, in this way, gave a clear sanction to his teachings.

He likewise died voluntarily because his death was to be the salvation of humanity.

Who will ever tell us the words that the Bab uttered in the midst of the unprecedented turmoil which broke out as he ascended?

Who will ever know the memories which stirred his noble soul?

Who will reveal to us the secret of that death....

The sight of the baseness, the vices, the deceptions of that clergy shocked his pure and sincere soul: he felt the need of a thorough reform in public morals and he undoubtedly hesitated more than once, at the thought of a revolution, which seemed unavoidable, to free the bodies as well as the minds from the yoke of brutishness and violence which weighed upon all Persia for the selfish benefit of a minority ... of pleasure lovers, and to the greatest shame of the true religion of the Prophet.

He must have been much perplexed, deeply anxious, and he stood in need of the triple shield of which Horace speaks, to throw himself headlong into that ocean of superstition and hatred which was fatally to engulf him.

His life is one of the most magnificent examples of courage which it has been the privilege of mankind to behold, and it is also an admirable proof of the love which our hero felt for his fellow countrymen.

He sacrificed himself for humanity, for it he gave his body and his soul, for it he endured privations, insults, torture and martyrdom.

He sealed, with his very lifeblood, the covenant of universal brotherhood.

Like Jesus he paid with his life for the proclamation of a reign of concord, equity and brotherly love.

More than anyone he knew what dreadful dangers he was heaping upon himself.

He had been able to see personally the degree of exasperation that a fanaticism, shrewdly aroused, could reach; but all these considerations could not weaken his resolve.

Fear had no hold upon his soul and, perfectly calm, never looking back, in full possession of all his powers, he walked into the furnace." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

203-204, 376.) "The head of the new religion was dead and, according to the provisions of the prime minister, the minds of the people would now be at peace and there was no room for further anxiety, at least from that source.

But such political wisdom was baffled and, instead of appeasing the flames, it had fanned them into greater violence." "We shall see shortly, when I shall examine the religious dogmas preached by the Bab, that the perpetuity of the sect did not in the least depend upon his physical presence; all could proceed and grow without him.

If the premier had been aware of this fundamental trait of the hostile religion, it is not likely that he would have been so eager to do away with a man whose existence, after all, would not have had any more significance than his death." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp.

224,225.) "Such a prophet," writes the Rev.

Dr.

T.

K.

Cheyne, "was the Bab; we call him 'prophet' for want of a better name; 'yea, I say unto you, a prophet and more than a prophet.' His combination of mildness and power is so rare that we have to place him in a line with super-normal men....

We learn that, at great points in his career, after he had been in an ecstasy, such radiance of might and majesty streamed from his countenance that none could bear to look upon the effulgence of his glory and beauty.

Nor was it an uncommon occurrence for unbelievers involuntarily to bow down in lowly obeisance on beholding His Holiness; while the inmates of the castle, though for the most part Christians and Sunnis, reverently prostrated themselves whenever they saw the visage of His Holiness.

Such transfiguration is well known to the saints.

It was regarded as the affixing of the heavenly seal to the reality and completeness of [the] Bab's detachment." ("The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," pp.

8-9.) "Who can fail to be attracted by the gentle spirit of Mirza 'Ali-Muhammad?

His sorrowful and persecuted life; his purity of conduct, and youth; his courage and uncomplaining patience under misfortune; his complete self-negation; the dim ideal of a better state of things which can be discerned through the obscure and mystic utterances of the Bayan; but most of all his tragic death, all serve to enlist our sympathies on behalf of the young Prophet of Shiraz.

The irresistible charm which won him such devotion during his life still lives on, and still continues to influence the minds of the Persian people." (E.

G.

Browne's art. "The Babis of Persia,"

Journal of the R.

A.

S., 1889, p.

933.) "Few believe that by these sanguinary measures the doctrines of [the] Bab will cease from propagation.

There is a spirit of change abroad among the Persians, which will preserve his system from extinction; besides which, his doctrines are of an attractive nature to Persians.

Though now subdued, and obliged to lurk concealed in towns, it is conjectured that the creed of [the] Bab, far from diminishing, is daily spreading." (Lady Sheil's "Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia," p.

181.) "The story of the Bab, as Mirza 'Ali-Muhammad called himself, was the story of spiritual heroism unsurpassed in Svabhava's experience; and his own adventurous soul was fired by it.

That a youth of no social influence and no education should, by the simple power of insight, be able to pierce into the heart of things and see the real truth, and then hold on to it with such firmness of conviction and present it with such suasion that he was able to convince men that he was the Messiah and get them to follow him to death itself, was one of those splendid facts in human history that Svabhava loved to meditate on...

The Bab's passionate sincerity could not be doubted, for he had given his life for his faith.

And that there must be something in his message that appealed to men and satisfied their souls was witnessed to by the fact that thousands gave their lives in his cause and millions now follow him.

If a young man could, in only six years of ministry, by the sincerity of his purpose and the attraction of his personality, so inspire rich and poor, cultured and illiterate, alike, with belief in himself and his doctrines that they would remain staunch though hunted down and without trial sentenced to death, sawn asunder, strangled, shot, blown from guns; and if men of high position and culture in Persia, Turkey and Egypt in numbers to this day adhere to his doctrines; his life must be one of those events in the last hundred years which is really worth study." (Sir Francis Younghusband's "The Gleam," pp.

183-4.) "Thus, in only his thirtieth year, in the year 1850, ended the heroic career of a true God-man.

Of the sincerity of his conviction that he was God-appointed, the manner of his death is the amplest possible proof.

In the belief that he would thereby save others from the error of their present

beliefs he willingly sacrificed his life.

And of his power of attaching men to him the passionate devotion of hundreds and even thousands of men who gave their lives in his cause is convincing testimony." (Ibid., p.

210.) "The Bab was dead, but not Babism.

He was not the first, and still less the last, of a long line of martyrs who have testified that, even in a country gangrened with corruption and atrophied with indifferentism like Persia, the soul of a nation survives, inarticulate, perhaps, and in a way helpless, but still capable of sudden spasms of vitality." (Valentine Chirol's "The Middle Eastern Question," p.

120.)

23.19. July 9, 1850 A.D.

23.20. "'The Emperor of Russia,' he [Haji Mirza Jani] says, 'sent to the Russian consul at Tabriz, bidding him fully investigate and report the circumstances of His Holiness the Bab. As soon as this news arrived, they, i.e. the Persian authorities, put the Bab to death. The Russian consul summoned Aqa Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn, the Bab's amanuensis, who was imprisoned at Tabriz, into his presence, and enquired concerning the signs and circumstances of His Holiness. Aqa Siyyid Husayn, because there were Musulmans present, dared not speak plainly about his Master, but managed by means of hints to communicate sundry matters, and also gave him [the Russian consul] certain of the Bab's writings.' That this statement is, in part at least, true is proved by the testimony of Dorn, who, in describing a M.S. of one of the Bab's 'Commentaries on the Names of God' (which he calls 'Qur'an der Babi'), says, on p. 248 of vol. 8 of the Bulletin de l'Academie Imperiale des Sciences de St. Petersbourg, that it was 'received directly from the Bab's own secretary, who, during his imprisonment at Tabriz, placed it in European hands.'" (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," pp. 395-6.)

23.21. See Glossary.

23.22. "Following an immemorial custom of the Orient, usage exemplified at the siege of Bethulie as well as at the tomb of our Lord, the sentinel is a soldier who sleeps, to his heart's content, at the post which he is expected to guard." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 166.) "We have been able to see throughout this history what the Persian guards are; their functions consist principally in sleeping by the trust that they are given to watch over." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 378.)

23.23. "M. de Gobineau, in agreement with the authors of the Nasikhu't-Tavarikh, of Rawdatu's-Safa, of Mir'atu'l-Buldan, in a word with all the official historians, relates that after the execution the body of the Bab was thrown in a moat of the city and devoured by dogs. In reality it was not so, and we shall see why this news had been spread by the authorities of Tabriz

(little eager to draw upon themselves a rebuke of the government for a favor dearly sold) and by the Babis, desirous to prevent any further investigation by the police. The most reliable testimony of the actual witnesses of the drama or of its actors do not leave me any doubt that the body of Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad was carried away by pious hands and, at last, after various incidents which I shall narrate, received a burial worthy of him." (Ibid., p. 377.)

23.24. "Tihran is thus endowed in respect of the mausoleum and sanctuary of Shah 'Abdu'l-'Azim.

Reposing beneath a golden-plated dome, whose scintillations I had seen from afar while riding towards the city, the remains of this holy individual are said to attract an annual visitation of 300 thousand persons.

I find that most writers discreetly veil their ignorance of the identity of the saint by describing him as 'a holy Musulman, whose shrine is much frequented by the pious Tihranis.' It appears, however, that long before the advent of Islam this had been a sacred spot, as the sepulchre of a lady of great sanctity, in which connection it may be noted that the shrine is still largely patronised by women.

Here, after the Musulman conquest, was interred Imam-Zadih Hamzih, the son of the seventh Imam, Musa-Kazim; and here, flying from the Khalif Mutavakkil, came a holy personage named Abu'l-Qasim 'Abdu'l-'Azim, who lived in concealment at Rayy till his death in about 861 A.D. (This is the account given by the Persian Kitab-i-Majlisi, quoting Shaykh Najashi, quoting Barki.) Subsequently his fame obscured that of his more illustrious predecessor.

Successive sovereigns, particularly those of the reigning dynasty, have extended and beautified the cluster of buildings raised above his grave, the ever-swelling popularity of which has caused a considerable village to spring up around the hallowed site.

The mosque is situated in the plain, about six miles to the south-southeast of the capital, just beyond the ruins of Rayy, and at the extremity of the mountain-spur that encloses the Tihran plain on the southeast." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," pp.

345-7.)

23.25. A local shrine in Tihran.

23.26. "It is true," writes Lord Curzon, "that his [Nasiri'd-Din Shah's] reign has been disfigured by one or two acts of regrettable violence; worst among which was the murder of his first Prime Minister, Mirza Taqi Khan, the Amir-Nizam.... The brother-in-law of the Shah, and the first subject in the kingdom, he owed to the vindictiveness of court intrigue and to the maliciously excited jealously of his youthful sovereign, a disgrace which his enemies were not satisfied until they had fulfilled by the death of their fallen, but still formidable victim." ("Persia and the Persian Question," vol. 1, p. 402.)

23.27. "Every one knew that the Babis had foretold the death of the prime

minister and predicted the manner of his going. It happened precisely, it is said, as the martyrs of Zanjan, Mirza Rida, Haji Muhammad-'Ali and Haji Muhsin had announced. Fallen into disgrace and pursued by the royal hatred, his veins were slashed open in the village of Fin, near Kashan, as the veins of his victims had been slashed. His successor was Mirza Aqa Khan-i-Nuri, of a noble tribe of Mazindaran, and erstwhile minister of war. This new official took the title of Sadr-i-A'zam which is the privilege of the grand viziers of the Ottoman Empire. This occurred in 1852." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 230.)

CHAPTER XXIV
THE ZANJAN UPHEAVAL

[527] The spark that had kindled the great conflagrations of Mazindaran and Nayriz had already set aflame Zanjan1 and its surroundings when the Bab met His death in Tabriz. Profound as was His sorrow at the sad and calamitous fate that had overtaken the heroes of Shaykh Tabarsi, the news of the no less tragic sufferings that had been the lot of Vahid and his companions, came as an added blow to His heart, already oppressed by the weight of manifold afflictions. The consciousness of the dangers that thickened around Him; the memory of the indignity He endured when He was last conducted to Tabriz; the strain of a prolonged and rigorous captivity amidst the mountain fastnesses of Adhirbayjan; the terrible butcheries that marked the closing stages of the Mazindaran and Nayriz upheavals; the outrages to His Faith wrought by the persecutors of the Seven Martyrs of Tihran—even these were not all the troubles [528] that beclouded the remaining days of a fast-ebbing life. He was already prostrated by the severity of these blows when the news of the happenings at Zanjan, which were then beginning to foreshadow their sad events, reached Him and served to consummate the anguish of His last days. What

pangs must He have endured as the shadows o f death were fast gathering about Him! In every field, whether in the north or in the south, the champions of His Faith had been subjected to undeserved sufferings, had been infamously deceived, had been robbed of their possessions, and had been inhumanly massacred. And now, as if to fill His cup of woes to over-flowing, [529] there broke forth the storm of Zanjan, the most violent and devastating of them all.2

I now proceed to relate the circumstances that have made of that event one of the most thrilling episodes in the history of this Revelation.

Its chief figure was Hujjat-i-Zanjani, whose name was Mulla Muhammad-'Ali,3 one of the ablest ecclesiastical dignitaries of his age, and certainly one of the most formidable champions of the Cause.

His father, Mulla Rahim-i-Zanjani, was one of the leading mujtahids of Zanjan, and was greatly esteemed for his piety, his learning and force of character.

Mulla Muhammad-'Ali, surnamed Hujjat, was born in the year 1227 A.H.4 From his very boyhood, he showed such capacity that his father lavished the utmost care upon his education.

He sent him to Najaf, where he distinguished himself by his insight, his ability and fiery ardour.5 His scholarship and keen intelligence excited the admiration of his friends, whilst his outspokenness and the strength of his character made him the terror of his adversaries.

His father advised him not to return to Zanjan, [530] where his enemies were conspiring against him.

He accordingly decided to establish his residence in Hamadan,6 where he married one of his kinswomen, and lived there for about two and a half years, when the news of his father's death decided him to leave for his native town.

The ovation accorded him on his arrival inflamed the hostility of the ulamas, who, despite their avowed opposition, received at his hands every mark of consideration and kindness.7

From the pulpit of the masjid which his friends erected in his honour, he urged the vast throng that gathered to hear him, to refrain from self-indulgence and to exercise moderation in all their acts.8 He ruthlessly suppressed every form of abuse, and by his example encouraged the people to adhere rigidly to the principles inculcated by the Qur'an. Such were the care and ability with which he taught his disciples that they surpassed in knowledge and understanding the recognised ulamas of Zanjan. For seventeen years, he pursued his meritorious labours and succeeded in purging the minds and hearts of his fellow-townsmen from whatever seemed contrary to the spirit and teachings of their Faith.9

When the Call from Shiraz reached him, he despatched his trusted messenger, Mulla Iskandar, to enquire into the claims of the new Revelation; and such was his response to [531] that Message that his enemies were stirred to redouble their attacks upon him. Unable, hitherto, to disgrace him in the eyes of the government and the people, they now endeavoured to denounce him as an advocate of heresy and a repudiator of all that is sacred and cherished in Islam. "His reputation for justice, for piety, wisdom, and learning," they whispered to one another, "has been such as to render it impossible for us to shake his position. When summoned to Tihran, in the presence of Muhammad Shah was he not able, by his magnetic eloquence, to win him over to his side, and make of him one of his devoted admirers? Now, however, that he has so openly championed the cause of the Siyyid-i-Bab, we can surely succeed in obtaining from the government the order for his arrest and banishment from our town."

They accordingly drew up a petition to Muhammad Shah, in which they sought, by every device their malevolent and crafty minds could invent, to discredit his name. "While still professing himself a follower of our Faith," they complained, "he, by the aid of his disciples, was able to repudiate our authority. Now that he has identified himself with the cause of the Siyyid-i-Bab and won over to that hateful creed two-thirds of the inhabitants of Zanjan, what humiliation will he not inflict upon us! The concourse that throngs his gates, the whole masjid can no longer contain. Such is his influence that the masjid that belonged to his father and the one that has been built in his honour, have been connected and made into one edifice in order to

accommodate the ever-increasing multitude that hastens eagerly to follow his lead in prayer. The time is fast approaching when not only Zanjan but the neighbouring villages also will have declared themselves his supporters."

The Shah was greatly surprised at the tone and language with which the petitioners sought to arraign Hujjat. He shared his astonishment with Mirza Nazar-'Ali, the Hakim-Bashi, and recalled the glowing tribute which many a visitor to Zanjan had paid to the abilities and integrity of the accused. He decided to summon him, together with his opponents, to Tihran. In a special gathering at which he himself, together with Haji Mirza Aqasi and the leading officials of the government, as well as a number of the recognised ulamas [532] of Tihran, had assembled, he called upon the ecclesiastical leaders of Zanjan to vindicate the claims they had advanced. Whatever questions they submitted to Hujjat, regarding the teachings of their Faith, he answered in a manner that could not fail to win the unqualified admiration of his hearers and to establish the sovereign's confidence in his innocence. The Shah expressed his entire satisfaction, and amply rewarded Hujjat for the excellent manner in which he had succeeded in refuting the allegations of his enemies. He bade him return to Zanjan and resume his valuable services to the cause of his people, assuring him that he would under all circumstances support him and asking to be informed of any difficulty with which he might be faced in the future.10

His arrival at Zanjan was the signal for a fierce outburst on the part of his humiliated opponents. As the evidences of their hostility multiplied, the marks of devotion on the part of his friends and supporters correspondingly increased.11 Utterly disdainful of their machinations, he pursued his activities with unrelaxing zeal.12 The liberal principles which he unceasingly and fearlessly advocated struck at the very root of the fabric which a bigoted enemy had laboriously reared. They beheld with impotent fury the disruption of their authority and the collapse of their institutions.

It was in those days that his special envoy, Mashhadi Ahmad, whom he had confidentially despatched to Shiraz with a petition and gifts from him to the Bab, arrived at [533] Zanjan and delivered into his hands, while he was addressing his disciples, a sealed letter from his Beloved. In the Tablet he received, the Bab conferred upon him one of His own titles, that of Hujjat, and urged him to proclaim from the pulpit, without the least reservation, the fundamental teachings of His Faith. No sooner was he informed of the wishes of his Master than he declared his resolve to devote himself to the immediate enforcement of whatever injunction that Tablet contained. He immediately dismissed his disciples, bade them close their books, and declared his intention of discontinuing his courses of study. "Of what profit," he said, "are study and research to those who have already found the Truth, and why strive after learning when He who is the Object of all knowledge is made manifest?"

As soon as he attempted to lead the congregation in offering the Friday prayer, enjoined upon him by the Bab,13 the Imam-Jum'ih, who had hitherto performed that duty, vehemently protested, on the ground that this right was the

exclusive privilege of his own forefathers, that it had been conferred upon him by his sovereign, and that no one, however exalted his station, could usurp it. "That right," Hujjat retorted, "has been superseded by the authority with which the Qa'im Himself has invested me. I have been commanded by Him to assume that function publicly, and I cannot allow any person to trespass upon that right. If attacked, I will take steps to defend myself and to protect the lives of my companions."

His fearless insistence on the duty laid upon him by the Bab caused the ulamas of Zanjan to league themselves with the Imam-Jum'ih14 and to lay their complaints before Haji Mirza Aqasi, pleading that Hujjat had challenged the validity [534] of recognised institutions and trampled upon their rights. "We must either flee from this town with our families and belongings," they pleaded, "and leave him in sole charge of the destinies of its people, or obtain from Muhammad Shah an edict for his immediate expulsion from this country; for we firmly believe that to allow him to remain on its soil would be courting disaster." Though Haji Mirza Aqasi, in his heart, distrusted the ecclesiastical order of his country and had a natural aversion to their beliefs and practices, he was forced eventually to yield to their pressing demands, and submitted the matter to Muhammad Shah, who ordered the transfer of Hujjat from Zanjan to the capital.

A Kurd named Qilij Khan was commissioned by the Shah to deliver the royal summons to Hujjat. The Bab had meanwhile arrived in the neighbourhood of Tihran on His way to Tabriz. Ere the arrival of the royal messenger at Zanjan, Hujjat had sent one of his friends, a certain Khan-Muhammad-i-Tub-Chi, to his Master with a petition in which he begged to be allowed to rescue Him from the hands of the enemy. The Bab assured him that His deliverance the Almighty alone could achieve and that no one could escape from His decree or evade His law. "As to your meeting with Me," He added, "it soon will take place in the world beyond, the home of unfading glory."

The day Hujjat received that message, Qilij Khan arrived at Zanjan, acquainted him with the orders he had received, and set out, accompanied by him, for the capital. Their arrival at Tihran coincided with the Bab's departure from the village of Kulayn, where He had been detained for some days.

The authorities, apprehensive lest a meeting between the Bab and Hujjat might lead to fresh disturbances, had taken the necessary precautions to ensure the absence of the latter from Zanjan during the Bab's passage through that town. The companions who were following Hujjat at a distance, whilst he was on his way to the capital, were urged by him to return and try to meet their Master and to assure Him of his readiness to come to His rescue. On their way back to their homes, they encountered the Bab, who again expressed His desire that no one of His friends should attempt to [535] deliver Him from His captivity. He even directed them to tell the believers among their fellow-townsmen not to press round Him, but even to avoid Him wherever He went.

No sooner had that message been delivered to those who had gone out to welcome

Him on His approach to their town

than they began to grieve and deplore their fate. They could not, however, resist the impulse that drove them to march forth to meet Him, forgetful of the desire He had expressed.

As soon as they were met by the guards who were marching in advance of their Captive, they were ruthlessly dispersed. On reaching a fork in the road, there arose an altercation [536] between Muhammad Big-i-Chaparchi and his colleague, who had been despatched from Tihran to assist in conducting the Bab to Tabriz. Muhammad Big insisted that their Prisoner should be taken into the town, where He should be allowed to pass the night in the caravanserai of Mirza Ma'sum-i-Tabib, the father of Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Tabib, a martyr of the Faith, before resuming their march to Adhirbayjan. He pleaded that to pass the night outside the gate would be to expose their lives to danger, and would encourage their opponents to attempt an attack upon them. He eventually succeeded in convincing his colleague that he should conduct the Bab to that caravanserai. As they were passing through the streets, they were amazed to see the multitude that had crowded onto the housetops in their eagerness to catch a glimpse of the face of the Prisoner.

Mirza Ma'sum, the former owner of the caravanserai, had lately died, and his eldest son, Mirza Muhammad-'Ali, the leading physician of Hamadan, who, though not a believer, was a true lover of the Bab, had arrived at Zanjan and was in mourning for his father. He lovingly received the Bab in the caravanserai he had specially prepared beforehand for His reception. That night he remained until a late hour in His presence and was completely won over to His Cause.

"The same night that witnessed my conversion," I heard him subsequently relate, "I arose ere break of day, lit my lantern, and, preceded by my father's attendant, directed my steps towards the caravanserai. The guards who were stationed at the entrance recognised me and allowed me to enter. The Bab was performing His ablutions when I was ushered into His presence. I was greatly impressed when I saw Him absorbed in His devotions. A feeling of reverent joy filled my heart as I stood behind Him and prayed. I myself prepared His tea and was offering it to Him when He turned to me and bade me depart for Hamadan. 'This town,' He said, 'will be thrown into a great tumult, and its streets will run with blood.' I expressed my strong desire to be allowed to shed my blood in His path. He assured me that the hour of my martyrdom had not yet come, and bade me be resigned to whatever God might decree. At the hour [537] of sunrise, as He mounted His horse and was preparing to depart, I begged to be allowed to follow Him, but He advised me to remain, and assured me of His unfailing prayers. Resigning myself to His will, with regret I watched Him disappear from my sight."

On his arrival at Tihran, Hujjat was conducted into the presence of Haji Mirza Aqasi, who, on behalf of the Shah and himself, expressed his annoyance at the intense hostility which his conduct had aroused among the ulamas of Zanjan. "Muhammad Shah and I," he told him, "are continually besieged by the oral as

well as written denunciations brought against you. I could scarcely believe their indictment relating to your desertion of the Faith of your forefathers. Nor is the Shah inclined to credit such assertions. I have been commanded by him to summon you to his capital and to call upon you to refute such accusations. It grieves me to hear that a man whom I consider infinitely superior in knowledge and ability to the Siyyid-i-Bab has chosen to identify himself with his creed." "Not so," replied Hujjat; "God knows that if that same Siyyid were to entrust me with the meanest service in His household, I would deem it an honour such as the highest favours of my sovereign could never hope to surpass." "This can never be!" burst forth Haji Mirza Aqasi. "It is my firm and unalterable conviction," Hujjat reaffirmed, "that this Siyyid of Shiraz is the very One whose advent you yourself, with all the peoples of the world, are eagerly awaiting. He is our Lord, our promised Deliverer."

Haji Mirza Aqasi reported the matter to Muhammad Shah, to whom he expressed his fears that to allow so formidable an adversary, whom the sovereign himself believed to be the most accomplished of the ulamas of his realm, to pursue unhindered the course of his activities would be a policy fraught with gravest danger to the State. The Shah, disinclined to credit such reports, which he attributed to the malice and envy of the enemies of the accused, ordered that a special meeting be convened at which he should be asked to vindicate his position in the presence of the assembled ulamas of the capital.

Several meetings were held for that purpose, before each [538] of which Hujjat eloquently set forth the basic claims of his Faith and confounded the arguments of those who tried to oppose him. "Is not the following tradition," he boldly declared, "recognised alike by shi'ah and sunni Islam: 'I leave amidst you my twin testimonies, the Book of God and my family'? Has not the second of these testimonies, in your opinion, passed away, and is not our sole means of guidance, as a result, contained in the testimony of the sacred Book? I appeal to you to measure every claim that either of us shall advance, by the standard established in that Book, and to regard it as the supreme authority whereby the righteousness of our argument can be judged." Unable to defend their case against him, they, as a last resort, ventured to ask him to produce a miracle whereby to establish the truth of his assertion. "What greater miracle," he exclaimed, "than that He should have enabled me to triumph, alone and unaided, by the simple power of my argument, over the combined forces of the mujtahids and ulamas of Tihran?"

The masterly manner in which Hujjat refuted the unsound claims advanced by his adversaries won for him the favour of his sovereign, who from that day forth was no longer swayed by the insinuations of his enemies. Although the entire company of the ulamas of Zanjan, as well as a number of the ecclesiastical leaders of Tihran, had declared him to be an infidel and condemned him to death, yet Muhammad Shah continued to bestow his favours upon him and to assure him that he could rely on his support. Haji Mirza Aqasi, though at heart unfriendly to Hujjat, was unable, in the face of such unmistakable evidences of royal favour, to resist his influence openly, and by his frequent visits to his

house, and by the gifts he lavished upon him, that deceitful minister sought to conceal his resentment and envy.

Hujjat was virtually a prisoner in Tihran. He was unable to go beyond the gates of the capital, nor was he allowed free intercourse with his friends. The believers among his fellow-townsmen eventually determined to send a deputation and ask him for fresh instructions regarding their attitude towards the laws and principles of their Faith. He charged them to observe with absolute loyalty the admonitions he had received from the Bab through the messengers he had [539] sent to investigate His Cause. He enumerated a series of observances, some of which constituted a definite departure from the established traditions of Islam. "Siyyid Kazim-i-Zanjani," he assured them, "has been intimately connected with my Master both in Shiraz and in Isfahan. He, as well as Mulla Iskandar and Mashhadi Ahmad, both of whom I sent to meet Him, have positively declared that He Himself is the first to practise the observances He has enjoined upon the faithful. It therefore behoves us who are His supporters to follow His noble example."

These explicit instructions were no sooner read to his companions than they became inflamed with an irresistible desire to carry out his wishes. They enthusiastically set to work to enforce the laws of the new Dispensation, and, giving up their former customs and practices, unhesitatingly identified themselves with its claims. Even the little children were encouraged to follow scrupulously the admonitions of the Bab. "Our beloved Master," they were taught to say, "Himself is the first to practise them. Why should we who are His privileged disciples hesitate to make them the ruling principles of our lives?"

Hujjat was still a captive in Tihran when the news of the siege of the fort of Tabarsi reached him. He longed, and deplored his inability, to throw in his lot with those of his companions who were struggling with such splendid heroism for the emancipation of their Faith. His sole consolation in those days was his close association with Baha'u'llah, from whom he received the sustaining power that enabled him, in the time to come, to distinguish himself by deeds no less remarkable than those which that company had manifested in the darkest hours of their memorable struggle.

He was still in Tihran when Muhammad Shah passed away, leaving the throne to his son Nasiri'd-Din Shah.15 The Amir-Nizam, the new Grand Vazir, decided to make Hujjat's imprisonment more rigorous, and to seek in the meantime a way of destroying him. On being informed of the imminence of the danger that threatened his life, his captive decided to [540] leave Tihran in disguise and join his companions, who eagerly awaited his return.

His arrival at his native town, which a certain Karbila'i Vali-'Attar announced to his companions, was a signal for a tremendous demonstration of devoted loyalty on the part of his many admirers. They flocked out, men, women, and children, to welcome him and to renew their assurances of abiding and undiminished affection.16 The governor of Zanjan, Majdu'd-Dawlih,17 the maternal uncle of Nasiri'd-Din Shah, astounded by the spontaneity of that

ovation, ordered, in the fury of his despair, that the tongue of Karbila'i Vali-'Attar be immediately cut out. Though at heart he loathed Hujjat, he pretended to be his friend and well-wisher. He often visited him and showed him unbounded consideration, yet he was secretly conspiring against his life and was waiting for the moment when he could strike the fatal blow.

That smouldering hostility was soon to be fanned into flame by an incident that was of little importance in itself. The occasion was afforded when a quarrel suddenly broke out between two children of Zanjan, one of whom belonged to a kinsman of one of the companions of Hujjat. The governor immediately ordered that child to be arrested and placed in strict confinement. A sum of money was offered [541] by the believers to the governor, in order to induce him to release his young prisoner. He refused their offer, whereupon they complained to Hujjat, who vehemently protested. "That child," he wrote to the governor, "is too young to be held responsible for his behaviour. If he deserves punishment, his father and not he should be made to suffer."

Finding that the appeal had been ignored, he renewed his protest and entrusted it to the hands of one of his influential comrades, Mir Jalil, father of Siyyid Ashraf and martyr of the Faith, directing him to present it in person to the governor. The guards stationed at the entrance of the house at first refused him admittance. Indignant at their refusal, he threatened to force his way through the gate, and succeeded, by the mere threat of unsheathing his sword, in overcoming their resistance and in compelling the infuriated governor to release the child.

The unconditional compliance of the governor with the demand of Mir Jalil stirred the furious indignation of the ulamas. They violently protested, and deprecated his submission to the threats with which their opponents had sought to intimidate him. They expressed to him their fear that such a surrender on his part would encourage them to make still greater demands upon him, would enable them before long to assume the reins of authority and to exclude him from any share in the administration of the government. They eventually induced him to consent to the arrest of Hujjat, an act which they were convinced would succeed in checking the progress of his influence.

The governor reluctantly consented. He was repeatedly assured by the ulamas that his action would under no circumstances endanger the peace and security of the town. Two of their supporters, Pahlavan18 Asadu'llah and Pahlavan Safar-'Ali, both notorious for their brutality and prodigious strength, volunteered to seize Hujjat and deliver him hand-cuffed to the governor. Each was promised a handsome reward in return for this service. Clad in their amour, with helmets on their heads, and followed by a band of ruffians recruited from among the most degraded of the population, [542] they set out to accomplish their purpose. The ulamas were in the meantime busily engaged in inciting the populace and encouraging them to reinforce their efforts.

As soon as the emissaries arrived in the quarter in which Hujjat was living, they were unexpectedly confronted by Mir Salah, one of his most formidable

supporters, who, together with seven of his armed companions, strenuously opposed their advance. He asked Asadu'llah whither he was bound, and, on receiving from him an insulting answer, unsheathed his sword and, with the cry of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!"19 sprang upon him and wounded him in the forehead. Mir Salah's audacity, in spite of the heavy armour which his adversary was wearing, frightened the whole band and caused them to flee in different directions.20

The cry which that stout-hearted defender of the Faith raised on that day was heard for the first time in Zanjan, a cry that spread panic through the town. The governor was terrified by its tremendous force, and asked what that shout could mean and whose voice had been able to raise it. He was gravely shaken when told that it was the watchword of Hujjat's companions, with which they called for the assistance of the Qa'im in the hour of distress.

The remnants of that affrighted band encountered, shortly after, Shaykh Muhammad-i-Tub-Chi, whom they immediately recognised as one of their ablest adversaries. Finding him unarmed, they fell upon him and, with an axe one of them was carrying, struck him and broke his head. They bore him to the governor, and no sooner had they laid down the wounded man than a certain Siyyid Abu'l-Qasim, one of the mujtahids of Zanjan who was present, leaped forward and, with his penknife, stabbed him in the breast. The governor too, unsheathing his sword, struck him on the mouth and was followed by the attendants who, with the weapons they carried with them, completed the murder of their hapless victim. As their blows rained upon him, unmindful of his sufferings, he was heard to say: "I thank Thee, O my God, for having vouchsafed me the crown of martyrdom." [543] He was the first among the believers of Zanjan to lay down his life in the path of the Cause. His death, which occurred on Friday, the fourth of Rajab, in the year 1266 A.H.,21 preceded by forty-five days the martyrdom of Vahid and by fifty-five days that of the Bab.

The blood that was shed on that day, far from allaying the hostility of the enemy, served further to inflame their passions, and to reinforce their determination to subject to the same fate the rest of the companions. Encouraged by the governor's tacit approval of their expressed intentions, they resolved to put to death all upon whom they could lay their hands, without obtaining beforehand an express authorisation from the government officials. They solemnly covenanted among themselves not to rest until they had extinguished the fire of what they deemed a shameless heresy.22 They compelled the governor to bid a crier proclaim throughout Zanjan that whoever was willing to endanger his life, to forfeit his property, and expose his wife and children to misery and shame, should throw in his lot with Hujjat and his companions; and that those desirous of ensuring the well-being and honour of themselves and their families, should withdraw from the neighbourhood in which those companions resided and seek the shelter of the sovereign's protection.

That warning immediately divided the inhabitants into two distinct camps, and severely tested the faith of those who were still wavering in their allegiance to the Cause. It gave rise to the most pathetic scenes, caused the separation of fathers from their sons and the estrangement of brothers and of kindred.

Every tie of worldly affection seemed to be dissolving on that day, and the solemn pledges were forsaken in favour of a loyalty mightier and more sacred than any earthly allegiance. Zanjan fell a prey to the wildest excitement. The cry of distress which members of divided families, in a frenzy of despair, raised to heaven, mingled with the blasphemous shouts which a threatening enemy [544] hurled upon them. Shouts of exultation hailed at every turn those who, tearing themselves from their homes and kinsmen, enrolled themselves as willing supporters of the Cause of Hujjat. The camp of the enemy hummed with feverish activity in preparation for the great struggle upon which they had secretly determined. Reinforcements were rushed into the town from the neighbouring villages, at the command of its governor and with the encouragement of the mujtahids, the siyyids, and the ulamas who supported him.23

Undeterred by the growing tumult, Hujjat ascended the pulpit and, with uplifted voice, proclaimed to the congregation: "The hand of Omnipotence has, in this day, separated truth from falsehood and divided the light of guidance from the darkness of error. I am unwilling that because of me you should suffer injury. The one aim of the governor and of the ulamas who support him is to seize and kill me. They cherish no other ambition. They thirst for my blood and seek no one besides me. Whoever among you feels the least desire to safeguard his life against the perils with which we are beset, whoever is reluctant to offer his life for our Cause, let him, ere it is too late, betake himself from this place and return whence he came."24

That day more than three thousand men were recruited by the governor from the surrounding villages of Zanjan. Meanwhile Mir Salah, accompanied by a number of his comrades, who observed the growing restiveness of their [545] opponents, sought the presence of Hujjat and urged him, as a precautionary measure, to transfer his residence to the fort of 'Ali-Mardan Khan,25 adjacent to the quarter in which he was residing. Hujjat gave his consent and ordered that their women and children, together with such provisions as they might require, be taken to the fort. Though they found it occupied by its owners, the companions eventually induced them to withdraw, and gave them in exchange the houses in which they themselves had been dwelling.

The enemy was meanwhile preparing for a violent attack upon them. No sooner had a detachment of their forces opened fire upon the barricades the companions had raised than Mir Rida, a siyyid of exceptional courage, asked his leader to allow him to attempt to capture the governor and to bring him as a prisoner to the fort. Hujjat, unwilling to comply with his request, advised him not to risk his life.

The governor was so overcome with fear when informed of that siyyid's intention that he decided to leave Zanjan immediately. He was, however, dissuaded from taking that course by a certain siyyid who pleaded that his departure would be the signal for grave disturbances such as would disgrace him in the sight of his superiors. The siyyid himself [546] set out, as evidence of his earnestness, to launch an offensive against the occupants of the fort. He had no sooner given the signal for attack and advanced at the head of a band of

thirty of his comrades, than he unexpectedly encountered two of his adversaries who were marching with drawn swords towards him. Believing that they intended to assail him, he, with the whole of his band, was suddenly seized with panic, straightway regained his home, and, forgetful of the assurances he had given to the governor, remained the whole day closeted within his room. Those who were with him promptly dispersed, renouncing the thought of pursuing the attack. They were subsequently informed that the two men they had encountered had no hostile intention against them, but were simply on their way to fulfil a commission with which they had been entrusted.

That humiliating episode was soon followed by a number of similar attempts on the part of the supporters of the governor, all of which utterly failed to achieve their purpose. Every time they rushed to attack the fort, Hujjat would order a few of his companions, who were three thousand in number, to emerge from their retreat and scatter their forces. He never failed, every time he gave them such orders, to caution his fellow-disciples against shedding unnecessarily the blood of their assailants. He constantly reminded them that their action was of a purely defensive character, and that their sole purpose was to preserve inviolate the security of their women and children. "We are commanded," he was frequently heard to observe, "not to wage holy war under any circumstances against the unbelievers, whatever be their attitude towards us."

This state of affairs continued26 until the orders of the [547] Amir-Nizam reached one of the generals of the imperial army, Sadru'd-Dawliy-i-Isfahani by name,27 who had set out at the head of two regiments for Adhirbayjan. The written orders of the Grand Vazir reached him in Khamsih, bidding him cancel his projected journey and proceed immediately to Zanjan and there give his assistance to the forces that had been mustered by the government. "You have been commissioned by your sovereign," the Amir-Nizam wrote him, "to subjugate the band of mischief-makers in and around Zanjan. It is your privilege to crush their hopes and exterminate their forces. So signal a service, at so critical a moment, will win for you the Shah's highest favour, no less than the applause and esteem of his people."

This encouraging farman stirred the imagination of the ambitious Sadru'd-Dawlih.

He marched instantly on Zanjan at the head of his two regiments, organised the forces which the governor placed at his disposal, and gave orders for a combined attack upon the fort and its defenders.28 The [548] contest raged in the environs of the fort three days and three nights, in the course of which the besieged, under the direction of Hujjat, resisted with splendid daring the fierce onslaught of their assailants.

Neither their overwhelming numbers nor the superiority of their equipment and training could enable them to reduce the intrepid companions to an unconditional surrender.29 Undeterred by the fire of the cannon with which they were deluged, and forgetful of both sleep and hunger, they rushed in a headlong charge out of the fort, utterly unmindful of the perils incurred by such a

sally.

To the imprecations with which an opposing host greeted their appearance from their retreat, they shouted their answer of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!" and, carried away by the spell which that invocation threw upon them, hurled themselves upon the enemy and scattered his forces.

The frequency and success of these sallies demoralised their assailants and convinced them of the futility of their efforts.

They were soon compelled to acknowledge their powerlessness to win a decisive victory.

Sadru'd-Dawlih himself had to confess that after the lapse of nine months of sustained fighting, of all the men who had originally belonged to his two regiments, no more than thirty crippled soldiers were left to support him.

Filled with humiliation, he was forced, eventually, to admit his powerlessness to daunt the spirit of his opponents.

He was degraded from his rank and gravely reprimanded by his sovereign.

The hopes he had fondly cherished were, as the result of that defeat, irretrievably shattered.

[549] So abject a defeat struck dismay into the hearts of the people of Zanjan. Few were willing, after that disaster, to risk their lives in hopeless encounters. Only those who were compelled to fight ventured to renew their attacks upon the besieged. The brunt of the struggle was mainly borne by the regiments which were being successively despatched from Tihran for that purpose. While the inhabitants of the town, and particularly the merchant class among them, profited greatly by the sudden influx of such a large number of forces, the companions of Hujjat suffered want and privation within the walls of the fort. Their supplies dwindled rapidly; their only hope of receiving any food from outside lay in the efforts, often unsuccessful, of a few women who could manage, under various pretexts, to approach the fort and sell them at an exorbitant price the provisions they so sadly needed.

Though oppressed with hunger and harassed by fierce and sudden onsets, they maintained with unflinching determination the defence of the fort. Sustained by a hope that no amount of adversity could dim, they succeeded in erecting no less than twenty-eight barricades, each of which was entrusted to the care of a group of nineteen of their fellow-disciples. At each barricade, nineteen additional companions were stationed as sentinels, whose function it was to watch and report the movements of the enemy.

They were frequently surprised by the voice of the crier whom the enemy sent to the neighbourhood of the fort to induce its occupants to desert Hujjat and his Cause. "The governor of the province," he would proclaim, "and the commander-in-chief too, are willing to forgive and extend a safe passage to whoever among you will decide to leave the fort and renounce his faith. Such a man will be amply rewarded by his sovereign, who, in addition to lavishing

gifts upon him, will invest him with the dignity of noble rank. Both the Shah and his representatives have pledged their honour not to depart from the promise they have given." To this call the besieged would, with one voice, return contemptuous and decisive replies.

Further evidence of the spirit of sublime renunciation animating those valiant companions was afforded by the behaviour of a village maiden, who, of her own accord, threw [550] in her lot with the band of women and children who had joined the defenders of the fort. Her name was Zaynab, her home a tiny hamlet in the near neighbourhood of Zanjan. She was comely and fair of face, was fired with a lofty faith, and endowed with intrepid courage. The sight of the trials and hardships which her men companions were made to endure stirred in her an irrepressible yearning to disguise herself in male attire and share in repulsing the repeated attacks of the enemy. Donning a tunic and wearing a head-dress like those of her men companions, she cut off her locks, girt on a sword, and, seizing a musket and a shield, introduced herself into their ranks. No one suspected her of being a maid when she leaped forward to take her place behind the barricade. As soon as the enemy charged, she bared her sword and, raising the cry of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!" flung herself with incredible audacity upon the forces arrayed against her. Friend and foe marvelled that day at a courage and resourcefulness the equal of which their eyes had scarcely ever beheld. Her enemies pronounced her the curse which an angry Providence had hurled upon them. Overwhelmed with despair and abandoning their barricades, they fled in disgraceful rout before her.

Hujjat, who was watching the movements of the enemy from one of the turrets, recognised her and marvelled at the prowess which that maiden was displaying. She had set out in pursuit of her assailants, when he ordered his men to bid her return to the fort and give up the attempt. "No man," he was heard to say, as he saw her plunge into the fire directed upon her by the enemy, "has shown himself capable of such vitality and courage." When questioned by him as to the motive of her behaviour, she burst into tears and said: "My heart ached with pity and sorrow when I beheld the toil and sufferings of my fellow-disciples. I advanced by an inner urge I could not resist. I was afraid lest you would deny me the privilege of throwing in my lot with my men companions." "You are surely the same Zaynab," Hujjat asked her, "who volunteered to join the occupants of the fort?" "I am," she replied. "I can confidently assure you that no one has hitherto discovered my sex. You alone have recognised me. I adjure you by the Bab not to withhold [551] from me that inestimable privilege, the crown of martyrdom, the one desire of my life."

Hujjat was profoundly impressed by the tone and manner of her appeal. He sought to calm the tumult of her soul, assured her of his prayers in her behalf, and gave her the name Rustam-'Ali as a mark of her noble courage. "This is the Day of Resurrection," he told her, "the day when 'all secrets shall be searched out.'30 Not by their outward appearance, but by the character of their beliefs and the manner of their lives, does God judge His creatures, be they men or women. Though a maiden of tender age and immature experience, you have

displayed such vitality and resource as few men could hope to surpass." He granted her request, and warned her not to exceed the bounds their Faith had imposed upon them. "We are called upon to defend our lives," he reminded her, "against a treacherous assailant, and not to wage holy war against him."

For a period of no less than five months, that maiden continued to withstand with unrivalled heroism the forces of the enemy. Disdainful of food and sleep, she toiled with fevered earnestness for the Cause she most loved. She quickened, by the example of her splendid daring, the courage of the few who wavered, and reminded them of the duty each was expected to fulfil. The sword she wielded remained, throughout that period, by her side. In the brief intervals of sleep she was able to obtain, she was seen with her head resting upon her sword and her shield serving as a covering for her body. Every one of her companions was assigned to a particular post which he was expected to guard and defend, while that fearless maid alone was free to move in whatever direction she pleased. Always in the thick and forefront of the turmoil that raged round her, Zaynab was ever ready to rush to the rescue of whatever post the assailant was threatening, and to lend her assistance to any one of those who needed either her encouragement or support. As the end of her life approached, her enemies discovered her secret, and continued, despite their knowledge that she was a maid, to dread her influence and to tremble at her approach. The [552] shrill sound of her voice was sufficient to strike consternation into their hearts and to fill them with despair.

One day, seeing that her companions were being suddenly enveloped by the forces of the enemy, Zaynab ran in distress to Hujjat and, flinging herself at his feet, implored him, with tearful eyes, to allow her to rush forth to their aid. "My life, I feel, is nearing its end," she added. "I may myself fall beneath the sword of the assailant. Forgive, I entreat you, my trespasses, and intercede for me with my Master, for whose sake I yearn to lay down my life."

Hujjat was too much overcome with emotion to reply. Encouraged by his silence, which she interpreted to mean that he consented to grant her appeal, she leaped out of the gate and, raising seven times the cry "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!" rushed to stay the hand that had already slain a number of her companions. "Why befoul by your deeds the fair name of Islam?" she shouted, as she flung herself upon them. "Why flee abjectly from before our face, if you be speakers of truth?" She ran to the barricades which the enemy had erected, routed those who guarded the first three of the defences, and was engaging in overcoming the fourth, when, beneath a shower of bullets, she dropped dead upon the ground. Not a single voice among her opponents dared question her chastity or ignore the sublimity of her faith and the enduring traits of her character. Such was her devotion that after her death no less than twenty women of her acquaintance embraced the Cause of the Bab. To them she had ceased to be the peasant girl they had known; she was the very incarnation of the noblest principles of human conduct, a living embodiment of the spirit which only a Faith such as hers could manifest.

The messengers who acted as intermediaries between Hujjat and his companions

were one day directed to inform the guards of the barricades to carry out the Bab's injunction to His followers and to repeat nineteen times, each night, each of the following invocations: "Allah-u-Akbar,"31 "Allah-u-A'zam,"32 "Allah-u-Ajmal,"33 "Allah-u-Abha,"34 and "Allah-u-Athar."35 The very night the behest was received, all the [553] defenders of the barricades joined in shouting those words simultaneously. So loud and compelling was that cry that the enemy was rudely awakened from sleep, abandoned the camp in horror, and, hurrying to the environs of the governor's residence, sought shelter in the neighbouring houses. A few were so shocked with terror that they instantly dropped dead. A considerable number of the inhabitants of Zanjan fled, panic-stricken, to the adjoining villages. Many believed that stupendous uproar to be a sign heralding the Day of Judgment; to others it signified the sending forth, on the part of Hujjat, of a fresh summons which they felt would be the prelude to a sudden offensive against them more terrible than any they had yet experienced.

"What," Hujjat was heard to remark, when informed of the terror that sudden invocation had inspired, "if I had been permitted by my Master to wage holy war against these cowardly miscreants! I am bidden by Him to instil into men's hearts the ennobling principles of charity and love, and to refrain from all unnecessary violence. My aim and that of my companions is, and ever will be, to serve our sovereign loyally and to be the well-wishers of his people. Had I chosen to follow in the footsteps of the ulamas of Zanjan, I should, as long as I live, have continued to remain the object of the slavish adoration of this people. Never shall I be willing to barter for all the treasures and honours this world can give me, the undying loyalty I bear His Cause."

The memory of that night still lingers in the minds of those who experienced its awe and terror. I have heard several eye-witnesses express in glowing terms the contrast between the tumult and disorder that reigned in the camp of the enemy and the atmosphere of reverent devotion that filled the fort. While those in the fort were invoking the name of God and praying for His guidance and mercy, their opponents, officers and men alike, were absorbed in acts of debauchery and shame. Though worn and exhausted, the occupants of the fort continued to observe their vigils and chant such anthems as the Bab had instructed them to repeat. The camp of the enemy at that same hour resounded with peals of noisy laughter, with imprecations and blasphemies. That night in particular, no sooner had the invocation [554] pealed out than the dissolute officers, who were holding their wine-glasses in their hands, dropped them instantly to the ground and rushed out headlong, in bare feet, as if stunned by that stentorian outcry. Gambling tables were overturned in the midst of the disorder that ensued. Half dressed and bareheaded, a number ran out into the wilderness, while others betook themselves in haste to the homes of the ulamas and roused them from their sleep. Alarmed and overawed, these began to direct their fiercest invectives against one another for having kindled the fire of such great mischief.

As soon as the enemy had discovered the purpose of that loud clamour, they

returned to their posts, reassured, though greatly humiliated, by their experience. The officers directed a certain number of their men to lie in ambush and to fire in any direction from which those voices might again proceed. Every night they succeeded in this way in slaying a number of the companions. Undeterred by the losses they were repeatedly sustaining, Hujjat's supporters continued to raise, with undiminished fervour, their invocation, despising the perils which the offering of the prayer involved. As their number diminished, that prayer grew louder and acquired added poignancy. Even the imminence of death was powerless to induce the intrepid defenders of the fort to give up what they deemed the noblest and most powerful reminder of their Beloved.

The contest was still raging when Hujjat was moved to address his written message to Nasiri'd-Din Shah. "The subjects of your Imperial Majesty," he wrote him, "regard you both as their temporal ruler and as the supreme custodian of their Faith.

They appeal to you for justice, and look upon you as the supreme protector of their rights.

Our controversy primarily concerned the ulamas of Zanjan only, and under no circumstances involved either your government or people.

I myself was summoned by your predecessor to Tihran and was requested by him to set forth the basic claims of my Faith.

The late Shah was entirely satisfied, and highly commended my efforts.

I resigned myself to leave my home and settle in Tihran, with no other intention than that of abating the fury that raged round my person and of [555] extinguishing the fire which the mischief-makers had kindled.

Though free to return to my home, I preferred to remain in the capital, wholly relying upon the justice of my sovereign.

In the early days of your reign, the Amir-Nizam, while the Mazindaran upheaval was still in progress, suspected me of treason and determined to destroy my life.

Finding no one in Tihran able to protect me, I determined, in self-defence, to flee to Zanjan, where I resumed my labours and strove with all my might to advance the true interest of Islam.

I was pursuing my work when Majdu'd-Dawlih arose against me.

I several times appealed to him to exercise moderation and justice, but he refused to grant my request.

Instigated by the ulamas of Zanjan, and encouraged by the adulation they lavished upon him, he determined to arrest me.

My friends intervened and attempted to stay his hand.

He continued to rouse the people against me, and they in their turn have acted

in a manner that has led to the present situation.

Your Majesty has until now refrained from extending his gracious assistance to us, who are the innocent victims of such ferocious cruelty.

Our enemies have even sought to represent our Cause, in the eyes of your Majesty, as a conspiracy against the authority with which you have been invested.

Surely every unbiased observer will readily admit that we cherish in our hearts no such intention.

Our sole aim is to advance the best interests of your government and people.

I and my principal companions hold ourselves in readiness to leave for Tihran, that we may, in your presence as well as in that of our chief opponents, establish the soundness of our Cause."

Not content with his own petition, he bade his leading supporters address similar appeals to the Shah and stress his request for justice.

No sooner had the messenger who was carrying those petitions to Tihran set out on his way than he was seized and brought back into the presence of the governor. Infuriated by the action of his opponents, he ordered the messenger to be immediately put to death. He destroyed the petitions and in their stead wrote the Shah letters which he loaded with abuse and insult, and, adding the signatures of Hujjat and his chief companions, despatched them to Tihran.

[556] The Shah was so indignant after the perusal of these insolent petitions that he gave orders for the immediate despatch of two regiments equipped with guns and munitions to Zanjan, commanding that not one supporter of Hujjat be allowed to survive.

The news of the Bab's martyrdom had meanwhile reached the hard-pressed occupants of the fort through Siyyid Hasan, brother of Siyyid Husayn, the Bab's amanuensis, who had arrived from Adhirbayjan on his way to Qazvin. The news spread among the enemy and was welcomed by them with shouts of wild delight. They hastened to ridicule and hurl their taunts at the efforts of His adherents. "For what reason," they cried in haughty scorn, "will you henceforth be willing to sacrifice yourselves? He in whose path you long to lay down your lives, has himself fallen a victim to the bullets of a triumphant foe. His body is even now lost both to his enemies and to his friends. Why persist in your stubbornness when a word is sufficient to deliver you from your woes?" However much they strove to shake the confidence of the bereaved community, they failed, in the end, to induce the feeblest among them either to desert the fort or to recant his Faith.

The Amir-Nizam was meanwhile urging his sovereign to despatch further reinforcements to Zanjan. Muhammad Khan, the Amir-Tuman, at the head of five regiments and equipped with a considerable amount of arms and munitions, was finally commissioned to demolish the fort and wipe out its occupants.

During the twenty days that hostilities were suspended, 'Aziz Khan-i-Mukri, surnamed Sardar-i-Kull, who was on a military mission to Iravan,36 arrived at Zanjan and succeeded in meeting Hujjat through his host, Siyyid 'Ali Khan. The latter related to 'Aziz Khan the circumstances of a touching interview he had had with Hujjat, when he had obtained all the information he required regarding the intentions and proposals of the besieged. "Should the government," Hujjat [557] had told him, "refuse to entertain my appeal, I am willing, with its permission, to depart with my family to a place beyond the confines of this land. Should it refuse to grant even this request and persist in attacking us, we should feel constrained to arise and defend ourselves." 'Aziz Khan assured Siyyid 'Ali Khan that he would do all in his power to induce the authorities to effect a speedy solution of this problem. No sooner had Siyyid 'Ali Khan retired than 'Aziz Khan was surprised by the farrash37 of the Amir-Nizam, who had come to arrest Siyyid 'Ali Khan and to conduct him to the capital. He was seized with great fear and, in order to avert any suspicion from himself, began to abuse Hujjat and to denounce him openly before the farrash. By this means he was able to ward off the danger that threatened his own life.

The arrival of the Amir-Tuman was the signal for the resumption of hostilities on a scale such as Zanjan had never before experienced. Seventeen regiments of cavalry and infantry had rallied to his standard, and fought under his command.38 No less than fourteen guns were, at his orders, directed against the fort. Five additional regiments, which the Amir had recruited from the neighbourhood, were being trained by him as reinforcements. The very night he arrived, he issued orders that the trumpets be sounded as a signal for the resumption of the attack. The officers in charge of his artillery were commanded to open fire instantly upon the besieged. The booming of the cannons, which could be heard distinctly at a distance of about fourteen farsangs,39 had scarcely begun when Hujjat ordered his companions to make use of the two guns they themselves had constructed. One of them was transported to a high position commanding the Amir's headquarters. A ball struck his tent and mortally [558] wounded his steed. The enemy was meanwhile directing, with unrelenting fury, its fire upon the fort, and had succeeded in killing a large number of its occupants.

As the days went by, it became increasingly evident that the forces under the command of the Amir-Tuman, in spite of their great superiority in number, equipment, and training, were unable to achieve the victory they had fondly anticipated. The death of Farrukh Khan, son of Yahya Khan and brother of Haji Sulayman Khan, one of the generals of the enemy's army, aroused the indignation of the Amir-Nizam, who addressed a strongly worded communication to the commanding officer, reprimanding him for his failure to force the besieged to an unconditional surrender. "You have sullied the fair name of our country," he wrote him, "have demoralised the army, and have wasted the lives of its ablest officers." He was bidden enforce the strictest discipline among his subordinates and cleanse his camp from every stain of debauchery and vice. He was, moreover, urged to take counsel with the chiefs of the people of Zanjan, and was warned that, failing to achieve his end, he would be degraded from his

position. "If your combined endeavours," he added, "prove powerless to force their submission, I myself will proceed to Zanjan, and will order a wholesale massacre of its inhabitants, irrespective of their position or belief. A town that can bring so much humiliation to the Shah and distress to his people is utterly unworthy of the clemency of our sovereign."

In a frenzy of despair, the Amir-Tuman summoned all the kad-khudas40 and chiefs of the people, showed them the text of that letter, and by his earnest entreaties succeeded in rousing them to immediate action.

The next day every able-bodied man in Zanjan had enlisted under the Amir-Tuman's standard.

Headed by their kad-khudas and preceded by four regiments, a vast multitude of people marched, to the sound of a flourish of trumpets and the beating of drums, in the direction of the fort.

Undaunted by their clamour, the companions of Hujjat raised simultaneously the cry of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!" then poured out of the gates and flung themselves upon them.

That encounter was the fiercest and most desperate engagement that had yet [559] been experienced.

The flower of Hujjat's supporters fell on that day, victims to a ruthless carnage.

Many a son was butchered in circumstances of unbridled cruelty under the eyes of his mother, while sisters gazed with horror and anguish upon the heads of their brothers raised on spears and brutally disfigured by the weapons of their foes.

In the midst of a tumult in which the boisterous enthusiasm of the companions of Hujjat faced the fury and barbarism of an exasperated enemy, the voices of women, who were struggling side by side with the men, could be heard from time to time, animating the zeal of their fellow-disciples.

The victory that was miraculously achieved on that day was, in no small measure, attributable to the shouts of exultation which those women raised in the face of a mighty foe, shouts which acquired added poignancy by their own acts of heroism and self-sacrifice.

Disguised in the garb of men, some had rushed forward, in their eagerness to supplant their fallen brethren, while the rest were seen carrying on their shoulders skins full of water, with which they strove to allay the thirst, and revive the strength, of the wounded.

Confusion reigned meanwhile in the camp of the enemy.

Deprived of water, and distressed by defection in their ranks, they fought a losing battle, unable to retreat and impotent to conquer.

No less than three hundred companions quaffed, that day, the cup of martyrdom.

One of Hujjat's supporters was a man named Muhsin, whose function it was to sound the adhan.41 His voice was endowed with a quality of warmth and richness that no man in the neighbourhood could equal. Its reverberation, as he summoned the faithful to prayer, could be distinctly felt as far as the adjoining villages, and penetrated the hearts of those who heard it. Oftentimes did the worshippers in that vicinity, in whose ears the voice of Muhsin was ringing, express their indignation at the charges of heresy imputed to Hujjat and his friends. So loud grew their protestations that they eventually reached the ears of the leading mujtahid of Zanjan, who, unable himself to impose silence upon them, implored the Amir-Tuman to devise some means of eradicating from the minds of the people the belief in the piety [560] and uprightness of Hujjat and his companions. "Day and night," he complained, "I strive through my public discourse, no less than by private converse with the people, to instil into their minds the conviction that that wretched band is the sworn enemy of the Prophet and the wrecker of His Faith. The cry of that evil man, Muhsin, robs my words of their influence and nullifies my exertions. To exterminate that miserable wretch is surely your first obligation."

The Amir refused at first to entertain his appeal. "You and your like," he replied, "are to be held responsible for having declared the necessity of waging holy war against them. We are but the servants of the government, and our duty is to obey the orders we receive. If you seek, however, to put an end to his life, you should be prepared to make the proper sacrifice." The siyyid immediately understood the purpose of the Amir's allusion. He had no sooner regained his house than he sent him, by the hand of a messenger, the gift of a hundred tumans.42

The Amir promptly ordered a number of his men, who were famed for their marksmanship, to lie in wait for Muhsin and shoot him when in the act of prayer. It was the hour of dawn when, as he raised the cry of "La Ilah-a-Illa'llah,"43 a bullet struck him in the mouth and killed him instantly. Hujjat, as soon as he was informed of that cruel act, ordered another of his companions to ascend the turret and continue the prayer from where Muhsin had left off. Though his life was spared until the cessation of hostilities, he, together with certain of his brethren, was made to suffer, eventually, a death no less atrocious than that of his fellow-disciple.

As the days of the siege were drawing to a close, Hujjat urged all those who were betrothed to celebrate their nuptials. For each unmarried youth among the besieged he chose a spouse, and, within the limits of the means at his disposal, contributed from his own purse whatever could add to the comfort and gladness of the newly married. He sold all the jewels his wife possessed, and, with the money, provided whatever could be obtained to bring happiness and pleasure to those he had joined in wedlock. During more than three months these festivities continued, festivities which were [561] intermingled with the terrors and hardships of a long-protracted siege. How often did the clamour of an advancing foe drown the acclamations of joy with which bride and bridegroom greeted each other! How suddenly was the voice of merriment stilled by the cry

of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!" that summoned the faithful to arise and repulse the invader! With what tenderness would the bride entreat the bridegroom to tarry awhile longer beside her ere he rushed forth to win the crown of martyrdom! "I can spare no time," he would reply. "I must hasten to obtain the crown of glory. We shall surely meet again on the shores of the great Beyond, the home of a blissful and eternal reunion."

No less than two hundred youths were joined in wedlock during those tumultuous days. Some a month, others a few days, and still others for but a brief moment, were able to tarry undisturbed in the company of their brides; no one among them failed, as the beating of the drum announced the hour of his departure, to respond joyously to the call. Each and every one ungrudgingly offered himself as a sacrifice for his true Beloved; all drank, eventually, the cup of martyrdom. No wonder the spot that has been the theatre of untold sufferings and has witnessed such heroism has been named Ard-i-A'la44 by the Bab, a title that has remained for all time linked with His own blessed name.

Among the companions was a certain Karbila'i 'Abdu'l-Baqi, the father of seven sons, five of whom Hujjat joined in wedlock. The nuptial ceremonies were hardly at an end when cries of terror suddenly announced the resumption of a fresh offensive against them. They sprang to their feet and, forsaking their loved ones, instantly rushed out to repulse the invader. All five fell in turn in the course of that encounter. The eldest of them, a youth greatly esteemed for his intelligence, and of renowned courage, was captured and conducted into the presence of the Amir-Tuman. "Lay him upon the ground," cried the infuriated Amir, "and kindle upon his breast, which dared nourish so great a love for Hujjat, a fire that shall consume it." "Wretched man," burst forth the undaunted youth, "no flame that the hands of your men are able to kindle, could destroy the love that [562] glows in my heart." The praise of his Beloved lingered on his lips until the last moment of his life.

Among the women who distinguished themselves by the tenacity of their faith was one named Umm-i-Ashraf,45 who was newly married when the storm of Zanjan broke out. She was within the fort when she gave birth to her son Ashraf. Both mother and child survived the massacre that marked the closing stages of that tragedy. Years afterwards, when her son had grown into a youth of great promise, he was involved in the persecutions that afflicted his brethren. Unable to persuade him to recant, his enemies endeavoured

to alarm his mother and convince her of the necessity of saving him, ere it was too late, from his fate. "I will disown you as my son," cried the mother, when brought face to face with him, "if you incline your heart to such evil whisperings and allow them to turn you away from the Truth." Faithful to his mother's admonitions, Ashraf met his death with intrepid calm. Though herself a witness to the cruelties inflicted on her son, she made no lamentation, neither did she shed a tear. This marvellous mother showed a courage and fortitude that amazed the perpetrators of that shameless deed. "I have now in mind," she exclaimed, as she cast a parting glance at the corpse of her son, "the vow I made on [563] the day of your birth, while besieged in the fort of 'Ali-Mardan

Khan. I rejoice that you, the only son whom God gave me, have enabled me to redeem that pledge."

My pen is powerless to portray, much less to render befitting tribute to, the consuming enthusiasm that glowed in those valiant hearts. Violent as were the winds of adversity, they were powerless to quench its flame. Men and women laboured with unabating fervour to strengthen the defences of the fort and reconstruct whatever the enemy had demolished. What leisure they could obtain was consecrated to prayer. Every thought, every desire, was subordinated to the paramount necessity of guarding their stronghold against the onslaughts of the assailant. The part the women played in these operations was no less arduous than that accomplished by their men companions. Every woman, irrespective of rank and age, joined with energy in the common task. They sewed the garments, baked the bread, ministered to the sick and wounded, repaired the barricades, cleared away from the courts and terraces the balls and missiles fired upon them by the enemy, and, last but not least, cheered the faint in heart and animated the faith of the wavering.46 Even the children joined in giving whatever assistance was in their power to the common cause, and seemed to be fired by an enthusiasm no less remarkable than that which their fathers and mothers displayed.

Such was the spirit of solidarity that characterised their labours, and such the heroism of their acts, that the enemy was led to believe their number was no less than ten thousand. It was generally conceded that a continual supply of provisions found its way, in an unaccountable manner, to the fort, and that fresh reinforcements were being steadily despatched from Nayriz, from Khurasan, and from Tabriz. The power of the besieged seemed to them as unshakable as ever, their resources inexhaustible.

The Amir-Tuman, exasperated by their unyielding tenacity [564] and spurred by the rebukes and protestations of the authorities in Tihran, determined to resort to the abject weapons of treachery in order to exact the complete submission of the besieged.47 Firmly convinced of the futility of his efforts to face his opponents in the field honourably, he craftily called for the suspension of hostilities, and gave currency to the report that the Shah had decided to abandon the whole enterprise. He represented his sovereign as having, from the very beginning, discountenanced the idea of extending his support to the forces that fought in Mazindaran and Nayriz, and of having deplored the shedding of so much blood for so insignificant a cause. The people of Zanjan and the surrounding villages were led to believe that Nasiri'd-Din Shah had actually ordered the Amir-Tuman to negotiate a friendly settlement of the issues between him and Hujjat, and that it was his intention to put an end, as speedily as possible, to this unhappy state of affairs.

Assured that the people had been deceived by his cunning plot, he drew up an appeal for peace, in which he assured Hujjat of the sincerity of his intention of achieving a lasting settlement between him and his supporters. He accompanied that declaration with a sealed copy of the Qur'an, as a testimony of the sacredness of his pledge. "My sovereign," he added, "has forgiven you.

You, as well as your followers, I hereby solemnly declare to be under the protection of his Imperial Majesty. This Book of God is my witness that if any of you decide to come out of the fort, you will be safe from any danger."

Hujjat reverently received the Qur'an from the hand of the messenger, and, as soon as he had read the appeal, bade its bearer inform his master that he would send an answer in the course of the following day. That night he gathered together his chief companions and spoke to them of the misgivings he entertained as to the sincerity of the enemy's declarations. "The treacheries of Mazindaran and of Nayriz [565] are still vivid in our minds. That which was perpetrated against them, the same they purpose to perpetrate against us. In deference to the Qur'an, however, we shall respond to their invitation, and shall despatch to their camp a number of our companions, that thereby their deceitfulness may be exposed."

I have heard Ustad Mihr-'Aliy-i-Haddad, who survived the massacre of Zanjan, relate the following: "I was one of the nine children, none of whom were more than ten years old, who accompanied the delegation sent by Hujjat to the Amir-Tuman. The rest were men of over eighty years of age. Among them were Karbila'i Mawla-Quli-Aqa-Dadash, Darvish-Salah, Muhammad-Rahim, and Muhammad. Darvish-Salah was a most impressive figure, tall of stature, white-bearded, and of singular beauty. He was greatly esteemed for his honourable and just conduct. His intervention on behalf of the downtrodden invariably received the consideration and sympathy of the authorities concerned. He renounced, after his conversion, all the honours he had received, and, though far advanced in age, enrolled himself among the defenders of the fort. He marched before us carrying the sealed Qur'an as we were led into the presence of the Amir-Tuman.

"Reaching his tent, we stood at its entrance awaiting his orders. To our salute he gave no response, and treated us with marked contempt. He kept us standing half an hour before he deigned to address us in a tone of severe reprimand. 'A meaner and more shameless people than you,' he cried in haughty scorn, 'has never been seen!' He had hurled his denunciations at us when one of the companions, the oldest and feeblest among them, begged to be allowed to say a few words to him, and, on obtaining his permission, spoke, unlettered though he was, in a manner that could not fail to excite our profound admiration. 'God knows,' he pleaded, 'that we are, and will ever remain, loyal and law-abiding subjects of our sovereign, with no other desire than to advance the true interests of his government and people. We have been grievously misrepresented by our ill-wishers. No one of the Shah's representatives was inclined to protect or befriend us; no one was found to plead our Cause before [566] him. We repeatedly appealed to him, but he ignored our entreaty and was deaf to our call. Our enemies, emboldened by the indifference which characterised the attitude of the ruling authorities, assailed us from every side, plundered our property, violated the honour of our wives and daughters, and captured our children. Undefended by our government and encompassed by our foes, we felt constrained to arise and defend our lives.'

"The Amir-Tuman turned to his lieutenant and asked him what action he would

advise him to take. 'I am at a loss," the Amir added, 'as to the answer I should give this man. Were I at heart religious, I would unhesitatingly embrace his cause.' 'Nothing but the sword,' replied his lieutenant, 'will deliver us from this abomination of heresy.' 'I still hold the Qur'an in my hand,' interposed Darvish-Salah, 'and carry the declaration which you, of your own accord, chose to make. Are the words we have just heard our reward for having responded to your appeal?'

"The Amir-Tuman, in a burst of fury, ordered that Darvish-Salah's beard be torn out, and that he, with those who were with him, be thrown into a dungeon. I and the rest of the children were scared, and attempted to escape. Raising the cry of 'Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!' we hurried in the direction of our barricades. Some of us were overtaken and made prisoners. As I was fleeing, the man who was pursuing me laid hold of the hem of my garment. I tore myself away from him and managed to reach the gate that led to the approaches of the fort, in a state of utter exhaustion. How great was my surprise when I saw one of the companions, a man named Iman-Quli, being savagely mutilated by the enemy. I was horrified as I gazed upon that scene, knowing as I did that on that very day the cessation of hostilities had been proclaimed and the most solemn pledges given that no acts of violence would be committed. I was soon informed that the victim had been betrayed by his brother, who, on the pretext of desiring to speak with him, had handed him over to his persecutors.

"I straightway hastened to Hujjat, who lovingly received me and, wiping the dust from my face, and clothing me with new garments, invited me to be seated by his side and bade [567] me tell him the fate of his companions. I described to him all that I had seen. 'It is the tumult of the Day of Resurrection,' he explained, 'a tumult such as the world has never seen before. This is the day on which "man shall fly from his brother, and his mother and his father, and his wife and his children."48 This is the day when man, not content with having abandoned his brother, sacrifices his substance in order to shed the blood of his nearest kinsman. This is the day when "every suckling woman shall forsake her sucking babe; and every woman that hath a burden in her womb shall cast her burden. And thou shalt see men drunken, yet are they not drunken; but it is the mighty chastisement of God!""'49

Seating himself in the centre of the maydan,50 Hujjat summoned his followers. On their arrival, he arose and, standing erect in their midst, spoke to them in these words: "I am well pleased with your unflinching endeavours, my beloved companions. Our enemies are bent upon our destruction. They harbour no other desire. Their intention was to trick you into coming out of the fort, and then to slaughter you mercilessly after their hearts' desire. Finding that their treachery has been exposed, they have, in the fury of their rage, ill-treated and imprisoned the oldest and the youngest among you. It is clear that not until they capture this fort and scatter you, will they lay down their arms or cease their persecutions against us. Your continued presence in this fort will eventually cause you to be taken captive by the enemy, who will of a certainty dishonour your wives and slay your children. Better is it, therefore, for you

to make your escape in the middle of the night and to take your wives and children with you. Let each one seek a place of safety until such time as this tyranny shall be overpast. I shall remain alone to face the enemy. It were better that my death should allay their thirst for revenge than that you should all perish."

The companions were moved to their very depths and, with tears in their eyes, declared their firm resolve to remain, to the end, by his side. "We can never consent," they exclaimed, "to abandon you to the mercy of a murderous enemy! Our lives are not more precious than your life, [568] neither are our families of a more noble descent than that of your kinsmen. Whatever calamity may yet befall you, is what we shall welcome for ourselves."

All except a few remained true their pledge. These, unable to bear the ever-increasing distress of a prolonged siege, and encouraged by the advice Hujjat himself had given them, betook themselves to a place of safety outside the fort, thus separating themselves from the rest of their fellow-disciples.

Nerved to a resolve of despair, the Amir-Tuman ordered all able-bodied men in Zanjan to assemble in the neighbourhood of his camp, ready to receive his commands. He reorganised the forces of his regiments, appointed their officers, and added them to the host of fresh recruits that had massed in the town. He ordered no less than sixteen regiments, each equipped with ten guns, to march against the fort. Eight of these regiments were charged to attack the fort every forenoon, after which the remainder of the forces were to replace them in their offensive until the approach of evening. The Amir himself took the field, and was seen in the forenoon of every day directing the efforts of his host, assuring them of the reward awaiting their success, and warning them of the punishment which, in the event of defeat, the sovereign would inflict upon them.

For one whole month the siege continued. Not content with attacks by day, the enemy several times attacked them by night also. The fierceness of their onslaughts, the overwhelming force of their numbers, and the rapid succession of the onsets, thinned the ranks of the companions and aggravated their distress. Reinforcements for the enemy continued to pour in from all directions, while the besieged languished in a state of misery and hunger.51

The Amir-Nizam meanwhile decided to strengthen the hands of the Amir-Tuman by the appointment of Hasan-'Ali Khan-i-Karrusi, who was commanded to march at the head of two sunni regiments to Zanjan. His arrival was the signal for the concentration of the enemy's artillery on [569] the fort. A tremendous bombardment threatened the structure with immediate destruction. It lasted for a number of days, during which the stronghold stood firm in spite of the increasing fire which was directed against it. The friends of Hujjat displayed, during those days, a valour and skill that even their bitterest foes were compelled to admire.

One day, while the bombardment was still in progress, a bullet struck Hujjat in the right arm, as he was performing his ablutions. Though he ordered his

servant not to inform his wife of the wound he had received, yet such was the man's grief that he was powerless to conceal his emotion. His tears betrayed his distress, and no sooner had the wife of Hujjat learned of the injury inflicted on her husband than she ran in distress and found him absorbed in prayer in a state of unruffled calm. Though bleeding profusely from his wound, his face retained its expression of undisturbed confidence. "Pardon this people, O God," he was heard to say, "for they know not what they do. Have mercy upon them, for they who have led them astray are alone responsible for the misdeeds the hands of this people have wrought."

Hujjat sought to calm the agitation that had seized his wife and relatives at the sight of the blood that covered his body. "Rejoice," he told them, "for I am still with you and desire you to be wholly resigned to God's will. What you now behold is but a drop compared to the ocean of afflictions that will be poured forth at the hour of my death. Whatever be His decree, it is our duty to acquiesce and bow down to His will."

No sooner had the news that he had been wounded reached the companions than they laid down their arms and hastened to him. The enemy, meanwhile, taking advantage of the momentary absence of their adversaries, redoubled their attack upon the fort and were able to force their passage through its gate.52 That day they took captive no less than a hundred of the women and children, and plundered all their [570] possessions. Despite the severity of that winter, these captives were left exposed in the open for no less than fifteen days and nights to a biting cold such as Zanjan had rarely experienced. Clad in the thinnest of garments, with no covering to protect them, they were abandoned, without food and shelter, in the wilderness. Their only protection was the gauze that covered their heads, with which they sought in vain to shield their faces from the icy wind that blew mercilessly upon them. Crowds of women, most of whom were inferior to them in social position, flocked from the various quarters of Zanjan to the scene of their sufferings and poured upon them contempt and ridicule. "You have now found your god," they scornfully exclaimed, as they danced wildly around them, "and have been rewarded abundantly by him." They spat in their faces and heaped upon them the foulest invectives.

The capture of the fort, though robbing Hujjat's companions of their chief instrument of defence, failed either to daunt their spirit or discourage their efforts. All property on which the enemy could lay its hands was plundered, and the women and children who were left defenceless were made captives. The rest of the companions, together with the remaining women and children, crowded into the houses that lay in the close vicinity of Hujjat's residence. They were divided into five companies, each consisting of nineteen times nineteen companions. From each of these companies, nineteen would rush forth together and, raising with one voice the cry of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!" would fling themselves into the midst of the enemy and would succeed in scattering its forces. The uplifted voices of these ninety-five companions would alone prove sufficient to paralyse the efforts, and crush the spirit, of their assailants.

This state of affairs continued for a few days, bringing in its wake both humiliation and loss to an enemy that had believed itself capable of achieving immediate and signal victory. Many were killed in the course of these encounters. Officers, to the distress of their superiors, were beginning to desert their posts, the captains of the artillery were abandoning their guns, whilst the rank and file of the army was demoralised and completely exhausted. The Amir-Tuman [571] was himself weary of the coercive measures to which he had been compelled to resort in order to maintain the discipline of his men and to keep unimpaired their efficiency and vigour. He was driven again to take counsel with the remainder of his officers, and to seek a desperate remedy for a situation that was fraught with grave danger to his own life no less than to that of the inhabitants of Zanjan. "I am weary," he confessed, "of the grim resistance of this people. They

are evidently animated by a spirit which no amount of encouragement from our sovereign can hope to call forth in our men. Such self-renunciation surely no one in the ranks of our army is able to manifest. No power that I can command is able to arouse my men from the slough of despair into which they have fallen. Whether they triumph or fail, these soldiers believe themselves doomed to eternal damnation."

Their mature deliberations resulted in the decision to [572] dig out underground passages from the site which their camp occupied to a place underneath the quarter in which the dwellings of Hujjat's adherents were situated. They determined to blow up these houses and by this means to force them to an unconditional surrender. For one whole month they laboured to fill these underground passages with all manner of explosives, and continued, at the same time, to demolish with fiendish cruelty such houses as remained standing. Wishing to accelerate the work of destruction, the Amir-Tuman ordered the officers in charge of his artillery to direct their fire upon Hujjat's residence, as the buildings that intervened between that house and the camp of the enemy had been razed to the ground, there remaining no further obstacle in the way of its ultimate destruction.

A section of his dwelling had already collapsed when Hujjat, who was still living within its walls, turned to his wife Khadijih, who was holding Hadi, their baby, in her arms, and warned her that the day was fast approaching when she and her infant might be taken captive, and bade her be prepared for that day. She was giving vent to her distress when a cannon-ball struck the room which she occupied, and killed her instantly. Her child, whom she was holding to her breast, fell into the brazier beside her, and shortly afterwards died of the injuries he had received, in the house of Mirza Abu'l-Qasim, the mujtahid of Zanjan.

Hujjat, though filled with grief, refused to yield to idle sorrow. "The day whereon I found Thy beloved One, O my God," he cried, "and recognised in Him the Manifestation of Thy eternal Spirit, I foresaw the woes that I should suffer for Thee. Great as have been until now my sorrows, they can never compare with the agonies that I would willingly suffer in Thy name. How can

this miserable life of mine, the loss of my wife and of my child, and the sacrifice of the band of my kindred and companions, compare with the blessings which the recognition of Thy Manifestation has bestowed on me! Would that a myriad lives were mine, would that I possessed the riches of the whole earth and its glory, that I might resign them all freely and joyously in Thy path."

The tragic loss their beloved leader had sustained, and the grievous wound inflicted upon him, distressed the companions [573] of Hujjat, and filled them with burning indignation. They determined to make a last and desperate effort to avenge the blood of their slaughtered brethren. Hujjat, however, dissuaded them from making that attempt, and exhorted them not to hasten the issue of the conflict. He bade them resign themselves to the will of God and to remain calm and steadfast to the end, whenever that end might come.

As time went on, their number diminished, their sufferings multiplied, and the area within which they could feel secure was reduced. On the morning of the fifth of the month of Rabi'u'l-Avval, in the year 1267 A.H.,53 Hujjat, who had already, for nineteen days, endured the severe pain caused by his wound, was in the act of prayer and had fallen prostrate upon his face, invoking the name of the Bab, when he suddenly passed away.

His sudden death came as a severe shock to his kindred and companions. Their grief at the passing of so able, so accomplished, and so inspiring a leader, was profound; the loss was irreparable. Two of his companions, Din-Muhammad-Vazir and Mir Riday-i-Sardar, straightway undertook, ere the enemy was made aware of his death, to inter his remains in a place which neither his kindred nor his friends could suspect. At midnight the body was borne to a room that belonged to Din-Muhammad-Vazir, where it received burial. They demolished that room in order to ensure the safety of the remains from desecration, and exercised the utmost care to maintain the secrecy of the spot.

More than five hundred women who survived that terrible tragedy were, immediately after the death of Hujjat, gathered together in his house. His companions, in spite of the death of their leader, continued to face, with undiminished zeal, the forces of their assailants. Of the great multitude that had flocked to the standard of Hujjat, there remained only two hundred vigorous men; the rest either had died or were utterly incapacitated by the wounds they had received.

The knowledge of the removal of so inspiring a leader nerved the enemy to resistance and decided them to wipe [574] out what still remained of the formidable forces they had been unable to subdue. They launched a general attack, fiercer and more determined than any previous one. Animated by the beating of drums and the sound of trumpets, and encouraged by the shouts of exultation raised by the populace, they threw themselves upon the companions with unbridled ferocity, resolved not to rest until the whole company had been annihilated. In the face of this fierce onset, the companions raised once more the cry of "Ya Sahibu'z-Zaman!" and rushed forth, undismayed, to continue the heroic struggle until all of them had been either slain or captured.

That massacre had scarcely been perpetrated when the signal was given for a pillage, unexampled in its scope and ferocity. Had not the Amir-Tuman issued orders to spare what remained of the house and belongings of Hujjat, and to refrain from any acts of violence against his kindred, even more dastardly attacks would have been made by his rapacious army. His intention was to inform the authorities in Tihran and to seek from them whatever advice they wished to give him. He failed, however, to restrain indefinitely the spirit of violence which animated his men. The ulamas of Zanjan, flushed with the victory that had cost them such exertion and loss of life, and which had involved to such an unprecedented degree their reputation and prestige, endeavoured to incite the populace to commit every imaginable outrage against the lives of their men captives and the honour of their women. The sentinels who guarded the entrance to the house in which Hujjat had been living, were driven from their posts in the general tumult that ensued. The populace joined hands with the army to plunder the property and assail the persons of the few who still survived that memorable struggle. Neither the Amir-Tuman nor the governor was able to allay the thirst for plunder and revenge which had seized the whole town. Order and discipline no longer existed in the midst of the general confusion.

The governor of the province was, however, able to induce the officers of the army to gather together the captives into the house of a certain Haji Ghulam and to keep them in custody until the arrival of fresh instructions from Tihran. [575] The entire company were huddled together like sheep in that wretched place, exposed to the cold of a severe winter. The enclosure into which they were crowded was roofless and without furniture. For a few days they remained without food. From thence the women were removed to the house of a mujtahid named Mirza Abu'l-Qasim, in the hope that he would induce them to recant, in return for which they would be offered their freedom. The greedy mujtahid, however, had, with the aid of his wives, his sisters and daughters, succeeded in seizing all they had been allowed to carry with them; had stripped them of their garments, clothed them in the meanest attire, and appropriated for himself whatever valuables he could find among their belongings.

After suffering untold hardships, these women captives were allowed to join their relatives, on condition that these would undertake full responsibility for their future behaviour. The rest were dispersed throughout the neighbouring villages, the inhabitants of which, unlike the people of Zanjan, welcomed the newcomers with treatment that was at once affectionate and genuine. The family of Hujjat, however, was detained in Zanjan until the arrival of definite instructions from Tihran.

As to the wounded, they were placed in custody until such time as the authorities in the capital should send directions as to how they were to be treated. Meanwhile the severity of the cold to which they were exposed and the cruelties they underwent were such that within a few days they had all perished.

The rest of the captives were delivered by the Amir-Tuman into the hands of the Karrusi, the Khamsih, and the 'Iraqi regiments, with orders that they be

immediately executed.

They were conducted in procession, to the accompaniment of drums and trumpets, to the camp where the army was stationed.54 All these regiments combined to add [576] to the horror of the abominations perpetrated against the poor sufferers.

Armed with their lances and spears, they flung themselves upon the seventy-six companions who still remained, piercing and mutilating their bodies with a savage ruthlessness that excelled the dark deeds of even the most refined torture-mongers of their race.

The spirit of revenge which that day dominated those barbarous men passed all bounds.

Regiment vied with regiment in committing the foulest atrocities which their ingenious minds could devise.

They were preparing to swoop afresh upon their victims when a certain Haji Muhammad-Husayn, father of Aba-Basir, sprang to his feet and, raising the call of the adhan,55 thrilled the multitude that had gathered about him.

Though in the hour of his death, such were the fervour and majesty with which he pealed out the words "Allah-u-Akbar,"56 that the entire 'Iraqi regiment immediately proclaimed their refusal to continue participating in such shameful deeds.

Deserting their posts, and raising the cry "Ya 'Ali!" they fled from that place in horror and disgust. "Accursed be the Amir-Tuman!" they were heard to exclaim, as they turned their backs on that scene of bloodshed and horror. "That wretch [577] has deceived us!

With devilish persistence he sought to convince us of this people's disloyalty to the Imam 'Ali and to his kindred.

Never, though we all be slain, will we consent to assist in such criminal deeds."

A number of these captives were blown from guns; others were stripped naked, ice-cold water was poured upon their bodies, and they were lashed severely. Still others were smeared with treacle and left to perish in the snow. Despite the shame and cruelties they were made to suffer, not one of these captives was known either to recant or to utter one angry word against his persecutors. Not even a whisper of discontent escaped their lips, nor did their countenances betray a shadow of regret or grief. No amount of adversity could succeed in darkening the light that shone in those faces; no words, however insulting, could disturb the serenity of their expressions.57

No sooner had the persecutors finished their work than they began to seek for the body of Hujjat, the place of whose burial the companions had carefully concealed. The most inhuman tortures had proved powerless to induce them to disclose the identity of that spot. The governor, exasperated by the failure of his search, asked that the seven-year-old son of Hujjat, whose name was Husayn,

be brought to him that he might attempt to induce him to disclose the secret.58 "My son," he said, as he gently caressed him, "I am filled with grief at the knowledge of all the afflictions that have been the lot of your parents. Not I, but the mujtahids of Zanjan, [578] should be held responsible for the abominations that have been committed. I am now willing to accord the remains of your father a befitting burial, and wish to atone for the shameful deeds that have been perpetrated against him." By his gentle insinuations, he succeeded in getting the child to reveal the secret, and thereupon sent his men to fetch the body. No sooner had the object of his desire been delivered into his hands than he ordered that it be dragged with a rope, to the sound of drums and trumpets, through the streets of Zanjan. For three days and three nights, unspeakable injuries were heaped upon the body, which lay exposed to the

eyes of the people in the maydan.59 On the third night, it was reported that a number of horsemen had succeeded in carrying away the remnants of the corpse to a place of safety in the direction of Qazvin. As to Hujjat's kinsmen, orders were received from Tihran to conduct them to Shiraz and to deliver them into the hands of the governor. There they languished in poverty and misery. Whatever possessions still remained to them the governor seized for himself, and condemned the victims of his rapacity to seek shelter in a ruined and dilapidated house. Hujjat's youngest son, Mihdi, died [579] of the privations he and his family were made to suffer, and was buried in the very midst of the ruins that had served as his shelter.

I was privileged, nine years after the termination of that memorable struggle, to visit Zanjan and witness the scene of those terrible butcheries. I beheld with grief and horror the ruins of the fort of 'Ali-Mardan Khan, and trod the ground that had been saturated with the blood of its immortal

defenders. I could discern on its gates and walls traces of the carnage that marked its surrender to the enemy, and could discover upon the very stones that had served as barricades, stains of the blood that had been so profusely shed in that neighbourhood.

As to the number of those who fell in the course of these encounters, no accurate estimate has as yet been made. So numerous were those who participated in that struggle, and [580] so prolonged the siege which they withstood, that to ascertain their names and number would be a task that I would hesitate to undertake. A tentative list of such names, which readers might do well to consult, has been prepared by Ismu'llahu'l-Mim and Ismu'llahu'l-Asad. Many and conflicting are the reports as to the exact number of those who struggled and fell under the banner of Hujjat in Zanjan. Some have estimated that there were as many as a thousand martyrs; according to others, they were more numerous. I have heard it stated that one of the companions of Hujjat who undertook to record the names of those who had suffered martyrdom, had left a written statement in which he had computed the number of those who had fallen prior to the death of Hujjat to be a thousand, five hundred and ninety-eight, whilst those who had suffered martyrdom afterwards were thought to have been in all two hundred and two persons.

For the account I have related of the happenings of Zanjan I am primarily indebted to Mirza Muhammad 'Aliy-i-Tabib-i-Zanjani, to Aba-Basir, and to Siyyid Ashraf, all martyrs of the Faith, with each of whom I was closely acquainted. The rest of my narrative is based upon the manuscript which a certain Mulla Husayn-i-Zanjani wrote and sent to the presence of Baha'u'llah, in which he recorded all the information he could glean from different sources regarding the events connected with that episode.

What I have related of the struggle of Mazindaran has been similarly inspired, to a very great extent, by the written account sent to the Holy Land by a certain Siyyid Abu-Talib-i-Shahmirzadi, as well as by the brief survey prepared here by one of the believers named Mirza Haydar-'Aliy-i-Ardistani. I have, moreover, ascertained certain facts connected with that struggle from persons who actually participated in it, such as Mulla Muhammad-Sadiq-i-Muqaddas, Mulla Mirza Muhammad-i-Furughi, and Haji 'Abdu'l-Majid, father of Badi' and martyr to the Faith.

As to the events relating to the life and deeds of Vahid, I have obtained my information regarding what took place in Yazd from Rida'r-Ruh, who was one of his intimate companions. As to the later stages of that struggle in Nayriz, my narrative is mainly drawn from such information as I [581] could gather from the detailed account sent to the Holy Land by a believer of that town, named Mulla Shafi', who had carefully investigated the matter and had reported it to Baha'u'llah. Whatever my pen has failed to record, future generations will, I hope, gather together and preserve for posterity. Many, I confess, are the gaps in this narrative, for which I beg the indulgence of my readers. It is my earnest hope that these gaps may be filled by those who will, after me, arise to compile an exhaustive and befitting account of these stirring events, the significance of which we can as yet but dimly discern.

FOOTNOTES

24.1. Capital of the district of Khamsih. "Khamsih is a small province to the east of Kaflan-Kuh, or Mountain of the Tiger, between 'Iraq and Adhirbayjan. Its capital, Zanjan, is a beautiful city surrounded by an embattled wall fortified with towers like all Persian cities. The inhabitants are of the Turkish race and the Persian language is seldom spoken, unless it be by government employees. The surrounding country is studded with villages which are fairly prosperous. Powerful tribes visit them, especially in the winter and spring." (Ibid., p. 191.)

24.2. "Now in these years [A.H. 1266 and 1267] throughout all Persia fire fell on the households of the Babis, and each one of them, in whatever hamlet he might be, was, on the slightest suspicion arising, put to the sword. More than four thousand souls were slain, and a great multitude of women and children, left without protector or helper, distracted and confounded, were trodden down and destroyed." ("A Traveller's Narrative," pp. 47-8.)

24.3. "There lived in that city a mujtahid called Mulla Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Zanjani.

He was a native of Mazindaran and studied under a celebrated master.

Dignified with the title of Sharifu'l-'Ulama, Muhammad-'Ali had concentrated his attention on dogmatic theology and jurisprudence, and had become famous.

The Muhammadans affirm that, in his function as mujtahid, he showed himself restless and turbulent.

No question ever seemed to him either sufficiently studied or properly solved.

His repeated fatvas disconcerted the conscience and confused the practices of the faithful.

Eager for change, he was neither tolerant in discussion nor moderate in debate.

Sometimes he would unduly prolong the fast of Ramadan for reasons which no one had advanced before; sometimes he would alter the ritual of prayer in quite a novel way.

He became obnoxious to the peaceful and odious to the traditionalists.

But it is also admitted that he counted many followers who considered him a saint, prized his zeal, and put their faith in him.

An impartial judge could recognize in him one of the Muhammadans who are only so in appearance, but urged on by a living faith and an abundant religious zeal for which they are eager to find a scope.

His misfortune was that he found, or thought he found, a natural use for his powers in the overthrow of traditions whose minor significance did not justify such a disturbance." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp.

191-192.)

24.4. 1812-13 A.D.

24.5. "Among the ulamas of the city was a man called Akhund Mulla 'Abdu'r-Rahim, renowned for his piety. He had a son who lived in Najaf and at Karbila where he attended the lectures of the celebrated Sharifu'l-'Ulamay-i-Mazindarani. This young man was of a restless nature and rather impatient with the narrowness of Shi'ism." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 332.)

24.6. "On his way back from the Holy Land he stopped at Hamadan where the citizens welcomed him cordially and entreated him to remain." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 336.)

24.7. "All the ulamas of the city called on him and left concerned over the few words which he had spoken and which revealed quite a novel turn of mind. Indeed the attitude of the newcomer very quickly proved to these pious men that their conjectures were well-founded." (Ibid.)

24.8. "There was a caravanserai of the days of Shah-'Abbas, which had gradually become a sighih-khanih: in order to prevent a breach of the Shiite law a

certain Mulla Dust-Muhammad, who made his residence there, would bless the transitory union between the male visitors to the place and the inmates. Hujjatu'l-Islam—such was the title which our hero had assumed— ordered the institution to be closed, gave in marriage the greater number of these women and secured employment for the others in respectable families. He also caused a wine dealer to be whipped and his house to be torn down." (Ibid., pp. 332-333.)

24.9. "But this was the limit of his activity. Always troubled with the problems raised by a religion founded upon hadiths which were frequently contradictory, he perplexed the conscience of the faithful by peculiar fatvas which upset old traditions. Thus, he restored the hadith according to which Muhammad would have said: 'The month of Ramadan is always full.' Without investigating the origin of that tradition, without enquiring whether those who had related it were worthy of faith, he commanded that it should be literally obeyed, thus inducing his hearers to fast on the day of Fitr, which is held to be a grievous sin. He also permitted that prostrations be made at prayer time by resting the head upon a crystal stone. All these innovations won for him a large number of partisans who admired his science and his activity; but they displeased the official clergy whose hatred, further augmented by anxiety, soon knew no bounds." (Ibid., p. 333.)

24.10. "Hujjat came and, by his courtesy and his captivating personality, soon won over all those who came in contact with him, even His Majesty. One day, so the story goes, he was in the palace of the Shah with several of his colleagues, when one of them, an ulama of Kashan, brought out a document and besought the king to sign it. It was a royal decree granting certain stipends. Hujjat rose up and bitterly denounced a clergy who begged pensions from the government. He had recourse to the hadiths and to the Qur'an to show how shameful was such a practice which had originated with the Bani-Umayyih. His colleagues were beside themselves with anger, but the Shah, pleased with such frankness, presented our hero with a staff and a ring and authorized him to return to Zanjan." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp. 333-334.)

24.11. "The inhabitants of Zanjan came in crowds to meet him and offered sacrifices of oxen, chickens and sheep. Twelve children, each twelve years of age, with red kerchiefs about their necks to show their readiness to sacrifice their all, were in the center of the cortege. It proved a triumphal entry." (Ibid., p. 334.)

24.12. "He transformed his disciples into models of virtue and temperance; henceforth the men quenched their thirst at the fountains of spiritual life. They fasted during three months, lengthened their prayers by adding to them daily the invocation of Ja'far-i-Tayyar, performing once a day their ablutions with the water of the Qur (legal measure of purity) and finally on Fridays they crowded the Mosques." (Ibid., p. 334.)

24.13. "Finally, he uttered in a clear voice the Friday prayer which must be

said instead of the habitual daily one said when the Imam comes. He then expounded several sayings of the Bab and concluded thus: 'The goal for which the world has been striving is now here, free from veils and obstacles. The sun of Truth has risen and the lights of imagination and imitation have been extinguished. Fix your eyes upon the Bab, not upon me, the least of his slaves. My wisdom compared to his is as an unlighted candle to the sun at midday. Know God by God and the sun by its rays. So, today has appeared the Sahibu'z-Zaman. The Sultan of Possibilities is living.' Needless to say, these words made a deep impression upon the audience. Nearly all accepted this message and conversed among themselves regarding the true nature of the Bab." (Ibid., p. 335.)

24.14. "The conversion of Mulla Muhammad-'Ali and his numerous partisans had in fact exhausted the patience of the Imam-Jum'ih and of Shaykhu'l-Islam. They wrote indignant letters to His Majesty who in reply gave orders for the arrest of the offender." (Ibid., p. 336.)

24.15. "He was in Tihran until the day when, after the death of Muhammad Shah, Nasiri'd-Din Mirza now Nasiri'd-Din Shah, appointed as governor of Zanjan, one of his uncles, Amir Arslan Khan Majdu'd-Dawlih, who was Ishiq Aghasi of the palace." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 337.)

24.16. "He made a triumphant entry into his native city.

Now that he was a Babi, to his old friends were added the believers in the new doctrine.

A large number of men, rich and respected, soldiers, merchants, even mullas came to meet him, at a distance of one or two stations away, and conducted him home, not as an exile who returns, not as a suppliant who asks only rest, not even as a rival strong enough to demand respect, but he entered as a master." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p.

193.) "The author of 'Nasikhu't-Tavarikh' himself acknowledged that a goodly number of citizens of Zanjan, and among them high officials, traveled the distance of two stations to meet him.

He was received like a conqueror and many heads of sheep were sacrificed in his honor.

None of his opponents dared ask him why he had left Tihran and had returned to Zanjan; but Islam was severely tried as the Zanjanis did not hesitate to preach throughout the city the new doctrine.

The Muhammadan writer points out that all the Zanjanis were simple-minded and so fell easily into the snare; but contradicting himself he declares that only the knaves, greedy for worldly possessions, and the impious ones gathered round the new leader.

However they were quite numerous and, according to his story, about fifteen thousand, which seems rather an exaggerated estimate." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

337-338.)

24.17. "Majdu'd-Dawlih, governor of the city, a cruel, heartless and severe man, enraged at the news of the return of so troublesome a person as Hujjat, ordered that Muhammad Big be whipped and that the tongue of Karbila'i Vali be cut out." (Ibid., p. 337.)

24.18. See Glossary.

24.19. See Glossary.

24.20. "At the spectacle, the Muhammadans took flight and the wounded man was cared for by the aunt of Mir Salah in her own house." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 341.)

24.21. May 16, 1850 A.D.

24.22. "The Governor and the ulamas wrote to His Majesty reports in which their fear and perplexity were revealed. The Shah, hardly rid of the war in Mazindaran and enraged at the thought of another sedition in another section of his empire, urged also by his son Sadr-i-A'zam and by the ulamas who had declared a holy war, gave orders to kill the Babis and plunder their possessions. It was on Friday the third of Rajab that the order came to Zanjan." (Ibid., pp. 341-342.)

24.23. "All was bewildering confusion. The Muhammadans were frantically running to and fro, looking for their wives, their children or their belongings. They came and went crazed, aghast, weeping over what they had to abandon. Families were separated, fathers thrusting back their sons, wives their husbands, children their mothers. Whole houses remained deserted so great was the haste, and the Governor sent soldiers to the neighboring villages to secure new recruits for the holy war." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 342.)

24.24. "The Babis, on the other hand, were not passive. They were organizing for their own protection. Hujjat was exhorting them never to attack but always to defend themselves. 'Brothers,' he would say to them, 'do not be ashamed of me. Do not believe that because you are the companions of the Sahibu'z-Zaman you are to conquer the world by the sword. I take God as witness; they will kill you, they will burn you, they will send your heads from town to town. The only victory in store for you is to sacrifice yourselves, your wives and your possessions. God has always decreed that in every age the blood of the believers is to be the oil of the lamp of religion. You have learned of the tortures endured by the saintly martyrs of Mazindaran. They were put to death because they affirmed that the promised Mihdi had come. I say to you, whosoever has not the strength to bear such torture, let him go over to the other side,

for we will have to endure martyrdom. Is not our master in their power?'"
(Ibid., pp. 342-343.)

24.25. "Picture to yourself a Persian city.

The streets are narrow, of a width of four or five or eight feet at the most.

The surface unpaved has so many holes that one must proceed cautiously to avoid breaking one's legs.

The houses, with no windows opening on the street, present on both sides unbroken walls, generally about fifteen feet high and topped with a terrace without a railing, sometimes crowned by a bala-Khanih or open pavilion which is usually an indication of a wealthy house.

All that is of adobe or bricks baked in the sun.

The uprights are of bricks baked in the kiln.

This type, of venerable antiquity and in use even before historical times in the ancient cities of Mesopotamia, has many advantages: it is inexpensive, it is sanitary, it adapts itself to modest or pretentious plans; it can be a cottage or a palace entirely covered with mosaics, brilliant paintings and gold ornaments.

But, as is always the case in this world, so many advantages are offset by the ease with which such dwellings crumble to pieces.

Cannon balls are not needed; the rain is quite sufficient to demolish them.

Thus we can visualize these famous sites covered, according to tradition, with immense cities of which nothing remains but ruins of temples and palaces and mounds scattered over the plains. "In a few years whole districts vanish without leaving a trace, if the houses are not kept in repair.

As all the cities of Persia are constructed after the same plan and of the same material, it is easy to visualize Zanjan with her crenellated walls with high towers, her crooked streets unpaved and full of ruts.

In the midst of these rose a formidable citadel called 'Chateau d"Ali-Mardan Khan.'" (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp.

197-198.)

24.26. "He [the governor of Zanjan], fearing for himself, at once took measures to safeguard his authority, and forwarded to Mirza Muhammad-Taqi Khan Amir-i-Kabir a garbled account of the affair; for he was fearful lest another should acquire more influence than he possessed, and so his authority and consideration should be weakened.

In consequence of his representations, Siyyid 'Ali Khan, Lieutenant-Colonel, of Firuz-Kuh, received the royal command to proceed with a numerous body of horse and foot to Zanjan, and to arrest Mulla Muhammad-'Ali, who had retired with his

followers (nearly five thousand in number) to the citadel.

On his arrival, Siyyid 'Ali Khan laid siege to the citadel, and thus was the fire of strife kindled, and day by day the number of those slain on either side increased, until at length he suffered an ignominious defeat and was obliged to ask for reinforcements from the capital.

The government wished to send Ja'far-Quli Khan, Lieutenant-Colonel, the brother of I'timadu'd-Dawlih, but he excused himself, and said to Mirza Taqi Khan Amir-i-Kabir: 'I am not an Ibn-i-Ziyad to go and make war on a band of siyyids and men of learning of whose tenets I know nothing, though I should be ready enough to fight Russians, Jews, or other infidels.' Other officers besides him showed a disinclination to take part in this war.

Amongst these was Mir Siyyid Husayn Khan of Firuz-Kuh, whom Mirza Taqi Khan the Amir dismissed and disgraced as soon as he became acquainted with his sentiments.

So also many of the officers who were of the sect of the 'Aliyu'llahis, although they went to the war, withdrew from it when they learned more of the matter.

For their chief had forbidden them to fight, and therefore they fled.

For it is written in their books that when the soldiers of Guran shall come to the capital of the king, then the Lord of the Age (whom they call God) shall appear; and this prophecy was now accomplished.

They also possess certain poems which contain the date of the Manifestation, and these too came true.

So they were convinced that this was the Truth become manifest, and begged to be excused from taking part in the war, which thing they declared themselves unable to do.

And to the Babis they said: 'In subsequent conflicts, when the framework of your religion shall have gathered strength, we will help you.' In short, when the officers of the army perceived in their opponents naught but devotion, godliness, and piety, some wavered in secret, and did not put forth their full strength in the war." (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," pp.

138-43.)

24.27. According to Gobineau (p. 198), he was the grandson of Haji Muhammad-Husayn Khan-i-Isfahani.

24.28. "On the fourth day, the Muhammadans saw with great joy Sadru'd-Dawlih, grandson of Haji Muhammad-Husayn Khan, of Isfahan, enter their section of the city coming from Sultaniyyih, at the head of the tribe of Khamsih.

For several days thereafter, reinforcements arrived in great numbers.

First of all, Siyyid 'Ali Khan and Shahbar Khan, one from Firuz-Kuh, the other from Maraghih, with two hundred horsemen from their respective tribes.

After them came Muhammad-'Ali Khan-i-Shah-Sun with two hundred mounted afshars; fifty artillerymen with two field guns and two mortars; so that the governor was provided with as much assistance as he could have wished and surrounded with a goodly number of military chieftains, among whom were several who were famous throughout the country." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp.

198-199.) "One of the most terrible encounters related in the journal of the siege, is the one which took place on the fifth of Ramadan.

Mustafa Khan, Qajar, with the fifteenth regiment of Shigaghi; Sadru'd-Dawlih, with his horsemen of Khamsih; Siyyid 'Ali Khan of Firuz-Kuh, with his own regiment; Muhammad Aqa, colonel, with the regiment of Nasir called the royal regiment; Muhammad-'Ali Khan, with the Afshar cavalry; Major Nabi Big, with his cavalry and a troop made up of loyal citizens of Zanjan; all these men at dawn attacked the fortifications of the Babis.

The resistance of the Babis was magnificent but disastrous.

They saw their best leaders fall, one after another, leaders brave and true, saints who could not be replaced:

Nur-'Ali, the hunter; Bakhsh-'Ali, the carpenter, Khudadad and Fathu'llah Big, all indispensable to the attainment of victory.

They all fell, some in the morning and others in the evening." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p.

200.)

24.29. "I have seen at Zanjan the ruins of that fierce encounter; whole sections of the city have not yet been rebuilt and probably never will be. Some of those who took part in the tragedy have related to me upon the very spot certain incidents: the Babis ascended and descended the terraces while carrying their cannon with them. Sometimes the earthen floor, not very firm, gave way and they had to raise the heavy gun again by dint of man power and had to prop the ground up with beams. When the enemy approached the crowd surrounded the guns with enthusiasm, all arms extended to lift them up and, when the carriers fell under the bullets of the assailants, a hundred comrades vied with each other for the honor of replacing them. Assuredly this was true faith." (Ibid., pp. 200-201.)

24.30. Qur'an, 86:9.

24.31. "God the Great."

24.32. "God the Most Great."

24.33. "God the Most Beauteous."

24.34. "God the Most Glorious."

24.35. "God the Most Pure."

24.36. According to Gobineau (p. 202), 'Aziz Khan was "general-in-chief of the troops of Adhirbayjan and then first aide-de-camp of the king. He was passing through Zanjan, on his way to Tiflis, to congratulate the grand duke, heir apparent of Russia, on the occasion of his arrival in Caucasia."

24.37. See Glossary.

24.38. "Muhammad Khan, then Bigliyirbigi and Mir-panj, or general of the division, today become Amir-Tuman, joined the troops already engaged in this city; he brought them three thousand men of the regiments of Shigagi and certain regiments of the guards with six cannon and two mortars. Almost at the same time Qasim Khan arrived from the frontier of Karabagh, entering Zanjan from another quarter, and the major Arslan Khan with cavalry from Khirghan, and 'Ali-Akbar, captain of Khuy, arrived with infantry. For each one had received orders from the king and they were all hastening to comply." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 201.)

24.39. See Glossary.

24.40. See Glossary.

24.41. See Glossary.

24.42. See Glossary.

24.43. There is no God but God.

24.44. "The Exalted Spot," title given to Zanjan by the Bab.

24.45. "Mother of Ashraf."

24.46. "The desperate resistance offered by the Babis must therefore be attributed less to the strength of the position which they occupied than to the extraordinary valour with which they defended themselves. Even the women took part in the defence, and I subsequently heard it stated on good authority that, like the Carthaginian women of old, they cut off their long hair, and bound it round the crazy guns to afford them the necessary support." (E. G. Browne's "A Year amongst the Persians," p. 74.)

24.47. "Decidedly the situation was becoming critical for the Muhammadans and it looked as though they would never overcome such a tenacious resistance. Moreover, why take so much trouble? Why endanger uselessly the lives, not of the soldiers, mere cannon fodder they, but those of the officers and the generals? Why expose oneself daily to ridicule and to defeat? Why not follow the example of Shaykh Tabarsi? Why not resort to deceit? Why not make the most sacred promises, even though it might later become necessary to massacre those gullibles who had put their trust in them?" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 350.)

24.48. Qur'an, 80:34.

24.49. Qur'an, 22:2.

24.50. See Glossary.

24.51. "Finally, the threats of the court, the encouragement and the reinforcements arrived so fast, there was such a disproportion as to soldiers and supplies between the Babis and their adversaries that the outcome became both evident and imminent." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 203.)

24.52. "The regiment of Karrus under the command of the chief of the tribe, Hasan-'Ali Khan (today minister to Paris), took the fort of 'Ali-Mardan Khan; the fourth regiment broke into the house of Aqa 'Aziz, one of the strongholds of the city, and burnt it to the ground; the regiment of guards blew up the hotel located near the Hamadan gate, and, though it lost one captain and several soldiers, nevertheless it remained in possession of the place." (Ibid., p. 203.)

24.53. January 8, 1851 A.D.

24.54. "Then Muhammad Khan, Bigliyirbigi, Amir Arslan Khan, governor, and the other commanders, although they had guaranteed on their honor to spare the lives of the Babis, assembled them in front of their troops to the accompaniment of drums and trumpets and ordered one hundred men, chosen from the different regiments, to take the prisoners and place them in a row.

The command was then given to pierce them with bayonets, which was done.

Then the leaders of the Babis, Sulayman the shoemaker and Haji Kazim Giltughi, were blown to pieces from the mouths of mortars.

This type of execution invented in Asia, but practised also by the English troops during the revolt in India, with the refinement with which European science and intelligence invest everything they do, consists in tying the victim to the mouth of the cannon loaded with powder.

When the explosion takes place, the victim is torn to pieces, the size of the pieces depending upon the amount of powder used. "The execution over, the captives were sorted again.

They set aside Mirza Rida, lieutenant of Mulla Muhammad-'Ali, and on all those of high standing or importance they placed chains about their necks and shackles on their hands and feet.

They then decided to disregard the royal command and to take them to Tihran in order to augment their triumph.

As for the few unfortunates who were left and whose life or death was of no importance to anyone, they were abandoned and the victorious army returned to the capital, dragging with them their prisoners, who walked ahead of the horses of the victorious generals. "Upon their arrival in Tihran, the Amir-Nizam, prime minister, found it necessary to make an example of this new execution and Mirza Rida, Haji Muhammad-'Ali and Haji Muhsin were condemned to have their veins slashed open.

The three victims learned the news without betraying the least emotion; they

declared, nevertheless, that the lack of good faith, of which the authorities had been guilty, was not one of those crimes that the Almighty could be satisfied with punishing in the ordinary way; He would demand a punishment more impressive and striking for the persecutors of His saints.

Consequently, they foretold that the prime minister would very soon suffer the same death that he was inflicting upon them. "I have heard this prophecy referred to and I do not doubt for an instant that they who informed me of it, were firmly convinced of its truth.

I must, however, state here that when I was told about it, four years had elapsed since the Amir-Nizam was thus put to death by royal edict.

The only thing I can affirm, therefore, is that I was given assurance that the prophecy had really been made by the martyrs of Zanjan." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp.

207-209.)

24.55. See Glossary.

24.56. "God is Most Great."

24.57. "After the execution, the spectators invaded the field of death, some searching for the body of a friend in order to bury it, others moved only by morbid curiosity. It is said that a Muhammadan, named Vali-Muhammad, came upon the body of one of his neighbours and, noticing that he was not quite dead, he called to him and said, 'I am your neighbor Vali-Muhammad. If you need anything call on me.' The other indicated that he was thirsty. Immediately, the Muhammadan fetched a large stone and returning to his neighbor said, 'Open your mouth, I bring you water.' As the dying man complied he crushed his head with the stone. "At last, the Bigliyirbigi started for Tihran, taking with him forty-four prisoners among whom were the son of Mirza Rida, Haji Muhammad-'Ali, and Haji Muhsin the surgeon. These three were put to death after their arrival, the others were doomed to rot in prison." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 363.)

24.58. "It was not enough for them to have gained the victory, they had even to insult the bodies of their enemies. They were eager to question the Babis but, no matter how great the torture with which they threatened them, the Babis refused to speak. They poured boiling oil upon the head of Aqa Din-Muhammad, but he remained silent. Finally, the Sardar had the son of the deceased chief brought before him. This child was but seven years of age, his name was Aqa Husayn, and, through clever threats and insidious flattery, they succeeded in making him speak." (Ibid., p. 361.)

24.59. See Glossary.

CHAPTER XXV
BAHA'U'LLAH'S JOURNEY TO KARBILA

[582] Ever since I began the writing of my narrative, it has been my firm

intention to include, in such accounts as I might be able to relate of the early days of this Revelation, those gems of inestimable value which it has been my privilege to hear, from time to time, from the lips of Baha'u'llah. These words, some of which were addressed to me alone, others which I shared with my fellow-disciples as we sat in His presence, are mainly concerned with the very episodes I have essayed to describe. Baha'u'llah's comments on the conference of Badasht, and His references to the tumult that marked its closing stages, to which I have referred in a preceding chapter, are but instances of the passages with which I hope to enrich and ennoble my narrative.

Upon the termination of the description of the struggle of Zanjan, I was ushered into His presence, and received, together with a number of other believers, the blessings which on two occasions He deigned to confer upon us. Both visits took place during the four days which Baha'u'llah chose to tarry in the home of Aqay-i-Kalim. On the second and fourth nights after His arrival at His brother's house, which fell on the seventh day of the month of Jamadiyu'l-Avval, in the year 1306 A.H.,1 I, together with a number of pilgrims from Sarvistan and Faran, as well as a few resident believers, was admitted into His presence. The words He spoke to us lie for ever engraved upon my heart, and I feel it my duty to my readers to share with them the gist of His talk.

"Praise be to God," He said, "that whatever is essential for the believers in this Revelation to be told has been revealed. Their duties have been clearly defined, and the deeds they are expected to perform have been plainly set forth in [583] Our Book. Now is the time for them to arise and fulfil their duty. Let them translate into deeds the exhortations We have given them. Let them beware lest the love they bear God, a love that glows so brightly in their hearts, cause them to transgress the bounds of moderation, and to overstep the limits We have set for them. In regard to this matter, We wrote thus, while in 'Iraq, to Haji Mirza Musay-i-Qumi: 'Such is to be the restraint you should exercise that if you be made to quaff from the well-springs of faith and certitude all the rivers of knowledge, your lips must never be allowed to betray, to either friend or stranger, the wonder of the draught of which you have partaken. Though your heart be aflame with His love, take heed lest any eye discover your inner agitation, and though your soul be surging like an ocean, suffer not the serenity of your countenance to be disturbed, nor the manner of your behaviour to reveal the intensity of your emotions.'

"God knows that at no time did We attempt to conceal Ourself or hide the Cause which We have been bidden to proclaim. Though not wearing the garb of the people of learning, We have again and again faced and reasoned with men of great scholarship in both Nur and Mazindaran, and have succeeded in persuading them of the truth of this Revelation. We never flinched in Our determination; We never hesitated to accept the challenge from whatever direction it came. To whomsoever We spoke in those days, We found him receptive to our Call and ready to identify himself with its precepts. But for the shameful behaviour of the people of Bayan, who sullied by their deeds the work We had accomplished, Nur

and Mazindaran would have been entirely won to this Cause and would have been accounted by this time among its leading strongholds.

"At a time when the forces of Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza had besieged the fort of Tabarsi, We resolved to depart from Nur and lend Our assistance to its heroic defenders.

We had intended to send 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, one of Our companions, in advance of Us, and to request him to announce Our approach to the besieged.

Though encompassed by the forces of the enemy, We had decided to throw in Our lot with those steadfast companions, and to risk the dangers with which [584] they were confronted.

This, however, was not to be.

The hand of Omnipotence spared Us from their fate and preserved Us for the work We were destined to accomplish.

In pursuance of God's inscrutable wisdom, the intention We had formed was, before Our arrival at the fort, communicated by certain inhabitants of Nur to Mirza Taqi, the governor of Amul, who sent his men to intercept Us.

While We were resting and taking Our tea, We found Ourselves suddenly surrounded by a number of horsemen, who seized Our belongings and captured Our steeds.

We were given, in exchange for Our own horse, a poorly saddled animal which We found it extremely uncomfortable to ride.

The rest of Our companions were conducted, handcuffed, to Amul.

Mirza Taqi succeeded, in spite of the tumult Our arrival had raised, and in the face of the opposition of the ulamas, in releasing Us from their grasp and in conducting Us to his own house.

He extended to Us the warmest hospitality.

Occasionally he yielded to the pressure which the ulamas were continuously bringing to bear upon him, and felt himself powerless to defeat their attempts to harm Us.

We were still in his house when the Sardar, who had joined the army in Mazindaran, returned to Amul.

No sooner was he informed of the indignities We had suffered than he rebuked Mirza Taqi for the weakness he had shown in protecting Us from Our enemies. 'Of what importance,' he indignantly demanded, 'are the denunciations of this ignorant people?

Why is it that you have allowed yourself to be swayed by their clamour?

You should have been satisfied with preventing the party from reaching their destination and, instead of detaining them in this house, you should have arranged for their safe and immediate return to Tihran.'

"Whilst in Sari, We were again exposed to the insults of the people. Though the notables of that town were, for the most part, Our friends and had on several occasions met Us in Tihran, no sooner had the townspeople recognised Us, as We walked with Quddus in the streets, than they began to hurl their invectives at Us. The cry 'Babi! Babi!' greeted Us wherever We went. We were unable to escape their bitter denunciations.

"In Tihran We were twice imprisoned as a result of Our [585] having risen to defend the cause of the innocent against a ruthless oppressor. The first confinement to which We were subjected followed the slaying of Mulla Taqiy-i-Qazvini, and was occasioned by the assistance We were moved to extend to those upon whom a severe punishment had been undeservedly inflicted. Our second imprisonment, infinitely more severe, was precipitated by the attempt which irresponsible followers of the Faith made on the life of the Shah. That event led to Our banishment to Baghdad. Soon after Our arrival, We betook Ourself to the mountains of Kurdistan, where We led for a time a life of complete solitude. We sought shelter upon the summit of a remote mountain which lay at some three days' distance from the nearest human habitation. The comforts of life were completely lacking. We remained entirely isolated from Our fellow men until a certain Shaykh Isma'il discovered Our abode and brought Us the food We needed.

"Upon Our return to Baghdad, We found, to Our great astonishment, that the Cause of the Bab had been sorely neglected, that its influence had waned, that its very name had almost sunk into oblivion. We arose to revive His Cause and to save it from decay and corruption. At the time when fear and perplexity had taken fast hold of Our companions, We reasserted, with fearlessness and determination, its essential verities, and summoned all those who had become lukewarm to espouse with enthusiasm the Faith they had so grievously neglected. We sent forth Our appeal to the peoples of the world, and invited them to fix their gaze upon the light of His Revelation.

"After Our departure from Adrianople, a discussion arose among the government officials in Constantinople as to whether We and Our companions should not be thrown into the sea. The report of such a discussion reached Persia, and gave rise to a rumour that We had actually suffered that fate. In Khurasan particularly, Our friends were greatly perturbed. Mirza Ahmad-i-Azghandi, as soon as he was informed of this news, was reported to have asserted that under no circumstances could he credit such a rumour. 'The Revelation of the Bab,' he said, 'must, if this be true, be regarded as utterly devoid of foundation.' The news of Our safe arrival [586] in the prison-city of 'Akka rejoiced the hearts of Our friends, deepened the admiration of the believers of Khurasan for the faith of Mirza Ahmad, and increased their confidence in him.

"From Our Most Great Prison We were moved to address to the several rulers and crowned heads of the world Epistles in which We summoned them to arise and embrace the Cause of God. To the Shah of Persia We sent Our messenger Badi', into whose hands We entrusted the Tablet. It was he who raised it aloft before the eyes of the multitude and, with uplifted voice, appealed to his sovereign

to heed the words that Tablet contained. The rest of the Epistles likewise reached their destination. To the Tablet We addressed to the Emperor of France, an answer was received from his minister, the original of which is now in the possession of the Most Great Branch.2 To him We addressed these words: 'Bid the high priest, O Monarch of France, to cease ringing his bells, for, lo! the Most Great Bell, which the hands of the will of the Lord thy God are ringing, is made manifest in the person of His chosen One.' The Epistle We addressed to the Czar of Russia, alone failed to reach it destination. Other Tablets, however, have reached him, and that Epistle will eventually be delivered into his hands.

"Be thankful to God for having enabled you to recognise His Cause. Whoever has received this blessing must, prior to his acceptance, have performed some deed which, though he himself was unaware of its character, was ordained by God as a means whereby he has been guided to find and embrace the Truth. As to those who have remained deprived of such a blessing, their acts alone have hindered them from recognising the truth of this Revelation. We cherish the hope that you, who have attained to this light, will exert your utmost to banish the darkness of superstition and unbelief from the midst of the people. May your deeds proclaim your faith and enable you to lead the erring into the paths of eternal salvation. The memory of this night will never be forgotten. May it never be effaced by the passage of time, and may its mention linger for ever on the lips of men."

The seventh Naw-Ruz after the Declaration of the Bab [587] fell on the sixteenth day of the month of Jamadiyu'l-Avval in the year 1267 A.H.,3 a month and a half after the termination of the struggle of Zanjan.

That same year, towards the end of spring, in the early days of the month of Sha'ban,4 Baha'u'llah left the capital for Karbila.

I was, at that time, dwelling in Kirmanshah, in the company of Mirza Ahmad, the Bab's amanuensis, who had been ordered by Baha'u'llah to collect and transcribe all the sacred writings, the originals of which were, for the most part, in his possession.

I was in Zarand, in the home of my father, when the Seven Martyrs of Tihran met their cruel fate.

I subsequently succeeded in leaving for Qum, under the pretext of desiring to visit the shrine.

Unable to find Mirza Ahmad, whom I wished to meet, I left for Kashan, on the advice of Haji Mirza Musay-i-Qumi, who informed me that the only person who could enlighten me as to the whereabouts of Mirza Ahmad was 'Azim, who was then living in Kashan.

With him I again returned to Qum, where I was introduced to a certain Siyyid Abu'l-Qasim-i-'Alaqih-Band-i-Isfahani, who had previously accompanied Mirza Ahmad on his journey to Kirmanshah. 'Azim instructed him to conduct me to the gate of the city, where he was to inform me of the place where Mirza Ahmad was residing, and to arrange for my departure for Hamadan.

Siyyid Abu'l-Qasim, in turn, referred me to Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Tabib-i-Zanjani, whom he said I was sure to find in Hamadan and who would direct me to the place where I could meet Mirza Ahmad.

I followed his instructions and was directed by this Mirza Muhammad-'Ali to meet, in Kirmanshah, a certain merchant, Ghulam-Husayn-i-Shushtari by name, who would conduct me to the house where Mirza Ahmad was residing.

A few days after my arrival, Mirza Ahmad informed me of his having succeeded, while in Qum, in teaching the Cause to Ildirim Mirza, brother of Khanlar Mirza, to whom he wished to present a copy of the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih,"5 and expressed his desire that I should be its bearer. Ildirim Mirza was in those days governor of Khurram-Abad, in the province of Luristan, and had encamped with his army in the mountains [588] of Khavih-Valishtar. I was only too glad to grant his request, and expressed my readiness to start immediately on that journey. With a Kurdish guide, we traversed mountains and forests for six days and six nights, until we reached the governor's headquarters. I delivered the trust into his hands and brought back with me for Mirza Ahmad a written message from him expressing his appreciation of the gift and assuring him of his devotion to the Cause of its Author.

On my return, I received from Mirza Ahmad the joyful tidings of the arrival of Baha'u'llah in Kirmanshah. As we were being ushered into His presence, we found Him, it being the month of Ramadan, engaged in reading the Qur'an, and were blessed by hearing Him read verses of that sacred Book. I presented to Him Ildirim Mirza's written message to Mirza Ahmad. "The faith which a member of the Qajar dynasty professes," He remarked, after reading the letter, "cannot be depended upon. His declarations are insincere. Expecting that the Babis will one day assassinate the sovereign, he harbours in his heart the hope of being acclaimed by them the successor. The love he professes for the Bab is actuated by that motive." Within a few months we knew the truth of His words. This same Ildirim Mirza gave orders that a certain Siyyid Basir-i-Hindi, a fervent adherent of the Faith, should be put to death.

It would be appropriate at this juncture to deviate from the course of our narrative and refer briefly to the circumstances of this martyr's conversion and death.

Among the disciples whom the Bab had instructed, in the early days of His Mission, to disperse and teach His Cause, was a certain Shaykh Sa'id-i-Hindi, one of the Letters of the Living, who had been directed by his Master to journey throughout India and proclaim to its people the precepts of His Revelation.

Shaykh Sa'id, in the course of his travels, visited the town of Mooltan, where he met this Siyyid Basir,6 who, [589] though blind, was able to perceive immediately, with his inner eye, the significance of the message Shaykh Sa'id had brought him.

The vast learning he had acquired, far from hindering him from appreciating the

value of the Cause to which he was summoned, enabled him to grasp its meaning and understand the greatness of its power.

Casting behind him the trappings of leadership, and severing himself from his friends and kinsmen, he arose with a fixed resolve to render his share of service to the Cause he had embraced.

His first act was to undertake a pilgrimage to Shiraz, in the hope of meeting his Beloved.

Arriving in that city, he was informed, to his surprise and grief, that the Bab had been banished to the mountains of Adhirbayjan, where He was leading a life of unrelieved solitude.

He straightway proceeded to Tihran, and from thence departed for Nur, where he met Baha'u'llah.

This meeting relieved his heart from the burden of sorrow caused by his failure to meet his Master.

To those he subsequently met, of whatever class or creed, he imparted the joys and blessings he had so abundantly received from the hands of Baha'u'llah, and was able to endow them with a measure of the power with which his intercourse with Him had invested his innermost being.

I have heard Shaykh Shahid-i-Mazkan relate the following: "I was privileged to meet Siyyid Basir at the height of summer during his passage through Qamsar, whither the leading men of Kashan go to escape the heat of that town. Day and night, I found him engaged in arguing with the leading ulamas who had congregated in that village. With ability and insight, he discussed with them the subtleties of their Faith, expounded without fear or reservation the fundamental teachings of the Cause, and absolutely confuted their arguments. No one, however great his learning and experience, was able to reject the evidences he set forth in support of his claims. Such were his insight and his knowledge [590] of the teachings and ordinances of Islam that his adversaries conceived him to be a sorcerer, whose baneful influence they feared would ere long rob them of their position."

I have similarly heard Mulla Ibrahim, surnamed Mulla-Bashi, who was martyred in Sultan-Abad, thus recount his impression of Siyyid Basir: "Towards the end of his life, Siyyid Basir passed through Sultan-Abad, where I was able to meet him. He was continually associated with the leading ulamas. No one could surpass his knowledge of the Qur'an and his mastery of the traditions ascribed to Muhammad. He displayed an understanding which made him the terror of his adversaries. Often would his opponents question the accuracy of his quotations or reject the existence of the tradition which he produced in support of his contention. With unerring exactitude, he would establish the truth of his argument by his reference to the text of the 'Usul-i-Kafi' and the 'Biharu'l-Anvar,'7 from which he would instantly bring out the particular tradition demonstrating the truth of his words. He stood unrivalled alike in the fluency of his argument and the facility with which he brought out the most

incontrovertible proofs in support of his theme."

From Sultan-Abad, Siyyid Basir proceeded to Luristan, where he visited the camp of Ildirim Mirza, and was received by him with marked respect and consideration. In the course of his conversation with him one day, the siyyid, who was a man of great courage, referred to Muhammad Shah in terms that aroused the fierce anger of Ildirim Mirza. He was furious at the tone and vehemence of his remarks, and ordered that his tongue be pulled out through the back of his neck. The siyyid endured this cruel torture with amazing fortitude, but succumbed to the pain which his oppressor had mercilessly inflicted upon him. The same week a letter, in which Ildirim Mirza had abused his brother, Khanlar Mirza, was discovered by the latter, who immediately obtained the consent of his sovereign to treat him in whatever way he pleased. Khanlar Mirza, who entertained an implacable hatred for his brother, ordered that he be stripped of his clothes and conducted, naked and in chains, to Ardibil, where he was imprisoned and where eventually he died.

[591] Baha'u'llah spent the entire month of Ramadan in Kirmanshah.

Shukru'llah-i-Nuri, one of His kinsmen, and Mirza Muhammad-i-Mazindarani, who had survived the struggle of Tabarsi, were the only companions He chose to take with Him to Karbila.

I have heard Baha'u'llah Himself give the reasons for His departure from Tihran. "The Amir-Nizam,"

He told us, "asked Us one day to see him.

He received Us cordially, and revealed the purpose for which he had summoned Us to his presence. 'I am well aware,' he gently insinuated, 'of the nature and influence of your activities, and am firmly convinced that were it not for the support and assistance which you have been extending to Mulla Husayn and his companions, neither he nor his band of inexperienced students would have been capable of resisting for seven months the forces of the imperial government.

The ability and skill with which you have managed to direct and encourage those efforts could not fail to excite my admiration.

I have been unable to obtain any evidence whereby I could establish your complicity in this affair.

I feel it a pity that so resourceful a person should be left idle and not be given an opportunity to serve his country and sovereign.

The thought has come to me to suggest to you that you visit Karbila in these days when the Shah is contemplating a journey to Isfahan.

It is my intention to be enabled, on his return, to confer upon you the position of Amir-Divan, a function you could admirably discharge.' We vehemently protested against such accusations, and refused to accept the position he hoped to offer Us.

A few days after that interview, We left Tihran for Karbila."

Ere Baha'u'llah's departure from Kirmanshah, He summoned Mirza Ahmad and me to His presence and bade us depart for Tihran. I was charged to meet Mirza Yahya immediately after my arrival and to take him with me to the fort of Dhu'l-Faqar Khan, situated in the vicinity of Shahrud, and remain with him until Baha'u'llah returned to the capital. Mirza Ahmad was instructed to remain in Tihran until His arrival, and was entrusted with a box of sweetmeats and a letter addressed to Aqay-i-Kalim, who was to forward the gift to Mazindaran, where the Most Great Branch and His mother were residing.

[592] Mirza Yahya, to whom I delivered the message, refused to leave Tihran, and directed me instead to leave for Qazvin.

He compelled me to abide by his wish and to take with me certain letters which he bade me deliver to certain of his friends in that town.

On my return to Tihran, I was constrained, on the insistence of my kinsmen, to leave for Zarand.

Mirza Ahmad, however, promised that he would again arrange for my return to the capital, a promise which he fulfilled.

Two months later, I was again living with him in a caravanserai outside the gate of Naw, where I passed the whole winter in his company.

He spent his days in transcribing the Persian Bayan and the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih," a work he accomplished with admirable enthusiasm.

He entrusted me with two copies of the latter, asking me to present them on his behalf to Mustawfiyu'l-Mamalik-i-Ashtiyani and Mirza Siyyid 'Aliy-i-Tafarshi, surnamed the Majdu'l-Ashraf.

The former was so much affected that he was completely won over to the Faith.

As for Mirza Siyyid 'Ali, the views he expressed were of a totally different character.

At a gathering at which Aqay-i-Kalim was present, he commented in an unfavourable manner upon the continued activities of the believers. "This sect," he publicly declared, "is still living.

Its emissaries are hard at work, spreading the teachings of their leader.

One of them, a youth, came to visit me the other day, and presented me with a treatise which I regard as highly dangerous.

Anyone from among the common people who shall read that book will surely be beguiled by its tone."

Aqay-i-Kalim immediately understood from his allusions that Mirza Ahmad had sent the Book to him and that I had acted as his messenger.

On that very day, Aqay-i-Kalim asked me to visit him and advised me to return to my home in Zarand.

I was asked to induce Mirza Ahmad to leave instantly for Qum, as both of us, in

his opinion, were exposed to great danger.

Acting according to Mirza Ahmad's instructions, I succeeded in inducing the siyyid to return the Book that had been offered him.

Shortly after, I parted company with Mirza Ahmad, whom I never met again.

I accompanied him as far as Shah-'Abdu'l-'Azim, whence he departed for Qum, while I pursued my way to Zarand.

[593] The month of Shavval, in the year 1267 A.H.,8 witnessed the arrival of Baha'u'llah at Karbila.

On His way to that holy city, He tarried a few days in Baghdad, that place which He was soon to visit again and where His Cause was destined to mature and unfold itself to the world.

When He arrived at Karbila, He found that a number of its leading residents, among whom were Shaykh Sultan and Haji Siyyid Javad, had fallen victims to the pernicious influence of a certain Siyyid-i-'Uluvv, and had declared themselves his supporters.

They were immersed in superstitions and believed their leader to be the very incarnation of the Divine Spirit.

Shaykh Sultan ranked among his most fervent disciples and regarded himself, next to his master, as the foremost leader of his countrymen.

Baha'u'llah met him on several occasions and succeeded, by His words of counsel and loving-kindness, in purging his mind from his idle fancies and in releasing him from the state of abject servitude into which he had sunk.

He won him over completely to the Cause of the Bab and kindled in his heart a desire to propagate the Faith.

His fellow-disciples, witnessing the effects of his immediate and marvellous conversion, were led, one after another, to forsake their former allegiance and to embrace the Cause which their colleague had risen to champion.

Abandoned and despised by his former adherents, the Siyyid-i-'Uluvv was at length reduced to recognising the authority of Baha'u'llah and acknowledging the superiority of His position.

He even went so far as to express repentance for his acts, and to pledge his word that he would never again advocate the theories and principles with which he had identified himself.

It was during that visit to Karbila that Baha'u'llah encountered, as He was walking through the streets, Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunuzi, to whom He confided the secret He was destined to reveal at a later time in Baghdad. He found him eagerly searching after the promised Husayn, to whom the Bab had so lovingly referred and whom He had promised he would meet in Karbila. We have already, in a preceding chapter, narrated the circumstances leading to his meeting with Baha'u'llah. From that day, Shaykh Hasan became magnetised by the charm of his

newly found Master, and [594] would, but for the restraint he was urged to exercise, have proclaimed to the people of Karbila the return of the promised Husayn whose appearance they were awaiting.

Among those who were made to feel that power was Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Tabib-i-Zanjani, in whose heart was implanted a seed that was destined to grow and blossom into a faith of such tenacity that the fires of persecution were powerless to quench it. To his devotion, his high-mindedness and singleness of purpose Baha'u'llah Himself testified. That faith carried him eventually to the field of martyrdom. The same fate was shared by Mirza 'Abdu'l-Vahhab-i-Shirazi, son of Haji 'Abdu'l-Majid, who owned a shop in Karbila and who felt the impulse to forsake all his possessions and follow his Master. He was advised, however, not to abandon his work, but to continue to earn his livelihood until such time as he should be summoned to Tihran. Baha'u'llah urged him to be patient, and gave him a sum of money wherewith he encouraged him to extend the scope of his business. Unable to concentrate his attention upon his trade, Mirza 'Abdu'l-Vahhab hastened to Tihran, where he remained until he was thrown into the dungeon in which his Master was confined and there suffered martyrdom for His sake.

Shaykh 'Ali-Mirzay-i-Shirazi was likewise attracted to, and remained to his last breath a staunch supporter of, the Cause to which he had been called and which he served with a selflessness and devotion beyond all praise. To friend and stranger alike he recounted his experiences of the marvellous influence the presence of Baha'u'llah had had upon him, and enthusiastically described the signs and wonders he had witnessed during and after the days of his conversion.

FOOTNOTES

25.1. January 9, 1889 A.D.

25.2. 'Abdu'l-Baha's title.

25.3. 1851 A.D.

25.4. June 1-30, 1851 A.D.

25.5. One of the Bab's best-known works.

25.6. "From his childhood, Siyyid Basir showed signs of the wonderful faculties which he afterwards manifested. For seven years he enjoyed the blessings of sight, but then, even as the vision of his soul became clear, a veil of darkness fell on his outward eyes. From his infancy, he had displayed his good disposition and amiable character both in word and deed; he now added to this a singular piety and soberness of life. At length, at the age of twenty-one, he set out with great pomp and state (for he had much wealth in India) to perform the pilgrimage; and, on reaching Persia, began to associate with every sect and party (for he was well acquainted with the doctrines and tenets of all), and to give away large sums of money in charity to the poor, submitting himself the while to the most rigorous religious discipline. And since his ancestors had foretold that in those days a Perfect Man should appear in Persia, he was

continually engaged in making enquiries. He visited Mecca, and, after performing the rites of the pilgrimage, proceeded to the holy shrines of Karbila and Najaf, where he met the late Haji Siyyid Kazim, for whom he conceived a sincere friendship. He then returned to India; but, on reaching Bombay, he heard that one claiming to be the Bab had appeared in Persia, whereupon he at once turned back thither." (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," pp. 245-6.)

25.7. Compilations of Muhammadan traditions.

25.8. July 30-August 28, 1851 A.D.

CHAPTER XXVI
ATTEMPT ON THE SHAH'S LIFE, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

[595] The eighth Naw-Ruz after the Declaration of the Bab, which fell on the twenty-seventh day of the month of Jamadiyu'l-Avval, in the year 1268 A.H.,1 found Baha'u'llah still in 'Iraq, engaged in spreading the teachings, and making firm the foundations, of the New Revelation. Displaying an enthusiasm and ability that recalled His activities in the early days of the Movement in Nur and Mazindaran, He continued to devote Himself to the task of reviving the energies, of organising the forces, and of directing the efforts, of the Bab's scattered companions. He was the sole light amidst the darkness that encompassed the bewildered disciples who had witnessed, on the one hand, the cruel martyrdom of their beloved Leader and, on the other, the tragic fate of their companions. He alone was able to inspire them with the needful courage and fortitude to endure the many afflictions that had been heaped upon them; He alone was capable of preparing them for the burden of the task they were destined to bear, and of inuring them to brave the storm and perils they were soon to face.

In the course of the spring of that year, Mirza Taqi Khan, the Amir-Nizam, the Grand Vazir of Nasiri'd-Din Shah, who had been guilty of such infamous outrages against the Bab and His companions, met his death in a public bath in Fin, near Kashan,2 having miserably failed to stay the [596] onrush of the Faith he had striven so desperately to crush.

His own fame and honour were destined eventually to perish with his death, and not the influence of the life he had sought to extinguish.

During the three years when he held the post of Grand Vazir of Persia, his ministry was stained with deeds of blackest infamy.

What atrocities did not his hands commit as they were stretched forth to tear down the fabric the Bab had raised!

To what treacherous measures did he not resort, in his impotent rage, in order to sap the vitality of a Cause which he feared and hated!

The first year of his administration was marked by the ferocious onslaught of the imperial army of Nasiri'd-Din Shah against the defenders of the fort of Tabarsi.

With what ruthlessness he conducted the campaign of repression against those innocent upholders of the Faith of God!

What fury and eloquence he displayed in pleading for the extermination of the lives of Quddus, of Mulla Husayn, and of three hundred and thirteen of the best and noblest of his countrymen!

The second year of his ministry found him battling with savage determination to extirpate the Faith in the capital.

It was he who authorised and encouraged the capture of the believers who resided in that city, and who ordered the execution of the Seven Martyrs of Tihran.

It was he who unchained the offensive against Vahid and his companions, who inspired that campaign of revenge which animated their persecutors, and who instigated them to commit the abominations with which that episode will for ever remain associated.

That same year witnessed another blow more terrible than any he had hitherto dealt that persecuted community, a blow that brought to a tragic end the life of Him who was the Source of all the forces he had in vain sought to repress.

The last years of that Vazir's life will for ever remain associated with the most revolting of the vast campaigns which his ingenious mind had devised,

[598] a campaign that involved the destruction of the lives of Hujjat and of no less than eighteen hundred of his companions. Such were the distinguishing features of a career that began and ended in a reign of terror such as Persia had seldom seen.

He was succeeded by Mirza Aqa Khan-i-Nuri,3 who endeavoured, at the very outset of his ministry, to effect a reconciliation between the government of which he was the head and Baha'u'llah, whom he regarded as the most capable

of the Bab's disciples. He sent Him a warm letter requesting Him to return to Tihran, and expressing his eagerness to meet Him. Ere the receipt of that letter, Baha'u'llah had already decided to leave 'Iraq for Persia.

He arrived in the capital in the month of Rajab,4 and was welcomed by the Grand Vazir's brother, Ja'far-Quli Khan, who had been specially directed to go forth to receive Him. For one whole month, He was the honoured Guest of [599] the Grand Vazir, who had appointed his brother to act as host on his behalf. So great was the number of the notables and dignitaries of the capital who flocked to meet Him that He found Himself unable to return to His own home. He remained in that house until His departure for Shimiran.5

I have heard it stated by Aqay-i-Kalim that in the course of that journey Baha'u'llah was able to meet 'Azim, who had been endeavouring for a long time to see Him, and who in that interview was advised, in the most emphatic terms, to abandon the plan he had conceived. Baha'u'llah condemned his designs, dissociated Himself entirely from the act it was his intention to commit, and

warned him that such an attempt would precipitate fresh disasters of unprecedented magnitude.

Baha'u'llah proceeded to Lavasan, and was staying in the village of Afchih, the property of the Grand Vazir, when the news of the attempt on the life of Nasiri'd-Din Shah reached Him. Ja'far-Quli Khan was still acting as His host on behalf of the Amir-Nizam. That criminal act was committed towards the end of the month of Shavval, in the year 1268 A.H.,6 by two obscure and irresponsible young men, one named Sadiq-i-Tabrizi, and the other Fathu'llah-i-Qumi, both of whom earned their livelihood in Tihran. At a time when the imperial army, headed by the Shah himself, had encamped in Shimiran, these two ignorant youths, in a frenzy of despair, arose to avenge the blood of their slaughtered brethren.7 [600] The folly that characterised their act was betrayed by the fact that in making such an attempt on the life of their sovereign, instead of employing effective weapons which would ensure the success of their venture, these youths charged their pistols with shot which no reasonable person would ever think of using for such a purpose. Had their action been instigated by a man of judgment and common sense, he would certainly never have allowed them to carry out their intention with such ridiculously ineffective instruments.8

[601] That act, though committed by wild and feeble-minded fanatics, and in spite of its being from the very first emphatically condemned by no less responsible a person than Baha'u'llah, was the signal for the outbreak of a series of persecutions and massacres of such barbarous ferocity as could be compared only to the atrocities of Mazindaran and Zanjan. The storm to which that act gave rise plunged the whole of Tihran into consternation and distress. It involved the life of the leading companions who had survived the calamities to which their Faith had been so cruelly and repeatedly subjected. That storm was still raging when Baha'u'llah, with some of His ablest lieutenants, was plunged into a filthy, dark, and fever-stricken dungeon, whilst chains of such weight as only notorious criminals were condemned to carry, were placed upon His neck. For no less than four months He bore the burden, and such was the intensity of His suffering that the marks of that cruelty remained imprinted upon His body all the days of His life.

So grave a menace to their sovereign and to the institutions of his realm stirred the indignation of the entire body of the ecclesiastical order of Persia. To them so bold a deed called for immediate and condign punishment. Measures of unprecedented severity, they clamoured, should be undertaken to stem the tide that was engulfing both the government and the Faith of Islam. Despite the restraint which the followers of the Bab had exercised ever since the inception of the Faith in every part of the land; despite the repeated charges of the chief disciples to their brethren enjoining them [602] to refrain from acts of violence, to obey their government loyally, and to disclaim any intention of a holy war, their enemies persevered in their deliberate efforts to misrepresent the nature and purpose of that Faith to the authorities. Now that an act of such momentous consequences had been committed, what accusations would not these same enemies be prompted to attribute to the

Cause with which those guilty of the crime had been associated! The moment seemed to have come when they could at last awaken the rulers of the

country to the necessity of extirpating as speedily as possible a heresy which seemed to threaten the very foundations of the State.

Ja'far-Quli Khan, who was in Shimiran when the attempt on the Shah's life was made, immediately wrote a letter to Baha'u'llah and acquainted Him with what had happened. "The Shah's mother," he wrote, "is inflamed with anger. She is denouncing you openly before the court and people as the 'would-be murderer' of her son. She is also trying to involve Mirza Aqa Khan in this affair, and accuses him of being your accomplice." He urged Baha'u'llah to remain for a time concealed in that neighbourhood, until the passion of the populace had subsided. He despatched to Afchih an old and experienced messenger whom he ordered to be at the [603] disposal of his Guest and to hold himself in readiness to accompany Him to whatever place of safety He might desire.

Baha'u'llah refused to avail Himself of the opportunity Ja'far-Quli Khan offered Him. Ignoring the messenger and rejecting his offer, He rode out, the next morning, with calm confidence, from Lavasan, where He was sojourning, to the headquarters of the imperial army, which was then stationed in Niyavaran, in the Shimiran district. Arriving at the village of Zarkandih, the seat of the Russian legation, which lay at a distance of one maydan9 from Niyavaran, He was met by Mirza Majid, His brother-in-law, who acted as secretary to the Russian minister,10 and was invited by him to stay at his home, which adjoined that of his superior. The attendants of Haji 'Ali Khan, the Hajibu'd-Dawlih, recognised Him and went straightway to inform their master, who in turn brought the matter to the attention of the Shah.

The news of the arrival of Baha'u'llah greatly surprised the officers of the imperial army. Nasiri'd-Din Shah himself was amazed at the bold and unexpected step which a man who was accused of being the chief instigator of the attempt upon his life had taken. He immediately sent one of his trusted officers to the legation, demanding that the Accused be delivered into his hands. The Russian minister refused, and requested Baha'u'llah to proceed to the home of Mirza Aqa Khan, the Grand Vazir, a place he thought to be the most appropriate under the circumstances. His request was granted, whereupon the minister formally communicated to the Grand Vazir his desire that the utmost care should be exercised to ensure the safety and protection of the Trust his government was delivering into his keeping, warning him that he would hold him responsible should he fail to disregard his wishes.11

Mirza Aqa Khan, though he undertook to give the fullest assurances that were required, and received Baha'u'llah with every mark of respect into his home, was, however, too apprehensive [604] for the safety of his own position to accord his Guest the treatment he was expected to extend.

As Baha'u'llah was leaving the village of Zarkandih, the minister's daughter, who felt greatly distressed at the dangers which beset His life, was so overcome with emotion that she was unable to restrain her tears. "Of what use,"

she was heard expostulating with her father, "is the authority with which you have been invested, if you are powerless to extend your protection to a guest whom you have received in your house?" The minister, who had a great affection for his daughter, was moved by the sight of her tears, and sought to

comfort her by his assurances that he would do all in his power to avert the danger that threatened the life of Baha'u'llah.

That day the army of Nasiri'd-Din Shah was thrown into a state of violent tumult. The peremptory orders of the sovereign, following so closely upon the attempt on his life, gave rise to the wildest rumours and excited the fiercest passions in the hearts of the people of the neighbourhood. The agitation spread to Tihran and fanned into flaming fury the smouldering embers of hatred which the enemies of the Cause still nourished in their hearts. Confusion, unprecedented in its range, reigned in the capital. A word of denunciation, a sign, or a whisper was sufficient to subject the [605] innocent to a persecution which no pen dare try to describe. Security of life and property had completely vanished. The highest ecclesiastical authorities in the capital joined hands with the most influential members of the government to deal what they hoped would be the fatal blow to a foe who, for eight years, had so gravely shaken the peace of the land, and whom no cunning or violence had yet been able to silence.12

[606] Baha'u'llah, now that the Bab was no more, appeared in their eyes to be the arch-foe whom they deemed it their first duty to seize and imprison. To them He was the reincarnation of the Spirit the Bab had so powerfully manifested, the Spirit through which He had been able to accomplish so complete a transformation in the lives and habits of His countrymen. The precautions the Russian minister had taken, and the warning he had uttered, failed to stay the hand that had been outstretched with such determination against that precious Life.

From Shimiran to Tihran, Baha'u'llah was several times [607] stripped of His garments, and was overwhelmed with abuse and ridicule. On foot and exposed to the fierce rays of the midsummer sun, He was compelled to cover, barefooted and bareheaded, the whole distance from Shimiran to the dungeon already referred to. All along the route, He was pelted and vilified by the crowds whom His enemies had succeeded in convincing that He was the sworn enemy of their sovereign and the wrecker of his realm. Words fail me to portray the horror of the treatment which was meted out to Him as He was being taken to the Siyah-Chal13 of Tihran. As He was

approaching that dungeon, an old and decrepit woman was seen to emerge from the midst of the crowd, with a stone in her hand, eager to cast it at the face of Baha'u'llah. Her eyes glowed with a determination and fanaticism of which few women of her age were capable. Her whole frame shook with rage as she stepped forward and raised her hand to hurl her missile at Him. "By the Siyyidu'sh-Shuhada,14 I adjure you," she pleaded, as she ran to overtake those into whose hands Baha'u'llah had been delivered, "give me a chance to fling my

stone in his face!" "Suffer not this woman to be [608] disappointed," were Baha'u'llah's words to His guards, as He saw her hastening behind Him. "Deny her not what she regards as a meritorious act in the sight of God."

The Siyah-Chal, into which Baha'u'llah was thrown, originally a reservoir of water for one of the public baths of Tihran, was a subterranean dungeon in which criminals of the worst type were wont to be confined.

The darkness, the filth, and the character of the prisoners, combined to make of that pestilential dungeon the most abominable place to which human beings could be condemned.

His feet were placed in stocks, and around His neck were fastened the Qara-Guhar chains, infamous throughout Persia for their galling weight.15 For three days and three nights, no manner of food or drink was given to Baha'u'llah.

Rest and sleep were both impossible to Him.

The place was infested with vermin, and the stench of that gloomy abode was enough to crush the very spirits of those who were condemned to suffer its horrors.

Such were the conditions under which He was held down that even one of the executioners who were watching over Him was moved with pity.

Several times this man attempted to induce Him to take some tea which he had managed to introduce into the dungeon under the cover of his garments.

Baha'u'llah, however, would refuse to drink it.

His family often endeavoured to persuade the [609] guards to allow them to carry the food they had prepared for Him into His prison.

Though at first no amount of pleading would induce the guards to relax the severity of their discipline, yet gradually they yielded to His friends' importunity.

No one could be sure, however, whether that food would eventually reach Him, or whether He would consent to eat it whilst a number of His fellow-prisoners were starving before His eyes.

Surely greater misery than had befallen these innocent victims of the wrath of their sovereign, could hardly be imagined.16

As to the youth Sadiq-i-Tabrizi, the fate he suffered was as cruel as it was humiliating. He was seized at the moment he was rushing towards the Shah, whom he had thrown from his horse, hoping to strike him with the sword he held in his hand. The Shatir-Bashi, together with the Mustawfiyu'l-Mamalik's attendants, fell upon him and, without attempting to learn who he was, slew him on the spot. Wishing to allay the excitement of the populace, they hewed his body into two halves, each of which they suspended to the public [610] gaze at the entrance of the gates of Shimiran and Shah-'Abdu'l-'Azim.17 His two other

companions, Fathu'llah-i-Hakkak-i-Qumi and Haji Qasim-i-Nayrizi, who had succeeded in inflicting only slight wounds on the Shah, were subjected to inhuman treatment, to which they ultimately owed their death. Fathu'llah, though suffering unspeakable cruelties, obstinately refused to answer the questions they asked him. The silence he maintained in the face of manifold tortures, induced his persecutors to believe that he was devoid of the

power of speech. Exasperated by the failure of their efforts, they poured molten lead down his throat, an act which brought his sufferings to an end.

His comrade, Haji Qasim, was treated with a savagery still more revolting. On the very day Haji Sulayman Khan was being subjected to that terrible ordeal, this poor wretch was receiving similar treatment at the hands of his persecutors in Shimiran. He was stripped of his clothes, lighted [611] candles were thrust into holes driven into his flesh, and he was thus paraded before the eyes of a multitude who yelled at and cursed him. The spirit of revenge that animated those into whose hands he was delivered seemed insatiable. Day after day fresh victims were forced to expiate with their blood a crime which they had never committed, and of the circumstances of which they were wholly ignorant. Every ingenious device that the torture-mongers of Tihran could employ was applied with merciless severity to the bodies of

these unfortunate ones who were neither brought to trial nor questioned, and whose right to plead and prove their innocence was entirely ignored.

Each of those days of terror witnessed the martyrdom of two companions of the Bab, one of whom was slain in Tihran, whilst the other met his fate in Shimiran. Both were subjected to the same manner of torture, both were handed over to the public to wreak their vengeance upon them. Those arrested were distributed among the various classes of people, whose messengers would visit the dungeon each day and claim their [612] victim.18 Conducting him to the scene of his death, they would give the signal for a general attack upon him, whereupon men and women would close upon their prey, tear his body to pieces, and so mutilate it that no trace of its original form would remain. Such ruthlessness amazed even the most brutal of the executioners, whose hands, however much accustomed to human slaughter, had never perpetrated the atrocities of which those people had proved themselves capable.19

[613] Of all the tortures which an insatiable enemy inflicted upon its victims, none was more revolting in its character than that which characterised the death of Haji Sulayman Khan.

He was the son of Yahya Khan, one of the officers in the service of the Nayibu's-Saltanih, who was the father of Muhammad Shah.

He retained that same position in the early days of the reign of Muhammad Shah.

Haji Sulayman Khan showed from his earliest years a marked disinclination to rank and office.

Ever since the day of his acceptance of [614] the Cause of the Bab, the petty

pursuits in which the people around him were immersed excited his pity and contempt.

The vanity of their ambitions had been abundantly demonstrated in his eyes.

In his early youth, he felt a longing to escape from the turmoil of the capital and to seek refuge in the holy city of Karbila.

There he met Siyyid Kazim and grew to be one of his most ardent supporters.

His sincere piety, his frugality and love of seclusion were among the chief traits of his character.

He tarried in Karbila until the day when the Call from Shiraz reached him through Mulla Yusuf-i-Ardibili and Mulla Mihdiy-Khu'i, both of whom were among his best-known friends.

He enthusiastically embraced the Message of the Bab.20 He had intended, upon his return from Karbila to Tihran, to join the defenders of the fort of Tabarsi, but arrived too late to achieve his purpose.

He remained in the capital and continued to wear the kind of dress he had adopted in Karbila.

The small turban he wore, and the white tunic which his black aba21 concealed, were displeasing to the Amir-Nizam, who induced him to discard these garments and to clothe himself instead in a [615] military uniform.

He was made to wear the kulah,22 a head-dress that was thought to be more in accordance with the rank his father held.

Though the Amir insisted that he should accept a position in the service of the government, he obstinately refused to comply with his request.

Most of his time was spent in the company of the disciples of the Bab, particularly those of His companions who had survived the struggle of Tabarsi.

He surrounded them with a care and kindness truly surprising.

He and his father were so influential that the Amir-Nizam was induced to spare his life and indeed to refrain from any acts of violence against him.

Though he was present in Tihran when the seven companions of the Bab, with whom he was intimately associated, were martyred, neither the officials of the government nor any of the common people ventured to demand his arrest.

Even in Tabriz, whither he had journeyed for the purpose of saving the life of the Bab, not one among the inhabitants of that city dared to lift a finger against him.

The Amir-Nizam, who was duly informed of all his services to the Cause of the Bab, preferred to ignore his acts rather than precipitate a conflict with him and his father.

Soon after the martyrdom of a certain Mulla Zaynu'l-'Abidin-i-Yazdi, a rumour

was spread that those whom the government intended to put to death, among whom were Siyyid Husayn, the Bab's amanuensis, and Tahirih, were to be released and that further persecution of their friends was to be definitely abandoned. It was reported far and wide that the Amir-Nizam, deeming the hour of his death to be approaching, had been seized suddenly with a great fear and, in an agony of repentance, had exclaimed: "I am haunted by the vision of the Siyyid-i-Bab, whom I have caused to be martyred. I can now see the fearful mistake I have made. I should have restrained the violence of those who pressed me to shed his blood and that of his companions. I now perceive that the interests of the State required it." His successor, Mirza Aqa Khan, was similarly inclined in the early days of his administration, and was intending to inaugurate his ministry with a lasting reconciliation between him and the followers of the Bab. He was preparing to [616] undertake that task when the attempt on the life of the Shah shattered his plans and threw the capital into a state of unprecedented confusion.

I have heard the Most Great Branch,23 who in those days was a child of only eight years of age, recount one of His experiences as He ventured to leave the house in which He was then residing. "We had sought shelter,"

He told us, "in the house of My uncle, Mirza Isma'il.

Tihran was in the throes of the wildest excitement.

I ventured at times to sally forth from that house and to cross the street on My way to the market.

I would hardly cross the threshold and step into the street, when boys of My age, who were running about, would crowd around Me crying, 'Babi!

Babi!' Knowing well the state of excitement into which all the inhabitants of the capital, both young and old, had fallen, I would deliberately ignore their clamour and quietly steal away to My home.

One day I happened to be walking alone through the market on My way to My uncle's house.

As I was looking behind Me, I found a band of little ruffians running fast to overtake Me.

They were pelting Me with stones and shouting menacingly, 'Babi!

Babi!' To intimidate them seemed to be the only way I could avert the danger with which I was threatened.

I turned back and rushed towards them with such determination that they fled away in distress and vanished.

I could hear their distant cry, 'The little Babi is fast pursuing us!

He will surely overtake and slay us all!' As I was directing My steps towards home, I heard a man shouting at the top of his voice: 'Well done, you brave and fearless child!

No one of your age would ever have been able, unaided, to withstand their attack.' From that day onward, I was never again molested by any of the boys of the streets, nor did I hear any offensive word fall from their lips."

Among those who, in the midst of the general confusion, were seized and thrown into prison was Haji Sulayman Khan, the circumstances of whose martyrdom I now proceed to relate.

The facts I mention have been carefully sifted and verified by me, and I owe them, for the most part, to Aqay-i-Kalim, who was himself in those days in Tihran and was made [617] to share the terrors and sufferings of his brethren. "On the very day of Haji Sulayman Khan's martyrdom," he informed me, "I happened to be present, with Mirza 'Abdu'l-Majid, at a gathering in Tihran at which a considerable number of the notables and dignitaries of the capital were present.

Among them was Haji Mulla Mahmud, the Nizamu'l-'Ulama, who requested the Kalantar to describe the actual circumstances of the death of Haji Sulayman Khan.

The Kalantar motioned with his finger to Mirza Taqi, the kad-khuda24 who, he said, had conducted the victim from the vicinity of the imperial palace to the place of his execution, outside the gate of Naw.

Mirza Taqi was accordingly requested to relate to those present all that he had seen and heard. 'I and my assistants,' he said, 'were ordered to purchase nine candles and to thrust them, ourselves, into deep holes we were to cut in his flesh.

We were instructed to light each one of these candles and to conduct him through the market to the accompaniment of drums and trumpets as far as the place of his execution.

There we were ordered to hew his body into two halves, each of which we were asked to suspend on either side of the gate of Naw.

He himself chose the manner in which he wished to be martyred.

Hajibu'd-Dawlih25 had been commanded by Nasiri'd-Din Shah to enquire into the complicity of the accused, and, if assured of his innocence, to induce him to recant.

If he submitted, his life was to be spared and he was to be detained pending the final settlement of his case.

In the event of his refusal, he was to be put to death in whatever manner he himself might desire.

"'The investigations of Hajibu'd-Dawlih convinced him of the innocence of Haji Sulayman Khan. The accused, as soon as he had been informed of the instructions of his sovereign, was heard joyously exclaiming: "Never, so long as my life-blood continues to pulsate in my veins, shall I be willing to recant my faith in my Beloved! This world which the Commander of the Faithful26 has

likened to carrion will never allure me from my heart's Desire." He was asked to [618] determine the manner in which he wished to die. "Pierce holes in my flesh," was the instant reply, "and in each wound place a candle. Let nine candles be lighted all over my body, and in this state conduct me through the streets of Tihran. Summon the multitude to witness the glory of my martyrdom, so that the memory of my death may remain imprinted in their hearts and help them, as they recall the intensity of my tribulation, to recognise the Light I have embraced. After I have reached the foot of the gallows and have uttered the last prayer of my earthly life, cleave my body in twain and suspend my limbs on either side of the gate of Tihran, that the multitude passing beneath it may witness to the love which the Faith of the Bab has kindled in the hearts of His disciples, and may look upon the proofs of their devotion."

"'Hajibu'd-Dawlih instructed his men to abide by the expressed wishes of Haji Sulayman Khan, and charged me to conduct him through the market as far as the place of his execution. As they handed to the victim the candles they had purchased, and were preparing to thrust their knives into his breast, he made a sudden attempt to seize the weapon from the executioner's trembling hands in order to plunge it himself into his flesh. "Why fear and hesitate?" he cried, as he stretched forth his arm to snatch the knife from his grasp. "Let me myself perform the deed and light the candles." Fearing lest he should attack us, I ordered my men to resist his attempt and bade them tie his hands behind his back. "Let me," he pleaded, "point out with my fingers the places into which I wish them to thrust their dagger, for I have no other request to make besides this."

"'He asked them to pierce two holes in his breast, two in his shoulders, one in the nape of his neck, and the four others in his back. With stoic calm he endured those tortures. Steadfastness glowed in his eyes as he maintained a mysterious and unbroken silence. Neither the howling of the multitude nor the sight of the blood that streamed all over his body could induce him to interrupt that silence. Impassive and serene he remained until all the nine candles were placed in position and lighted.

"'When all was completed for his march to the scene [619] of his death, he, standing erect as an arrow and with that same unflinching fortitude gleaming upon his face, stepped forward to lead the concourse that was pressing round him to the place that was to witness the consummation of his martyrdom.

Every few steps he would interrupt his march and, gazing at the bewildered bystanders, would shout: "What greater pomp and pageantry than those which this day accompany my progress to win the crown of glory!

Glorified be the Bab, who can kindle such devotion in the breasts of His lovers, and can endow them with a power greater than the might of kings!"

At times, as if intoxicated with the fervour of that devotion, he would exclaim: "The Abraham of a bygone age, as He prayed God, in the hour of bitter agony, to send down upon Him the refreshment for which His soul was crying, heard the voice of the Unseen proclaim: 'O fire!

Be thou cold, and to Abraham a safety!'27 But this Sulayman is crying out from the depths of his ravaged heart: 'Lord, Lord, let Thy fire burn unceasingly within me, and suffer its flame to consume my being.'"

As his eyes saw the wax flicker in his wounds, he burst forth in an acclamation of frantic delight: "Would that He whose hand has enkindled my soul were here to behold my state!" "Think me not to be intoxicated with the wine of this earth!" he cried to the vast throng who stood aghast at the sight of his behaviour. "It is the love of my Beloved that has filled my soul and made me feel endowed with a sovereignty which even kings might envy!"

"'I cannot recall the exclamations of joy which fell from his lips as he drew near to his end. All I remember are but a few of the stirring words which, in his moments of exultation, he was moved to cry out to the concourse of spectators. Words fail me to portray the expression of that countenance or to measure the effect of his words on the multitude.

"'He was still in the bazaar when the blowing of a breeze excited the burning of the candles that were placed upon his breast. As they melted rapidly, their flames reached the level of the wounds into which they had been thrust. We who were following a few steps behind him could hear distinctly the sizzling of his flesh. The sight of gore and fire [620] which covered his body, instead of silencing his voice, appeared to heighten his unquenchable enthusiasm. He could still be heard, this time addressing the flames, as they ate into his wounds: "You have long lost your sting, O flames, and have been robbed of your power to pain me. Make haste, for from your very tongues of fire I can hear the voice that calls me to my Beloved!"

"'Pain and suffering seemed to have melted away in the ardour of that enthusiasm. Enveloped by the flames, he walked as a conqueror might have marched to the scene of his victory. He moved through the excited crowd a blaze of light amidst the gloom that surrounded him. Arriving at the foot of the gallows, he again raised his voice in a last appeal to the multitude of onlookers: "Did not this Sulayman whom you now see before you a prey to fire and blood, enjoy until recently all the favours and riches the world can bestow? What could have caused him to renounce this earthly glory and accept in return such great degradation and suffering?" Prostrating himself in the direction of the shrine of the Imam-Zadih Hasan, he murmured certain words in Arabic which I could not understand. "My work is now finished!" he cried to the executioner, as soon as his prayer was ended. "Come and do yours!" He was still alive when his body was hewn into two halves with a hatchet. The praise of his Beloved, despite such incredible sufferings, lingered upon his lips until the last moment of his life.'28

"That tragic tale stirred the listeners to the very depths of their souls. The Nizamu'l-'Ulama, who was listening intently [621] to all its details, wrung his hands in horror and despair. 'How strange, how very strange, is this Cause!' he exclaimed. Without adding a further word of comment, he, immediately after, arose and departed."29

Those days of unceasing turmoil witnessed the martyrdom of yet another eminent disciple of the Bab.

A woman, no less great and heroic than Tahirih herself, was engulfed in the storm that was then raging with undiminished violence throughout the capital.

What I now begin to relate regarding the circumstances of her martyrdom has been obtained from trustworthy informants, some of whom were themselves witnesses of the events I am attempting to describe.

Her stay in Tihran was marked by many proofs of the warm [622] affection and high esteem in which she was held by the leading women of the capital.

She had reached, indeed, in those days, the high-water mark of her popularity.30 The house where she was confined was besieged by her women admirers, who thronged her doors, eager to enter her presence and to seek the benefit of her knowledge.31 Among these ladies, the wife of Kalantar32 distinguished herself by the extreme reverence she showed to Tahirih.

Acting as her hostess, she introduced into her presence the flower of womanhood in Tihran, served her with extraordinary enthusiasm, and never failed to contribute her share in deepening her influence among her womenfolk.

Persons with whom the wife of Kalantar was intimately connected have heard her relate the following: "One night, whilst Tahirih was staying in my home, I was summoned to her presence and found her fully adorned, dressed in a gown of snow-white silk.

Her room was redolent with the choicest perfume.

I expressed to her my surprise at so unusual a sight. 'I am preparing to meet my Beloved,' she said, 'and wish to free you from the cares [623] and anxieties of my imprisonment.' I was much startled at first, and wept at the thought of separation from her. 'Weep not,' she sought to reassure me. 'The time of your lamentation is not yet come.

I wish to share with you my last wishes, for the hour when I shall be arrested and condemned to suffer martyrdom is fast approaching.

I would request you to allow your son to accompany me to the scene of my death and to ensure that the guards and executioner into

whose hands I shall be delivered will not compel me to divest myself of this attire. It is also my wish that my body be thrown into a pit, and that that pit be filled with earth and stones. Three days after my death a woman will come and visit you, to whom you will give this package which I now deliver into your hands. My last request is that you permit no one henceforth to enter my chamber. From now until the time when I shall be summoned to leave this house, let no one be allowed to disturb my devotions. This day I intend to fast— a fast which I shall not break until I am brought face to face [624] with my Beloved.' She bade me, with these words, lock the door of her chamber and not open it until the hour of her departure should strike. She also urged me to

keep secret the tidings of her death until such time as her enemies should themselves disclose it.

"The great love I cherished for her in my heart, alone enabled me to abide by her instructions. But for the compelling desire I felt to fulfil her wishes, I would never have consented to deprive myself of one moment of her presence.

I locked the door of her chamber and retired to my own, in a state of uncontrollable sorrow.

I lay sleepless and disconsolate upon my bed.

The thought of her approaching martyrdom lacerated my soul. 'Lord, Lord,' I prayed in my despair, 'turn from her, if it be Thy wish, the cup which her lips desire to drink.' That day and night, I several times, unable to contain myself, arose and stole away to the threshold of that room and stood silently at her door, eager to listen to whatever might be falling from her lips.

I was enchanted by the melody of that voice which intoned the praise of her Beloved.

I could hardly remain standing upon my feet, so [625] great was my agitation.

Four hours after sunset, I heard a knocking at the door.

I hastened immediately to my son, and acquainted him with the wishes of Tahirih.

He pledged his word that he would fulfil every instruction she had given me.

It chanced that night that my husband was absent.

My son, who opened the door, informed me that the farrashes33 of 'Aziz Khan-i-Sardar were standing at the gate, demanding that Tahirih be immediately delivered into their hands.

I was struck with terror by the news, and, as I tottered to her door and with trembling hands unlocked it, found her veiled and prepared to leave her apartment.

She was pacing the floor when I entered, and was chanting a litany expressive of both grief and triumph.

As soon as she saw me, she approached and kissed me.

She placed in my hand the key to her chest, in which she said she had left for me a few trivial things as a remembrance of her stay in my house. 'Whenever you open this chest,' she said, 'and behold the things it contains, you will, I hope, remember me and rejoice in my gladness.'

"With these words she bade me her last farewell, and, accompanied by my son, disappeared from before my eyes. What pangs of anguish I felt that moment, as I beheld her beauteous form gradually fade away in the distance! She mounted the steed which the Sardar had sent for her, and, escorted by my son and a number of attendants, who marched on each side of her, rode out to the garden that was

to be the scene of her martyrdom.

"Three hours later my son returned, his face drenched with tears, hurling imprecations at the Sardar and his abject lieutenants. I tried to calm his agitation, and, seating him beside me, asked him to relate as fully as he could the circumstances of her death. 'Mother,' he sobbingly replied, 'I can scarcely attempt to describe what my eyes have beheld. We straightway proceeded to the Ilkhani garden,34 [626] outside the gate of the city. There I found, to my horror, the Sardar and his lieutenants absorbed in acts of debauchery and shame, flushed with wine and roaring with laughter. Arriving at the gate, Tahirih dismounted and, calling me to her, asked me to act as her intermediary with the Sardar, whom she said she was disinclined to address in the midst of his revelry. 'They apparently wish to strangle me,' she said. 'I set aside, long ago, a silken kerchief which I hoped would be used for this purpose. I deliver it into your hands and wish you to induce that dissolute drunkard to use it as a means whereby he can take my life.'

"When I went to the Sardar, I found him in a state of wretched intoxication. 'Interrupt not the gaiety of our festival!' I heard him shout as I approached him. 'Let that miserable wretch be strangled and her body be thrown into a pit!' I was greatly surprised at such an order. Believing it unnecessary to venture any request from him, I went to two of his attendants, with whom I was already acquainted, and gave them the kerchief with which Tahirih had entrusted me. They consented to grant her request. That same kerchief was wound round her neck and was made the instrument of her martyrdom. I hastened immediately afterwards to the gardener and asked him whether [627] he could suggest a place where I could conceal the body. He directed me, to my great delight, to a well that had been dug recently and left unfinished. With the help of a few others, I lowered her into her grave and filled the well with earth and stones in the manner she herself had wished. Those who saw her in her last moments were profoundly affected. With downcast eyes and rapt in silence, they mournfully dispersed, leaving their victim, who had shed so imperishable a lustre upon their country, buried beneath a mass of stones which they, with their own hands, had heaped upon her.

"I wept hot tears as my son unfolded to my eyes that tragic tale. I was so overcome with emotion that I fell prostrate and unconscious upon the ground. When I had recovered, I found my son a prey to an agony no less severe than my own. He lay upon his couch, weeping in a passion of devotion. Beholding my plight, he approached and comforted me. 'Your tears,' he said, 'will betray you in the eyes of my father. Considerations of rank and position will, no doubt, induce him to forsake us and sever whatever ties bind him to this home. He will, if we fail to repress our tears, accuse us before Nasiri'd-Din Shah, as victims of the charm of a hateful enemy. He will obtain the sovereign's consent to our death, and will probably, with his own hands, proceed to slay us. Why should we, who have never embraced that Cause, allow ourselves to suffer such a fate at his hands? All we should do is to defend her against those who denounce her as the very negation of chastity and honour. We should ever treasure her

love in our hearts and maintain in the face of a slanderous enemy the integrity of that life.'

"His words allayed my inner agitation.

I went to her chest and, with the key she had placed in my hand, opened it.

I found a small vial of the choicest perfume, beside which lay a rosary, a coral necklace, and three rings, mounted with turquoise, cornelian, and ruby stones.

As I gazed upon her earthly belongings, I mused over the circumstances of her eventful life, and recalled, with a throb of wonder, her intrepid courage, her zeal, her high sense of duty and unquestioning devotion.

I was reminded of her literary attainments, and brooded over the imprisonments, the shame, and the calumny which she had faced with a fortitude such as no other woman [628] in her land could manifest.

I pictured to myself that winsome face which now, alas, lay buried beneath a mass of earth and stones.

The memory of her passionate eloquence warmed my heart, as I repeated to myself the words that had so often dropped from her lips.

The consciousness of the vastness of her knowledge, and her mastery of the sacred Scriptures of Islam, flashed through my mind with a suddenness that disconcerted me.

Above all, her passionate loyalty to the Faith she had embraced, her fervour as she pleaded its cause, the services she rendered it, the woes and tribulations she endured for its sake, the example she had given to its followers, the impetus she had lent to its advancement, the name she had carved for herself in the hearts of her fellow-countrymen, all these I remembered as I stood beside her chest, wondering what could have induced so great a woman to forsake all the riches and honours with which she had been surrounded and to identify herself with the cause of an obscure youth from Shiraz.

What could have been the secret, I thought to myself, of the power that tore her away from her home and kindred, that sustained her throughout her stormy career, and eventually carried her to her grave?

Could that force, I pondered, be of God?

Could the hand of the Almighty have guided her destiny and steered her course amidst the perils of her life?

"On the third day after her martyrdom,35 the woman whose coming she had promised arrived. I enquired her name, and, finding it to be the same as the one Tahirih had told me, delivered into her hands the package with which I had been entrusted. I had never before met that woman, nor did I ever see her again."36

The name of that immortal woman was Fatimih, a name which her father had

bestowed upon her. She was surnamed Umm-i-Salmih by her family and kindred, who also designated her as Zakiyyih. She was born in the year 1233 A.H.,37 the very year which witnessed the birth of Baha'u'llah. She was thirty-six years of age when she suffered martyrdom in Tihran. May future generations be enabled to present a [629] worthy account of a life which her contemporaries have failed adequately to recognise. May future historians perceive the full measure of her influence, and record the unique services this great woman has rendered to her land and its people. May the followers of the Faith which she served so well strive to follow her example, recount her deeds, collect her writings, unfold the secret of her talents, and establish her, for all time, in the memory and affections of the peoples and kindreds of the earth.38

Another distinguished figure among the disciples of the Bab who met his death during the turbulent time that had overwhelmed Tihran was Siyyid Husayn-i-Yazdi, who was the Bab's amanuensis both in Mah-Ku and Chihriq.

Such was his knowledge of the teachings of the Faith that the Bab, in a Tablet addressed to Mirza Yahya, urged the latter to seek enlightenment from him in whatever might pertain to the sacred writings.

A man of standing and experience, in whom the Bab reposed the utmost confidence and with whom he had been intimately associated, he suffered, after the martyrdom of his Master in Tabriz, the agony of a long confinement in the subterranean dungeon of Tihran, which confinement terminated in his martyrdom.

To a very great [630] extent, Baha'u'llah helped to allay the hardships from which he suffered.

Regularly every month He sent him whatever financial assistance he required.

He was praised and admired even by the gaolers who watched over him.

His long and intimate companionship with the Bab, during the last and stormiest days of His life, had deepened his understanding and endowed his soul with a power which he was destined to manifest more and more as the days of his earthly life drew near to their close.

He lay in the prison, longing for the time when he should be called upon to suffer a death similar to that of his Master.

Deprived of the privilege of being martyred on the same day as the Bab, a privilege which it had been his supreme desire to attain, he now eagerly awaited the hour when he, in his turn, should drain to the very dregs the cup that had touched His lips.

Many a time did the leading officials of Tihran strive to induce him to accept their offer to deliver him from the rigours of his imprisonment, as well as from the prospect of a still more cruel death.

He steadfastly refused.

Tears flowed unceasingly from his eyes —tears born of his longing to see again that face whose radiance had shone so brightly amidst the darkness of a

cruel incarceration in Adhirbayjan, and whose glow warmed the chill [631] of its wintry nights.

As he mused in the gloom of his prison cell over those blissful days spent in the presence of his Master, there came to him One who alone could banish, by the light of His presence, the anguish that had settled upon his soul.

His Comforter was none other than Baha'u'llah Himself.

In His company Siyyid Husayn was privileged to remain until the hour of his death.

The hand of 'Aziz Khan-i-Sardar, which had struck down Tahirih, was the hand that dealt the fatal blow to the Bab's amanuensis and sometime fellow-prisoner in Adhirbayjan.

I need not expatiate upon the circumstances of the death which that murderous Sardar inflicted upon him.

Suffice it to say that he too, like those who went before, drank, in circumstances of shameful cruelty, the cup for which he had so long and so deeply yearned.

I now proceed to relate what befell the remaining companions of the Bab, those who had been privileged to share the horrors of the confinement with Baha'u'llah.

From His own lips I have often heard the following account: "All those who were struck down by the storm that raged during that memorable year in Tihran were Our fellow-prisoners in the Siyah-Chal, where We were confined.

We were all huddled together in one cell, our feet in stocks, and around our necks fastened the most galling of chains.

The air we breathed was laden with the foulest impurities, while the floor on which [632] we sat was covered with filth and infested with vermin.

No ray of light was allowed to penetrate that pestilential dungeon or to warm its icy-coldness.

We were placed in two rows, each facing the other.

We had taught them to repeat certain verses which, every night, they chanted with extreme fervour. 'God is sufficient unto me; He verily is the All-sufficing!' one row would intone, while the other would reply: 'In Him let the trusting trust.' The chorus of these gladsome voices would continue to peal out until the early hours of the morning.

Their reverberation would fill the dungeon, and, piercing its massive walls, would reach the ears of Nasiri'd-Din Shah, whose palace was not far distant from the place where we were imprisoned. 'What means this sound?' he was reported to have exclaimed. 'It is the anthem the Babis are intoning in their prison,' they replied.

The Shah made no further remarks, nor did he attempt to restrain the enthusiasm his prisoners, despite the horrors of their confinement, continued to display.

"One day, there was brought to Our prison a tray of roasted meat, which they informed Us the Shah had ordered to be distributed among the prisoners. 'The Shah,' We were told, 'faithful to a vow he made, has chosen this day to offer to you all this lamb in fulfilment of his pledge.' A deep silence fell upon Our companions, who expected Us to make answer on their behalf. 'We return this gift to you,' We replied; 'we can well dispense with this offer.' The answer We made would have greatly irritated the guards had they not been eager to devour the food we had refused to touch. Despite the hunger with which Our companions were afflicted, only one among them, a certain Mirza Husayn-i-Matavalliy-i-Qumi, showed any desire to eat of the food the sovereign had chosen to spread before us. With a fortitude that was truly heroic, Our fellow-prisoners submitted, without a murmur, to endure the piteous plight to which they were reduced. Praise of God, instead of complaint of the treatment meted out to them by the Shah, fell unceasingly from their lips—praise with which they sought to beguile the hardships of a cruel captivity.

"Every day Our gaolers, entering Our cell, would call the name of one of Our companions, bidding him arise and follow [633] them to the foot of the gallows. With what eagerness would the owner of that name respond to that solemn call! Relieved of his chains, he would spring to his feet and, in a state of uncontrollable delight, would approach and embrace Us. We would seek to comfort him with the assurance of an everlasting life in the world beyond, and, filling his heart with hope and joy, would send him forth to win the crown of glory. He would embrace, in turn, the rest of his fellow-prisoners and then proceed to die as dauntlessly as he had lived. Soon after the martyrdom of each of these companions, We would be informed by the executioner, who had grown to be friendly to Us, of the circumstances of the death of his victim, and of the joy with which he had endured his sufferings to the very end.

"We were awakened one night, ere break of day, by Mirza 'Abdu'l-Vahhab-i-Shirazi, who was bound with Us to the same chains. He had left Kazimayn and followed Us to Tihran, where he was arrested and thrown into prison. He asked Us whether We were awake, and proceeded to relate to Us his dream. 'I have this night,' he said, 'been soaring into a space of infinite vastness and beauty. I seemed to be uplifted on wings that carried me wherever I desired to go. A feeling of rapturous delight filled my soul. I flew in the midst of that immensity with a swiftness and ease that I cannot describe.' 'To-day,' We replied, 'it will be your turn to sacrifice yourself for this Cause. May you remain firm and steadfast to the end. You will then find yourself soaring in that same limitless space of which you dreamed, traversing with the same ease and swiftness the realm of immortal sovereignty, and gazing with that same rapture upon the Infinite Horizon.'

"That morning saw the gaoler again enter Our cell and call out the name of 'Abdu'l-Vahhab. Throwing off his chains, he sprang to his feet, embraced each of his fellow-prisoners, and, taking Us into his arms, pressed Us lovingly to

his heart. That moment We discovered that he had no shoes to wear. We gave him Our own, and, speaking a last word of encouragement and cheer, sent him forth to the scene of his martyrdom. Later on, his executioner came to Us, praising in glowing language the spirit which that youth had shown. [634] How thankful We were to God for this testimony which the executioner himself had given!"

All this suffering and the cruel revenge the authorities had taken on those who had attempted the life of their sovereign failed to appease the anger of the Shah's mother.

Day and night she persisted in her vindictive clamour, demanding the execution of Baha'u'llah, whom she still regarded as the real author of the crime. "Deliver him to the executioner!" she insistently cried to the authorities. "What greater humiliation than this, that I, who am the mother of the Shah, should be powerless to inflict upon that criminal the punishment so dastardly an act deserves!"

Her cry for vengeance, which an impotent rage served to intensify, was doomed to remain unanswered.

Despite her machinations, Baha'u'llah was saved from the fate she had so importunately striven to precipitate.

The Prisoner was eventually released from His confinement, and was able to unfold and establish, beyond the confines of the kingdom of her son, a sovereignty the possibility of which she could never even have dreamed of.

The blood shed in the course of that fateful year in Tihran by that heroic band with whom Baha'u'llah had been imprisoned, was the ransom paid for His deliverance from the hand of a foe that sought to prevent Him from achieving the purpose for which God had destined Him.

Ever since the time He espoused the Cause of the Bab, He had never neglected one single occasion to champion the Faith He had embraced.

He had exposed Himself to the perils which the followers of the Faith had to face in its early days.

He was the first of the Bab's disciples to set the example of renunciation and service to the Cause.

Yet His life, beset as it was by the risks and dangers that a career such as His was sure to encounter, was spared by that same Providence who had chosen Him for a task which He, in His wisdom, deemed it as yet too soon to proclaim publicly.

The terror that convulsed Tihran was but one of the many risks and dangers to which Baha'u'llah's life was exposed.

Men, women, and children in the capital trembled at the ruthlessness with which the enemy pursued their victims.

A youth named 'Abbas, a former servant of Haji Sulayman Khan, and fully

informed, owing to the wide [635] circle of friends whom his master cultivated, of the names, the number, and the dwelling places of the Bab's disciples, was employed by the enemy as an instrument ready to hand for the prosecution of its designs.

He had identified himself with the Faith of his master, and regarded himself as one of its zealous supporters.

At the outset of the turmoil, he was arrested and compelled to betray all those whom he knew to be associated with the Faith.

They sought by every manner of reward to induce him to reveal those who were his master's fellow-disciples, and warned him that, should he refuse to disclose their names, he would be subjected to inhuman tortures.

He pledged his word that he would act according to their wishes and would inform the assistants of Haji 'Ali Khan, the Hajibu'd-Dawlih, the Farrash-Bashi, of their names and abodes.

He was taken through the streets of Tihran and directed to point out everyone he recognised as being a follower of the Bab.

A number of people whom he had never met and known were in this manner delivered into the hands of Haji 'Ali Khan's assistants—people who had never had any connection with the Bab and His Cause.

These were able to recover their freedom only after having paid a heavy bribe to those who had captured them.

Such was the greed of the Hajibu'd-Dawlih's attendants that they specially requested 'Abbas to salute as a sign of betrayal every person who he thought would be willing and able to pay large sums for his deliverance.

They would even force him to betray such persons, threatening that his refusal would be fraught with grave danger to his own life.

They would frequently promise to give him a share of the money they determined to extort from their victims.

This 'Abbas was taken to the Siyah-Chal and introduced to Baha'u'llah, whom he had met previously on several occasions in the company of his master, in the hope that he would betray Him. They promised that the mother of the Shah would amply reward him for such a betrayal. Every time he was taken into Baha'u'llah's presence, 'Abbas, after standing a few moments before Him and gazing upon His face, would leave the place, emphatically denying ever having seen Him. Having failed in their efforts, they resorted to poison, in the hope of obtaining the favour of the mother of [636] their sovereign. They were able to intercept the food that their Prisoner was permitted to receive from His home, and mixed with it the poison they hoped would be fatal to Him. This measure, though impairing the health of Baha'u'llah for years, failed to achieve its purpose.

The enemy was finally induced to cease regarding Him as the prime mover of that

attempt, and decided to transfer the responsibility for this act to 'Azim, whom they now accused of being the real author of the crime. By this means they endeavoured to obtain the favour of the mother of the Shah, a favour they greatly coveted. Haji 'Ali Khan was only too happy to second their efforts. As he himself had taken no share in imprisoning Baha'u'llah, he seized upon the occasion which offered itself to denounce 'Azim, whom he had already succeeded in arresting, as the chief and responsible instigator.

The Russian minister, who, through one of his agents, was watching the developments of the situation and keeping in close touch with the condition of Baha'u'llah, addressed, through his interpreter, a strongly worded message to the Grand Vazir, in which he protested against his action, suggesting that a messenger should proceed, in the company of one of the government's trusted representatives and of Hajibu'd-Dawlih, to the Siyah-Chal and there ask the newly recognised leader to declare publicly his opinion regarding Baha'u'llah's position. "Whatever that leader may declare," he wrote, "whether in praise or denunciation, I think ought to be immediately recorded and should serve as a basis for the final judgment which should be pronounced in this affair."

The Grand Vazir promised the interpreter that he would follow the minister's advice, and even appointed a time for the messenger to join the government representative and Hajibu'd-Dawlih and proceed with them to the Siyah-Chal.

When 'Azim was questioned as to whether he regarded Baha'u'llah as the responsible leader of the group that had made the attempt on the Shah's life, he answered: "The Leader of this community was none other than the Siyyid-i-Bab, who was slain in Tabriz, and whose martyrdom induced me to arise and avenge His death. I alone conceived this plan [637] and endeavoured to execute it. The youth who threw the Shah from his horse was none other than Sadiq-i-Tabrizi, a servitor in a confectioner's shop in Tihran who had been for two years in my service. He was fired with a desire even more burning than my own to avenge the martyrdom of his Leader. He acted too hastily, however, and failed to make certain the success of his attempt."

The words of his declaration were taken down by both the minister's interpreter and the Grand Vazir's representative, who submitted their records to Mirza Aqa Khan. The documents which were placed in his hands were chiefly responsible for Baha'u'llah's release from His imprisonment.

'Azim was accordingly delivered into the hands of the ulamas, who, though themselves anxious to hasten his death, were prevented by the hesitancy of Mirza Abu'l Qasim, the Imam-Jum'ih of Tihran. Hajibu'd-Dawlih, because of the near approach of the month of Muharram, induced the ulamas to assemble on the upper floor of the barracks, where he succeeded in obtaining the presence of the Imam-Jum'ih, who still persisted in his refusal to consent to the death of 'Azim. He directed that the accused be brought to that place and there await the judgment that was to be pronounced against him. He was roughly conducted through the streets, overwhelmed with ridicule, and reviled by the populace. Through a subtle device which the enemy had contrived, they succeeded in

obtaining a verdict for death. A siyyid armed with a club rushed at him and smashed his head. His example was followed by the people, who, with sticks, stones, and daggers, fell upon him and mutilated his body. Haji Mirza Jani also was among those who suffered martyrdom in the course of the agitation that followed the attempt on the life of the Shah. Owing to the disinclination of the Grand Vazir to harm him, he was secretly put to death.

The conflagration kindled in the capital spread to the adjoining provinces, bringing in its wake devastation and misery to countless innocent people among the subjects of the Shah. It ravaged Mazindaran, the home of Baha'u'llah, and was the signal for acts of violence which were directed mainly against all His possessions in that province. Two of the Bab's devoted disciples, Muhammad-Taqi Khan and [638] 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, both residents of Nur, suffered martyrdom as the result of that turmoil.

The enemies of the Faith, finding to their disappointment that Baha'u'llah's deliverance from prison was almost assured, sought by intimidating their sovereign to involve Him in fresh complications and thus encompass His death. The folly of Mirza Yahya, who, driven by his idle hopes, had sought to secure for himself and the band of his foolish supporters a supremacy which hitherto he had in vain laboured to obtain, served as a further pretext for the enemy to urge the Shah to take drastic measures for the destruction

of whatever influence his Prisoner still retained in Mazindaran.

The alarming reports received by the Shah, who had scarcely recovered from his wounds, stirred in him a terrible thirst for revenge. He summoned the Grand Vazir and reprimanded him for having failed to maintain order and discipline among the people of his own province, who were bound to him by ties of kinship. Disconcerted by the rebuke of his sovereign, he expressed his readiness to fulfil whatever he would direct him to do. He was bidden despatch immediately to that province several regiments, with strict orders to repress with a ruthless hand the disturbers of the public peace.

[639] The Grand Vazir, though fully aware of the exaggerated character of the reports that had been submitted to him, found himself compelled, owing to the Shah's insistence, to order the despatch of the Shah-Sun regiment, headed by Husayn-'Ali Khan-i-Shah-Sun, to the village of Takur, in the district of Nur, where the home of Baha'u'llah was situated. He gave the supreme command into the hands of his nephew, Mirza Abu-Talib Khan, brother-in-law of Mirza Hasan, who was Baha'u'llah's half-brother. Mirza Aqa Khan urged him to exercise the utmost caution and restraint while encamping in that village. "Whatever excesses," he urged him, "are committed by your men will react unfavourably on the prestige of Mirza Hasan and be the cause of affliction to your own sister." He bade him investigate the nature of these reports and not to encamp more than three days in the vicinity of that village.

The Grand Vazir afterwards summoned Husayn-'Ali Khan and exhorted him to conduct himself with the utmost circumspection and wisdom. "Mirza Abu-Talib," he said, "is still young and inexperienced. I have specially chosen him owing

to his kinship to Mirza Hasan. I trust that he will, for the sake of his sister, refrain from causing unnecessary injury to the inhabitants of Takur. Being superior to him in age and experience, you must set him a noble example and impress on him the necessity of serving the interests of both government and people. You must never allow him to undertake any operations without having previously consulted with you." He assured Husayn-'Ali Khan that he had issued written instructions to the chieftains of that district, calling upon them to come to his assistance whenever required.

Mirza Abu-Talib Khan, flushed with pride and enthusiasm, forgot the counsels of moderation the Grand Vazir had given him. He refused to be influenced by the pressing appeals of Husayn-'Ali Khan, who entreated him not to provoke an unnecessary conflict with the people. No sooner had he reached the pass which divided the district of Nur from the adjoining province, which was not far distant from Takur, than he ordered his men to prepare for an attack upon the people of that village. Husayn-'Ali Khan ran to him in despair and begged him to refrain from such an act. "It is [640] for me," Mirza Abu-Talib haughtily retorted, "who am your superior, to decide what measures should be taken and in what manner I should serve my sovereign."

A sudden attack was launched upon the defenceless people

of Takur. Surprised by so unexpected and fierce an onslaught, they appealed to Mirza Hasan, who asked to be introduced into the presence of Mirza Abu-Talib but was refused admittance. "Tell him," was the commander's message, "that [641] I am charged by my sovereign to order a wholesale massacre of the people of this village, to capture its women and confiscate their property. For your sake, however, I am willing to spare such women as take refuge in your house."

Mirza Hasan, indignant at this refusal, severely censured him and, denouncing the action of the Shah, returned to his home. The men of that village had meanwhile left their dwellings and sought refuge in the neighbouring mountains. Their women, abandoned to their fate, betook themselves to the home of Mirza Hasan, whom they implored to protect them from the enemy.

The first act of Mirza Abu-Talib Khan was directed against the house Baha'u'llah had inherited from the Vazir, His father, and of which He was the sole possessor. That house had been royally furnished and was decorated with vessels of inestimable value. He ordered his men to break open all its treasuries and to take away their contents. Such things as he was unable to carry away, he ordered to be destroyed. Some were shattered, others were burned. Even the rooms, which were more stately than those of the palaces of Tihran, were disfigured beyond repair; the beams were burned down and the decorations utterly ruined.

He next turned to the houses of the people, which he levelled with the ground, appropriating to himself and his men whatever valuables they contained.

The entire village, despoiled and deserted by its men inhabitants, was delivered to the flames.

Not able to find any able-bodied men, he ordered that a search be conducted in the neighbouring mountains.

Any who were found were to be either shot or captured.

All they could lay their hands upon were a few aged men and shepherds who had been unable to proceed further afield in their flight from the enemy.

They discovered two men lying in the distance on the slopes of a mountain beside a running brook.

Their weapons gleaming under the rays of the sun had betrayed them.

Finding them asleep, they shot them both from across the brook which intervened between the assailants and their victims.

They recognised them as 'Abdu'l-Vahhab and Muhammad-Taqi Khan.

The former was shot dead, while the latter was severely wounded.

They were carried into the presence of Mirza Abu-Talib, [642] who did his best to preserve the life of the victim whom he wished, owing to his far-famed courage, to take with him to Tihran as a trophy of his victory.

His efforts failed, however, for Muhammad-Taqi Khan, two days after, died from his wounds.

The few men they had been able to capture were led in chains to Tihran and thrown into the same underground dungeon where Baha'u'llah had been confined.

Among them was Mulla 'Ali-Baba, who, together with a number of his fellow-prisoners, perished in that dungeon as a result of the hardships he had endured.

The year after, this same Mirza Abu-Talib was stricken with plague and taken in a state of wretched misery to Shimiran. Shunned by even his nearest kindred, he lay on his sick-bed until this same Mirza Hasan, whom he had so haughtily insulted, offered to tend his sores and bear him company in his days of humiliation and loneliness. He was on the brink of death when the Grand Vazir visited him and found none at his bedside but the one whom he had so rudely treated. That very day that wretched tyrant expired, bitterly disappointed at the failure of all the hopes he had fondly cherished.

The commotion that had seized Tihran, the effects of which had been severely felt in Nur and the surrounding district, spread as far as Yazd and Nayriz, where a considerable number of the Bab's disciples were seized and inhumanly martyred. The whole of Persia seemed, indeed, to have felt the shock of that great convulsion. Its tide swept as far as the remotest hamlets of the distant provinces, and brought in its wake untold sufferings to the remnants of a persecuted community. Governors, no less than their subordinates, inflamed with greed and revenge, seized the occasion to enrich themselves and obtain the favour of their sovereign. Without mercy, moderation, or shame, they employed any means, however base and lawless, to extort from the innocent the benefits

they themselves coveted. Forsaking every principle of justice and decency, they arrested, imprisoned, and tortured whomsoever they suspected of being a Babi, and would hasten to inform Nasiri'd-Din Shah in Tihran of the victories achieved over a detested opponent.

In Nayriz the full effects of that turmoil revealed themselves [643] in the treatment accorded by its rulers and people to the followers of the Bab. About two months after the attempt on the life of the Shah, a young man named Mirza 'Ali, whose exceptional courage had earned for him the surname of 'Aliy-i-Sardar, distinguished himself by the extreme solicitude he extended to the survivors of the struggle which ended with the death of Vahid and his supporters. He was often seen in the darkness of the night to emerge from his shelter, carrying whatever aid was in his power to the widows and orphans who had suffered from the consequences of that tragedy. To those in need he distributed food and garments with noble generosity, tended their injuries, and comforted them in their sorrow. The sight of the continuous sufferings of these innocent ones stirred the fierce indignation of some of Mirza 'Ali's companions, who undertook to wreak their vengeance upon Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan, who was still dwelling in Nayriz and whom they regarded as the author of their misfortunes. Believing that he had still in his heart a desire to subject them to even further afflictions, they determined to take his life. They surprised him in the public bath, where they succeeded in accomplishing their purpose. This led to an upheaval that recalled in its concluding stages the horror of the butcheries of Zanjan.

Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan's widow pressed Mirza Na'im, who held the reins of authority in his grasp and was then residing in Shiraz, to avenge the blood of her husband, promising that she would in return bestow all her jewels upon him and would transfer to his name whatever he might desire of her possessions. Through treachery, the authorities succeeded in capturing a considerable number of the Bab's followers, many of whom were savagely beaten. All were thrown into prison, pending the receipt of instructions from Tihran. The Grand Vazir submitted the list of names he had received, together with the report that accompanied it, to the Shah, who expressed his extreme satisfaction at the success that had attended the efforts of his representative in Shiraz, and whom he amply rewarded for his signal service. He asked that all those who were captured be brought to the capital.

I shall not attempt to record the various circumstances that led to the carnage which marked the termination of [644] that episode. I would refer my reader to the graphic and detailed account which Mirza Shafi'-i-Nayrizi has written in a separate booklet, in which he refers with accuracy and force to every detail of that moving event. Suffice it to say that no less than one hundred and eighty of the Bab's valiant disciples suffered martyrdom. A like number were wounded and, though incapacitated by their injuries, were ordered to leave for Tihran. Only twenty-eight persons among them survived the hardships of the journey to the capital. Of these twenty-eight, fifteen were taken to the gallows on the very day of their arrival. The rest were thrown into prison and made to suffer

for two years the most horrible atrocities.

Though eventually released, many of them perished on their way to their homes, exhausted by the trials of a long and cruel captivity.

A large number of their fellow-disciples were slain in Shiraz by order of Tahmasb-Mirza. The heads of two hundred of these victims were placed on bayonets and carried triumphantly by their oppressors to Abadih, a village in Fars. They were intending to take them to Tihran, when a royal messenger commanded them to abandon their project, whereupon they decided to bury the heads in that village.

As to the women, who were six hundred in number, half of them were released in Nayriz, while the rest were carried, [645] each two being forced to ride together on an unsaddled horse, to Shiraz, where, after being submitted to severe tortures, they were abandoned to their fate. Many perished on their way to that city; many yielded up their lives to the afflictions they were made to endure ere they recovered their freedom. My pen shrinks in horror in attempting to describe what befell those valiant men and women who were made to suffer so severely for their Faith. The wanton barbarity that characterised the treatment meted out to them reached the lowest depths of infamy in the concluding stages

of that lamentable episode. What I have attempted to recount of the horrors of the siege of Zanjan, of the indignities heaped upon Hujjat and his supporters, pales before the glaring ferocity of the atrocities perpetrated a few years later in Nayriz and Shiraz. A pen abler than mine to describe in all their tragic details these unspeakable savageries will, I trust, be found to place on record a tale which, however grim its features, must ever remain as one of the noblest evidences of the faith which the Cause of the Bab was able to inspire in His followers.39

[646] The confession of 'Azim freed Baha'u'llah from the danger to which His life had been exposed. The circumstances of the death of him who had declared himself the chief instigator of that crime served to abate the wrath with which an enraged populace clamoured for the immediate punishment of so daring an attempt. The cries of rage and vengeance, the appeals for immediate retribution, which had hitherto been focussed on Baha'u'llah were now diverted from Him. The ferocity of those claimant denunciations was, by degrees, much allayed. The conviction grew firmer in the minds of the responsible authorities in Tihran that Baha'u'llah, hitherto regarded as the arch-foe of Nasiri'd-Din [647] Shah, was by no means involved in any conspiracy against the sovereign's life. Mirza Aqa Khan was therefore encouraged to send his trusted representative, a man named Haji 'Ali, to the Siyah-Chal, and to present the order for His release to the Prisoner.

Upon his arrival, the sight which the emissary beheld filled him with grief and surprise. The spectacle which met his eyes was one he could scarcely believe. He wept as he saw Baha'u'llah chained to a floor that was infested with vermin, His neck weighed down by galling chains, His face laden with sorrow, ungroomed

and dishevelled, breathing the pestilential atmosphere of the most terrible of dungeons. [648] "Accursed be Mirza Aqa Khan!" he burst forth, as his eyes recognised Baha'u'llah in the gloom that surrounded Him. "God knows I had never imagined that you could have been subjected to so humiliating a captivity. I should never have thought that the Grand Vazir could have dared commit so heinous an act."

He removed the mantle from his shoulders and presented it to Baha'u'llah, entreating Him to wear it when in the presence of the minister and his counsellors. Baha'u'llah refused his request, and, wearing the dress of a prisoner, proceeded straightway to the seat of the imperial government.

The first word the Grand Vazir was moved to address to his Captive was the following: "Had you chosen to take my advice, and had you dissociated yourself from the faith of the Siyyid-i-Bab, you would never have suffered the pains and indignities that have been heaped upon you." "Had you, in your turn," Baha'u'llah replied, "followed my counsels, the affairs of the government would not have reached so critical a stage."

He was immediately reminded of the conversation he had [649] had with Him on the occasion of the Bab's martyrdom. The words, "the flame that has been kindled will blaze forth more fiercely than ever," flashed through the mind of Mirza Aqa Khan. "The warning you uttered," he remarked, "has, alas, been fulfilled. What is it that you advise me now to

do?" "Command the governors of the realm," was the instant reply, "to cease shedding the blood of the innocent, to cease plundering their property, to cease dishonouring their women and injuring their children. Let them cease the persecution of the Faith of the Bab; let them abandon the idle hope of wiping out its followers."

[650] That same day orders were given, through a circular addressed to all the governors of the realm, bidding them desist from their acts of cruelty and shame. "What you have done is enough," Mirza Aqa Khan wrote them. "Cease arresting and punishing the people. Disturb no longer the peace and tranquillity of your countrymen." The Shah's government had been deliberating as to the most effective measures that should be taken to rid the country, once and for all, of the curse with which it had been afflicted. No sooner had Baha'u'llah recovered His freedom than the decision of the government was handed to Him, informing Him that within a month of the issuing of this order, He, with His family, was expected to leave Tihran for a place beyond the confines of Persia.

The Russian minister, as soon as he learned of the action which the government contemplated taking, volunteered to take Baha'u'llah under his protection, and invited Him to go to Russia. He refused the offer and chose instead to leave for 'Iraq. Nine months after His return from Karbila, on the first day of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani, in the year 1269 A.H.,40 Baha'u'llah, accompanied by the members of His family, among whom were the Most Great Branch41 and Aqay-i-Kalim,42 and escorted by a member of the imperial body-guard and an

official representing the Russian legation, set out from Tihran on His journey to Baghdad.

FOOTNOTES

26.1. 1852 A.D.

26.2. "About four miles to the southwest of Kashan, on the slopes of the mountains, is situated the palace of Fin, the springs of which have rendered it a favourite resort of royalty from early times....

In later times, a gloomier memory has attached to the palace of Fin; for here, in 1852, Mirza Taqi Khan, the first great minister of the reigning Shah, and brother-in-law of the king, was put to death by the Royal order, his veins being opened in a bath.

The place is now deserted." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," vol.

2, p.16.) "A lady of the harem was sent to the Princess, telling her to dry her tears, for that the Shah had relented, and that the Amir was to return to Tihran or go to Karbila, the usual haven for Persians who have lost court favour. 'The khal'at or coat of honour,' said she, 'is on the way, and will arrive in an hour or two; go, therefore, to the bath, and prepare to receive it.' The Amir all this time had not once ventured to quit the safety afforded by the apartment of the Princess, and of her presence.

On hearing the joyful news, however, he resolved to take the advice of this woman, and indulge in the luxury of a bath.

He left the Princess, and she never saw him more.

When he reached the bath the fatal order was revealed to him, and the crime perpetrated.

The farrash-bashi and his vile crew presented themselves, and the choice of the mode of death was given to him.

It is said he bore his fate with patience and fortitude.

His veins were opened, and he at length expired." (Lady Sheil's "Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia," pp.

251-2.)

26.3. His title was the I'timadu'd-Dawlih, the Trusted of the State. (Lady Sheil's "Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia," p. 249.)

26.4. April 21-May 21, 1852 A.D.

26.5. "Shimiran or Shimran (sometimes used in the plural, Shimranat) is the name applied generally to the villages and mansions situated on the lower slopes descending from Elburz which serve as summer residences to the wealthier inhabitants of Tihran." ("Traveller's Narrative," p. 81, footnote 1.)

26.6. Shavval 28; August 15, 1852 A.D.

26.7. "In the morning, the king went out for a horseback ride.

Before him, as usual, went equerries carrying long lances, grooms leading horses with embroidered saddle cloths, and a group of nomad riders with their rifles slung over the shoulder and their swords hanging from their saddles.

This vanguard preceded the king in order that he might not be annoyed by the dust raised by the cavalry, and the king followed along slowly, a little distance from the retinue of the great lords, chiefs and officers who accompanied him everywhere.

He was near the palace and had barely passed the small door of the garden of Muhammad-Hasan, sanduq-dar or treasurer of the Savings, when he noticed, at the side of the road, three men, three gardeners, standing two on the left, and one on the right side, seemingly waiting for him.

He did not suspect danger and rode on.

When quite close, he saw them bow very low and he heard them cry out together, 'We are your sacrifice!

We make a request.' This is the traditional formula, but instead of remaining aloof as is customary, they rushed on him repeating, 'We make a request!' Surprised, the king shouted, 'Rascals, what do you want?' At that moment, the man on his right took hold of the bridle of the horse and fired upon the king.

In the meantime, the two men on the left fired also.

One of the shots cut the collar of pearls adorning the horse's neck, another riddled with buckshot the right arm and back of the king.

Immediately, the man on the right pulled on the leg of His Majesty and would have unsaddled him, had it not been that the two assassins on the left were pulling on the other side.

The king was striking his assailants on the head with his fists, while the jumping of the frightened horse paralyzed their efforts and delayed their aggression.

The royal retinue, at first dumbfounded, hurried towards their master.

Asadu'llah Khan, the grand equerry, and one of the nomad riders killed the man on the right with their swords.

In the meantime, several lords threw down the other two men and bound them. "Doctor Cloquet, the court physician, had the king brought quickly into the garden of Muhammad-Hasan, sanduq-dar; as no one seemed to know what had really happened, and those who sensed an imminent danger, had no idea of what a catastrophe it might be.

During more than an hour, a great tumult reigned in the city of Niyavaran, while ministers headed by the Sadr-i-A'zam rushed into the garden.

The bugles, the drums, the tambourines and the fifes were calling the troops together; the ghulams came riding at full speed; everyone was giving orders, no one saw, heard or knew anything.

In the midst of this confusion a courier arrived from Tihran, sent by Ardishir Mirza, governor of the city, to enquire what had happened and what measures should be taken in the capital, for, on the previous evening, the rumor had grown into a certainty that the king had been assassinated.

The bazaars, policed by men in arms, had been deserted by the merchants.

All night long, bakeries had been surrounded, everyone trying to store up provisions for several days, as people do when they foresee trouble. "At dawn, as the agitation grew, Ardishir Mirza had ordered the gates of the citadel of the town closed, put the regiment on a war footing, and pointed his guns, although he did not know who the enemy was; and now he was asking for orders." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp.

231-233.)

26.8. Lord Curzon, who regards this event as being "most unfairly mistaken for a revolutionary and anarchical conspiracy," writes as follows: "From the facts that Babism in its earliest years found itself in conflict with the civil powers, and that an attempt was made by Babis upon the life of the Shah, it has been wrongly inferred that the movement was political in origin and Nihilist in character.

It does not appear from a study of the writings either of the Bab or his successors, that there is any foundation for such a suspicion.

The persecution of the government very early drove the adherents of the new creed into an attitude of rebellion; and in the exasperation produced by the struggle, and by the ferocious brutality with which the rights of conquest were exercised by the victors, it was not surprising if fanatical hands were found ready to strike the sovereign down.

At the present time the Babis are equally loyal with any other subjects of the Crown.

Nor does there appear to be any greater justice in the charges of socialism, communism, and immorality, that have so freely been levelled at the youthful persuasion.

Certainly no such idea as communism in the European sense, i.e., a forcible redistribution of property, or as socialism in the nineteenth century sense i.e., the defeat of capital by labour, ever entered the brain of the Bab or his disciples.

The only communism known to and recommended by him was that of the New Testament and the early Christian Church, viz., the sharing of goods in common by members of the faith, and the exercise of almsgiving, and an ample charity.

The charge of immorality seems to have arisen partly from the malignant inventions of opponents, partly from the much greater freedom claimed for women by the Bab, which in the Oriental mind is scarcely dissociable from profligacy of conduct....

Broadly regarded, Babism may be defined as a creed of charity, and almost of common humanity.

Brotherly love, kindness to children, courtesy combined with dignity, sociability, hospitality, freedom from bigotry, friendliness even to Christians, are included in its tenets.

That every Babi recognises or observes these precepts would be a foolish assertion; but let a prophet, if his gospel be in question, be judged by his own preaching." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," pp.

501-2.)

26.9. See Glossary.

26.10. Prince Dolgorouki.

26.11. "When I was in chains and fetters, in the prison of Ta, one of thine ambassadors assisted Me. Therefore hath God decreed unto thee a station which none but Himself can comprehend. Beware lest thou change this lofty station." (Baha'u'llah's Tablet to the Czar of Russia.)

26.12. Renan, in his work entitled "Les Apotres" (p.

378), characterises the great massacre at Tihran, following on the attempt made on the life of the Shah, as "un jour sans pareil peut-etre dans l'histoire du monde." (E.

G.

Browne's introduction to "A Traveller's Narrative," p.

45.) "The number of martyrdoms which have taken place in Persia has been estimated at ten thousand. [This estimate is conservative.

Many place the number at from twenty to thirty thousand, and some even higher.] Most of these occurred during the early history of the faith, but they have continued with diminishing frequency, even down to the present time." (M.

H.

Phelps' "Life and Teachings of 'Abbas Effendi," introduction, p.

36.) "Amongst the documents referring to the Babis in my possession is a manuscript copy of an article in German published on October 17, 1852, in No.

291 of some German or Austrian newspaper of which, unhappily, the name is not noted.

I think that I received it a good many years ago from the widow of the late Dr.

Polak, an Austrian doctor, who was physician to Nasiri'd-Din Shah at the beginning of his reign, and who is the author of a valuable book and several smaller treatises on Persia and matters connected therewith.

It is chiefly based on a letter written on August 29, 1852, by an Austrian officer, Captain von Goumoens, who was in the Shah's service, but who was so disgusted and horrified at the cruelties he was compelled to witness that he sent in his resignation.

The translation of this article is as follows: 'Some days ago we mentioned the attempt made on the life of the Shah of Persia on the occasion of a hunting-party.

The conspirators, as is well known, belonged to the Babis, a religious sect.

Concerning this sect and the repressive measures adopted against it, the letter of the Austrian Captain von Goumoens lately published in the "Soldier's Friend" (Soldatenfreund) contains interesting disclosures, and elucidates to some extent the attempt in question.

This letter runs as follows: "Tihran, August 29, 1852.

Dear Friend, My last letter of the 20th inst. mentioned the attempt on the King.

I will now communicate to you the result of the interrogation to which the two criminals were subjected.

In spite of the terrible tortures inflicted, the examination extorted no comprehensive confession; the lips of the fanatics remained closed, even when by means of red-hot pincers and limb-rending screws they sought to discover the chief conspirator....

But follow me, my friend, you who lay claim to a heart and European ethics, follow me to the unhappy ones who, with gouged-out eyes, must eat, on the scene of the deed, without any sauce, their own amputated ears; or whose teeth are torn out with inhuman violence by the hand of the executioner; or whose bare skulls are simply crushed by blows from a hammer; or where the bazar is illuminated with unhappy victims, because on right and left the people dig deep holes in their breasts and shoulders and insert burning wicks in the wounds.

I saw some dragged in chains through the bazar, preceded by a military band, in whom these wicks had burned so deep that now the fat flickered convulsively in the wound like a newly-extinguished lamp.

Not seldom it happens that the unwearying ingenuity of the Orientals leads to fresh tortures.

They will skin the soles of the Babis' feet, soak the wounds in boiling oil, shoe the foot like the hoof of a horse, and compel the victim to run.

No cry escaped from the victim's breast; the torment is endured in dark silence by the numbed sensation of the fanatic; now he must run; the body cannot endure

what the soul has endured; he falls.

Give him the coup de grace!

Put him out of his pain!

No!

The executioner swings the whip, and—I myself have had to witness it—the unhappy victim of hundredfold tortures runs!

This is the beginning of the end.

As for the end itself, they hang the scorched and perforated bodies by their hands and feet to a tree head downwards, and now every Persian may try his marksmanship to his heart's content from a fixed but not too proximate distance on the noble quarry placed at his disposal.

I saw corpses torn by nearly 150 bullets....

When I read over again what I have written I am overcome by the thought that those who are with you in our dearly beloved Austria may doubt the full truth of the picture, and accuse me of exaggeration.

Would to God that I had not lived to see it!

But by the duties of my profession I was unhappily often, only too often, a witness of these abominations.

At present I never leave my house, in order not to meet with fresh scenes of horror.

After their death the Babis are hacked in two and either nailed to the city gate, or cast out into the plain as food for the dogs and jackals.

Thus the punishment extends even beyond the limits which bound this bitter world, for Musulmans who are not buried have no right to enter the Prophet's Paradise.

Since my whole soul revolts against such infamy, against such abominations as recent times, according to the judgment of all, present, I will no longer maintain my connection with the scene of such crimes.'" (He goes on to say that he has already asked for his discharge, but has not yet received an answer.)" (E.

G.

Browne's "Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion," pp.

267-71.) "Ardishir Mirza was forced to act in consequence.

He kept the gates of the city closed and guarded, giving orders to examine closely all those who might ask to leave.

The people were urged to climb the walls near the Shimiran gate in order to see in the open field across the bridge the mutilated body of Sadiq.

The prince governor called together the Kalantar, or prefect of police, the Vazir of the city, the Darughih, or police judge, and the heads of the boroughs and ordered them to seek and arrest all persons suspected of being Babis.

As no one could leave the city, they waited until night-fall to start ferreting them out, ruse and cunning being the main requisites employed. "The police force in Tihran, as in all Asiatic cities, is very well organized.

It is a legacy of the Sassanides which the Arabian Khalifs have carefully preserved.

As it was to the advantage of all governments (no matter how bad, and even more so to the worst ones) to maintain it, it has remained, so to speak, unchanged, in the midst of the ruins of other institutions, equally efficient, which have decayed. "One should know that the head of every borough, always in touch with the Kalantar, has under him a few men called 'sar-ghishmihs,' policemen who, without either uniform or badge, never leave the streets which are assigned to them.

They are generally well liked by the people and they live on familiar terms with them.

They are helpful at all times and, at night, be it winter or summer, they recline under the awning of any store, indifferent to rain or snow, and watch over private property.

In this way they reduce the number of thefts by rendering them difficult.

Moreover, they know every dweller and his ways, so that they can assist in case of investigation; they know the minds, the opinions, the acquaintances, the relations of everyone; and if one asks three friends to dinner, the sar-ghishmih without spying, so well informed is he about everyone, knows the time of the arrival of the guests, what has been served, what has been said and done, and the time of their departure.

The kad-khudas warned these policemen to watch the Babis in their respective sections and everyone awaited the results." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp.

234-235.)

26.13. Name of the dungeon, meaning "Black Pit."

26.14. The Imam Husayn.

26.15. "If sometime thou shouldst happen to visit the prison of His Majesty the Shah, ask thou the director and chief of that place to show thee those two chains, one of which is known as Qara-Guhar and the other as Salasil.

I swear by the Day-star of Justice, that during four months, I was weighted and tormented by one of these chains. 'The sorrow of Jacob paleth before my sorrow; and all the afflictions of Job were but a part of my calamities.'" ("The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf," p.

57.) "Concerning the Persian mode of imprisonment, the practice is as different from our own as in the case of penalties.

There is no such thing as penal servitude for life, or even for a term of years; hard labour is unknown as a sentence; and confinement for any lengthy period is rare.

There is usually a gaol-delivery at the beginning of the new year; and when a fresh governor is appointed, he not uncommonly empties the prison that may have been filled by his predecessor, one or two of the worst cases, perhaps, suffering the death penalty, in order to create a salutary impression of strength.

There is no such thing as a female ward, women being detained, as also are male criminals of high rank, in the house of a priest.

In Tihran there are said to be three kinds of prison: the subterranean cells beneath the Ark, where criminals guilty of conspiracy or high treason are reported to have been confined; the town prison, where the vulgar criminals may be seen with iron collars round their neck, sometimes with their feet in stocks, and attached to each other by iron chains; and the private guard-house, that is frequently an appurtenance of the mansions of the great.

It will be seen that the Persian theory of justice, as expressed both in judicial sentences, in the infliction of penalties, and in the prison code, is one of sharp and rapid procedure, whose object is the punishment (in a manner as roughly equivalent as possible to the original offence), but in no sense the reformation, of the culprit." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," vol. i, pp.

458-9.)

26.16. "We had nothing to do with this odious deed, and Our innocence was indisputably proved before the tribunals.

Nevertheless, they arrested Us and brought Us to the prison in Tihran, from Niyavaran, which was then the seat of the royal residence; on foot, in chains, and with bare head and feet, for a brutal fellow who was accompanying Us on horseback snatched the hat from Our head, and many executioners and farrashes hurried Us along with great speed and put Us for four months in a place the like of which has not been seen.

In reality, a dark and narrow cell were far better than the place where this wronged One and His companions were confined.

When We entered the prison, on arrival, they conducted us along a dismal corridor, and thence We descended three steep stairs to the dungeon appointed for Us.

The place was dark, and its inmates numbered nearly a hundred and fifty—thieves, assassins, and highway robbers.

Holding such a crowd as this, it yet had no outlet but the passage through

which We entered.

The pen fails to describe this place and its putrid stench.

Most of the company had neither clothes to wear nor mat to lie on.

God knows what We endured in that gloomy and loathsome place!

By day and by night, in this prison We reflected on the condition of the Babis and their doings and affairs, wondering how, notwithstanding their greatness of soul, nobility, and intelligence, they could be capable of such a deed as this audacious attempt on the life of the sovereign.

Then did this wronged One determine that, on leaving this prison, He would arise with the utmost endeavour for the regeneration of these souls.

One night, in a dream, this all-glorious word was heard from all sides: 'Verily We will aid Thee to triumph by Thyself and by Thy pen.

Grieve not for that which hath befallen Thee, and have no fear.

Truly Thou art of them that are secure.

Ere long shall the Lord send forth and reveal the treasures of the earth, men who shall give Thee the victory by Thyself and by Thy name wherewith the Lord hath revived the hearts of them that know.'" (Baha'u'llah's reference to the Siyah-Chal in "The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf.") "'Abdu'l-Baha," writes Dr.

J.

E.

Esslemont, "tells how one day He was allowed to enter the prison-yard to see His beloved Father when He came out for His daily exercise.

Baha'u'llah was terribly altered, so ill He could hardly walk, His hair and beard unkempt, His neck galled and swollen from the pressure of a heavy steel collar, His body bent by the weight of His chains, and the sight made a never-to-be-forgotten impression on the mind of the sensitive boy." ("Baha'u'llah and the New Era," p.

61.)

26.17. "They ordered the body of Sadiq, the Babi who had been murdered, to be tied to the tail of a mule and dragged over the stones as far as Tihran, so that the entire population could see that the conspirators had failed. At the same time, messengers were sent to Ardishir Mirza to dictate to him what he should do." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 234.)

26.18. "It was on this occasion that Mirza Aqa Khan, the Grand Vazir, in order to distribute the responsibility of punishment and to lessen the chances of blood-revenge, conceived the extraordinary idea of assigning the several criminals for execution to the principal ministers, generals, and officers of the Court, as well as to representatives of the priestly and merchant classes.

The Foreign Secretary killed one, the Home Secretary another, the Master of the Horse a third, and so on." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," p. 402, note 2.)

26.19. "His Excellency resolved to divide the execution of the victims among the different departments of the state; the only person he exempted was himself.

First came the Shah, who was entitled to Qisas, or legal retaliation, for his wound.

To save the dignity of the crown, the steward of the household, as the Shah's representative, fired the first shot at the conspirator selected as his victim, and his deputies, the farrashes, completed the work.

The Prime Minister's son headed the Home Office, and slew another Babi.

Then came the Foreign Office.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a pious, silly man, who spent his time in conning over the traditions of Muhammad, with averted face made the first swordcut, and then the Under-Secretary of State and clerks of the Foreign Office hewed their victim into pieces.

The priesthood, the merchants, the artillery, the infantry, had each their allotted Babi.

Even the Shah's admirable French physician, the late lamented Dr.

Cloquet, was invited to show his loyalty by following the example of the rest of the Court.

He excused himself, and pleasantly said he killed too many men professionally to permit him to increase their number by any voluntary homicide on his part.

The Sadr was reminded that these barbarous and unheard-of proceedings were not only revolting in themselves, but would produce the utmost horror and disgust in Europe.

Upon this he became very much excited, and asked angrily, 'Do you wish the vengeance of all the Babis to be concentrated upon me alone?' The following is an extract from the 'Tihran Gazette' of that day, and will serve as a specimen of a Persian 'leader': 'Some profligate, unprincipled individuals, destitute of religion, became disciples of the accursed Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad Bab, who some years ago invented a new religion, and who afterwards met his doom.

They were unable to prove the truth of their faith, the falsehood of which was visible.

For instance, many of their books having fallen into our hands, they are found to contain nothing but pure infidelity.

In worldly argument, too, they never were able to support their religion, which seemed fit only for entering into a contest with the Almighty.

They then began to think of aspiring to sovereignty, and to endeavour to raise insurrections, hoping to profit by the confusion, and to pillage the property of their neighbours.

A wretched miserable gang, whose chief, Mulla Shaykh 'Ali of Turshiz, styled himself the deputy of the former Bab, and who gave himself the title of High Majesty, collected round themselves some of the former companions of [the] Bab.

They seduced to their principles some dissolute debauchees, one of whom was Haji Sulayman Khan, son of the late Yahya Khan of Tabriz.

In the house of this Haji it was their practice to assemble for consultation, and to plan an attempt on the auspicious life of his Majesty.

Twelve of their number, who were volunteers for the deed, were selected to execute their purpose, and to each of them were given pistols, daggers, etc.

It was resolved that the above number should proceed to the Shah's residence at Niyavaran, and await their opportunity.' Then follows an account of the attack, which I have already given in sufficient detail. 'Six persons, whose crimes were not so clearly proved, were condemned to perpetual imprisonment; the remainder were divided among the priesthood, the doctors of the law, the chief servants of the court, the people of the town, merchants, tradesmen, artisans, who bestowed on them their deserts in the following manner:

The mullas, priests, and learned body slew Mulla Shaykh 'Ali, the deputy of [the] Bab, who gave himself the title of Imperial Majesty, and who was the author of this atrocity.

The princes slew Siyyid Hasan, of Khurasan, a man of noted profligacy, with pistol-shots, swords, and daggers.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, full of religious and moral zeal, took the first shot at Mulla Zaynu'l-'Abidin of Yazd, and the secretaries of his department finished him and cut him in pieces.

The Nizamu'l-Mulk (son of the Prime Minister) slew Mulla Husayn.

Mirza 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, of Shiraz, who was one of the twelve assassins, was slain by the brother and sons of the Prime Minister; his other relations cut him in pieces.

Mulla Fathu'llah, of Qum, who fired the shot which wounded the royal person, was killed thus:

In the midst of the royal camp candles were placed in his body (by making incisions) and lighted.

The steward of the household wounded him in the very place that he had injured the Shah, and then the attendants stoned him.

The nobles of the court sent Shaykh 'Abbas of Tihran to hell.

The Shah's personal attendants put to death Muhammad-Baqir, one of the twelve.

The Shah's master of the horse and the servants of the stable horse-shod Muhammad-Taqi of Shiraz, and then sent him to join his companions.

The masters of the ceremonies and other nobles, with their deputies, slew Muhammad of Najaf-Abad with hatchets and maces, and sent him to the depths of hell.

The artillerymen first dug out the eye of Muhammad-'Ali of Najaf-Abad, and then blew him away from a mortar.

The soldiers bayoneted Siyyid Husayn, of Milan, and sent him to hell.

The cavalry slew Mirza Rafi'.

The adjutant-general, generals, and colonels slew Siyyid Husayn.'" (Lady Sheil's "Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia," pp.

277-81.) "On that day, a spectacle was witnessed in the streets and bazaars of Tihran which the people can never forget.

Even to this very day, it remains the topic of conversation; one still feels a shocking horror which the years have not been able to lessen.

The people saw marching, between executioners, children and women with deep holes cut into their flesh in which lighted wicks were inserted.

The victims were dragged with ropes and goaded on with whips.

Children and women went forth singing this verse: 'In truth, we come from God and unto Him do we return!' Their voices were raised triumphant above the deep silence of the crowd, for the citizens of Tihran were neither mean nor great believers in Islam.

When one of the victims fell to the ground and they prodded him up with bayonets, if the loss of blood which dripped from his wounds had left him any strength, he would begin to dance and to cry out with even greater enthusiasm: 'In truth, we come from God and unto Him do we return!' "Some of the children expired on the way.

The executioners would throw their bodies under the feet of their fathers and sisters, who proudly walked over them without giving it a second thought.

When the cortege reached the place of execution near the New Gate, the victims were given the choice between life and abjuration of their faith; they were even subjected to every form of intimidation.

One of the executioners conceived the idea of saying to a father that, unless he yielded, he would cut the throats of his two sons on his very breast.

The sons were quite young, the oldest about fourteen.

Covered with blood, their flesh scorched, they were listening stoically to the threats.

The father replied, while laying himself down, that he was ready and the older

of the boys, claiming a prior right, requested to be the first to die.

It may be that the executioner denied him even that last comfort. "At last, the tragedy was over and night fell upon a heap of formless bodies; the heads were tied in bundles to the posts of justice and the dogs on the outskirts of the city were crowding about.

That day won for the Babis a larger number of secret followers than much exhortation could have done. "As I have said above, the impression caused by the terrifying impassibility of the martyrs was deep and lasting.

I have often heard eye witnesses describe the scenes of that fateful day, men close to the government, some even holding important positions.

While listening to them, one could easily have believed that they were all Babis, so great was their admiration for the events in which Islam played so inglorious a part, and so high a conception did they entertain of the resources, the hopes and the means of success of the new religion." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp.

248-250.) "These executions were not merely criminal, but foolish.

The barbarity of the persecutors defeated its own ends, and instead of inspiring terror, gave the martyrs an opportunity of exhibiting a heroic fortitude which has done more than any propaganda, however skilful, could have done to ensure the triumph of the cause for which they died....

The impression produced by such exhibitions of courage and endurance was profound and lasting; nay, the faith which inspired the martyrs was often contagious, as the following incident shows.

A certain Yazdi rough, noted for his wild and disorderly life, went to see the execution of some Babis, perhaps to scoff at them.

But when he saw with what calmness and steadfastness they met torture and death, his feelings underwent so great a revulsion that he rushed forward crying, 'Kill me too!

I also am a Babi!' And thus he continued to cry till he too was made a partaker in the doom he had come out only to gaze upon." (E.

G.

Browne's "A Year amongst the Persians," pp.

111-12.)

26.20. According to Samandar (manuscript, p. 2), Sulayman Khan attained to the presence of the Bab in the course of His pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina.

26.21. See Glossary.

26.22. See Glossary.

26.23. 'Abdu'l-Baha's title.

26.24. See Glossary.

26.25. His name was Haji 'Ali Khan. (See "A Traveller's Narrative," p. 52, note 1.)

26.26. The Imam 'Ali.

26.27. Qur'an, 21:69.

26.28. "The extraordinary heroism with which Sulayman Khan bore these frightful tortures is notorious, and I have repeatedly heard it related how he ceased not during the long agony which he endured to testify his joy that he should be accounted worthy to suffer martyrdom for his Master's cause.

He even sang and recited verses of poetry, amongst them the following: 'I have returned!

I have returned!

I have come by the way of Shiraz!

I have come with winsome airs and graces!

Such is the lover's madness!' 'Why do you not dance,' asked the executioners mockingly, 'since you find death so pleasant?' 'Dance!' cried Sulayman Khan. 'In one hand the wine-cup, in one hand the tresses of the Friend.

Such a dance in the midst of the market-place is my desire!'" ("A Traveller's Narrative,"

Note T, pp.

333-4.) He was martyred in August, 1852. "When they arrested Sulayman Khan, and strove, in consideration of his faithful service and loyalty, to induce him, by promises of rewards from the king, to abandon the creed which he had adopted, he would not consent, but answered firmly: 'His Majesty the King has a right to demand from his servants fidelity, loyalty, and uprightness; but he is not entitled to meddle with their religious convictions.' In consequence of this boldness of speech, it was ordered that his body should be pierced with wounds, and that into each of these wounds a lighted candle should be inserted as an example to others.

Another victim was similarly treated.

In this state, with minstrels and drummers going in advance, they led him through the bazaars, and he, meanwhile, with smiling countenance, kept repeating these verses:

'Happy he whom love's intoxication
So hath overcome that scare he knows
Whether at the feet of the Beloved
It be head or turban which he throws!'

Whenever one of the candles fell from his body, he would with his own hand pick it up, light it from the others, and replace it. The executioners, seeing in

him such exultation and rapture, said: 'If thou art so eager for martyrdom, why dost thou not dance?' Thereat he began to leap, and to sing, in verses appropriate to his condition:

'An ear no longer dulled with ignorance
And self-subdued entitles one to dance.
Fools dance and caper in the market-place;
Men dance the while their life-blood flows apace.
When self is slain, they clap their hands in glee,
And dance, because from evil they are free.'

In such fashion did they lead these two forth through the gate of Shah 'Abdu'l-'Azim. When they were preparing to saw that brave man asunder, he stretched out his feet without fear or hesitation, while he recited these verses:

'I hold this body as of little worth;
A brave man's spirit scorns its house of earth.
Dagger and sword like fragrant basil seem,
Or flowers to deck death's banquet with their gleam.'"
(The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," pp. 228-30.)

26.29. "If one conclusion more than another has been forced upon our notice by the retrospect in which I have indulged, it is that a sublime and unmurmuring devotion has been inculcated by this new faith, whatever it be. There is, I believe, but one instance of a Babi having recanted under pressure or menace of suffering, and he reverted to the faith and was executed within two years. Tales of magnificent heroism illumine the blood-stained pages of Babi history. Ignorant and unlettered as many of its votaries are, and have been, they are yet prepared to die for their religion, and the fires of Smithfield did not kindle a nobler courage than has met and defied the more refined torture-mongers of Tihran. Of no small account, then, must be the tenets of a creed that can awaken in its followers so rare and beautiful a spirit of self-sacrifice.... It is these little incidents, protruding from time to time their ugly features, that prove Persia to be not as yet quite redeemed, and that somewhat stagger the tall-talkers about Iranian civilization." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," vol. 1, p. 501.)

26.30. "She remained in Tihran a long time receiving numerous visitors both men and women.

She aroused the women by showing them the abject role which Islam assigned to them and she won them over to the new religion by showing them the freedom and respect which it would bestow upon them.

Many domestic disputes followed, not always to the advantage and credit of the husband.

These discussions might have continued at length, if Mirza Aqa Khan-i-Nuri had not been appointed Sadr-i-A'zam.

The premier ordered Haji Mulla Mirza Muhammad Andirmani and Haji Mulla 'Ali Kini to call on her in order to examine into her belief.

They held seven conferences with her in which she argued with much feeling and affirmed that the Bab was the promised and expected Imam.

Her adversaries called her attention to the fact that, in accordance with the prophecies, the promised Imam was to come from Jabulqa and Jabulsa.

She retorted feelingly that those prophecies were false and forged by false traditionalists and, as these two cities never existed, they could only be the superstitions of diseased brains.

She expounded the new doctrine, bringing out its truth, but always encountered the same argument of Jabulqa.

Exasperated, she finally told them: 'Your reasoning is that of an ignorant and stupid child; how long will you cling to these follies and lies?

When will you lift your eyes towards the Sun of Truth?' Shocked by such blasphemy, Haji Mulla 'Ali rose up and led his friend away saying, 'Why prolong our discussion with an infidel?' They returned home and wrote out the sentence which established her apostasy and her refusal to retract, and condemned her to death in the name of the Qur'an!" (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

446-447.)

26.31. "While a prisoner in the house of the Kalantar, the marriage of the son of the family took place. Naturally, the wives of all the prominent men were invited; but, although the host had gone to a great deal of expense to provide the customary entertainment, the women loudly demanded that Qurratu'l-'Ayn be brought before the company. She had hardly appeared and begun to speak when the musicians and dancers were dismissed. The ladies, forgetful of the sweets of which they were so fond, had eyes only for Qurratu'l-'Ayn." (Ibid., p. 448.)

26.32 Mahmud Khan-i-Kalantar, in whose custody she was placed.

26.33. See Glossary.

26.34. "Across from the English Legation and the Turkish Embassy stretched a rather vast square which since 1893 has disappeared. Toward the center of this square, but in line with the street, stood five or six trees which marked the spot where the Babi heroine had died, for in those days the garden of Ilkhani extended that far. On my return in 1898 the square had entirely disappeared overrun by modern buildings and I do not know whether the present owner has saved those trees which pious hands had planted." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," p. 452.)

26.35. August, 1852 A.D.

26.36. See Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1889, article 6, p. 492.

26.37. 1817-18 A.D.

26.38. "Beauty and the female sex also lent their consecration to the new creed, and the heroism of the lovely but ill-fated poetess of Qazvin, Zarrin-Taj (Crown of Gold), or Qurratu'l-'Ayn (Solace of the Eyes), who, throwing off the veil, carried the missionary torch far and wide, is one of the most affecting episodes in modern history." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," vol.

1, p.

497, note 2.) "No memory is more deeply venerated or kindles greater enthusiasm than hers, and the influence which she wielded in her lifetime still inures to her sex." (Valentine Chirol's "The Middle Eastern Question," p.

124.) "The appearance of such a woman as Qurratu'l-'Ayn is in any country and any age a rare phenomenon, but in such a country as Persia it is a prodigy—nay, almost a miracle.

Alike in virtue of her marvellous beauty, her rare intellectual gifts, her fervid eloquence, her fearless devotion, and her glorious martyrdom, she stands forth incomparable and immortal amidst her countrywomen.

Had the Babi religion no other claim to greatness, this were sufficient—that it produced a heroine like Qurratu'l-'Ayn." ("A Traveller's Narrative,"

Note Q, p.

213.) "Almost the most remarkable figure in the whole movement was the poetess Qurratu'l-'Ayn.

She was known for her virtue, piety and learning, and had been finally converted on reading some of the verses and exhortations of the Bab.

So strong in her faith did she become that although she was both rich and noble she gave up wealth, child, name and position for her Master's service and set herself to proclaim and establish his doctrine...

The beauty of her speech was such as to draw guests from a marriage feast rather than listen to the music provided by the host.

And her verses were among the most stirring in the Persian language." (Sir Francis Younghusband's "The Gleam," pp.

202-3.) "Looking back on the short career of Qurratu'l-'Ayn, one is chiefly struck by her fiery enthusiasm and by her absolute unworldliness.

This world was, in fact, to her, as it was said to be to Quddus, a mere handful of dust.

She was also an eloquent speaker and experienced in the intricate measures of

Persian poetry.

One of her few poems which have thus far been made known is of special interest, because of the belief which it expresses in the divine-human character of some one (here called Lord), whose claims, when once adduced, would receive general recognition.

Who was this Personage?

It appears that Qurratu'l-'Ayn thought Him slow in bringing forward these claims.

Is there any one who can be thought of but Baha'u'llah?

The poetess was a true Baha'i." (Dr.

T.

K.

Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," pp.

114, 115.) "The harvest sown in Islamic lands by Qurratu'l-'Ayn is now beginning to appear.

A letter addressed to the "Christian Commonwealth" last June informs us that forty Turkish suffragettes are being deported from Constantinople to 'Akka (so long the prison of Baha'u'llah): 'During the last few years suffrage ideas have been spreading quietly behind in the harems.

The men were ignorant of it; everybody was ignorant of it; and now suddenly the floodgate is opened and the men of Constantinople have thought it necessary to resort to drastic measures.

Suffrage clubs have been organised, intelligent memorials incorporating the women's demands have been drafted and circulated; women's journals and magazines have sprung up, publishing excellent articles; and public meetings were held.

Then one day the members of these clubs—four hundred of them—cast away their veils.

The staid, fossilised class of society were shocked, the good Musulmans were alarmed, and the Government forced into action.

These four hundred liberty-loving women were divided into several groups.

One group composed of forty have been exiled to 'Akka, and will arrive in a few days.

Everybody is talking about it, and it is really surprising to see how numerous are those in favour of removing the veils from the faces of the women.

Many men with whom I have talked think the custom not only archaic, but thought-stifling.

The Turkish authorities, thinking to extinguish this light of liberty, have greatly added to its flame, and their high-handed action has materially assisted the creation of a wider public opinion and a better understanding of this crucial problem.'" (Ibid., pp.

115-16.) "The other missionary, the woman to whom I refer, had come to Qazvin.

She was without doubt, at the same time, the object of the Babis highest veneration and one of the most strikingly fascinating manifestations of that religion." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p.

136.) "Many who have known her and heard her at different times have stated that, for a person so learned and so well read, the outstanding characteristic of her discourse was an amazing simplicity; and still, when she spoke, her audience was deeply stirred and filled with admiration, often in tears." (Ibid., p.

150.) "Although the Muhammadans and Babis speak in the highest terms of the beauty of 'Consolation of the Eyes,' it is beyond dispute that the intelligence and character of this young woman were even more remarkable than has been related.

Having heard, almost daily, learned conversations, it seems that, at an early age, she had taken a deep interest in them; hence it came about that she was perfectly able to follow the subtle arguments of her father, her uncle, her cousin and now her husband, and even to debate with them and frequently to astonish them with the power and keenness of her mind.

In Persia, one does not frequently see women engaged in intellectual pursuits but, nevertheless, it does sometimes occur.

What is really extraordinary is to find a woman of the ability of Qurratu'l-'Ayn.

Not only did she carry her knowledge of Arabic to an unusual degree of perfection, but she became also outstanding in the knowledge of the traditions of Islam and of the varied interpretations of the disputed passages of the Qur'an and of the great writers.

In Qazvin, she was rightly considered a prodigy." (Ibid., p.

137.)

26.39. "Strange as it may seem, they respected the women whom they gathered and led to Mount Biyaban.

There were, among them, two old men too feeble to fight, Mulla Muhammad-Musa, a fuller, and Mashhadi Baqir, a dyer.

These were murdered.

Mashhadi Baqir was killed by 'Ali Big, captain of the Nayrizi soldiers, who severed the head from the body of his victim and gave it to a child; then,

covering the head of the niece of his victim with a black veil, he led her to Mirza Na'im, who was then on Mount Biyaban seated upon a stone in a garden.

When 'Ali Big approached him, he threw the head of Baqir at him and shoved the little girl abruptly forward.

She fell on her face, as he cried out, 'We have done as you wished, the Babis are no more!' "Akhund Mulla 'Abdu'l-Husayn ordered that the mouth of Mirza Na'im be stuffed with dirt; then a ghulam shot him in the head but the wound was not fatal. "Approximately six hundred and three women were arrested and taken to the mill called 'Takht' which is near Nayriz.

One author tells the following anecdote: 'I was very young then and I was following my mother who had another son younger than I.

A man, called Asadu'llah, was carrying my brother on his shoulders.

The child wore a hat decorated with a few ornaments.

A rider saw the hat and snatched it with such brutality that he took hold at the same time of the hair of the baby.

The child was thrown about ten feet away and my poor mother found him unconscious.' "I shall not expatiate upon the horrors which followed this victory.

It is enough to know that Mirza Na'im rode on, preceded and followed by men carrying the heads of the martyrs on pikes.

The prisoners were prodded along with whip and sword.

The women were jostled into ditches full of water.

The night was spent at the caravanserai in Shiraz.

In the morning, the women were taken out, all entirely naked; they were kicked, stoned, whipped and spat upon.

When their tormentors grew tired, they were confined for twenty days, during which time they were constantly insulted and outraged.

Eighty Babis bound together in tens, were entrusted to one hundred soldiers, with Shiraz as their destination.

Siyyid Mir Muhammad 'Abd died from exposure to cold at Khanih-Gird, others expired a little further on.

The guards, from time to time, would cut off the head of one of them.

At last they entered Shiraz, through the gate of Sa'di.

They paraded the prisoners through the streets, then they cast them into prison.

The women were taken out of the school building after twenty days and separated into two groups.

One group was set free, the others were sent to Shiraz with other prisoners who had lately been arrested. "On reaching Shiraz, the caravan was again divided into two groups: the women were sent to the caravanserai Shah Mir 'Ali-Hamzih and the men to prison with the other Babis.

The next day was a feast day.

The governor, surrounded by all the prominent citizens of Shiraz, ordered the prisoners to be brought before him.

A Nayrizi called Jalal, whom Na'im had nicknamed 'Bulbul,' revealed the names of his fellow-citizens.

The first one to appear was Mulla 'Abdu'l-Husayn, who was commanded to curse the Bab.

He refused and his head rolled on the ground.

Haji son of Asghar, 'Ali Garm-Siri, Husayn son of Hadi Khayri, Sadiq son of Salih, and Muhammad-ibn-i-Muhsin all were executed.

The women were set free and the men who survived were taken back to prison.

The Shah having demanded that the prisoners be sent away, seventy-three were sent to Tihran.

Twenty-two died during the journey, among whom were Mulla 'Abdu'l-Husayn who died at Saydan, 'Ali son of Karbila'i Zaman, at Abadih; Akbar son of Karbila'i Muhammad, at Qinarih; Hasan son of 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, Mulla 'Ali-Akbar, at Isfahan; Karbila'i Baqir son of Muhammad-Zaman, Hasan and his brother Dhu'l-Faqar, Karbila'i Naqi and 'Ali his son, Vali Khan, Mulla Karim, Akbar Ra'is, Ghulam-'Ali son of Pir Muhammad, Naqi and Muhammad-'Ali sons of Muhammad, expired likewise during the course of the journey. "The others reached Tihran and, on the very day of their arrival, fifteen of them were put to death, among them Aqa Siyyid 'Ali, who had been abandoned as dead, Karbila'i Rajab, the barber; Sayfu'd-Din, Sulayman son of K.

Salman, Ja'far, Murad Khayri, Husayn son of K.

Baqir, Mirza Abu'l-Hasan son of Mirza Taqi, Mulla Muhammad-'Ali son of Aqa Mihdi.

Twenty-three died in prison, thirteen were freed after three years, the only one who remained in Tihran, to die there a little later, was Karbila'i Zaynu'l-'Abidin." (A.

L.

M.

Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab," pp.

421-424.) "Their persecutors, having captured and killed the men, seized and slew forty women and children in the following manner:

They placed them in the midst of a cave, heaped up in the cave a vast quantity of firewood, poured naphtha over the faggots strewn around, and set fire to it.

One of those who took part in this deed related as follows: 'After two or three days, I ascended that mountain and removed the door from the cave.

I saw that the fire had sunk down into the ashes; but all those women with their children were seated, each in some corner, clasping their little ones to their bosoms, and sitting round in a circle, just as they were when we left them.

Some, as though in despair or in mourning, had suffered their heads to sink down on their knees in grief, and all retained the postures they had assumed.

I was filled with amazement, thinking that the fire had not burned them.

Full of apprehension and awe, I entered.

Then I saw that all were burned and charred to a cinder, yet had they never made a movement which would cause the crumbling away of the bodies.

As soon as I touched them with my hand, however, they crumbled away to ashes.

And all of us, when we had seen this, repented what we had done.

But of what avail was this?'" (The "Tarikh-i-Jadid," pp.

128-31.) "The author of the 'Tarikh-i-Jadid,' in concluding this narrative, takes occasion to point out how literally was fulfilled in these events the prophecy contained in a tradition referring to the signs which shall mark the appearance of the Imam Mihdi: 'In Him (shall be) the perfection of Moses, the preciousness of Jesus, and the patience of Job; His saints shall be abased in His time, and their heads shall be exchanged as presents, even as the heads of the Turk and the Daylamite are exchanged as presents; they shall be slain and burned, and shall be afraid, fearful, and dismayed; the earth shall be dyed with their blood, and lamentation and wailing shall prevail amongst their women; these are my saints indeed.' [This tradition, called Hadith-i-Jabir, is also quoted from the "Kafi," one of the principal compilations of shi'ite traditions, in the "Iqan."] When I was at Yazd in the early summer of 1888, I became acquainted with a Babi holding a position of some importance under government, two of whose ancestors had taken a prominent part in the suppression of the Nayriz insurrection.

Of what he told me concerning this the following is a summary taken from my diary for May 18th, 1888: 'My maternal grandfather Mihr-'Ali Khan Shuja'u'l-Mulk and my great-uncle Mirza Na'im both took an active part in the Nayriz war—but on the wrong side.

When orders came to Shiraz to quell the insurrection, my grandfather was instructed to take command of the expedition sent for that purpose.

He did not like the task committed to him and communicated his reluctance to two of the ulamas, who, however, reassured him, declaring that the war on which

he was about to engage was a holy enterprise sanctioned by Religion, and that he would receive reward therefor in Paradise.

So he went, and what happened happened.

After they had killed 750 men, they took the women and children, stripped them almost naked, mounted them on donkeys, mules, and camels, and led them through rows of heads hewn from the lifeless bodies of their fathers, brothers, sons, and husbands towards Shiraz.

On their arrival there, they were placed in a ruined caravanserai just outside the Isfahan gate and opposite to an Imam-zadih, their captors taking up their quarters under some trees hard by.

Here they remained for a long while, subjected to many insults and hardships, and many of them died.

Now see the judgment of God on the oppressors; for of those chiefly responsible for these cruelties not one but came to a bad end and died overwhelmed with calamity.

My grandfather Mihr-'Ali Khan presently fell ill and was dumb till the day of his death.

Just as he was about to expire, those who stood round him saw from the movement of his lips that he was whispering something.

They leant down to catch his last words and heard him murmur faintly "Babi!

Babi!

Babi!" three times.

Then he fell back dead.

My great-uncle Mirza Na'im fell into disgrace with the government and was twice fined: ten thousand tumans the first time, fifteen thousand the second.

But his punishment did not cease here, for he was made to suffer diverse tortures.

His hands were put in the "il-chik" (the torture consists in placing pieces of wood between the victim's fingers, binding them round tightly with cord.

Cold water is then thrown over the cord to cause its further contraction) and his feet in the "tang-i-Qajar" (or "Qajar squeeze," an instrument of torture resembling the "boot" once used in England, for the introduction of which Persia is indebted to the dynasty which at present occupies the throne); he was made to stand bareheaded in the sun with treacle smeared over his head to attract the flies; and, after suffering these and other torments yet more painful and humiliating, he was dismissed a disgraced and ruined man.'" ("A Traveller's Narrative,"

Note H, pp.

191-3.)

26.40. January 12, 1853 A.D.

26.41. 'Abdu'l-Baha.

26.42. Mirza Musa, commonly called Aqay-i-Kalim, the ablest and most distinguished among Baha'u'llah's brothers and sisters, and His staunch and valued supporter.

EPILOGUE

[651] Never had the fortunes of the Faith proclaimed by the Bab sunk to a lower ebb than when Baha'u'llah was banished from His native land to 'Iraq.

The Cause for which the Bab had given His life, for which Baha'u'llah had toiled and suffered, seemed to be on the very verge of extinction.

Its force appeared to have been spent, its resistance irretrievably broken.

Discouragements and disasters, each more devastating in its effect than the preceding one, had succeeded one another with bewildering rapidity, sapping its vitality and dimming the hope of its stoutest supporters.

Indeed, to a superficial reader of the pages of Nabil's narrative, the whole story from its very beginning appears to be a mere recital of reverses and massacres, of humiliations and disappointments, each more severe than the previous one, culminating at last in the banishment of Baha'u'llah from His own country.

To the sceptical reader, unwilling to recognise the celestial potency with which that Faith was endowed, the entire conception that had evolved in the mind of its Author seems to have been foredoomed to failure.

The work of the Bab, so gloriously conceived, so heroically undertaken, would appear to have ended in a colossal disaster.

To such a reader, the life of the ill-fated Youth of Shiraz would seem, judging from the cruel blows it sustained, to be one of the saddest and most fruitless that had ever been the lot of mortal men.

That short and heroic career, which, swift as a meteor, flashed across the firmament of Persia, and seemed for a time to have brought the longed-for light of eternal salvation into the gloom that encircled the country, was plunged at last into an abyss of darkness and despair.

Every step He took, every endeavour He made, had but served to intensify the sorrows and disappointments that weighed upon His soul.

The plan He had, at the very outset of His career, conceived of inaugurating His Mission with a public proclamation in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina [652] failed to materialise as He had hoped.

The Sherif of Mecca, to whom Quddus was bidden deliver His Message, accorded him a reception that betrayed by its icy indifference the contemptuous

disregard in which the Cause of a Youth of Shiraz was held by the ruler of Hijaz and custodian of its Ka'bih.

The project He had in mind of returning triumphantly from His pilgrimage to the cities of Karbila and Najaf, where He hoped to establish His Cause, in the very heart of that stronghold of shi'ah orthodoxy, was likewise hopelessly shattered.

The programme which He had thought out, the essentials of which He had already communicated to the chosen nineteen of His disciples, remained for the most part unfulfilled.

The moderation He had exhorted them to observe was forgotten in the first flush of enthusiasm that seized the early missionaries of His Faith, which behaviour was in no small measure responsible for the failure of the hopes He had so fondly cherished.

The Mu'tamid, that wise and sagacious ruler, who had so ably warded off the danger with which that precious Life was threatened, and who had proved his capacity to render Him services of such distinction as few of His more modest companions could have hoped to offer, was suddenly taken from Him, leaving Him at the mercy of the perfidious Gurgin Khan, the most detestable and unscrupulous of all His enemies.

The Bab's only chance of meeting Muhammad Shah—a meeting which He Himself had requested and on which He had pinned His fondest hopes —was dashed to the ground by the intervention of the cowardly and capricious Haji Mirza Aqasi, who trembled at the thought lest His contact with the sovereign, already unduly inclined to befriend that Cause, should prove fatal to his own interests.

The attempts, inspired and initiated by the Bab, which two of His foremost disciples, Mulla 'Aliy-i-Bastami and Shaykh Sa'id-i-Hindi, had made to introduce the Faith, the one in Turkish territory and the other in India, ended in dismal failure.

The first enterprise collapsed at its very outset by reason of the cruel martyrdom of its promoter, whilst the latter was productive of what might seem a negligible result, its only fruit being the conversion of a certain siyyid whose chequered career of service was brought to a sudden end in Luristan by the action of the treacherous Ildirim [653] Mirza.

The captivity to which the Bab Himself, during the greater part of the years of His ministry, was condemned; His isolation in the mountain fastnesses of Adhirbayjan from the body of His followers, who were being sorely tried by a rapacious enemy; above all, the tragedy of His own martyrdom, so intense, so terribly humiliating, would appear to have marked the lowest depths of ignominy which so noble a Cause, from the very hour of its birth, was doomed to suffer.

His death, the culmination of a swift and stormy career, would seem to have set the seal of failure upon a task which, however heroic in the efforts it inspired, was impossible of achievement.

Much as He Himself had suffered, the agony He was made to endure was but a drop compared to the calamities which were to rain down upon the multitude of His avowed followers.

The cup of sorrow that had touched His lips had yet to be drained to its very dregs by those who still remained after Him.

The catastrophe of Shaykh Tabarsi, which robbed Him of His ablest lieutenants, Quddus and Mulla Husayn, and which engulfed no less than three hundred and thirteen of His staunch companions, came as the cruelest blow that had yet fallen upon Him, and enveloped with a shroud of darkness the closing days of His fast-ebbing life.

The struggle of Nayriz, with its attendant horrors and cruelties, involving as it did the loss of Vahid, the most learned, the most influential, and the most accomplished among the followers of the Bab, was an added blow to the resources and numbers of those who continued to hold aloft the torch in their hands.

The siege of Zanjan, following closely in the wake of the disaster that had befallen the Faith in Nayriz, and marked by the butcheries with which the name of that province will ever remain associated, depleted still further the ranks of the upholders of the Faith, and deprived them of the sustaining strength with which the presence of Hujjat inspired them.

With him was gone the last outstanding figure among the representative leaders of the Faith who towered, by virtue of their ecclesiastical authority, their learning, their fearlessness and force of character, above the rank and file of their fellow-disciples.

The flower of the [654] Bab's followers had been mown down in a ruthless carnage, leaving behind it a vast company of enslaved women and children, who groaned beneath the yoke of an unrelenting foe.

Their leaders, who, alike by their knowledge and example, had fed and sustained the flame that glowed in those valiant hearts, had also perished, their work seemingly abandoned amidst the confusion that afflicted a persecuted community.

Of all those who had shown themselves capable of carrying on the work which the Bab had handed down to His followers, Baha'u'llah alone remained.1 All the rest had fallen by the sword of the enemy.

Mirza Yahya, the nominal leader of the band that survived the Bab, had ingloriously sought refuge in the mountains of Mazindaran from the perils of the turmoil that had seized the capital.

In the guise of a dervish, kashkul2 in hand, he had deserted his companions and fled from the scene of danger to the forests of Gilan.

Siyyid Husayn, the Bab's amanuensis, and Mirza Ahmad, his collaborator, who were both well-versed in the teachings and implications of the newly revealed Bayan and, by virtue of their intimacy with their Master and their familiarity with the precepts of His Faith, were in a position to enlighten the

understanding, and consolidate the foundations of the faith, of their companions, lay in chains in the Siyah-Chal of Tihran, cut off entirely from the body of the believers who so greatly needed their counsel, both doomed to suffer, at an early date, a cruel martyrdom.

Even His own maternal uncle, who, ever since His childhood, had surrounded Him with a paternal solicitude that no father could have surpassed, who had rendered Him signal services in the early days of His sufferings in Shiraz, and who, had he been allowed to survive Him by only a few years, could have rendered [655] inestimable services to His Cause, languished in prison, forlorn and hopeless of ever continuing the work that was so close to his heart.

Tahirih, that flaming emblem of His Cause who, alike by her indomitable courage, her impetuous character, her dauntless faith, her fiery ardour and vast knowledge, seemed for a time able to win the whole womanhood of Persia to the Cause of her Beloved, fell, alas, at the very hour when victory seemed near at hand, a victim to the wrath of a calumnious enemy.

The influence of her work, the course of which was so prematurely arrested, seemed to those who stood near as they lowered her into the pit that served as her grave, to have been completely extinguished.

The Bab's remaining Letters of the Living either had perished by the sword or were fettered in prison, or again were leading an obscure life in some remote corner of the realm.

The body of the Bab's voluminous writings suffered, for the most part, a fate no less humiliating than that which had befallen His disciples.

Many of His copious works were utterly obliterated, others were torn and reduced to ashes, a few were corrupted, much was seized by the enemy, and the rest lay a mass of disorganised and undeciphered manuscripts, precariously hidden and widely scattered among the survivors of His companions.

The Faith the Bab had proclaimed, and for which He had given His all, had indeed reached its lowest ebb.

The fires kindled against it had almost consumed the fabric upon which its continued existence depended.

The wings of death seemed to be hovering above it.

Extermination, complete and irremediable, appeared to be threatening its very life.

Amidst the shadows that were fast gathering about it, the figure of Baha'u'llah alone shone as the potential Deliverer of a Cause that was fast speeding to its end.

The marks of clear vision, of courage and sagacity which He had shown on more than one occasion ever since He had risen to champion the Cause of the Bab, appeared to qualify Him, should His life and continued existence in Persia be ensured, to revive the fortunes of an expiring Faith.

But this was not to be.

A catastrophe, unexampled in the whole history of that Faith, precipitated a persecution fiercer than any that had [656] hitherto taken place, and this time drew into its vortex the person of Baha'u'llah Himself.

The slender hopes which the remnants of the believers still entertained were wrecked amidst the confusion that ensued.

For Baha'u'llah, their only hope and the sole object of their confidence, was so struck down by the severity of that storm that no recovery could any longer be thought possible.

After He had been despoiled of all His possessions in Nur and Tihran, denounced as the prime mover of a dastardly attempt upon the life of His sovereign, abandoned by His kindred and despised by His former friends and admirers, plunged into a dark and pestilential dungeon, and at last, with the members of His family, driven into hopeless exile beyond the confines of His native land, all the hopes that had centred round Him as the possible Redeemer of an afflicted Faith seemed for a moment to have completely vanished.

No wonder Nasiri'd-Din Shah, under whose eyes and by whose impulse such blows were being dealt, was already priding himself on being the wrecker of a Cause against which he had so consistently battled, and which he had at last, to outward seeming, been able to crush.

No wonder he imagined, as he sat musing over the successive stages of this vast and bloody enterprise, that by the act of banishment which his hands had signed, he was sounding the death-knell of that hateful heresy which had struck such terror to the hearts of his people.

To Nasiri'd-Din Shah it appeared, at that supreme moment, that the spell of that terror was broken, that the tide that had swept over his country was at last turning and bringing back to his fellow-countrymen the peace for which they cried.

Now that the Bab was no more; now that the mighty pillars that sustained His Cause had been crushed into dust; now that the mass of its devotees, throughout the length and breadth of his dominion, were cowed and exhausted; now that Baha'u'llah Himself, the one remaining hope of a leaderless community, had been driven into exile and had, of His own accord, sought refuge in the neighbourhood of the stronghold of shi'ah fanaticism, the spectre that had haunted him ever since he had ascended the throne had vanished for ever.

Never again, he imagined, [657] would he hear of that detestable Movement which, if he were to believe his best counsellors, was swiftly receding into the shadows of impotence and oblivion.3

To even the followers of the Faith who were left to survive the abominations heaped upon their Cause—to even that small caravan, with perhaps a few exceptions, wending its way in the depth of winter through the snows of the mountains bordering on 'Iraq,4 the Cause of the Bab, one can well imagine,

might for a moment have seemed to have failed in accomplishing its purpose. The forces of darkness that had encompassed it on every side would seem to have at last triumphed over, and put out, the light which that young Prince of Glory had kindled in His land.

In the eyes of Nasiri'd-Din Shah, at all events, the power that had seemed for a time to have swept within its orbit the entire forces of his realm had ceased to count. Ill-starred from its very birth, it had eventually been forced to surrender to the violence of the blows which his sword had dealt. The Faith had suffered a disruption certainly well deserved. Delivered from its curse, which for many nights had robbed him of his sleep, he could now, with undivided attention, set about the task of rescuing his land from the devastating effects of that vast delusion. Henceforth his real mission, as he conceived it, was to enable both Church and State to consolidate their foundations and to reinforce their ranks against the intrusion of similar heresies, which might, in a future day, poison the life of his countrymen.

How vain were his imaginings, how vast his own delusion!

The Cause he had fondly imagined to have been crushed was still living, destined to emerge from the midst of that great convulsion stronger, purer, and nobler than ever.

The Cause [658] which, to the mind of that foolish monarch, seemed to be speeding towards destruction was but passing through the fiery tests of a phase of transition that was to carry it a step further on the path of its high destiny.

A new chapter in its history was being unfolded, more glorious than any that had marked its birth or its rise.

The repression which that monarch had believed to have succeeded in sealing its doom was but the initial stage in an evolution destined to blossom, in the fulness of time, into a Revelation mightier than any that the Bab Himself had proclaimed.

The seed His hand had sown, though subjected, for a time, to the fury of a storm of unexampled violence and though later transplanted to a foreign soil, was to continue to develop and grow, in due time, into a Tree destined to spread its shelter over all the kindreds and peoples of the earth.

Though the Bab's disciples might be tortured and slain, and His companions humiliated and crushed; though His followers might dwindle in number; though the voice of the Faith itself might be silenced by the arm of violence; though despair might settle upon its fortunes; though its ablest defenders might apostatise from their faith, yet the promise embedded within the shell of His word no hand could succeed in ravishing, and no power stand in the way of its germination and growth.

Indeed, the first glimmerings of the dawning Revelation, of which the Bab had declared Himself to be the Herald, and to the approach and certainty of which

He had so repeatedly alluded,5 could already be discerned amidst the gloom that encircled Baha'u'llah in the Siyah-Chal of Tihran.6 The [659] force that, growing out of the momentous Revelation released by the Bab, was at a later time to unfold itself in all its glory and encompass the globe, was already pulsating in the veins of Baha'u'llah as He lay exposed in His cell to the sword of His executioner. The still voice which, in the hour of bitter agony, announced to the Prisoner the Revelation of which He was chosen to be the Mouthpiece, could not, of a certainty, have reached the ears of the monarch who was already preparing the celebration of the extinction of the Faith his Captive had championed. That imprisonment which he who had caused it, believed to have branded with infamy the fair name of Baha'u'llah, and which he regarded as a prelude to a still more humiliating banishment to 'Iraq, was, indeed, the very scene that witnessed the first stirrings of that Movement of which Baha'u'llah was to be the Author, a Movement which was first to be made known in the city of Baghdad and at a later time to be proclaimed from the prison-city of 'Akka to the Shah, no less than to the other rulers and crowned heads of the world.

Little did Nasiri'd-Din Shah imagine that by the very act of pronouncing the sentence of banishment against Baha'u'llah he was helping in the unfolding of God's irrepressible Purpose and that he himself was but an instrument in the execution of that Design.

Little did he imagine that as his reign was drawing to a close it would witness a revival of the very forces he had sought so strenuously to exterminate—a revival that would manifest a vitality such as he, in the hour of darkest despair, had never believed that Faith to possess.

Not only within the confines of his own realm,7 [660] not only throughout the adjacent territories of 'Iraq and Russia, but as far as India in the East,8 as far as Egypt and European Turkey in the West, a recrudescence of the Faith such as he had never expected, awakened him from the dreams in which he had so fondly indulged.

The Cause of the Bab seemed as if risen from the dead.

It appeared under a form infinitely more formidable than any under which it had appeared in the past.

The fresh impetus which, despite his calculations, the personality of Baha'u'llah, and, above all, the inherent strength of the Revelation which He personified, had lent to the Cause of the Bab, was one Nasiri'd Din Shah had never imagined.

The rapidity with which a [661] slumbering Faith had been revived and consolidated within his own territory; its spreading out to States beyond its confines; the stupendous claims advanced by Baha'u'llah almost in the midst of the stronghold where He had chosen to dwell; the public declaration of that claim in European Turkey, and its proclamation in challenging Epistles to the crowned heads of the earth, one of which the Shah himself was destined to

receive; the enthusiasm that announcement evoked in the [662] hearts of countless followers; the transference to the Holy Land of the centre of His Cause; the gradual relaxation of the severity of His confinement which marked the closing days of His life; the lifting of the ban that had been imposed by the Sultan of Turkey on His intercourse with visitors and

pilgrims who flocked from various parts of the East to His prison; the awakening of the spirit of enquiry among the thinkers of the West; the utter disruption of the forces that had attempted to effect a schism in the ranks of His followers, and the fate that had befallen its chief instigator; above all, [663] the sublimity of those teachings with which His published works abounded and which were being read, disseminated, and taught by an ever-increasing number of adherents in Russian Turkistan, in 'Iraq, in India, in Syria, and as far off as European Turkey—these were among the chief factors that convincingly revealed to the eyes of the Shah the invincible character of a Faith he believed himself to have bridled and destroyed. The futility of his efforts, however much he might attempt to conceal his feelings, was only too apparent. The Cause of the Bab, the birth and tribulations of which he had himself witnessed, and the triumphant progress of which he was now beholding, had risen phoenix-like from its ashes and was pressing forward along the road leading to undreamt-of achievements.10

[664] Little did Nabil himself imagine that within twoscore years of the writing of his narrative the Revelation of Baha'u'llah, the flower and fruit of all the Dispensations of the past, would have been capable of advancing thus far on the road leading to its world-wide recognition and triumph.

Little did he imagine that less than forty years after the death of Baha'u'llah His Cause, bursting beyond the confines of Persia and the East, would have penetrated the furthermost regions of the globe and would have encircled the whole earth.

Scarcely would he have believed the prediction had he been told that the Cause would, within that period, have implanted its banner in the heart of the American continent, would have made itself felt in the leading capitals of Europe, would have reached out to the southern confines of Africa, and would [665] have established its outposts as far as Australasia.

Hardly would his imagination, fired as it was by a conviction as to the destiny of his Faith, have carried him to a point at which he could have pictured to his mind the Tomb Shrine of the Bab, of the ultimate destination of whose remains he confesses himself to be ignorant, embosomed in the heart of Carmel, a place of pilgrimage and a beacon of light to many a visitor from the ends of the earth.

Hardly could he have imagined that the humble dwelling of Baha'u'llah, lost amid the tortuous lanes of old Baghdad, would one day, as a result of the machinations of a tireless enemy, have forced itself on the attention, and become the object of the earnest deliberations, of the assembled representatives of the leading Powers of Europe.

Little did he imagine that, with all the praise he, in his narrative, lavishes upon Him, there would proceed from the Most Great Branch10 a power that within a short period would have awakened the northern States of the American continent to the glory of the Revelation bequeathed to Him by Baha'u'llah.

Little did he imagine that the dynasties of those monarchs the evidences of whose tyranny he recounts so vividly in his narrative, would have tottered to their fall and suffered the very fate which their representatives had so desperately striven to inflict upon their dreaded opponents.

Little did he imagine that the whole ecclesiastical hierarchy of his country, the prime mover and the willing instrument of the abominations heaped upon his Faith, would so swiftly and easily be overthrown by the very forces [666] it had attempted to subdue.

Never would he have believed that the highest institutions of sunni Islam, the Sultanate and the Caliphate,11 those twin oppressors of the Faith of Baha'u'llah, would have been swept away so ruthlessly by the very hands of the professing adherents of the Faith of

[667] Islam. Little did he imagine that side by side with the steady expansion of the Cause of Baha'u'llah the forces of consolidation and internal administration would so progress as to present to the world the unique spectacle of a Commonwealth of peoples, world-wide in its ramifications, united in its purpose, co-ordinated in its efforts, and fired by a zeal and enthusiasm that no amount of adversity can quench.

And yet who knows what achievements, greater than any that the past and the present have witnessed, may not still be in store for those into whose hands so precious a heritage has been entrusted? Who knows but that out of the turmoil which agitates the face of present-day society there may not emerge, sooner than we expect, the World-Order of Baha'u'llah, the bare outline of which is being but faintly discerned among the world-wide communities that bear His name? For, great and marvellous as have been the achievements of the past, the glory of the golden age of the Cause, whose promise lies embedded within the shell of Baha'u'llah's immortal utterance, is yet to be revealed. Fierce as may seem the onslaught of the forces of darkness that may still afflict this Cause, desperate and prolonged as may be that struggle, severe as may be the disappointments it may still experience, the ascendancy it will eventually obtain will be such as no other Faith has ever in its history achieved. The welding of the communities of East and West into the world-wide Brotherhood of which poets and dreamers have sung, and the promise of which lies at the very core of the Revelation conceived by Baha'u'llah; the recognition of His law as the indissoluble bond uniting the peoples and nations of the earth; and the proclamation of the reign of the Most Great Peace, are but a few among the chapters of the glorious tale which the consummation of the Faith of Baha'u'llah will unfold.

Who knows but that triumphs, unsurpassed in splendour, are not in store for the mass of Baha'u'llah's toiling followers? Surely, we stand too near the colossal

edifice His hand has reared to be able, at the present stage of the evolution of His Revelation, to claim to be able even to conceive the full measure of its promised glory. Its past history, stained by the blood of countless martyrs, may well inspire us with the [668] thought that, whatever may yet befall this Cause, however formidable the forces that may still assail it, however numerous the reverses it will inevitably suffer, its onward march can never be stayed, and that it will continue to advance until the very last promise, enshrined within the words of Baha'u'llah, shall have been completely redeemed.

FOOTNOTES

EP.1. Mirza Abu'l-Fadl quotes, in his "Fara'id" (pp. 50-51), the following remarkable tradition from Muhammad, which is recognised as an authentic utterance of the Prophet and to which Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Vahhab-i-Sha'rani refers in his work entitled "Kitabu'l-Yavaqit-i-va'l-Javahir": "All of them [the companions of the Qa'im] shall be slain except One who shall reach the plain of 'Akka, the Banquet-Hall of God." The full text is also mentioned, according to Mirza Abu'l-Fadl, by Shaykh Ibnu'l-'Arabi in his "Futuhat-i-Makkiyyih."

EP.2. "A hollow receptacle of about the size and shape of a cocoa-nut, round the orifice of which two chains are attached at four points to serve as a handle. It is used by dervishes as an alms-basket." ("A Traveller's Narrative," p. 51, note 3.)

EP.3. "Excellency, After the carrying out of those energetic measures on the part of the Persian Government for the extirpation and extermination of the misguided and detestable sect of the Babis, with the details of which Your Excellency is fully acquainted [allusion is made to the great persecution of the Babis in Tihran in the summer of 1852], praise be to God, by the attention of the Imperial mind of His most potent Majesty, whose rank is as that of Jamshid, the refuge of the True Religion—may our lives be his sacrifice!—, their roots were torn up." (Extract from letter addressed by Mirza Sa'id Khan, ex-foreign minister of Persia, to the Persian ambassador in Constantinople; dated 12th of 12th Dhu'l-Hijjih, 1278 [May 10, 1862]. Facsimile and translation of the document reproduced in E. G. Browne's "Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion," p. 283.)

EP.4. "It was a terrible journey in rough mountain country and the travellers suffered greatly from exposure." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," p. 121.)

EP.5. "But just as remarkable as his boldness in claiming Divine authority is his restraint in insisting that his authority was not final. He felt competent and commissioned to reveal much, but he felt with equal certainty that there was infinitely more yet to be revealed. Herein was his greatness. And herein was his greatest sacrifice. He thereby risked the diminution of his personal fame. But he insured the continuance of his mission.... He insured that the movement he had started would grow and expand. He himself was but 'a letter out of that most mighty book, a dewdrop from that limitless ocean.'... This was the humility of true insight. And it had its effect. His movement has grown and

expanded, and it has yet a great future before it." (Sir Francis Younghusband's "The Gleam," pp. 210-11.)

EP.6. "During the days when I was imprisoned in the Land of Ta [Tihran], although the galling weight of chains and the loathsome atmosphere of the prison allowed me little sleep, yet occasionally, in my moments of slumber, I felt as if something were pouring forth over my breast, even as a mighty torrent, which, descending from the summit of a lofty mountain, precipitates itself over the earth. All my limbs seemed to have been set aflame. At such moments my tongue recited what mortal ears could not hear." ("The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf," p. 17.)

EP.7. Gobineau, writing in about the year 1865, testifies as follows: "Public opinion holds that the Babis are to be found in every social class and among the members of every religion, with the exception of the Nusayris and the Christians; but it is especially the educated classes, the men of learning who are suspected of sympathy with Babism.

It is believed, and with good reason, that many mullas, and, among them, outstanding mujtahids, magistrates of high rank, and high court officials very close to the king, are Babis.

According to a recent estimate, there would be in Tihran, a city of about eighty thousand souls, five thousand Babis.

But this estimate is not very reliable, and I am inclined to think that, if the Babis were to triumph in Persia, their number in the capital would be much larger; for, at that moment, one would have to add to the number of the zealous ones, whatever that number may now be, a large proportion of those who are recently in favor of the officially condemned doctrine and to whom victory would impart the courage to declare their faith openly." ("Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p.

251.) "Half a century has not yet elapsed since Mirza 'Ali-Muhammad, the young Seer of Shiraz, first began to preach the religion which now counts its martyrs by hundreds and its adherents by hundreds of thousands; which seemed at one time to menace the supremacy alike of the Qajar dynasty and of the Muhammadan faith in Persia, and may still not improbably prove an important factor in the history of Western Asia." (E.

G.

Browne's introduction to the "Tarikh-i-Jadid," p.

7.) "Babism," writes Professor James Darmesteter, "which diffused itself in less than five years from one end of Persia to another, which was bathed in 1852 in the blood of its martyrs, has been silently progressing and propagating itself.

If Persia is to be at all regenerate it will be through this new faith."
(Extract from "Persia:

A Historical and Literary Sketch," translated by G.

K.

Nariman.) "If Babism continues to grow at its present rate of progression, a time may conceivably come when it will oust Muhammadanism from the field in Persia.

This, I think, it would be unlikely to do, did it appear upon the ground under the flag of a hostile faith.

But since its recruits are won from the best soldiers of the garrison whom it is attacking, there is greater reason to believe that it may ultimately prevail.

To those who know anything of the Persian character, so extraordinarily susceptible of religious influences as it is, it will be obvious to how many classes in that country the new creed makes successful appeal.

The Sufis, or mystics, have long held that there must always be a Pir, or Prophet, visible in the flesh, and are very easily absorbed into the Babi fold.

Even the orthodox Musulman, whose mind's eye has ever been turned in eager anticipation upon the vanished Imam, is amenable to the cogent reasoning, by which it is sought to prove that either the Bab, or Baha, is the Mihdi, according to all the predictions of the Qur'an and the traditions.

The pure and suffering life of the Bab, his ignominious death, the heroism and martyrdom of his followers, will appeal to many others who can find no similar phenomena in the contemporaneous records of Islam." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," vol.

1, p.

503.) The author, in the same chapter, commenting on the prospects of Christian missionary enterprise in Persia, writes as follows: "Persia has even been described as the most hopeful among the fields of missionary labour in the East.

While conscious of the valuable work that has been and is being done by the representatives of English, French, and American Mission societies in that country, by the spread of education, by the display of charity, by the free gift of medical assistance, by the force of example, and while in no way suggesting that these pious labours should be slackened, I am unable, from such knowledge as I possess, to participate in so sanguine a forecast of the future." (p.

504.) "...In Persia, however, not the least of the obstacles with which Christian communities are confronted arise from their own sectarian differences; and the Musulmans are perfectly entitled to scoff at those who invite them to enter a flock the different members of which love each other so bitterly.

Protestants squabble with Roman Catholics, Presbyterians with Episcopalians, the Protestant Nestorians look with no very friendly eye upon the Nestorians proper, and these, again, are not on the most harmonious terms with the Chaldaeans, or Catholic Nestorians.

The Armenians gaze askance upon the United (or Catholic) Armenians, and both unite in retarding the work of the Protestant missions.

Finally, the hostility of the Jews may, as a rule, be reckoned upon.

In the various countries of the East in which I have traveled, from Syria to Japan, I have been struck by the strange, and, to my mind, sorrowful phenomenon, of missionary bands waging the noblest of warfares under the banner of the King of Peace with fratricidal weapons in their hands." (Pp.

507-8.) "...If, then, the criterion of missionary enterprise in Persia be the number of converts it has made from Islam, I do not hesitate to say that the prodigious expenditure of money, of honest effort, and of sacrificing toil that has been showered upon that country has met with a wholly inadequate return.

Young Muhammadans have sometimes been baptised by Christian missionaries.

But this must not too readily be confounded with conversion, since the bulk of the newcomers relapse into the faith of their fathers; and I question if, since the day when Henry Martyn set foot in Shiraz up till the present moment, half a dozen Persian Muhammadans have genuinely embraced the Christian creed.

I have myself often enquired for, but have never seen, a converted Musulman (I exclude, of course, those derelicts or orphans of Musulman parents who are brought up from childhood in Christian schools).

Nor am I surprised at even the most complete demonstration of failure.

Putting aside the dogmatic assumptions of Christianity (e.g. the doctrine of the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ), which are so repugnant to the Muhammadan conception of the unity of God, we cannot regard the reluctance of a Musulman to desert his faith with much astonishment when we remember that the penalty for such an act is death.

The chances of conversion are remote indeed so long as the body as well as the soul of the convert is thrown into the scales.

But personal apprehensions, though an important, are not the deciding factor in the situation.

It is against the impregnable rock-wall of Islam, as a system embracing every sphere, and duty, and act of life, that the waves of missionary effort beat and buffet in vain.

Marvellously adapted alike to the climate, character, and occupations of those countries upon which it has laid its adamantine grip, Islam holds its votary in complete thrall from the cradle to the grave.

To him, it is not only religion, it is government, philosophy, and science as

well.

The Muhammadan conception is not so much that of a state church as, if the phrase may be permitted, of a church state.

The undergirders with which society itself is warped round are not of civil, but of ecclesiastical, fabrication; and, wrapped in this superb, if paralysing, creed, the Musulman lives in contented surrender of all volition, deems it his highest duty to worship God and to compel, or, where impossible, to despise those who do not worship Him in the spirit, and then dies in sure and certain hope of Paradise.

So long as this all-compelling, all-absorbing code of life holds an Eastern people in its embrace, determining every duty and regulating every act of existence, and finally meting out an assured salvation, missionary treasure and missionary self-denial will largely be spent in vain.

Indeed, an active propaganda is, in my judgment, the worst of policies that a Christian mission in a bigoted Musulman country can adopt and the very tolerance with which I have credited the Persian government is in large measure due to the prudent abstention of the Christian missionaries from avowed proselytism." (Pp.

508-9.)

EP.9. Gobineau, writing in about 1865, gives the following testimony: "Thus Babism has won a considerable influence on the mind of Persia, and spreading beyond the Persian frontier, has overflowed into the pachalick of Baghdad and penetrated into India. Among its characteristics, one of the most striking is that, even during the life of the Bab, many of the new faith, many of its most convinced and devoted followers, have never known personally their prophet and do not seem to have attached great importance to the hearing of his instructions from his own lips. Nevertheless, they rendered him, completely and without reservation, the honors and the veneration to which, in their own eyes, he was certainly entitled." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 255.)

EP.10. 'Abdu'l-Baha's title.

EP.11. "The Caliphate began with the election of Abu-Bakr in A.D. 632 and lasted until A.D. 1258, when Hulagu Khan sacked Baghdad and put Mu'tasim-Bi'llah to death. For nearly three centuries after this catastrophe the title of Caliph was perpetuated in Egypt by descendants of the House of 'Abbas who lived under the protection of its Mameluke rulers, until in A.D. 1517 Sultan Salim, the Osmanli, having conquered the Mameluke dynasty, induced the helpless Caliph to transfer to him the title and insignia." (P. M. Sykes' "A History of Persia," vol. 2, p. 25.)

APPENDIX
LIST OF THE BAB'S BEST-KNOWN WORKS

1. [669] The Persian Bayan

2. The Arabic Bayan
3. The Qayyumu'l-Asma'
4. The Sahifatu'l-Haramayn
5. The Dala'il-i-Sab'ih
6. Commentary on the Surih of Kawthar
7. Commentary on the Surih of Va'l-'Asr
8. The Kitab-i-Asma'
9. Sahifiy-i-Makhdhumiyyih
10. Sahifiy-i-Ja'fariyyih
11. Ziyarat-i-Shah-'Abdu'l-'Azim
12. Kitab-i-Panj-Sha'n
13. Sahifiy-i-Radaviyyih
14. Risaliy-i-'Adliyyih
15. Risaliy-i-Fiqhiyyih
16. Risaliy-i-Dhahabiyyih
17. Kitabu'r-Ruh
18. Suriy-i-Tawhid
19. Lawh-i-Hurufat
20. Tafsir-i-Nubuvvat-i-Khassih
21. Risaliy-i-Furu'-i-'Adliyyih
22. Khasa'il-i-Sab'ih
23. Epistles to Muhammad Shah and Haji Mirza Aqasi

N.B. The Bab Himself states in one passage of the Persian Bayan that His writings comprise no less than 500,000 verses.

WORKS CONSULTED BY THE TRANSLATOR

1. Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question" (2 vols.) (Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1892)

2. A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme I" (Librairie Paul Geuthner, Rue Mazarine, Paris, 1910)

3. A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme II" (Librairie Paul Geuthner, Rue Magazine, Paris, 1914)

4. A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bab" (Librairie Critique, Rue Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, Paris, 1908)

5. Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale" (Les Editions G. Cres et Cie., Paris, Rue de Sevres, 1928)

6. Lady Sheil's "Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia" (John Murray, Albemarle Street, London, 1856)

7. "The Tarikh-i-Jadid," by Mirza Husayn of Hamadan, translated from the Persian by E. G. Browne (The University Press, Cambridge, 1893)

8. M. Clement Huart's "La Religion de Bab" (Ernest Leroux, Rue Bonaparte, Paris, 1889)

9. [670] "A Traveller's Narrative," translated from the Persian by E. G. Browne (The University Press, Cambridge, 1891)

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ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS OF PERSIA IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

"There is no fixed principle or permanence in the administrative subdivisions of Persia. Their separation or combination is regulated by the ability or reputation of their governors, and by the scope that may be conceded thereto by the confidence or the fears of the sovereign.... It should further be remarked

that no principle, geographical, ethnographical, or political, appears to be adopted in determining the borders and size of the various divisions, which vary in extent from a province larger than the whole of England, to a small and decayed town with its immediate surroundings."

LARGER PROVINCES OR DISTRICTS

Administrative Division Capital
Adhirbayjan Tabriz
Khurasan and Sistan Mashhad
Tihran and Dependencies Tihran
Fars Shiraz
Isfahan and Dependencies Isfahan
Kirman and Persian Baluchistan Kirman
'Arabistan Shushtar
Gilan and Talish Rasht
Mazindaran Amul
Yazd and Dependencies Yazd
Persian Gulf Littoral and Islands Bushihr
(From Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," vol. 1, p. 437.)

BRITISH AND RUSSIAN ENVOYS TO THE COURT OF PERSIA, 1814-1855

1814 November—Mr. Morier and Mr. Ellis.
1815 July—Sir Henry Willock.
1826 September—Sir John Macdonald.
1830 June—Sir John Campbell.
1835 November—Sir Henry Ellis.
1836 August—Sir John McNeill.
1842 August—Justin Sheil.
1847 October—Colonel Farrant (acting).
1849 November—Sir Justin Sheil (returned from leave).
1853 February—Mr. Taylor Thomson (acting).
1855 April—Hon. A. C. Murray.
[672] 1817 August—General Yermoloff.
1819 April—M. Mazarowitch.
1823 January—M. Ambourger (acting).
1824 July—M. Mazarowitch (returned from leave).
1825 September—M. Ambourger.
1826 July—Prince Menschikoff.
1828—M. Grebayadoff.
1831—Prince Dolgorouki.
1833 February—Count Simonich.
1839—Count Meden.
1846 January—Prince Dolgorouki.
1854 September—M. Anitchkoff.
(From Clements R. Markham, C.B., F.R.S., "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," Appendix B. Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1874.)

LIST OF MONTHS OF THE MUHAMMADAN CALENDAR

Muharram 30 days
Safar 29 "
Rabi'u'l-Avval 30 "
Rabi'u'th-Thani 29 "
Jamadiyu'-Avval 30 "
Jamadiy'th-Thani 29 "
Rajab 30 "
Sha'ban 29 "
Ramadan 30 "
Shavval 29 "
Dhi'l-Qa'dih 30 "
Dhi'l-Hijjih 29-30 "

Muharram 1, 1 A.H. July 16, 622 A.D. Friday.
Muharram 1, 1260 " January 22, 1844 " Monday.
Muharram 1, 1261 " January 10, 1845 " Friday.
Muharram 1, 1262 " December 30, 1845 " Tuesday.
Muharram 1, 1263 " December 20, 1846 " Sunday.
Muharram 1, 1264 " December 9, 1847 " Thursday.
Muharram 1, 1265 " November 27, 1848 " Monday.
Muharram 1, 1266 " November 17, 1849 " Saturday.
Muharram 1, 1267 " November 6, 1850 " Wednesday.
Muharram 1, 1268 " October 27, 1851 " Monday.
Muharram 1, 1269 " October 15, 1852 " Friday.
Muharram 1, 1270 " October 4, 1853 " Tuesday.
(From "Wustenfeld-Mahler'sche Vergleichungs-Tabellen," Leipzig, 1926.)

GLOSSARY

[674] 'Aba: Cloak or mantle.

Adhan: Muslim call to prayer.

A.H.: "After Hijirah." Date of Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina, and basis of Muhammadan chronology.

Akbar: "Greater."

Amir: "Lord," "prince," "commander," "governor."

Aqa: "Master." Title given by Baha'u'llah to 'Abdu'l-Baha.

A'zam: "The greatest."

Bab: "Gate." Title assumed by Mirza 'Ali-Muhammad after the declaration of His Mission in Shiraz in May, 1844, A.D.

Baha: "Glory," "splendour," "light." Title by which Baha'u'llah (Mirza Husayn-'Ali) is designated.

Baqiyyatu'llah: "Remnant of God." Title applied both to the Bab and to

Baha'u'llah.

Bayan: "Utterance," "explanation." Title given by the Bab to His Revelation, particularly to His Books.

Big: Honorary title; lower title than Khan.

Caravanserai: An inn for caravans.

Darughih: "High constable."

Dawlih: "State," "government."

Farman: "Order," "command," "royal decree."

Farrash: "Footman," "lictor," "attendant."

Farrash-Bashi: The head farrash.

Farsakh: Unit of measurement. Its length differs in different parts of the country according to the nature of the ground, the local interpretation of the term being the distance which a laden mule will walk in the hour, which varies from three to four miles. Arabicised from the old Persian "parsang," and supposed to be derived from pieces of stone (sang) placed on the roadside.

Haji: A Muhammadan who has performed the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Howdah: A litter carried by a camel, mule, horse, or elephant for travelling purposes.

Il: "Clan." Imam: Title of the twelve shi'ah successors of Muhammad. Also applied to Muslim religious leaders.

Imam-Jum'ih: The leading imam in a town or city; chief of the mullas.

Imam-Zadih: Descendant of an imam, or his shrine.

Jubbih: An upper coat.

Ka'bih: Ancient shrine at Mecca. Now recognised as the most holy shrine of Islam.

Kad-Khuda: Chief of a ward or parish in a town; headman of a village.

[675] Kalantar: "Mayor." Kalim: "One who discourses."

Karbila'i: A Muhammadan who has performed the pilgrimage to Karbila.

Khan: "Prince," "lord," "nobleman," "chieftain."

Kulah: The Persian lambskin hat worn by government employees and civilians.

Madrisih: Religious college.

Man-Yuzhiruhu'llah: "He whom God will make manifest." Title given by the Bab to the promised One.

Mashhadi: A Muhammadan who has performed the pilgrimage to Mashhad.

Masjid: Mosque, temple, place of worship.

Maydan: A subdivision of a farsakh. A square or open place.

Mihdi: Title of the Manifestation expected by Islam.

Mihrab: The principal place in a mosque, where the imam prays with his face turned towards Mecca.

Mi'raj: "Ascent"; used with reference to Muhammad's ascension to heaven.

Mirza: A contraction of Amir-Zadih, meaning son of Amir. When affixed to a name, it signifies prince; when prefixed, simply Mr.

Mu'adhdhin: The one who sounds the Adhan, the Muhammadan call to prayer.

Mujtahid: Muhammadan doctor of law. Most of the mujtahids of Persia have received their diplomas from the most eminent jurists of Karbila and Najaf.
Mulla: Muhammadan priest.

Mustaghath: "He who is invoked"; the numerical value of which has been assigned by the Bab as the limit of the time fixed for the advent of the promised Manifestation.

Nabil "Learned," "noble."

Naw-Ruz: "New Day." Name applied to the Baha'i New Year's Day; according to the Persian calendar, the day on which the sun enters Aries.

Nuqtih: "Point."

Pahlavan: "Athlete," "champion." Term applied to brave and muscular men.

Qadi: Judge: civil, criminal, and ecclesiastical.

Qa'im: "He who shall arise." Title designating the promised One of Islam.

Qalyan: A pipe for smoking through water.

Qiblih: The direction to which people turn in prayer; especially Mecca, the Qiblih of all Muhammadans.

Qurban: "Sacrifice."

Sahibu'z-Zaman: "Lord of the Age." One of the titles of the promised Qa'im.

Shahid: "Martyr." The plural of martyr is "Shuhada."

[676] Shaykhu'l-Islam: Head of religious court, appointed to every large city by the Shah.

Siyyid: Descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

Surih: Name of the chapters of the Qur'an.

Tuman: A sum of money equivalent to a dollar.

Vali-'Ahd: "Heir to the throne."

Zadih: "Son."

— The Dawn-Breakers (1970)