



again recanted his errors. Six months afterwards it having been ascertained that his doctrines were obtaining rapid diffusion among all classes, he was conveyed to Tabrez, and on the day of his arrival was brought out for execution in the great maidan or square. This was on the point of becoming a most remarkable event, which would probably have overturned the throne and Islamism in Persia. A company of soldiers was ordered to despatch Bab by a volley. When the smoke cleared away Bab had disappeared from sight. It had so happened that none of the balls had touched him; and prompted by an impulse to preserve his life, he rushed from the spot. Had Bab possessed sufficient presence of mind to have fled to the bazar, which was within a few yards of the place where he was stationed, he would in all probability have succeeded in effecting his escape. A miracle palpable to all Tabrez would have been performed, and a new creed would have been established; but he turned in the opposite direction, and hid himself in the guard-room, where he was immediately discovered, brought out and shot. His body was thrown into the ditch of the town, where it was devoured by the half-wild dogs which abound outside a Persian city. Bab possessed a mild and benignant countenance, his manners were composed and dignified, his eloquence was impressive, and he wrote rapidly and well.

"It would appear that in the beginning of his career he did not wholly reject the established forms and doctrines of the Mahamadan faith, but he reduced these to proportions so small as to be equivalent to their annulment, and thus rendered his speculations acceptable to the multitude. As his disciples increased, so did his views enlarge. It is a strange circumstance that among those who adopted Bab's doctrine there should have been a large number of 'mulas' and even mustahids, who held a high rank as expounders of the law in the Mahamadan church. Many of these men sealed their faith with their blood. Bab's notions did not contain much originality. Atheism, under the disguise of pantheism, was the basis of his principles. Every single atom in the universe, he said, was actually God, and the whole universe collectively was God; not a representative of or emanation from God, but God himself. Everything in short was God. Bab was God, and every living creature down to each lowest insect. Death was not real; it was only another form of divinity, if such language has any signification at all. Virtue has no existence, neither had vice; they were necessarily wholly indifferent, as being portions or emanations of the God-head. Rights of property had no existence, excepting in the equal division of all things among the godly. But this was a fiction, the real doctrine being the reign of the saints, that is, of the Babis and their possession of the goods of the ungodly; in other words, the non-Babis. It was the simplest of religions. Its tenets may be summed up in materialism, communism, and the entire indifference of good and evil and of all human actions. There was no antipathy, it was affirmed, on the part of the Babis, to Christians, or to the followers of any other creed excepting Mahamadans, who as they slew Babis ought to be exterminated.

"One of the proofs alleged against Bab's claim to a divine mission was the ungrammatical Arabic of his revelations, which could not consequently have

descended from heaven. The Koran is regarded as a miracle of style and composition."

(Shiel.)

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