

of the inquiries made to discover the motives of this vast conspiracy, directed not only against the life of our beloved sovereign, but also against the public peace, and against the property and lives of true Mussulmans. For the real aim of these malefactors was, in getting rid of the person of the King, to seize the power, and by this detestable means to secure at last the triumph of their abominable cause, in forcing, by arms and violence, the good Mussulmans to embrace their infamous religion, which differs from that sent down from Heaven, and which does not accord either with philosophy or human reason — which is, in fine, the most deplorable heresy that has ever been heard of, as may be gathered from certain of their books and pamphlets which we have been able to procure.

" The founder of this abominable sect, who began to propagate these detestable doctrines only a few years ago, and who, having fallen into the hands of the authorities, was immediately shot, was called Ali Mohammed, and had given himself the surname of Bab,[^] wishing to give people to understand by this that the keys of Paradise were in his hands.

" After the death of the Bab, his disciples met soon under the orders of another chief, Sheikh Ali of Turshiz, who assumed the position of nayeb (vicar) of the Bab, and had imposed it on himself to live in complete solitude, showing himself to nobody, and granting audiences to his principal followers only at rare intervals. They regarded this favour as the greatest that Heaven could confer on them. He had given himself the surname of Hazret Azem, the Highest Highness.

" Among the people who were attached to him one may mention first Hadji Suleiman Khan, son of the late Yah- Yah Khan of Tabriz. It was in the house of this Suleiman Khan, in Teheran, in the quarter Sar-i-Cheshmeh, that the principal Babis used to meet to deliberate upon their hateful projects. Twelve amongst them, who appeared more zealous and determined than the others, were chosen by Hazret Azem, who had the necessary arms given to them to execute the great act that he believed to be unavoidable. Pistols, daggers, cutlasses, nothing was spared, and, armed in this way, it seemed impossible for them to miss their prey.

" They were recommended to stand in the neigh-

bourhood of Niavaran, and to wait for a favourable opportunity.

" We may refer our readers to our last number ; they will see in it how three of these madmen have taken advantage of the circumstance which presented itself on Sunday the 28th of Chavval, at the moment when His Majesty, having gone out of the town, directed himself, with his ordinary suite, towards the village where he was in the habit of going for his hunting parties. They will see how they flung themselves upon the King, one after the other, firing their pistols nearly point-blank at His Majesty; how one of them was immediately slain by people of well-known zeal and devotion, such as Assad Oullah-Khan, first equerry of the King, Mustofi-el-Memalek, Nizam-oul-Moulk, the Keshikchi-Bashi, and other persons who were near His Majesty ; how at last the two others were seized and thrown into the prison of the town.

" An inquiry was at once made into the case, and put into the hands of Adjutant Bashi Hadjeb-ed-Dowleh, the Kalentar (Minister of Police), and the Kedkhodas of the town (a sort of municipal councillors).

" Thanks to the zeal and the activity that they showed in their inquiries, they soon learned that the house of Suleiman- Khan was used as the place of meeting by these wretches. It was immediately surrounded on all sides ; but whether by the neglect of the men of Hadjeb-ed-Dowleh, or by the lack of cohesion in the execution of this enterprise, they succeeded in catching only twelve, amongst them Suleiman- Khan. The others effected their escape, one does not know exactly how. But their accomplices having named several of them, the police, it may be hoped, will soon trace them.

" However, not a single day passed without the Adjutant- Bashi of the Kalentar and the ferrashes of the King capturing three, four, or even five Babis, whom they quickly brought before the Imperial divan or tribunal, which in such a case is held in public.

" They were interrogated at once, and condemned upon their own evidence, as well as on the denunciations of their accomplices, whom they took care to confront with them.

" These interrogatories were made in accordance with the customs and forms laid down by the law.

" We must not omit here to recall the immense service that Hadjeb-ed-Dowleh has rendered to the Faith, to the State, and to Religion, in capturing Mollah Sheikh Ali of Turchiz, in spite of all the precautions that he took not to be seen in public, and in spite of the retired and secretive life which he did not cease to lead till the moment of his arrest. By his flight from the town he had expected to find a shelter against all pursuit ; he had hidden himself in a litde house at Evine in the Shimran.

** He lived there, surrounded by some faithful disciples, who, like himself, had succeeded in escaping from the house of Suleiman Khan at the moment that it was surrounded.

" It is in this house that Hadjeb-ed-Dowleh, accompanied by his men, succeeded in surprising them at the moment when they expected it least. The Babis were seized, manacled, and thrown into the prisons of the town.

" His Excellency the Grand Vizier, Mirza Aga Khan, had the satisfaction of interrogating himself the chief of this hateful sect. He made him appear before him with the disciples taken at the same time as this wretch, and questioned him in their presence. Mollah Sheikh Ali of Turchiz did not attempt to excuse himself. He avowed that he had become the chief of the Babis since the death of the Bab ; that he had given the order to his most devoted disciples to kill the King. He declared even that Mohammed Sadek, who had precipitated himself the first on the King, was his confidential servant, and that he had provided himself the necessary arms to execute the regicides' project. The number of these wretches who had fallen into the hands of justice does not exceed thirty-two. As for the others, the police have not been able to find them, and it is believed that they have crossed the frontiers of Persia and gone to lead a wretched life in a foreign land.

" We impose upon ourselves the task of pointing out to our readers the admirable conduct of His Excellency the Minister of Russia on this occasion.

" One of these damnable conspirators, Mirza Houssein Ali, had taken refuge at Zerghandeh in the summer quarters of the Russian Legation. The Prince Dolgorouki, having learnt that this individual was amongst

the conspirators, had him seized by his own people and sent to the Ministers of His Majesty, who, touched by an action so in conformity with the good relations that existed between Persia and Russia, evinced their profound gratitude to him. His Majesty himself had his thanks conveyed to the prince, and gave orders that the people who had been entrusted with conveying the culprit to custody should be worthily recompensed, which was done without delay.

" Amongst the Babis who have fallen into the hands of justice, there are six whose culpability not having been well established, have been condemned to the galleys for life. The others have all been massacred in the following ways : —

" Mollah Sheik AH of Turchiz, the author of this conspiracy, has been condemned to death by the Ulemas or religious judges, and put to death by them.

" Seyyed Houssein Khorassani was killed by the princes of the blood, who massacred him with pistol-shots, scimitars, and daggers.

" Mustafi-el-Memalek took charge of the execution of Mollah Zeyine-el-Abedin, Yezdi, whom he killed with pistol-shots fired point blank, after which the Mustafis of the Divan, throwing themselves upon the corpse, riddled it with pistol-shots and stabs of sword, dagger, and cutlass.

" Mollah Houssein Khorassani was killed by Mirza Kassem Nizam Oul-Mouk and by Mirza Said Khan, Minister of Public Affairs. Mirza Kassem was the first to approach the condemned, and shot him with his pistol point blank. Then Mirza Said Khan approached in his turn and fired another pistol. At last the servants of these two high functionaries threw themselves on the corpse, which they hacked to pieces with knives and daggers.

" Mirza Abdoul Wahab of Shiraz, who during his sojourn in Kazemein had rendered himself guilty in the eyes of the authorities by inciting the inhabitants to revolt, was put to death by Jaffar Kouli-Khan, brother of the Grand Vizier, by Zulfe-Khar Khan, by Moussa Khan, and by Mirza Aly Khan, all three sons of the Grand Vizier, assisted by their servants and the guards of the King and the other people present at the execution, some using pistols, others rifles, others daggers of all sorts, so that the corpse of this wretched man was reduced to

mincemeat.

" Mollah Fcthoulhah, son of Mollah Aly, the book-binder, the man who, shooting at the King with a pistol loaded with lead, slightly wounded His Majesty, had his body covered with holes, in which lighted candles were stuck. Then Hadjeb-ed-Dowleh received the order to kill him with a pistol-shot, which he did by shooting at the exact spot of the body where His Majesty had been wounded. He fell stone dead. Then the ferrashes of the King threw themselves on the body and hacked it to pieces and heaped stones upon it.

" Sheikh Abbas of Teheran has been sent to the bottom of hell by the Khans and other dignitaries of the State, who killed him with pistols and swords.

" Mohammed Taghi of Shiraz had horseshoes nailed to his feet first, like a horse, by Ased-oullah-Khan, first equerry of His Majesty, and by the employees of the Imperial stables. Then he was beaten to death with maces and with the great nails of iron which are used in the stables to fasten the horses to.

" Mohammed Aly of Nejef-Abad was handed over to the Artillery men, who first of all tore out one of his eyes, then bound him over the muzzle of a gun and blew him to pieces.

" As to Hadji Suleiman Khan, son of Yah-Yah Khan of Tabriz, and Hadji Kassem, also of Tabriz, they were marched through the town of Teheran with their bodies stuck with candles, accompanied by dancers and by the music of the Evening, which is composed of long horns and huge drums, and were followed by a crowd of the curious, who wished to stone them, but were prevented by the ferrashes.

" Suleiman Khan, when one of the candles fell, sank and picked it up, and restored it to its place. Somebody having cried, 'You sing, why don't you dance?' Suleiman began to dance.

" Once out of the town, the ferrashes, executing the orders which had been given them, cut them both into four pieces, which they hung over various gates of the town.

" Nejef of Khamseh was abandoned to the fury of the mob, who beat him to pieces with their fists and stones.

" Hadji Mirza Djami, merchant of Kachan, was killed

by the Provost of the Merchants of Teheran, assisted by the merchants and shopkeepers."

The above is the official Persian account. Comte de Gobineau, who was Minister of France to the Court of Teheran at that time, tells us —

" One saw that day in the streets and bazars of Teheran a spectacle that the population will never forget. One saw, walking between staffs of executioners, children and women, with the flesh gaping all over their bodies, with lighted wicks soaked with oil stuck in the wounds. The victims were dragged by cords and driven with whips. The children and women walked singing a verse, which says, * In truth we come from God, and we return to Him.' Their voices rose piercingly in the middle of the profound silence of the mob ; for the population of Teheran is neither bad-hearted nor much devoted to Islam. When one of the tortured people fell, he was forced to rise with blows from whips and prods from bayonets. If the loss of blood which ensued from the wounds all over the body left him strength enough, he began to dance and shout with fervour, ' We belong to God, and we return to Him.' Some of the children expired en rotite. The executioners threw their bodies under the feet of their father and sister, who walked fiercely upon them, without looking.

" When they arrived at the place of execution near the new gate, life was again offered to the victims if they would abjure their faith, and, though it seemed difficult, means were sought to intimidate them. The executioner hit upon the device of signing to a father that if he did not abjure he would cut the throat of his two sons upon his chest. These were two small boys, the eldest being fourteen, who, red with their own blood and with flesh scorched by the candles, listened unmoved. The father answered by lying down on the earth that he was ready, and the eldest of the boys, claiming his right of birth, begged to have his throat cut first. It is not impossible that the executioner refused him this last satisfaction. At last everything was ended, and the night fell upon a heap of mangled human remains. The heads were strung in bundles to the Posts of Justice, and all the dogs of the suburbs made their way to that side of the town.

" This day gave to the Bab more secret partisans than many preachings could have done."

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