



the vaguer perhaps because I think I roused him from his midday sleep. He offered me books and advice and coffee all in a hurried agitated manner: "Can't I - mayn't I - won't you allow me to offer you any of the customary refreshments? a cup of coffee? no? no, no! Ah - hm - what do people take at this time? (NB it was 4) Yes, yes, a glass of water? - No? no." I took however a Persian history of the Babis from him and went off hunting Abu Nimrud all over the town.

Thursday 27. [27 March 1902]

At last I found him in his shop in the bazaar, a polite old party with whom I speedily came to terms - he agreed to come up and give me my first lesson today, but need I say he hasn't come. The next thing was to get a Persian. My old friend 'Abbas Effendi the head of the sect, is now confined to Acre ['Akko]; something has happened, I don't quite know what, but anyway he and his younger brother have quarrelled and the brother got the Turks to forbid 'Abbas to leave Acre, though he has a house here too. I heard however that the son in law of 'Abbas, Husein Effendi, lived here and I determined to apply to him. Accordingly I made my way to his shop - a sort of little general store like the shop of a small country town - and in this unlikely setting I found a company of grave Persians, sitting round on the biscuit tins and the bags of grain, and Husein himself leaning over the counter. The typical, the unmistakable mystic, inheritor of all the centuries of Persian mysticism, he is of the pÅte of which martyrs and ascetics are made and he wd go to the stake with the same dreamy ecstatic smile on his long drawn face as it wore when he answered my inquiries after 'Abbas Effendi who is for him the representative of the B...b, the Prophet that was to come. The upshot of it is that I hope I shall end by getting a Persian to come and talk to me. A horse was the next necessity and horse dealers my next acquaintances - I see one at this instant upon the road bringing me up to horse to try. I am excellently lodged in two rooms with a balcony from whence I see all across the bay and Acre at the end of a long stretch of sand, and the Plain of Esdraelon with Kishon [Qishon] running through it, and far away Hermon [Sheikh, Jebel esh] white with snow. Later. But for all that I find I shall have to d,m,nager. Abu Nimrud came up this morning and gave me a long lesson, but he declared that it was too far for him to come and that he could only get me a Persian on condition that I wd come down into the town, so I rode down this afternoon and inspected the two hotels and fixed on one standing in a charming garden where I could get 2 big comfortable rooms; it has the further advantage of being kept by Syrians so that I shall hear and speak nothing but Arabic. Mr Monaghan came to see me while I was out, but I met him as I rode up - I was riding a horse something like a clothes horse, but I'm to try another tomorrow and Mr M. also has one in his eye that would do for me. Mr M. is most obliging. He is coming up here on Saturday and on Sunday we are going to ride to Athlit ['Atlit], a wonderful Crusader castle on the sea some 3 hours from here. Husein Effendi's brother in law is going to teach me

Persian. He is a cheerful young man with a round face

13/04/1902

Sun. 14. [sic] [13 April 1902] Rode over to Acre ['Akko]. Visited the mosque wh is charming and went to the house of 'Abbas who was out. Got a letter to Abu Kasim his gardener at the garden by the Nahr Na'man, Shahuta is its name [Persian[?] characters] where I lunched under the trees Abu Kasim discoursing to me the while on religion and Abbas in Persian. Reg.[?] oriental untidy garden full of flowers. Came rain and I sat on his balcony and drank tea. Then rode off to the Bahjeh a really lovely place with a big tank and pines and cypresses. Went into the house and talked to the women. Then on to the Bahjeh House behind where the Beha's tomb is, where the gardener gave me flowers and so back to Acre where I succeeded in seeing 'Abbas. He was most polite but not very cordial I thought. His servants treat him with immense respect. We spoke chiefly of the possibilities of a universal language. So home getting in at 6.45. Talked to Mr Khaddar and Mr Rust who left next day early.

14/04/1902

Mon. { 13 } 14 [14 April 1902] After lunch called on Amin Abd ul Nur's wife and went to Marun's where I photographed his Arab. Then to Bahaj. Felt very ill and came home to find I had fever. Had a Persian lesson in a sort of nightmare and dreamt of it all night. 2 American globe trotters, husband and wife went off today to see Abbas with Balora. Nice old things.

Wed 23 [23 April 1902]

All the 4 Americans went off early to my great regret. There remain in the hotel a party of Syrians Fuad Saad and his wife and children and governess, nice people, from Akka ['Akko (Acre)]. Muhammad Ali and Badi' Allah live in his house. Rode up from Balad esh Sheikh meaning to find my way up to Khureibeh, but I missed it and got into impossible places and was obliged to turn back. Found the lovely wild broom.

Sun 4. [4 May 1902]

Drove with M. Abdullah and A. and R. Khanums to Akka ['Akko (Acre)]. Got to[?] Baghjle[?] about 11.30 where we lunched with his mother, sister and brother in law. A son of Muhammad 'Ali's was also there Shu'a Allah. Then I was taken to see the tomb set about with lamps and covered with carpets. Zitt Allah is also buried here. Then to see Fughuriyeh Khanum and her husband Sayyid 'Ali. Then to the greatest widow Bibi Kh. [Arabic characters] or Khanumi or Hazrat Haram where there were a lot of young women probably granddaughters and a daughter I think. Samadiyah Khanum. Drove off to Akka ['Akko (Acre)] where I called on Muhammad 'Ali and Badi Allah and saw the other wife Ghauhar[?] Khanum. (Abba's Mother's name was [Arabic characters]) So home getting in at 7.

Tues 6. Wed 7. Thurs 8. Fri. 9. Sat. 10. [6-10 May 1902]

On Tuesday I dined with Amir Abd ul Nour to meet Mr Monahan [i.e. Monaghan]; Badri Beg and Mr P. Abela made up the party. After dinner they had in old Mushkin Kalam who did tricks for us. Amin Effendi and I went to see him one afternoon this week. Very hot.

Mon 23. [23 January 1905]

Began the day by chasing a thief who had stolen a belt of Sim'an's. Found the thief but not the belt. Got off at 8.15. Very delightful day, cold but sunny. Inspected the great bi'rs at Ras ul Ain. The road lay over two great headlands, Ras el Abyad and Ras en Nakurah [Naqoura, Ras ed], very splendid with the sea beating up against them. Then a long plain past Zib and the orange gardens of the Akka ['Akko (Acre)] plain. Just before I reached the Bagheheh my horse fell dead lame and I had to change with Sim'an. At the Bagheheh Sayyid Ali Effendi made me most welcome and his wife and mother in law fell on my neck and gave me good Persian tea. Stayed talking with them over an hour. Badi 'Allah has joined Abbas Effendi but Muhammad Ali is irreconcilable. They loaded me with flowers and I rode off in the dusk. Went to see Miss Ramsay and found her just going out to dinner. Camped outside the gate. Coldish.

Tues 24. [24 January 1905]

One of Sayyid 'Ali's sons is at school in the Lebanon and he thinks of sending him to the Colliyeh or to America.) Breakfasted with the Ramsays. I sent Abbas Effendi a message through Dr Gould asking if he would like to see me and received the answer that he wd prefer not. I think he is afraid of me because I know too much of the ikhtilaf. The stream of Americans has begun again and the money flows in. Miss Ramsay says that Abbas is very much on his guard against her and she no longer teaches the girls English. Perhaps what Ba Hajj says is true that the Americans have taught Abbas that he is the Messiah. Walked about the town with Miss R. and say [sic] a very beautiful khan, the Persian khan with great columns all round and rough capitals. Lunched with the Ramsays and drove to Haifa in the streaming rain. Ibrahim Nassar and his wife delighted to see me. Walked into Abdullah's tea house and drank tea with him. Then to the hospital where I saw Miss [space left blank]. My horse is I fear incurable. Streaming rain and wind.

8 January 1907

After H. left yesterday I went to the Khedivial library and had a very interesting talk with Dr Moritz who showed me lots of beautiful things. We became so deep in talk that I brought him home to lunch with me and then he came up to see Father for a few moments. After he went I sat with Father most of the afternoon except for half an hour when I had to go and see Countess Bernstorff whose day it was. Sir John Harrington came in

late and stayed till nearly dinner time but Father did not see him as his doctor was there. This morning I went at cockcrow to Dr Moritz's house and we looked at photographs and talked of Sassanian ornament for three happy hours. It really was delightful. I got home at 12 and found Father quite brisk. He rested after lunch and Mrs Napier and I went to the bazaars where I found some Persian friends and was entertained with tea. They knew the Acre ['Akko] people and had seen my photograph in their houses. They were Beha'is of course.

10 January 1907

I went to the library yesterday morning and had out books and discussed some ornaments with Moritz. While Father rested after lunch I went out with Mrs Napier and showed her some mosques. After tea I was flooded out with Persians! They were all Beha'is who came to see me thinking I was a believer! I had to tell them at once I wasn't, however they have asked me to tea undaunted.

18 January 1907 Cairo

I paid a visit on a lot of Persians today; most delightful it was. They are Beha'is of course, nice people. It's become quite a habit to be in this hotel! a bad habit. Your affectionate daughter Gertrude

[10 October 1920]

I had my usual group of colleagues, Major Yetts, Capt. Clayton and Major Murray to dine last week and with them Saiyid Husain Afnan, the editor of one of the vernacular papers and a great friend of Capt Clayton and me. His remarkable career is as follows: he is the grandson through his mother of Baha Ullah, the Persian reformer (father of 'Abbas Effendi whom Lisa met in London) who was exiled by the Shah and allowed by the Sultan to live at Acre ['Akko]. There Saiyid Husain was born - a direct descendant of the Prophet through Husain who was killed at Karbala. He was educated at the Quaker school at Brumana in the Lebanon, graduated at the American college at Beyrut [Beyrouth (Beirut)] and at Cambridge. During the war he was in charge of a prisoner's camp in India. You saw him here - he was then in business with Mahmud Shabandar. He is a free thinker, talks English as well as I do, almost, is bi-lingual as far as Persian and Arabic are concerned and has a profound knowledge of the near East coupled with a complete understanding of the European point of view and a great sympathy with it. I think him one of the most interesting people I know. He is not very hopeful about the East. What strikes him - and I must say it strikes me as far as I know about it - is the viciousness of private life and the entire lack of morals. The mode of existence of most of the young and ardent nationalists would surprise you, added to which, says Saiyid Husain "What can you expect of people who never go to bed sober?" Don't for a moment think that it's all due to western contact. Town life has always been the same, and whether they get drunk on champagne or on araq doesn't affect the matter. The fact is I

don't think you will ever find - or very very rarely - a Mohammadan who lives a decent existence, but not beginning to be decent. And he pays the price physically, which means mentally also. The remedy I don't know. It's surprising, when you come to think of it that we in Europe should have found out that a reasonable minimum of virtue and honesty are essential concomitants of any successful society. They haven't found it out in Asia, no matter what religion they happen to belong to.

26 February 1922

I ended the day with a dinner party in my own house to which came Mr Cooke, Saiyid Muhi al Din (the second, and far the cleverest, son of the Naqib) the Governor of Baghdad (Taufiq Khalidi) Hikmat Sulaiman, an able cynical man - his brother was a famous War Minister under the Turks - and 'Abdul Latif Nuri, a member of the 'Iraq Army General Staff. Muhi al Din, Taufiq and Hikmat are all men of singular breadth of mind. People who think that the East has a wholly different mentality from the West should hear men of this kind when they are talking freely together as I think they do in my house. The real difference is in character; they are very reluctant to give themselves away in public - the weight of popular ignorance and superstition bears too heavily upon them. These three were discussing that night an episode which may possibly give the 'Iraq Govt some trouble. There's a house in Baghdad which belonged to Baha Ullah, the Persian founder of a reformed sect of Islam. The Bahais regard it with great reverence because Baha Ullah lived there for a time after he was exiled from Persia, some 60 years ago. The Shi'ahs, always the most fanatical and conservative element, treat the Bahais as schismatics, and are protesting against their retention of this house on the ground that it is a nest of heretics. The King and the Naqib are equally indignant at the agitation. The Naqib loathes the superstition of the Shi'ahs and to hear the King, in his more expansive moments, on the Shi'ah divines - well, it's a privilege. My Sunni guests, all of them really free-thinkers, were equally outspoken, and I can't help hoping that in this matter of the Bahai house the mujtahids - damnation to all of them - may find that they have embarked on a pretty tough proposition.

[13 February 1924] Baghdad

But how to prevent the King from interfering in administration - that's the problem. There has been a terrific affair today. (This is all secret.) It arose out of an order given by H.M. which quashed a decision of the Court of First Instance, confirmed by the Court of Appeal. It's a complicated case, a Shi'ah suit against the Bahais for the possession of a house; religious fanaticism lies at the bottom of it and H.M., who is playing up to the Shi'ahs, backed them. The Council backed H.M., Ja'far not being one who would ever go against him. It was a clear case of the executive overruling the judicial and Sir Henry took an absolutely firm stand. He pointed out that if such things occurred the Courts would lose all credit and the abrogation of capitulations would become impossible. He

insisted on the King's withdrawing his order and the King has undertaken to do so - I've not yet heard the details of the conversation which took place between H.M. and Ken this morning (poor Ken was of course the person who had to represent H.E.'s views to H.M.!) but I saw the King this afternoon at the Arab polo. He was all smiles, I'm bound to say; he was dressed in his most beautiful Arab clothes and he was playing the part of King of the Arabs in his finest manner. He was surrounded by shaikhs of the tribes of Najd [(Nejd)] who had fled from Ibn Sa'ud and come up to Faisal, much to the gratification of the latter! There are persistent rumours that Ibn Sa'ud is dead but I doubt if they are true. They will be soon, for we hear he has cancer, poor Sultan. On the whole the world will be simpler without him, I fear.

[9 January 1924] Baghdad

On Saturday afternoon I rode down to see Haji Naji. He really is a wonderful old thing. His natural good sense and breadth of view are surprising. There has been a silly fuss made by some extreme Shi'ahs, confound their politics, about a house in Kadhimain [(Al Kazimiyah)] belonging to the Bahais, indeed to members of Saiyid Husain Afnan's family. It's all because they're jealous of him, poor dear, but they put it on religious grounds - confound religion - an infidel house in a sacred city and so forth. A deputation came to Haji Naji to ask him to sign a petition in this sense. Said he, relating the episode: "I like Saiyid Husain; he is a good young man. So I said: Look you at India. There are people who worship stones and those who worship men and idols and trees and bits of rag. What do the English? they pay no attention. And why should we trouble as to what others worship. Suppose I wish to worship this ass (that is donk" explained Haji Naji, in parenthesis, in case I shouldn't understand, for he used a colloquial word.) I say it is a very good ass and fit to be worshipped. Does it concern you? And 'Wallah! true' they answered and went away."

2. Links to photos

search for more, e.g.

[gerty.ncl.ac.uk/search\\_photos\\_results.php?search\\_photos=acre](http://gerty.ncl.ac.uk/search_photos_results.php?search_photos=acre)

Photo of Akka June 1900, [gerty.ncl.ac.uk/photo\\_details.php?photo\\_id=512](http://gerty.ncl.ac.uk/photo_details.php?photo_id=512)

Akka "The Babi House" (?) 1899-1900,

[gertrudebell.ncl.ac.uk/photo\\_details.php?photo\\_id=510](http://gertrudebell.ncl.ac.uk/photo_details.php?photo_id=510)

June 1900 Akka Citadel, [gerty.ncl.ac.uk/photo\\_details.php?photo\\_id=511](http://gerty.ncl.ac.uk/photo_details.php?photo_id=511)

June 1900 Akka from the sea, [gerty.ncl.ac.uk/photo\\_details.php?photo\\_id=509](http://gerty.ncl.ac.uk/photo_details.php?photo_id=509)

Haifa June 1900, a Persian [Persian man in courtyard in Wadi Salib area of Old City], [gertrudebell.ncl.ac.uk/photo\\_details.php?photo\\_id=516](http://gertrudebell.ncl.ac.uk/photo_details.php?photo_id=516)

This is a well known photo of Azal. The description says Gertrude Bell is the photographer (?). It's a photo of good quality; maybe she \*is\* the

photographer. Caption: [Portrait of an Arab man - seated. Printed on card].

[gerty.ncl.ac.uk/photo\\_details.php?photo\\_id=517](http://gerty.ncl.ac.uk/photo_details.php?photo_id=517)

Harbor and Sea wall of Akka June 1900,

[gerty.ncl.ac.uk/photo\\_details.php?photo\\_id=518](http://gerty.ncl.ac.uk/photo_details.php?photo_id=518)

Akka from harbor, [gerty.ncl.ac.uk/photo\\_details.php?photo\\_id=519](http://gerty.ncl.ac.uk/photo_details.php?photo_id=519)

Corn market in Haifa June 1900, [gerty.ncl.ac.uk/photo\\_details.php?photo\\_id=520](http://gerty.ncl.ac.uk/photo_details.php?photo_id=520)

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