AMONGST THE KALANDARS

When he had finished this ode, and the cries of "Ey jān!" ("O my life!") and "Kumbān-at gardānm!" ("May I be thy sacrifice!") which, interjected more than once even in the course of the song, burst forth with uncontrollable enthusiasm at its conclusion, had ceased, the minstrel once more began to sing. I cannot recall the actual words of this song, save in a few places, but the general tenor of it was not far from the paraphrase which I here offer—

"As you gaze on the heaving Ocean's foam
A myriad bubbles meet your eye;
The rain-drops fall from their heavenly home
To ascend no more, it would seem, on high;
But all shall return when their race is run,
For their source is one, their source is one!

"Through glasses of every tint and hue
Fair and bright-shine the rays of light;
Some may be violet, and some be blue,
Some be orange, and some be white;
But in essence and origin all are one,
For the source of all is the radiant Sun!

"Besker and flagon and bowl and jar,
Of earth or crystal, coarse or fine,
However the Potter may make or mar,
Still may serve to contain the Wine;
Should we this one seek, or that one shun,
When the Wine which lends them their worth is one?"

Again the minstrel was silent, and Sheykh Ibrāhīm, with flushed face and glistering eyes, began to speak. "Yes," said he, "we are all one. What matter if the vessels differ in honour and degree one from another, when in truth their honour is but from at p. 991. For the benefit of those not accustomed to this style of mystical verse, in which the Persians so greatly delight, I may remark that by such terms as "the Beloved," "the Darling," "the Friend," and the like, God (or in this case the Bb) is intended; that the "cruelty" and "tyranny" attributed to Him are not regarded as reproaches, but rather as praise of His "independence" (țitār), that Islām is the faith "demolished by His eyes" though "in vain attacked by the pagans of Tartary"; and that couples 5 and 6 are addressed respectively to the dry votaries of orthodox piety, and to such as care only for the world and its pleasures.

AMONGST THE KALANDARS

the wine they hold, which perisheth not though they be broken in pieces? And what is this Wine which perisheth not, which pervadeth all things? God, you will answer. Then, what, I say again, is God? An imaginary abstraction? A projection of your own personality and conceptions thrown on the sky above?

' Hib is-m-i bi-musammā dīdī?
Ya qiz Gār u Lā v-i 'gīn gul āshīdī?
Ism jastī; rāw, musammā-rā bō-jī:
Ma bi-bišdī dān, ma andar āh ē jīdī?

'Did'st ere a Name without an Object see,
Or call a rose from B. O. S. and E?
Thou seek'st the Name; to find the Object try:
The Moon's not in the stream, but in the sky.'

What, then, means the 'meeting with God' spoken of in the Qur'ān? Who are 'those who shall meet their Lord'? Can you meet an Abstraction? Nay, is not this Abstraction, after all, but the creation of your own mind, and as such dependent on you and inferior to you? No, God is something real, visible, tangible, definite. Go to Acre and see God!'

"Now God forbid," I exclaimed in utter horror of the frightful anthropomorphism thus suddenly laid bare before me, "God forbid that it should be so! Why, the very verse which you cited from the Masnavi bears witness against you—'The Moon's not in the stream but in the sky'—that is to say, as I understand it, 'Look for the Reality outside and beyond this phenomenal world, not in these transient reflections whereby, clearly or dimly, it is mirrored amongst mankind.' The mirror wholly depends on the original, and owes all to it; the original stands in no need of the mirror. 'Exalted is God above that which they allege!'

Then Fatḥu'llāh, the minstrel, broke in. "O Ūrūt-i-Firangi!" he exclaimed, "all these ideas and thoughts about God which you have, yea, your very doubts and wonderings, are your creatures, and you are their creator, and therefore above them, even according to the verse you quote, 'Exalted is God above
amongst the Kalandars

that which they allege!” Jesus, who is the Spirit of God (Ruhullâh), passed into His Church and is manifested in them; therefore was it that when His Holiness, the Point of Revelation (i.e. the Báb) was asked ‘What are the Firangis?’ he replied, ‘They are Spirit.’ You are to-day the Manifestation of Jesus, you are the Incarnation of the Holy Spirit, nay, did you but realise it, you are God!’

“God forbid!” I exclaimed again, “speak not after this impious fashion, and know that I regard myself as the least of God’s servants and the most inconsistent and unworthy of those who profess to take the Lord Jesus as their pattern and exemplar!”

“Verily, I am a man like unto you!” shouted Sheykhr Ibârîm; “thus said the Prophet, whose object, like all the prophets who preceded and followed him, was to make us men. So said Behâ to me in Acre, ‘I desire that all men should become even as I am!’ If any one says that Behâ has attained to anything whereunto we also may not attain, he lies and is an ignominious fool!” Here he glared fiercely round the assembly to see if anyone would venture to contradict him, and, as no one did so, continued: “On the forehead of every man is written, in that writing whereof you wot, either ‘Hâdhâ Mu’mîn’ (‘This is a Believer’), or ‘Hâdhâ Kâfir’ (‘This is an Infidel’). On that side of your forehead uncovered by the bandage which you have bound over your eye I read ‘Hâdhâ Mu’...’ and I know that were the bandage removed I should see ‘-min’ written on the other side. O Jenub-i-Sâhib! O Hâqiqat-i-Firangi! when you go back to Firangiistân you must stir up trouble and mischief (fînîî â fasâdî); you must make them all Bâbîs.”

They talked much after this fashion, while I listened in consternation, half-frightened at their vehemence, half-dismayed at their doctrines, yet withal held spell-bound by their eloquence. “Was this, then,” I thought to myself, “the root of the matter, the heart of that doctrine which promised so fairly, whereof the votaries whom I have hitherto met seemed so conspicuous for their probity, piety, sobriety, and devoutness? Have I mistaken for a gleam of heaven-sent light a will-o’-the-wisp, born of the dead, disintegrated creeds of Mazdak and el-Mo’kanna’, and the terrible ‘Old Man of the Mountain,’ before the daggers of whose emissaries the chivalry of East and West fell like the grass before the scythe of the mower? And have I tracked it onwards, step by step, only to find at last that its home is in this quagmire of antinomian anthropomorphism? Or are these indeed no more Bâbîs than they are Mu’hammadians, but men who, in true Persian fashion, disguise atheism in the garb of religion, and bedeck it with the trinkets of a mystical terminology?”

At length, long after midnight, we adjourned for supper to the other buildings, and, ere the conclusion of the meal, Sheykhr Ibârîm’s conversation grew so blasphemous and disgusting that on the first opportunity I arose and returned, distressed and angry, to the summer-house, followed by my guests. The merchant from Râfsînîân, whose conversation had throughout been more moderate and reasonable than that of the others, and Fathullâh, the minstrel, whose vehemence was the outcome of an emotional and excitable nature—not of wine, which he eschewed—noticed my disgust, and approached me to enquire its cause.

“What is it that has offended me?” I replied: “What should it be but Sheykhr Ibârîm’s disgusting behaviour? The all-controlling influence exerted by the Prophetic Word over the hearts of men is one of the chief proofs to which you appeal in support of your religion. Is not wine forbidden in your religion as rigorously as in Islâm? What is the use of your professing all this devotion to him whom you regard as the Mouthpiece of God, and kissing the Kist-i-Akdas, which you regard as the Word of God, if you condone so gross a violation of the laws which it contains, and of all laws, whether of religion ethics, or good taste?”

Sheykhr Ibârîm at this moment staggered up to us with cries
of drunken defiance, and, laying his hand on my arm, demanded what we were talking about. I shook him from me with a gesture of uncontrollable loathing, and, followed by the other two, retired to a little distance from the summer-house.

"You are right," they rejoined, as soon as we were out of Sheykh Ibrahim's sight and hearing, "and the Sheykh's conduct is to be deplored. But then old habits will force themselves to the surface at times, and, after all, to know and recognise the Truth is the great thing."

"But action is better than assent," said I, "and to do is greater than to know. What think you of this parable which we find in our Gospels?" And I repeated to them the parable of the two sons bidden by their father to go and do his work, of whom the one said, "I go," and went not, and the other said, "I will not go," but afterwards went.

"Ay," said they, "but for all that, both were sons. Knowledge is like a telescope, wherewith we view the distant Land of Promise. We may be standing in the mud, chilled by snow and sleet, or drenched with rain, yet with this telescope we may see and correctly describe the orange and myrtle-groves of the Promised Land. And this knowledge the Sheykh has none the less, because at times he wallows, as now, in the mud of sin."

"But this vision of the Promised Land," I replied, "is of no use unless you set out to reach it. Better is he who, without seeing it or knowing where it lies, faithfully follows one who will lead him thither, though he be compelled to walk blindly, than he who supinely gazes at it through this telescope."

They were silent for a while, distressed, as it seemed, at my distress, and somewhat ashamed of the Sheykh's conduct. Then said the merchant of Rafsínján:—

"Sabib, we will now bid you farewell and depart, for see, the dawn grows bright in the sky, and we had best return."

"Nay," I answered, fearing lest I had offended them, "tarry at least till the city-gates are open, and sleep for a while, and then depart in peace."

But they would not be persuaded, and departed with sorrowful and downcast faces, all save Sheykh Ibrahim (who was in no condition to move) and 'Abdu'lláh, who would not forsake his friend. So I left these two in the summer-house, and went back to the room where we had eaten supper, and bathed my eye, which had again become very painful, and, after a time, fell asleep.

It was the afternoon of the next day when I awoke, and learned with some relief that 'Abdu'lláh had departed soon after the other guests, and the Sheykh about noon. My eye was so painful that it was impossible to think of going out, and there was nothing to distract my attention from the pain which I suffered (for to read was, of course, impossible) till, about three hours before sunset, a telegram from my friend, the Chief of the Telegraph at Yezd, was brought to me, informing me that he had just received my letter and had answered it by that day's post, and enquiring after my health. The telegram must have travelled very slowly, or the letter very fast, for hardly had I finished writing the answer to the former when the latter was brought by the postmaster of Kirmán, who was accompanied by the young Bábí merchant, Aká Muhammad Sádík. In the letter, which was most kindly worded, were enclosed copies of two poems for which I had asked—the one by Kurratu'l'-Ayn, the other by Jenáb-i-Maryam, the sister of the Báb's first apostle, Mullá Husayn of Bushrawéy. These I showed to my visitors, who read them with manifest delight, and, the subject being thus introduced, the conversation turned on the Bábís, and especially on Kurratu'l'-Ayn, of whose death the postmaster gave me the following account, which he professed to have had from the lips of her gaoler, Maḥmúd Khán the Kalántar:—

1 Of this poem, which is written in the same rhyme and metre as that translated at p. 535, supra, the text and translation will be found at pp. 314–16 of vol. ii of my Traveller's Narrative.
“The day before she suffered martyrdom,” said the postmaster, “she told those about her that her death was to take place, saying, ‘To-morrow evening the Shâh will send after me, and his messenger will come riding, and will desire me to mount behind him. This I do not wish to do, wherefore I pray you to lend me one of your horses, and to send one of your servants to escort me.’ Next day all this came to pass. When she was brought in before the Shâh in the palace of the Nigâristán, and bidden to renounce the Báb, she refused, and persisted in her refusal. So she was cast into a well which is in the garden, and four large stones were thrown down upon her, and the well was then filled up with earth. As for Makhmûd Khân, he was, as you know, strangled by order of the father of Prince Nâşir-ud-Dawla, our governor, during the bread-riots in Teherân, and his body dragged by the feet through the streets and bazaars.”

The postmaster also talked a little about the Ezélis, saying that they were more numerous in Kirmân than anywhere else, and that even in Kirmân they were but few in number. Amongst them he mentioned Fârû’îl-lâh, the minstrel, and a certain mulâl whom I will call Mullâ Hâdî, but the Sheykh of Kûm he would not include in his enumeration, “for,” said he, “though he sympathises with the Ezélis and courts their society, he is in point of fact a free-thinker and a materialist.” After the departure of these guests I was visited by my Zoroastrian friends, Gushtasp and Feridun, who came to condole with me, and to enquire after the ophthalmia, repeating over and over again, “Bad na-badîl!” (“May it not end ill!”), till I was depressed not a little.

Monday, 8th July, 28th Shawwal.—This morning I received a visit from one Murâzâ-kulî Khân Afsârî, who, soon after his arrival, produced a great roll of verse in manuscript, from which he proceeded to read me selections. This verse was, I fancy, his own composition, but about the writer I could learn no more than that his poetical pseudonym (tâkâhîl) was Bî-nawî, and that he was still living. My visitor was very anxious to give me the manuscript, so that I might take it back with me to Europe and get it printed, but I excused myself, assuring him that it could be better and more conveniently published in Persia. In point of fact it was not worth publishing anywhere, being remarkable only for its monotonous harping on the topics of death, corruption, and the torments of hell, and for its badness of taste and poverty of style. Over and over again was this idea repeated in substance: “How many moon-faced beauties, whose stature was as that of the cypress tree, have gone down into the grave with only scorpions, snakes, worms, and ants for their companions in their narrow bed!” Only one poem, in praise of the reigning king, offered the least variety. This began with an account of the Shâh’s travels in Europe, which was followed by a description of the Bâbî rising and its suppression, a long passage being devoted to Kurru’t-l’Ayn. My visitor remained with me for some time after I had succeeded in checking this recitation of doggerel, but his conversation was not much more lively than his verse, for he talked of nothing else but the horrors of hell and the delights of paradise, both of which he depicted in the crudest and most grossly material colours.

Tuesday, 9th July, 29th Shawwal.—This evening I was again the guest of the Zoroastrians at the garden of Mullâ Serûsh, and sat down to supper with some twenty-five followers of “the Good Religion.” The evening passed much as usual, with wine, song, and minstrelsy, save that one Fîrûz by name, having taken rather more to drink than was good for him (a rare thing amongst the Zoroastrians), favoured the company with a rather vulgar imitation of the performances of dancing-boys. There was some talk of Zoroaster and the miracles ascribed to him, and of the descent to earth of ten flames (dâhar), distinguished from fire (dtâb)
AMONGST THE KALANDARS

by being devoid of all property of scorching or burning. Three of these, so my hosts informed me, had returned to heaven, and one had in recent times migrated from Khurán, where it suffered neglect, to Yezd. It was not till after midnight that I was suffered to depart, and then only on giving a promise that I would return first thing the next morning.

It was on this night that a jerk of the chain which I had suffered Sir Opium to wind round me, first made me conscious of the fact that I had dallied over-long with him. Eight days had now elapsed since this dalliance began, and, though I had smoked what may well be termed “the Pipe of Peace” pretty regularly during this period, the fact that once or twice I had abstained from smoking it at the usual time, without suffering inconvenience, had lulled me into a false sense of security.

“After all,” I had said to myself, “a great deal of exaggeration is current about these things; for how few of those in England who talk so glibly about the evils of opium-smoking, and waste their time and other people’s money in trying to put a stop to it, have any practical acquaintance at all with it; and, on the other hand, how many of my friends here, when they feel depressed and worried, or want to pass a quiet evening with a few congenial friends in discussing metaphysics and ontology, indulge in an occasional pipe. However, this resolution I make, that on the day when I shall be well enough to go out of this garden I lay aside my pretty opium-pipes (vaštán), with its sikh (cleaning rod) and its anbúr (charcoal tongs), which shall be to me thenceforth but as curiosities to hang up in my college rooms when I get back to Cambridge.”

Well, to-night, as I reluctantly admitted to myself, the time had come to put my resolution into practice. And how did I do it? I kept it, after a fashion, just for that one night—and what a night it was! In vain I longed for sleep, in vain I tossed to and fro on my couch till the stars grew pale in the sky, for an indefinable craving, to which was presently superadded a general sense of uneasiness pervading all the facial nerves, warred with the weariness which possessed me. I was ashamed to wake my servant and bid him kindle a fire, else had my resolution not held even for one night; indeed, as it was, it can hardly be said to have held, since at last in desperation I drenched some tobacco in laudanum, taken from the little medicine-chest I had with me, rolled it into a cigarette, and tried, though with but little satisfaction, to smoke it.

And this is the way of opium. You may smoke it occasionally at long intervals, and feel no after-craving. You may smoke it for two or three days consecutively, and abandon it without difficulty; then you may, after an interval of one or two days, do the like once more, and again forsake it; and then, having smoked it once or twice again, you will try to put it from you as before, and you will find you cannot—that the fetters are forged which, likely enough, you will wear for ever. So next day I relapsed into bondage, and, when a few days later I told my plight to a friend of mine (the Prince’s secretary and an Ezéli Bábí), who was a confirmed “vaštán” (opium-smoker), he clapped his hand on his thigh and exclaimed, “Hádá dígár gazábí! Vástán shundé-id!” (“Now, at any rate, it is all over! You have become an opium-smoker!”). Neither did he say this without a certain air of contentment, if not of exultation; for it is a curious fact that, although the opium-smoker will, as a rule, never tire of abusing his tyrant, he will almost always rejoice to see another led into the same bondage, and will take the new captive by the hand as a brother.

Thursday, 11th July, and Dhi’l-káda.—Last night I received a telegram from Shiráz informing me that a telegram addressed to me there had arrived from England, in which I was requested to signify my acceptance of the post of Persian Lecturer, to which I had been appointed at Cambridge. Accordingly, I went into the city an hour or two after sunrise to despatch an answer. Near the Mosque Gate I met Ustá Akbar, the pea-parcher, who invited
amongst the KalanderS

me to lunch with him when I had completed my business. I readily accepted his invitation, and walked with him to his shop, where I stayed talking with him for a few minutes. A young Tabriz named Rahmán Beg was there, and Ustá Akbar, pointing at him, asked me jestingly, "whether I could make this Turk a Bábí?"

My business at the telegraph-office did not take long. The telegram, though destined for England, had, of course, to be written in Persian, and I managed to condense it, including the address, into seven words, for which I paid twenty kranis and thirteen sháhís (about 16l. 6d.), the tariff having luckily been reduced within the last few days. I then returned to Ustá Akbar's house and had lunch with him, after which I wrote some letters, including one to Prince Nasiru'd-Dawla, the governor. In this I ventured to say a few words in favour of Mirzá Yusuf of Tabriz (at whose urgent request, supported by Seyyid Husayn of Jandak, I had been induced to take what certainly was rather a liberty), asking the Prince, in case he could not find him employed, whether he would give him the means of reaching his native town of Tabriz, where he had friends and relatives.

I stayed to supper with Ustá Akbar, Faţü’lláh, the Ezeli minstrel, being the only other guest. We ate our meal on the roof (for it was a beautiful moonlight night), and sat so late talking, drinking tea, and smoking opium, that, as the time for shutting the city-gates had long passed, I agreed to my host's proposal that I should spend the night there. Bolsters, pillows, and quilts were accordingly brought up on to the roof, but, though our host soon composed himself to sleep, I sat late talking to the Ezeli. I asked him to tell me how he had become a Bábí, and he related as follows:

"A year or two ago," he began, "I fell desperately in love; so that, on the rare occasions when my good fortune suffered me to pass a few moments in the presence of my beloved, I was for the most part as one annihilated and overcome by bewilder-
AMONGST THE KALANDARS

"To-day, at the Feast of Fair ones, to One is assigned the Throne,
For though of the fair there are thousands there, in beauty He stands alone.
For Him I forsake this world and that, and am counted in both undone;
Withhold your blame, nor think it shame, for the sum of the worlds is One."

"One day, passing by the city-gate, I heard a man reading from a book which he held in his hand. The sweetness of the words and their dignity charmed me, and I stopped to ask him what book it was. At first he appeared unwilling to tell me, but at length, yielding to my persuasion, he told me that it was the Bejda of Mirzá 'Ali Muhammad, the Báb. He consented to lend me the book for a while; and as I read it my assurance increased that this indeed was the Word of God."

"What, then, think you of Behá?" I demanded, "for these would make him greater than the Báb."
"I know not," he replied; "for me the Báb sufficeth, neither can I comprehend a station higher than His."

Friday, 25th July, 3rd Dhi‘l-Qa‘da.—I woke late, and found that Fáthílláh and Ustá Akbar had both gone out, the latter leaving word that he would return soon. An old man named Mirzá Ja‘far, a dervish of the Dáhábí order, presently arrived. He told me that he was at present engaged in fasting and other religious exercises, and that he had an "Inner Light." Presently Ustá Akbar returned with a shoemaker of his acquaintance, named Ustá Gholám Rá‘ís, who brought with him a book of verses composed in praise of Behá by the Bábí poet Nabíl. These, which in their eulogies were fulsome beyond belief, he proceeded to read, the pea-parcher encouraging him with occasional exclamations of "Záhí mi-khuwáhad!" ("He does read nicely!"). During a momentary pause the Dáhábí dervish ventured to make some remarks containing an allusion to his "Inner Light," whereupon the shoemaker turned savagely upon him, crying—

"Who cares for your 'Inner Light,' owl and bat that you are? The Sun of Truth shines radiant in the mid-heaven of the Theophany, and do you dare obtrude your foolish fancies and vain imaginings, or seek to distract us thereby from that which will truly advantage us?"

At this arrogant and insolent speech anger overcame me, and I said to the shoemaker—
"Silence! How dare you speak in so unseemly a manner to this old man, who, according to his belief, is seeking to draw near to God? After all, age is revered and courtesy of demeanour approved in every religion, and you do but ill commend to others the creed which you profess by conduct such as this."
Then the shoemaker hung his head and was silent.

On my way home I called on Áká Muhammad Šádik, the young Bábí merchant, at the caravansaray where he dwelt, and he, on learning that I had taken to smoking opium, entreated me to abandon it ere it was too late. He also begged me to lend him the manuscript of the Kitáb-i-Áqdas ("Most Holy Book") which had been given to me at Shíráz, that he might transcribe it for himself, and this request, at least, I was ready to grant, though the other, as I began to fear, came too late.

When I returned to my garden about sundown I found that Seyyid Huseyn of Jándákh had been several times to see me, and had enquired most persistently as to my whereabouts; and that Sheyk Ibráhím, his friend 'Abdu'lláh, and a dervish who had brought me a present of apples, were still patiently awaiting my arrival. I found them sitting by one of the streamlets near the summer-house, and half a glance sufficed to show me that that Sheyk, at least, was a good deal the worse for drink. As I approached he greeted me with a loud screech of welcome, and strove to stagger to his feet, but quickly subsided into the expectant arms of 'Abdu'lláh, crooning out a couplet from the Masnaví, which, when he was in this state, he never tired of repeating—

"Báddé néy dar ber sûrí shir mi-khánad;
Ácháhind-rá dícháhind-táb mi-khánad."

"Tis not in every head that wine works ill;
That which is so, it maketh more so still."
servant Hājī Șafar was preparing for him. Hājī Șafar! Hājī Șafar! Where is Hājī Șafar?"

Hājī Șafar approached. He was sulky and morose, offended, as it appeared, at my having remained so long away without telling him where I had gone, and grumbled accordingly. I bade him be silent, and Sheykḥ İbrāhīm continued in a loud and aggressive tone—

"I have heard from the postmaster how he surprised you in close conabulation with those foul and benighted Ezels at the house of the Sheykh of Șum. Mullah Hâlîf, a noted Ezelf, was there, and you were talking glibly enough when the postmaster entered, but, on seeing him, you at once changed the conversation."

Presently, to my great relief, Sheykḥ İbrāhīm and ‘Abdu’llâh rose to depart. As they were leaving, Hājī Șafar met us, and again complained of my want of consideration for him in leaving him ignorant of my whereabouts. Sheykḥ İbrāhīm loudly applauded his solicitude, which I, on the other hand, was inclined to resent as impertinence. In consequence, we had words, and he threatened to leave me on the morrow and return to Șehrān; but later on, when he brought my supper, he had repented of his decision, and offered an apology for his conduct, explaining it by saying that he had just had news that his mother was seriously ill, and that this had greatly disturbed his mind, and caused him to forget himself.

_Saturday, 13th Juy, 4th Dhi‘l-kâda._—According to my promise, I lunched to-day with the physician of whom I have already spoken. On my arrival I found Sheykḥ İbrāhīm (already much disguised in liquor) and ‘Abdu’llâh, together with my host and his little boy, a pretty child of eight or nine years of age, who amused us by repeating ‘Obeyd-i-Zâkânt’s celebrated poem of “the Cat and the Mouse” (Mîrâb-a-gûrî). In the evening I was the guest of my host’s rival, a physician of the old Galenic school, with a splendid contempt for the new-fangled doctrines of pathology and treatment which are beginning to make way
AMONGST THE KALANDARS

amongst the medical men of Teherán. His son was a determined Bábí, and confided to me his intention of running away from Kirmán and setting out alone and on foot for Acre. Ustá Akbar joined us presently, and after supper we sat late, talking, drinking tea, and smoking opium.

Sunday, 14th July, 5th Dhi‘l-kā‘da.—Soon after we had drunk our morning tea I left, and paid a visit to one of my Ezell friends, the Prince’s secretary, who invited me to stay to lunch. In the intervals of conversation he amused himself by making the teaglasses float in the little tank which occupied the middle of the room, pushing them from one side to the other, and objurgating them with shouts of “Gür-i-pidar-ash la‘nat!” (“Curses on the grave of its father!”), when, receiving too violent a push, they filled with water and sank to the bottom. On returning to the garden about sunset I found that a number of visitors, including the postmaster and two of his men, the Prince-Telegraphist, the insufferable Hájj Muhammad Kháñ, and Mullá Yúsuf and Fathu’lláh, the Ezells, had been to see me, while the Sheyk of Kum and one of his friends were still awaiting my arrival. The Sheyk brought me a photograph of Prince Násiru’ll-Dawla bearing an inscription in his own hand, together with a very kind answer to the letter which I had addressed to him some days previously concerning Mirzá Yúsuf of Tabríz. This letter, even after making a large deduction for Persian politeness, was so gratifying that I cannot forbear translating it—

“My dear and respected Friend,

"From the receipt of your letter, and the perusal of the pleasing contents of your script, I derived the utmost gratification. My delight at the handwriting and coherent diction of that honoured friend was chiefly owing to the fact that it is in Europe that you have thus perfectly acquired the Persian language, and have obtained so thorough a mastery of composition and style. May God, if it so please Him, bring this dear friend of mine safely back to his native country, and gladden him with the sight of his honourable father and mother and kindred! I regret having met that dear friend so seldom, nor has your sojourn in Kirmán been of any length; yet such is the regard

AMONGST THE KALANDARS

which I have conceived for you during this short period that it will never quit my heart.

‘Hamisteh dar bandábar-i-chahram mu‘āsavat.’

‘Thy face will stand depicted for ever in my sight.’

I shall ever supplicate God for your safety and advancement, and I shall be much pleased if now and then a letter from you should reach me from Firangistán. As for Mirzá Yúsuf, the request of that honoured friend is of course most gladly granted by me, and I have ordered that he shall receive money for the expenses of his journey. . . . I send a portrait of myself as a keepsake for that dear friend."

When I had read this letter, the Sheyk of Kum informed Mirzá Yúsuf of Tabríz that fifteen tímáns (about £5) was the sum assigned to him by the Prince. Mirzá Yúsuf was, of course, overjoyed, and Seyyid Ḥuseyn of Jandaḵ, who had interested himself a good deal in the matter, was also very pleased, “but,” said he to me, “don’t suppose that these fifteen tímáns were given to Mirzá Yúsuf; they were given to you, and the obligation lies on your neck, for so much money was not raised in Kirmán save at the price of blood.” This, of course, was a mere figure of speech, yet it somewhat damped my joy, and would have done so more had I known how worthless Mirzá Yúsuf would prove himself.

Monday, 15th July, 6th Dhi‘l-kā‘da.—To-day I lunched with the Sheyk of Kum, where I met the young Ezell artillery officer of whom I have already spoken. After lunch the Prince’s head-cook dropped in. He was an amusing fellow, and had seen something of the world, having been for some time a servant at the Persian Embassy in London, in the remembrance of which he gloried. It was he, I found, who had prepared the elaborate meal of which I had partaken with the Prince-Governor, for he had learned the art of European cookery while in London, though, as he told me, the ambassador, unless he had company, generally preferred to have Persian dishes set before him. I asked him whether the materials for these were generally forthcoming in London. “Oh yes,” he replied, “I found them without much difficulty in the shops, but of course I made the
AMBOST THE KALANDARS

ambassador pay well for them. I would buy egg-plants (bādīnjān), for instance, at a few pence each, and when I returned I would tell him with a long face that things were terribly dear here, and that I had paid a shilling a piece for them. Yes, those were fine times, and I wish I were back in London again.

The cook presently departed, and the Sheykh began to speak more freely about Behā than he had hitherto done. He produced a copy of the lithographed Bombay edition of the Ikān, which he told me had been sent him by the Behāfis, and pointed out with great disapproval a passage where the Shfîtes are called “that foul and erring sect.” He also showed me some letters addressed to him and other Ezellîs by Behā, and took great exception to several passages in them, especially to one where Behā said, “A child who has been blessed by beholding me is greater than all the people of the Beyân.” Then he gave me an account of the attempt on the Shâhî’s life by the Bâbis in 1832, which I will not repeat here, as I have already published it in the second volume of my Traveller’s Narrative (pp. 323–4). The young artillery officer told me that for four years he had in vain sought to enter into relations with the Bâbis, and had only succeeded at last by acquainting himself with a part of their terminology, and so leading some of his acquaintances whom he believed to be adherents of the sect to make open confession of their doctrines in his presence.

Tuesday, 16th July, 7th Dhi’l-Ka’dã.—This afternoon I paid a visit to Mizrâd Jawâd’s house. He himself was away, but I found his son and one or two other boys reading with their tutor, Mullâ Ghulâm Ḥuseyn, who, on my arrival, at once dismissed the class. I made some further enquiries of him concerning the Sheyhî literature, and he gave me the following supplementary list of books:—By Sheyḳh Ahmad Ahsâ’î, “The Commentary on the ‘Visitation’” (Sharh-i-Ziyârat) and the Faḍ‘lîd (text and commentary) in Arabic, and the “Aphorisms” (Jawānîl-Kalâm) in Persian; by Ḥâji Seyyid Kâzîm of Resht, the Com-

COMMENTARY ON ‘All’s sermon called the ‘Râkhāb-i-Tâturjiiyya,’ and the “Commentary on the Kaṣīda”; by Ḥâji Muḥâmmed Karîm Khân, the Faḍ‘lî-Kîfîlî (on Tradition), the Irshadîl-Awâmîm (“Direction of the Common People”), the ‘Tarîkh-n-najât (“Way of Salvation”), the ‘Ikhshîdîl-Bâdîî (“Crushing of Falsehood”), and the Tîr-i-Shûbî (“Meteor-bolt”), both directed against the Bâbis, the Fiṣrâl-i-Sâlima (“Sound disposition”), the Nusrâtîl-Dîn (“Help of Religion”), and the Sultânîyya, an Apology for Islâm, written in Persian.

Wednesday, 17th July, 8th Dhi’l-Ka’dã.—This morning, before I was dressed, Seyyid Ḥuseyn of Jandâk came to see me. While he was with me, an old man named Mashhâdî ‘Allî, who kept a shop just outside the city-gate, came to lodge a complaint against Nâ‘îb Ḥasan’s brother, a muleteer whom I had some thoughts of engaging for the journey to Shîrz. He was accompanied by a farrâbî sent by the vâzîr (who, in the absence of the Prince-Governor, was administering justice), and his complaint was that he had been subjected to a violent and unprompted attack on the part of Nâ‘îb Ḥasan’s brother, for which he demanded redress. He had been before the vâzîr, who said that, as the defendant was in some sort under my protection, he would prefer to leave his punishment to me; but that he hoped I would inflict the bastinado upon him, if the complainant could prove his case to my satisfaction. Now, I have no doubt that the vâzîr meant kindly, but I could not help wishing he would execute whatever he conceived to be justice according to his own lights, without making me a judge and arbiter over his subjects—a position which I was very far from coveting. The Seyyid, however, who saw only an unhoped-for opportunity of displaying his Solomon-like wisdom and delivering some epoch-making decision, was delighted, and bade Ḥâji Ṣafar bring the complainant, the defendant, the farrâbî, and any witnesses who might be forthcoming, before us. The defendant was luckily away in the country, and as the only “witness” (if such he could be called,