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the old Dhababí dervish had so displeased me, arrived simultaneously. ‘Abdu’lláh soon went off, thinking that he might be wanted by his master, and I was left with the other two. Both talked, and Sheykh Ibrahim drank a great deal; but as regards the talking, the cobbler had at first the best of it, and presently he demanded my copy of the Ikhtíyár, and said he would read aloud to us—an accomplishment on which he greatly prided himself.

Sheykh Ibrahim bore with this reading, or rather chanting, as long as he could, gulping down his rage and his ‘arák together, till finally one or both of these proved too much for him, and he suddenly turned ferociously on the unsuspecting cobbler.

“Beast and idiot!” he cried, “cannot you be silent when there are men present, and let them talk without interrupting them with your abominable gabbling? Your silly head is so turned by Ustá Akbar and others, who listen to your reading, and applaud it with cries of ‘Zhibi mi-khwáníd!’ (‘How nicely he reads!’) that you are inflated with conceit, and do not see that this Firangi here, who knows ten times as much Arabic as you do, is laughing at you under his lip, because in every word of Arabic which you read you violate a rule of grammar. Silence then, beast, and be no more intoxicated with Ustá Akbar’s ‘Zhibi mi-khwáníd!’”

The poor cobbler was utterly taken aback by this unexpected sally. “Forgive me, O Sheykh!” he began; “I am only a poor ignorant man—”

“Man!” cried the Sheykh, waxing more and more wroth; “I spit on the pates of the father and mother of the dog-mamma! Man, forsooth! You are like those maggots (khárdhsín) which thrust forth their heads from rotten fruit and wave them in the air under the impression that they are men. I count you not as belonging to the world of humanity!”

1 A slightly refined translation of the Persian “Rádam bi-kallí-há-pídar u mídár-i-xudú-ság,” a form of abuse which was a great favourite with the Sheykh, who was not given to mincing words.

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“O Sheykh!” exclaimed the poor cobbler, “Whatever you may please to say is right. I have eaten dirt! I have committed a fault! I am the least of your servants!”

“But I will not accept you as my servant,” shouted the Sheykh; “you are not in my world at all. I take no cognisance of your existence.” And so he stormed on, till the wretched cobbler, now reduced to tears, grovelled at his feet, begging for enlightenment and instruction, and saying, “You are a great and a wise man; your knowledge is far beyond ours; you have travelled and seen the world, and looked on the Blessed Beauty (Jemal-i-Mubarak, i.e. Behá’u’lláh, the Bábí hierarch at Acre). Tell me what to think, and what to believe, and what to do, and I will accept it.” Finally the Sheykh was appeased, and they embraced and made up their quarrel.

Saturday, 27th July, 18th Dh‘l-Qá‘da. This day was chiefly notable to me because, for the first time for several weeks, I succeeded in resisting the growing craving for opium which possessed me. This had now begun to cause me some anxiety, for I felt that the experiment had gone quite far enough. “It is all very well,” I thought to myself, “to enter into the world of the opium-smoker—and the experience was needed to complete my view of dervish life—but if I do not take care I shall become a dervish in reality, living from hand to mouth, engrossed with smoking opium and ‘weaving metaphysic’ (‘irfán-háft), and content if I can but postpone the business or trouble of to-day till to-morrow—a to-morrow which never comes. It is high time I took measures to put an end to this state of things.” The plan which I devised for putting an end to my servitude was based upon the observation that it is not so much the smoking of opium as the regular smoking of opium at a fixed time, that is dangerous. I believe that, speaking generally, anyone may indulge in an occasional pipe with impunity; but I had accustomed myself to smoke opium regularly after supper, and so soon as this time came round, an indescribable craving came upon me,
which only the drug could assuage. It therefore seemed to me that the first step towards emancipation must be to alter, and gradually to increase, the interval, which, so far as I remember, I effected somewhat in the following way:—One day, instead of waiting till after supper, I smoked a small amount of the drug at the time of afternoon tea. Next day I waited till supper-time, thus extending the interval of abstinence from twenty-four to thirty hours. On the third day I sat up very late and smoked a very little opium just before retiring to rest. And on the fourth day I went to bed in reasonable time, and succeeded in falling asleep before the craving came upon me, not returning to the drug till the afternoon of the fifth day, thus farther extending the interval from thirty to forty hours. Thus gradually did I free myself from a thraldom which, as I believe, can hardly be broken in any other way.

_Sunday, 28th July, 19th Dhi’l-Ka‘da._—To-day I lunched with Ustá Akbar to meet the postmaster of Kirmán; the chief of the telegraph at Rafsínján, who was on a visit to Kirmán; and several other Bábís of the Behá’í faction. On my entrance they greeted me with an outburst of rillery, induced, as it appeared, by their belief that I was disposed to prefer the claims of Šúhíd-Ezel to those of Behá, and that I had been influenced in this by the Sheykh of Kum and his friends. I was at first utterly taken aback and somewhat alarmed at their vehemence, but anger at the unjust and intolerant attitude towards the Ezelís which they took up presently came to my aid, and I reminded them that such violence and unfairness, so far from proving their case, could only make it appear the weaker. “From the statement of Sheykh Ibráhím,” I concluded, “who is one of your own party, it appears that your friends at Acre, who complain so much of the bigotry, intolerance, and ferocious antagonism of the Muḥammadans, and who are always talking about ‘consorting with men of every faith with spirituality and fragrance,’ could find no better argument than the dagger of the assassin wherewith to convince the

unfortunate Ezelís who were their companions in exile, and I assure you that this fact has done more to incline me from Behá to Ezel than anything which the Sheykh of Kum or his friends have said to me. It would be more to the point if, instead of talking in this violent and unreasonable manner, you would produce the _Bayda_ (of which, ever since I came to Kirmán, and, indeed, to Persia, I have been vainly endeavouring to obtain a copy), and show me what the Báb has said about his successor.”

The postmaster and Ustá Akbar eventually admitted that I was right, and promised to try to obtain for me a copy of the _Bayda_. After this, amicable relations were restored, and the atmosphere seemed clearer for the past storm.

On returning to the garden I found Seyyid Ḥuseyn and one Mírzá Ghulám Ḥuseyn awaiting my arrival. They stayed for some time, and, as usual, talked about religion. With Mírzá Ghulám Ḥuseyn I was much pleased, though I could not satisfy myself as to his real opinions. He told me that he had read the gospels attentively, and was convinced of their genuineness by the deep effect which the words of Christ recorded in them had produced on his heart. He added that he could interpret many of the prophecies contained in the Book of Revelation as applying to Muḥammad, and would do so for my benefit, if I would visit him in the _Karandāzārdiy-i-Gulshan_, where he lodged.

_Monday, 29th July, 20th Dhi’l-Ka‘da._—This evening there was another stormy scene in the summer-house, of which, as usual, Sheykh Ibráhím was the cause. He and the parcher of peas came to visit me about sundown, bringing with them a poor scrivener named Mírzá Aḥmad, who had made for himself copies of certain writings of the Bábís, with which, as being a dangerous possession, he was, I was informed, willing to part for a small consideration. Now to guard himself from suspicion, in case the book should fall into the hands of an enemy, he had placed at the end of the _Kitáb-i-Aqdas_, which stood first in the volume, a colophon,
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wherein he had described it as “the book of the accursed, misguided, misleading sect of the Bábís.” This colophon, which had not been seen by either of his companions, caught my eye as I turned over the pages; but I made no remark, and, fearing trouble if it should meet other eyes, quickly closed the book and laid it aside. Shortly afterwards, Ustá Akbar, wishing to speak with me privately, drew me apart. When we returned, it was to find that the explosion which I dreaded had taken place, and that Sheykh Ibrahím, having taken up the book and seen the objectionable words, was pouring forth the vials of his wrath on the poor scrivener, who, overcome with shame and terror, was shaking like an aspen, and on the verge of tears. It was only with the greatest difficulty that I could stem the torrent of threatening and abusive language which the Sheykh continued to pour forth, and lead Mírzá Ahmad out into the garden, where he sat down by the stream and began to weep. Finally, I succeeded in comforting him a little with fair words and a larger sum of money than he had expected, but the evening was not a harmonious one, and the acquisition of a new manuscript was the only feature in it which caused me any satisfaction.

Wednesday, 31st July, 22nd Dhi’l-Ka‘da.---In the morning Seyyid Husayn came, bringing with him a kindly and courteous old divine of the Sheykhí sect, named Mullá Muhammad of Júpár. When lunch-time came I invited them to eat with me, “although,” I added with a smile, “I am in your eyes but an unclean infidel.” “Now God forbid that it should be so!” exclaimed the old mulá; “in His Name (exalted is He!) will we partake of your food.” So Hájí Safar set before them delicate and strange meats, whereof they ate with great contentment, and presently departed, well pleased with their entertainment. Thereupon I again set to work on the account of my journey which I was writing for the Prince-Governor, intending later to go into the city; but word came from Mírzá Jawád’s son that he would visit me with

his tutor, and about three hours before sunset they arrived. I was greatly displeased at the conduct of the aforesaid tutor, Mullá Ghulám Husayn, on this occasion; for soon after his arrival there was placed in my hands a letter from one of my Bábí friends at Yezd, which he, with gross impertinence, requested me to show him. This I naturally declined to do, but he, unabashed, picked up the envelope from the ground where it lay, and began to criticise the superscription, which ran as follows:

“Waqihayn bi‘l-khuyr! Dar Kirmán bi-mulah-ha-yi ‘áli-janab-i fu‘ad-il-nisab-i
i’máli-yi-zi-yádí va‘l-med‘ab Hakim-l-láhib Edward Sháhí (calá sûfíhánu va qádá
taufikhánu) muharraf shahad.”

Which being interpreted is—

“May its arrival be with good! In Kirmán by the perusal of Edward Sháhí of lofty dignity, endowed with virtues, excellent of qualities and of resort, the discerning philosopher (may his excellence be augmented and his guidance be increased!) may it be honoured.”

“Discerning philosopher; ‘excellent of resort,’” read Mullá Ghulám Husayn. “What right have you, a Firangi, to such titles as these? Either be this thing or that—a Firangi or a Persian.”

An end was put to this unpleasant conversation by the return of Seyyid Husayn and the old mulá of Júpár, who were soon followed by Ustá Akbar and several other persons, mostly Bábís. In this ill-assorted and incongruous assembly, which threatened momentarily to terminate in an explosion, I was oppressed as by a thunderstorm, and I was almost thankful when the rudeness of Ustá Akbar finally put the Sheykhí to rout, leaving the Bábís in possession of the field. These also departed a little later, leaving me at last in peace. They wished me to go with them on the morrow or the following day to Mábán, to visit the shrine of the great Sáfi saint, Sháh Nú‘matu’lláh. I told them that I had already promised to go with some of my Zoroastrian friends; whereupon they urged me to break with these “gabr-ha-yi najis” (“unclean pagans”), as they called them, and would hardly take
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"No" for an answer. But at last, when, after listening in silence to their efforts to persuade me, I replied, "It is no use talking more about it; I have given my word to the Zoroastrians, and will not go back on it, for my word is one"—they turned away impatiently, exclaiming, "Go with theguebres, and God pardon thy father!"

Next day I had a telegram from Shíráz enquiring when I proposed to return thither, and urging me to leave Kírmán without further delay. This caused me some annoyance, as I had no wish to leave it yet, and hoped to obtain permission from Cambridge to postpone my return to England till January, so that I might go by Bandar-i-Abbás and the Persian Gulf to Baghdád, and thence to Damascus and Acre, which would be impossible till the cooler weather came. I therefore had recourse to the opium-pipe, and deferred answering the message till the following day, when I visited the telegraph-office and despatched an answer to the effect that I had no intention of quitting Kírmán at present. I found my friend the Prince-Telegraphist still much cast down at the loss of his eldest son. His mind was evidently running much on the fate of the soul after its separation from the body, and he asked me repeatedly, "What think you of the matter? what have you understood?" He also talked more openly than he had hitherto done about the Babí religion, saying that as between the rival claimants to the pontificate, Behá and Ezély, he found it hard to decide, but that as to the divine mission of Mírzá 'Ali Muhammad, the Bab, there could, he thought, be no doubt. Then his secretary, who was an ardent believer in Behá, read extracts from the epistles and treatises which he was copying for me, and asked if these were like the words of a mere man; but the poor prince only shook his head, sorrowfully, saying, "It is a hard matter; God knows best!"

Next day a term was put to my uncertainty (though not in the way I wished) by the arrival of a telegram from England, which had been translated into Persian and sent on from Shíráz, bidding me be in Cambridge by the beginning of October. There was no help for it then; I must leave Kírmán, and that without much delay, and, abandoning all idea of Baghdád, Acre, and a camel-ride across the Syrian Desert, post to Teherán, and return home by the Caspian Sea and Russia. It was a bitter disappointment at the time, and on the top of it came, as is so often the case, another, which, though small in comparison, gave me that sense of things going generally wrong which almost everyone must at some time have experienced. My Zoroastrian friend, who was to have taken me to Máhán, sent word that a misfortune had befallen him (the death of his brother in Teherán, as I afterwards discovered), which rendered this impossible; and my Babí friends, who had previously so greatly importuned me to accompany them, had now made other arrangements, so that it seemed likely that I should have to leave Kírmán without visiting the tomb of the celebrated Saint Sháh Ni'ímatulláh.

I had now no excuse for prolonging my stay at Kírmán; yet still I could not summon up resolution to leave it. It seemed as though my whole mental horizon had been altered by the atmosphere of mysticism and opium smoke which surrounded me. I had almost ceased to think in English, and nothing seemed so good in my eyes as to continue the dreamy speculative existence which I was leading, with opium for my solace and dervishes for my friends. Peremptory telegrams came from Shíráz, sometimes two or three together, but I heeded them not, and banished all thought of them with these two potent antidotes to action of which I have spoken above. Their influence must have been at its height at this time, for once or twice I neglected for a day or two even to write my diary—a daily task which I had hitherto allowed nothing to keep me from accomplishing. The record of the incidents which marked the day preceding the first break of this sort shows the elements of external disturbance and internal quietism in full conflict—on the one hand, a tripartite telegram from the English Superintendent of the Telegraph at Shíráz,
the chief of the Persian office at the same place (the same whom I had known at Yezd, whence he had recently been transferred), and my former host, the Nawâb, strongly urging me to start at once; on the other, two wildly mystical poems given to me by a dervish mursâhâ, or spiritual director, whom I had left in a state of unconsciousness produced by some narcotic compound which I had refused to taste, and of which he had offered to prove the innocuousness by eating it.

Some decision, however, was imperatively called for, and could not much longer be deferred; for, amongst other things, my money had nearly come to an end, and I could only obtain a fresh supply in Téherán, Isfahán, or Bushire. In this strait my friends came to my assistance with a delicacy and a generosity which I shall not readily forget. I was making arrangements for borrowing, at 5 per cent. interest, a sufficient sum to take me at least as far as Isfahán or Téherán, when, almost simultaneously, by a Bâbî and a Zoroastrian merchant, I was offered any advance that I might need. I was at first unwilling to borrow from either of them, remembering the Arabic proverb, “el-karîn miqrâ’dîl-mawaddât” (“Borrowing is the scissors of friendship”), but they would take no denial, especially the Bâbî, who said that he should feel deeply hurt if I refused to accept his offer. Finally, I consented to avail myself of his kindness, and borrowed from him a sum of sixty or seventy tîmanîs (about £20), for which he declined to accept any interest, and could only be prevailed upon with difficulty to take a receipt. This sum I duly remitted to his agent at Téherán on my arrival there.

And now Hâjî Safar, who, in spite of occasional fits of perversity and sulkiness, had always shown himself a faithful and loyal servant, came to the rescue. He had been much troubled (and not without reason) at the state of indecision and inactivity into which I had lapsed, which state he ascribed to some spell cast over me by the Bâbîs, to whom he had even addressed threats and remonstrances. So one night, while waiting on me at supper, he unfolded to me a plan which he had formed, as follows:—

“Sâhib,” he began, “you cannot stay on here for ever, and you know that you are wanted in England at the beginning of the month of Safar next (7th October 1888). Now I have been thinking how you can stay at Kirmân as long as possible, see as much new country as possible, and still be back in your own country in time. If you return to Shíráz and go thence to Bushire, and there take ship, you will not arrive in time, even if we could start at once, which we cannot do, as it will not be easy to find mules for the journey. It is much better, then, that we should go to Téherán, and that you should return thence through Russia. The advantages of this plan are that you can have a week or ten days more here; visit your friends at Rafsînján on the way; see your friends at Yezd, Kâshân, Kum, and Téherán again; be in the capital for the Muḥarram passion-plays, which you will nowhere see so well performed; and traverse Mâzandarân or Ghlân, both of which, as I can assure you, are very remarkable countries, which you ought to see before leaving Persia. I will undertake to sell your horse for not less than you gave for it, and before it is sold I will arrange for you to visit Mâhân, as you wished to do. You can write to Shíráz for your things to be sent to meet you at Téherán, where also you will be able to buy any more books of which you have need. What do you think of my plan? Have I not spoken well?”

That he had spoken well there was no doubt; his plan was the best that remained possible, and he had baited it cunningly. With a sudden sense of shame at my own lethargy, and gratitude to Hâjî Safar for his wise admonition, I determined once and for all to shake off this fatal quietism which had been so long growing on me, and at once to take the steps necessary for the execution of his plan.
Two days later, on 9th August, everything was in proper train. The expedition to Mähán had presented some difficulties, but they were overcome by Haji Şafar’s energy. He came to me about sundown on that day with a smile of triumph and satisfaction. “Şabib,” said he, “it is all arranged: you will go to Mähán and perform your visitation to the shrine, and that without bearing the burden of obligation to anyone. I have found an old man, an uncle of the gardener’s, and a regular ‘desert-walker’ (bîydân-gashî), who will bear you company and show you the way; for I must remain here to complete our preparations for the journey. I will bring you your supper directly, and then you had better go to sleep for a while; for if you start four hours after sunset, you will still be at Mähán by daybreak. You will remain there all to-morrow, travel back in the same way to-morrow night, and be here at daybreak on Sunday morning.”

The silent march to Mähán (for the old guide stalked on before me with swift untiring gait, only looking round now and again to see that I was following him) was pleasant in spite of its monotony. Never had my horse carried me so well as on this our last journey together. Once again my spirit was refreshed and rejoiced by the soft night air and the shimmer of the moonlight on the sand-hills, until the sky grew pale with the dawn, and the trees and buildings of Mähán stood clear before us.

We went straight to the shrine of the great Saint Shâh Ni‘matullâh, and were admitted without difficulty in company with other pilgrims. One of the dervishes attached to the shrine read the ṣiyârat, or form of visitation. Then he said to me, as the other pilgrims were kissing the tombstone, “Şabib, Shâh Ni‘matullâh was a great man.” I acquiesced. “In the world of the gnostics there is no difference of sects,” he continued. Again I agreed. “Then,” said he, “seeing that this is so, it were not amiss for you to kiss his tombstone.” I did as he desired, and then, having visited the various buildings connected with the shrine, returned with the dervishes to their kahvé-khâné (“coffee-house” or guest-chamber), where I had tea and slept till noon.

In the afternoon the dervishes took me to see some of the gardens which surround Mähán. In one of these, called the Gardan-i-Shuntor (“Camel’s Neck”), a charming spot, I met my friend Serûsh, the Zoroastrian, who was still mourning the death of his brother, and had come to Mähán for a day’s solitude and quiet before starting for Teherân to wind up his affairs.

About two hours before sunset, after another cup of tea, I bade farewell to the kindly dervishes, mounted my horse, and started homewards with my guide, well pleased with Mähán and its people, and disposed to regard as a gratuitous slander that cynical verse:

“Bîhîsh-i-rengi zamin-ast kif‘a-i-Mähân,
Bi-shart-i-dinkî takâm-ast dîhund dar dîrîkh.”

“The district of Mähán would be an earthly paradise,
On condition that it should be well shaken over hell.”

To our left lay the village of Langar, the headquarters of the Sheykhs, where live the sons of the Bâb’s great rival and antagonist, the late Haji Muhammad Karin Khân of Kirmân. I asked my guide whether we could not visit it on our way. To this he consented, and in a short while we found ourselves in the quiet lane where dwell the “Akb-zâdas” (“Sons of the Master”). Here we met a Sheykhi divine, whom my guide accosted, telling him that I wished to pay my respects to the Akb-zâdas; and before I had time to consider whether I should do well to thrust myself upon the leaders of a sect for which I had but little kindliness, I found myself in the courtyard of their house. At the farther end of this courtyard mats and carpets were spread, and on these sat in rows some dozen sour-looking, heavy-turbaned Sheykhi students, to whom two of Karin Khân’s sons, seated in the place of honour, were

1 I.e. That all its inhabitants should be shaken from it into hell.
expounding the text of a work of their father's called the Fāsūl-
Khiṣṭāb. Ashamed to retreat, I advanced and sat down on my
heels like the others in the lowest place. Of those nearest to me,
some glared indignantly at me and others edged away, but no
other notice was taken of my arrival till the lecture was over,
when one of the Aḵd-żddās addressed me, remarking that he had
heard I was "going after religions" (aḵb-i-maddāb mi-gardid).
I replied that he had been correctly informed.

"Well," said he, "and have you found a religion better than
that in which you were brought up?"

"No," I replied.

"What of Islām?" continued he.

"It is a good religion," I answered.

"Which is best," said he: "the Law of Islām or your Law?"

"Why do you ask me this question?" I replied; "my apparel
answers for me. If I thought Islām the better, I should not
come here clad in this raiment, but rather in turban and 'abd."

Thereat the younger students laughed, and the Aḵd-żddās,
remarking that it was the time for the evening prayer, went
off to the mosque, leaving a cousin of theirs, who wore the
dress of a layman, to entertain me till their return. He gave
me tea, and would have had me stay to supper, so as to converse
with the Aḵd-żddās, but I excused myself, and soon after their
return from the mosque took my departure. One of Karim
Khān's sons accompanied me to the gate. I thanked him for
his hospitality.

"Our Prophet hath bidden us 'honour the guest,'" said he.

"' Even though he be an infidel,'" I replied, completing the
quotation; whereat we parted with laughter.

Another silent ride through the moonlit desert, and, as the
sun rose above the horizon, I alighted for the last time from
my honest old horse at the gate of my garden in Kirmān. The
arrangements for his sale had been already concluded, and that
very day the servant of his new master brought me a cheque for
CHAPTER XVIII
FROM KIRMAN TO ENGLAND

"Yakubina innal-mawta sa'adha, wa innaa
Mufarqatu'l-ahrabi we'llabi afshar"?

"They say that Death is hard, but by the Name of God I swear
That separation from one's friends is harder still to bear!"

"Shah-i-shamha qa Kirman hir kardam;
Ghalat kardam, ki pusht bar yar kardam."

"On Friday night I loaded up from Kirman;
I did ill, for I turned my back on my friend."

IT was on Sunday morning that I parted with my horse, and
my departure was arranged for the following Tuesday. On
that day, while paying a farewell visit to the young Babi
merchant who had so kindly advanced me the money which I
needed for my journey back to Teheran, I met the postmaster's
son. He appeared to be sulky with me for some reason—probably
because of my friendliness with the Ezells and apologies
for their attitude—and coldly observed that the sooner I left
Kirman the better, and that if I could leave that very night
it would be best of all. I answered that this was impossible,
but that I would perhaps start on the morrow. "Then you must
go early in the morning," said he, "so as to avoid collision
with the post."

When I told this to Sheikh Ibrahim, on whom I next called,
he was greatly incensed.

"Nonsense," said he, "the rascally burnt-father only wants
to get your money as soon as may be, so that he may get drunk,
eat sweetmeats, and play the libertine. You must stop here to-
night and sup with me and some others of your friends. I will
ask the postmaster and his scoundrel of a son too, and you shall
see how small they will sing after I have had a talk with them. I'll
warrant they will be humble enough then, and will let you have
your horses whenever it may please you."

Somewhat comforted by the Sheikhs confidence in his own
powers, I went off with Ushe Akebar to pay a visit to some of my
Babi friends who were employed in the post-office in a sub-
ordinate capacity, after which we returned to Sheikhs Ibrahim's
abode. He had been as good as his word: the postmaster and his
son were there, both, to use the Sheikhs expression, "the very
essence of submission" (ma'ay-i-taslim), ready to let me have
horses for my journey whenever it might please me. The evening
passed off harmoniously after this, the Sheikh cooking the
supper himself, only stopping occasionally to add a remark
to one of us.

"O thou who art buried in this land of K and R," he cried
out to me in one of these pauses, "why should you leave this
place, since you like it so well?"

"Because," I replied, "I must be back at the University of
Cambridge early in the autumn. My leave of absence is nearly
at an end, and they have summoned me to return."

"I spit on the University of Gimbri" (so he pronounced
it), answered the Sheikhs; and to such revilings he continued at
intervals to give vent throughout the evening.

When one begins to procrastinate there is no end to it. I
wished to start on Thursday, 16th August, but at the last moment,
when I was actually ready for the journey, word came from the
post-office that the post (which was due out on that day) was so
heavy that there were no horses to spare; and from one cause
and another my actual departure was deferred till the evening
of Sunday, 19th August. All day I was busy with farewells,
to which there seemed to be no end, for several of my friends
were loth to bid me a final good-bye, and I too shrank from the

1. *I.e.* Kirman, which is so called by the Babis, and in the *Kitaib-i-Akhas.*
parting, for I knew how unlikely it was that I should ever see
them again. To this thought the postmaster, who had recovered
his wonted kindliness of manner, gave expression. "In this
world we shall see one another no more, as I think," said he,
"but in another world we shall without doubt meet again, and
that world is the better, for there all things will be made clear,
and there will be no more parting."

My last visit was to the Prince-Telegraphist. On my way
thither I was stopped in the street by the Bábí cobbler who
had been so roughly rebuked by Sheykh Ibráhím for his chanting
of the sacred books. He was in a great state of agitation, and
cried out to me with tears in his eyes—

"Sáhib, you will go to Acre, if not now, then at some future
time, and you will see the Supreme Beauty¹. Do not forget me
then; mention me there, and let my name be remembered in the
Holy Presence!"

The post-horses, ready laden for the journey, called for me
at the telegraph-office. It was after sunset, but the Prince had
casued the northern gate of the city to be kept open for me after
the usual hour of closing, so that I was able to linger a little
while longer in the city which had cast so strange a glamour
over me. At last, however, I rose regretfully and bade him fare-
well; and, as the great gate closed behind me with a dull clang,
and I found myself in the open plain under the star-spangled sky,
I thought that I had seen the last of all my Kirmán friends. But
when we halted at the post-house (which, as before said, stands
some distance outside the city to the north), there were Sheykh
Ibráhím and Ustá Akbar the pācā-parcher come out to see the last
of me, and I had to dismount and smoke a last pipe with them;
while the Sheykh, who was subdued and sorrowful, told me how
his friend ‘Abdu’lláh had fled, none knew whither, with such
raiment only as he wore, leaving word that he was bound for
Acre, and would not return till his eyes had gazed on the

¹ I.e. Baha'u'llah.
had not altogether wished to consent to this fresh delay, but Ağı Muḥammad Ḥasan was determined that it should be so, and had secured my compliance by a rather cunning device. Hearing that I was very desirous of obtaining a manuscript of the Persian Beyān, and that Ustā Akbar had found one which the owner was willing to part with, he bought it himself, sent it off by post the same day to his home, lest I should induce him to change his mind, and then, when he bade me farewell, promised to give me the book I so greatly longed to possess if I would visit him on my way north. Only after his departure did I learn the trick that had been played upon me, for not till Ustā Akbar explained that this was the manuscript about which he had spoken to me did I realise with mixed indignation and amusement how I had been duped. Now, if I wanted my Beyān, it was clear that I should have to go to Ağı Muḥammad Ḥasan’s village for it, and I was not going to lose the only chance that I had yet had of obtaining this precious volume for the sake of gaining two paltry days.

As there was no question, therefore, of getting beyond this village for the present, and no object in arriving there before evening, I stayed with my friends at Bahārām-ābād till half an hour before sundown, when I again mounted the ugly black horse which had carried me so well on the previous day, and set off at a tearing gallop. As I drew near the village I descried a little group assembled on a small conical hill just outside it. Their figures stood out clear against the setting sun, and I could see that they were watching for my arrival. Even as I espied them, one of them, my host’s son, a handsome lad of eighteen or nineteen, disengaged himself from their midst, and, mounting a large white ass which stood ready, advanced at a rapid amble to meet me. I should have stopped to greet him, but the black horse would hardly consent to be checked in his headlong career, and in about a minute more I was in the middle of the group. Having dismounted, I had to exchange embraces with my host and his Bābī friends (some ten or a dozen in number), a proceeding which, in spite of its patriarchal character, was rather tedious. Then, taking me by the hand, my host led me through the village street, which was lined with curious onlookers, to his house.

I remained here for two days—days which passed pleasantly but uneventfully. There was the usual tea-drinking, smoking of opium and tobacco, and long debates—in shaded rooms by day and in the moonlit garden by night—on religious and philosophical questions. There were several guests besides myself, some of whom had come from Kirmān to meet me. Amongst these was one, a dyer by trade, whose good sense and moderation especially impressed me. To him I expressed my dissatisfaction at the exaggerated language employed by Nāblī, the poet, and other Bābis in speaking of Behā. He agreed with me, but said that allowance must be made for them if their affection for their Master prompted them at times to use language which calmer reason could not approve.

My host had a large collection of Bābī manuscripts, together with some photographs, which he showed us with much pride and yet more caution, never suffering more than one book at a time to leave the box in which he kept his treasures. For liberal as the Bābis are in all else, they hoard their books as a miser does his gold; and if a Bābī were to commit a theft, it would be some rare and much-prized manuscript which would vanquish his honesty. And so it was that, when the moment of my departure arrived, I came near to losing the manuscript of the Persian Beyān which had served as the bait to lead me to this remote hamlet of Rāfinjān. My host begged me to leave it with him for a month, for a week, even for five days; in five days, he said, he could get it copied, and it should then be sent after me to Yezd, or Tcherān, or any other place I might designate. I was obdurate, however, for I yearned to possess the book, and felt that I was entitled to have it; neither dared I leave it behind me, fearing lest the