Temptation to keep it should prove too strong for my Bábí friends. So at last, when the discussion had grown protracted, I said—

"I have eaten your bread and salt, and am your guest. If you will have the book, take it; but I would almost as lief give you my head."

"Then," said he, after a moment's pause, "take it; if such be your feeling, we cannot ask you to give it up."

So I put the precious volume in my pocket with a sense of profound thankfulness, and, accompanied by my friends, walked out a little distance from the village before mounting. Once more we embraced; and then, tightening the wide leather belt in which I carried my money, and buttoning the hardly-won Beyân into my breast-pocket, I hoisted myself into the saddle, and, amidst a shower of good wishes for the journey, again set my face towards Yezd.

It was about an hour before sunset on Thursday, 23rd August, when I resumed my northward journey. Three hours after sunset I was at Kushkúh, where I stopped only to change horses. At about 3 a.m. on the Friday I was at Beyân, and soon after sunrise at Anár. Here I rested and had luncheon, not starting again till the afternoon. About sundown I was at Shemsh, where such bad horses were provided that I did not reach Kirmánsháhán till 9 or 10 p.m. There I had supper, tea, and—I regret to add—a pipe of opium, which greatly comforted me; and then I slept till daybreak.

Next day (Saturday, 25th August) I reached Zeynu’d-Dín two hours after sunrise, and ate a melon while the fresh horses were being saddled. Soon after leaving this place the Sháurgird-chádpár (post-boy) who accompanied us raised an alarm of thieves, and indeed we saw three horsemen wheeling round us in the distance. I fancy, however, that they were waiting there in the hopes of rescuing some of their comrades who had recently been captured at Kirmán and were being sent in chains to

Teherán to undergo judgment. At any rate they did not molest us.

About noon we arrived at Sar-i-Yezd, where I halted for lunch for an hour or two. As I was preparing to start, a Kirmání woman who was standing by called out to me, "We pray God to bring you back to Kirmán." I suppose she was a Bábí, and regarded me as a co-religionist; though how she knew anything about me I was at a loss to imagine.

Rather more than an hour before sunset I reached Muhammad-áhádí, a sort of suburb of Yezd. Here I visited the brother of the young Bábí merchant who had befriended me at Kirmán, meaning only to stay for a short time; but nothing would serve him save that I should be his guest that night, and go on to Yezd on the following morning. I was not loth to accept his hospitality; and a right pleasant evening we passed on a roof overlooking beautiful gardens redolent with the perfume of flowers and resonant with the song of the nightingale. Here it was, I think, that I smoked my last opium-pipe in Persia, amidst surroundings the most perfect that could be imagined.

Next evening (Sunday, 26th August) I supped with the Bábí Seyyids at Yezd, where I remained till the following Friday, lodging at the post-house, which is situated at the northern extremity of the town. I saw most of my old friends, except the Prince-Governor, during these five days, and received from all of them a very cordial welcome; but the Bábí Seyyids were, not a little vexed to find that I had foregathered with the Ezélis at Kirmán. "I told you," remarked the poet 'Andalíb, "that no good would come of your going there, and I was, it seems, perfectly right."

I left Yezd at sunrise on Friday, 31st August, and entered the great sand-desert which bounds it on the north. It and the long post-ride to Káshán were equally monotonous, and need little more description than a list of the stages, times, and distances, which were as follows:
FROM KIRMAN TO ENGLAND

Yezd to Meybūt or Meybud, where I arrived about 2 p.m., after a two hours’ halt at ‘Izz-ābād to visit an acquaintance, ten parasangs. Thence to Chifré, which we reached about 5 p.m., six parasangs. Thence to Aghdā, where we arrived about half an hour after dusk, four parasangs. Here we were delayed by the post, which always has the first right to horses, till late in the night, when, after supper and a short sleep, we started by bright moonlight, and reached the desolate post-house of Naw-Gunbudh (whence a road leads to Isfahan) half an hour before sunrise on 1st September (nine parasangs).

1st September.—Slept till noon at Naw-Gunbudh. Thence a dreary stage of six parasangs brought us about 4 p.m. to the queer old rambling town of Nā‘in. Half an hour after sunset we reached Neyistānak (six parasangs), where the son-in-law of one of the postal officials of Yezd, with whom I had made acquaintance, hospitably entertained me to supper.

2nd September.—Left Neyistānak a little before daybreak, accompanied by an intelligent and handsome little sbagird-chalpar, and arrived (eight parasangs) during the forenoon at Jaukand, a pretty place, abounding in trees and streams, where I would fain have lingered a while to converse with the singularly amiable and courteous postmaster. While I was waiting for fresh horses to be saddled, two or three villagers came in, well-favoured, genial fellows, who told me that an old dialect nearly akin to that of Kohrūd was spoken in this and the neighbouring villages. After a short halt the fresh horses were led out, and I bade farewell to the kindly postmaster, who exhorted me to deal gently with them, as they had just been watered. The sbagird-chalpar, a bright handsome lad named Ḥaydar, saw to this; for he was proud of his horses (and rightly, for they actually had to be held in), and prattled incessantly about them, till, after a ride of five parasangs, we reached the little town of Ardistān.

Here I had an introduction to a Bābī, who took me to his house, gave me fruit, tea, and pipes, and showed me a manu-

script of the works of a mystical poet of Ardistān named Pir-i-Jemāl, in whose verses, as he declared, the “manifestation” of the Bāb had been foreshadowed. I left Ardistān about two hours and a half before sunset, the boy Ḥaydar again bearing us company. The horses supplied to us were so bad that when we had gone a short distance we had to send back two of them and take on two of the horses we had brought from Jaukand, to the delight of Ḥaydar and the disgust of the poor old postmaster of Ardistān, who had to refund part of the money which he had received.

After a stage of six parasangs we reached Mughār, where I had supper and slept for a while by the side of a stream which ran past the post-house, starting again soon after midnight. Five parasangs more brought us to Khālid-ābād about sunrise; six more parasangs to Abū Zeyd-ābād about noon on 3rd September. The horses which brought us thither had been very bad, but those now supplied to us were even worse; so, as it was impossible to urge them out of a walk, I resigned myself to the inevitable, bought some melons, and thus eating the fruit and crawling along in true caravan fashion, entered Kāshān soon after sunset, and was again hospitably received at the telegraph-office by Mr Aganot. Here I remained that night and all next day to make some purchases and see one or two of my old friends.

I left Kāshān about sunset on 4th September, and reached Sinsin at 10 p.m., and Pasangān about sunrise the next morning. I was very tired and would fain have rested a while, but the post from the south was behind us, and there was nothing for it but to push on, unless I wished to run the risk of being stranded for a day at this desolate spot. At 10 a.m. on 5th September I was at Kum, where I was most hospitably received at the telegraph-office, and enjoyed a welcome rest of twenty-four hours, for I was by this time half-dead with weariness, not being used to such severe riding.

6th September.—Left Kum at 9 a.m.; reached Rahmat-ābād
(four parasangs) at 11 a.m.; Kushk-i-Bahram (seven parasangs) at sunset; and Pile (four parasangs) about midnight. Here I had supper and slept till daybreak.

7th September.—Started at 6 a.m., and, after a hot and dusty ride of six parasangs, reached Ribat Karim, a populous and rather pretty village, during the forenoon. Here I stopped for lunch, after which I set off, about three and a half hours before sunset, to accomplish the last stage (seven parasangs) of this wearisome journey. We had good horses, and shortly before sunset found ourselves at a little roadside tea-house, distant one parasang from Tehran. Here we halted to drink tea, when Hajji Safar suddenly observed that if we didn’t make haste the southern gates of the city would be shut, and we should have to make a long detour to obtain admission. We at once set off and galloped in as hard as we could go, but all to no purpose, for the nearest gate was already shut, nor could the gatekeeper be induced by threats or promises to re-open it. He only did his duty, poor man; but I was so angry and disappointed that I gave him the benefit of the whole vocabulary of powerful abuse and invective which I had learned from Sheykh Ibrahîm, and it was perhaps as well that the solid gate stood between us. I was ashamed of my outburst of temper afterwards, but those who had ever made a journey of 600 miles on Persian post-horses will be ready to make some allowances for me. Luckily we found the Shâh ‘Abdu’llâh-‘Acif gate still open, and, threading our way through the bazaars, we alighted about 8.30 p.m. at Prevost’s hotel, where Hajji Safar left me to go and visit his relatives.

The return to what must, I suppose, be called civilisation was anything but grateful to me; I loathed the European dishes set before me, the fixed hours for meals, the constraint and absence of freedom, and above all the commonplace and conventional character of my surroundings. Seven months had elapsed since I quit Tehran for the south, and during this time I had been growing steadily more and more Persian in thought and speech alike. The sudden plunge back into European life came upon me as a shock which was not mitigated even by the charm of novelty, and it took several days to reconcile me at all to my surroundings, my whole wish being at first to get away from the degenerate capital at the earliest possible date. Many of my friends, too, had left Tehran, or gone into the surrounding villages for the hot weather, so that life was much duller than it had been during my previous stay.

In spite of my desire to get away from Tehran, it took me thirteen days to transact all my business. First of all I had to find out about the steamers from Mashhad-i-Sar, the port whence I intended to sail for Russia (for I would not take the well-known Reht and Enzeli route); then there were books to be bought, packed up, and sent off by way of Bushire to Cambridge; Babis, to whom I had letters of introduction, to be visited; money arrangements to be made; and last though not least, tarziyas to be seen, for it was the beginning of the month of Muḥarram, and the national mournings for Ḥasan, Ḥuseyn, and the other saints of the Shi‘ite Church were in full swing.

To the chief Babis of Tehran I was introduced by a merchant of Shîrvan (a Russian subject), to whom I carried a letter of recommendation. They entertained me at lunch in a house near the Dûlûb Gate, and I was much impressed by their piety and gravity of demeanour, so unlike the anarchic freedom of the Kirmân Babîs. As a psychological study, however, they were less interesting, neither did I see enough of them to become intimate with them.

As I intended to spend all my available money on books, I was at some pains to ascertain what was to be had, and where it could be had cheapest. I therefore visited several booksellers and asked them to furnish me with a list of books and prices, telling them that, as I hated haggling, I should make no remarks on the prices quoted, but simply buy what I needed from him who would sell cheapest. This plan had the best effect, since they
did not know what other shops I had visited, and could, therefore, make no coalition against me; and I soon filled a large tin-lined box with a good selection of useful works of reference which seldom find their way to Europe, where bad Indian editions are, as a rule, the only things readily obtainable. I also bought a few curiosities, and a complete suit of Persian clothes, which was made for me under Haji Safar’s supervision. Amongst the booksellers I made the acquaintance of a delightful old man, a real scholar, who, when he could collect two or three manuscripts of some rare book which took his fancy (generally a philosophical or mystical work), would, at his own risk, and with no one to assist him, lithograph as correct and good a text as he could. Of course he got no encouragement or help from the great, who in earlier and better days might have recognised his worth, and supplied him with the means of carrying on his labour of love on a larger scale. His name, so far as I remember, was Sheykh Muhammed Huseyn of Kashan. Whether he still lives I know not; but I shall ever remember him as one of the best types of the unobtrusive, kindly, disinterested, enthusiastic scholar and bibliophile of the East that it has been my lot to meet.

On Wednesday, 6th Muharram (14th September), I dined with my kind friend Mr Fahie at the telegraph-office. The Shah’s Prime Minister, the Amin-‘Ali Khan, was giving a rawga-khadwân, or religious recitation, on a splendid scale in the adjoining house, and after dinner we adjourned to the roof to watch it. On this occasion a whole regiment of soldiers, as well as a number of other guests, were being entertained by the generous vezir. Supper was provided for all of them, and I counted over a hundred trays of food as they were brought in by the servants.

Next evening I accompanied several members of the English Embassy to the Royal tayyâ, a theatre specially constructed and set apart for the dramatised representations of Muharram (tâ’ziyâs), which are to the Shi‘ite Muhammadan what the

Miracle-plays of Ober-Ammergau are to Christians of the Romish Church. The theatre is a large circular building—roofless, but covered during Muharram with an awning. There are boxes (takhebs) all round, which are assigned to the more patrician spectators, one, specially large and highly decorated, being reserved for the Shah. The humbler spectators sit round the central space or arena in serried ranks, the women and children in front. A circular stone platform in the centre constitutes the stage. There is no curtain and no exit for the actors, who, when not wanted, simply stand back. The acting is powerful, though somewhat crude, and it is impossible not to be influenced by the deep feeling evinced by both actors and audience. The tâ’ziyâs comprise at least some thirty or forty episodes, the representation of any one of which requires two or three hours. Some of them are drawn from the histories of the Jewish prophets, and these are the less interesting because the spectators are less profoundly moved by them; the majority, however, illustrate the misfortunes of the Shi‘ite Imâms. Those connected with the fatal field of Kerbelâ, culminating in the death of the “Prince of Martyrs” (Seyyid ebn-shuhadâ), the Imâm Husayn, are the most moving; but I fancy that the Persians are, as a rule, not very willing to admit Europeans or Sunnite Muhammadans, so greatly are the religious feelings of the spectators stirred by the representation of the supreme catastrophe of the ‘Asha‘irâ, or tenth of Muharram. On that day bands of men (especially soldiers of Adharbâyân) parade the streets in white garments, which are soon dyed with gore; for each man carries a knife or sword, and, as their excitement increases with cries of “Yâ Hasan! Yâ Husayn!” and beating of breasts, they inflict deep gashes on their heads till the blood pours forth and streams over their faces and apparel. It is an impressive sight, though somewhat suggestive of Baal-worship.

The tâ’ziyâ which I was privileged to see represented the bereaved women of the Holy Family before the impious Shímîr,
FROM KIRMÂN TO ENGLAND

Yezid’s general. Shiraz was clad in a complete suit of chain- armour, and the captive women were brought in before him mounted on barebacked camels. Them he entertains with the greatest brutality, driving them with a whip from the corpse of Huseyn, round which they gather to weep and lament. The mise-en-scène and costumes were good; but the effect was spoiled in some measure by the introduction of a number of the Sháh’s carriages, with postilions barbarously dressed in a half-European uniform, in the middle of the piece. This absurd piece of ostentation seemed to me typical of Kájár taste.

I had been much exercised in mind as to the safe conveyance of my precious Bábí manuscripts to England. The box of books which I was sending home by Bushire would, I knew, be months on the road, and I wished to begin to work at my manuscripts immediately on my return. On the other hand, I had heard such dreadful accounts of the Russian Custom-house that I was afraid to take them with me. Finally I decided to sew them up carefully in thick linen, direct the parcel to my home address, and send it, if I could obtain permission, in the Embassy bag, which is conveyed monthly to Constantinople by a special bearer, and there handed over to the Queen’s messenger for transport to London. It cost me an effort to part with my beloved and hardly-won manuscripts, even for so short a time, but I felt that this was the safest plan; and, accordingly, having packed and directed them with the greatest care, I rode out to Kholah, the summer quarters of the English Embassy, situated about six miles to the north of Tehrán, and, to my great relief, saw the precious packet sealed up in the bag.

I had been delayed in starting from Tehrán, and so reached

the Embassy too late for lunch; I stayed at Kholah until about 5.30 p.m. visiting some of my Persian friends, and did not get back to the city till nearly 7 p.m.; and that evening I had been invited by my servant Haji Safar to sup with him at his house and then to visit some of the smaller t'eziyas and rawza-khudas with him in disguise. As I had had nothing to eat all day but tea and biscuits, I was well-nigh famished before supper-time, and returned to the hotel about midnight almost dead-beat. So tired was I that it was some time before I could even summon up energy to undress.

Next day I woke at I know not what time, feeling faint, ill, and helplessly weak, as though every bone in my body were broken. No one came near me, and it was not till evening that I could make the effort to rise and obtain some food. After drinking a plate of soup and some tea, I again fell asleep, and woke next morning somewhat better, though still too weak to rise till evening. As two of my Persian friends had promised to take me into the town to see something more of the Muḥarram mornings and spectacles, I then made a fresh effort, got up, had dinner, and, as soon as they arrived, put on a Persian coat (sardári) and lambskin hat (kuldí), and sallied forth in this disguise, well content to feel myself for the time a Persian amongst Persians. We spent a pleasant and interesting evening, visiting unmolested the Masjide Sháh (Royal Mosque) and the houses of two notable divines, the Imám-Jum'á and Mullá ‘Ali of Kand.

On Tuesday, 18th September, I concluded my purchase of books, on which I spent something over £10. For the benefit of Persian students, I append a list of the twenty-six volumes which I bought for this sum, together with their prices. The first fifteen I obtained from my good old friend Sheykholムhammad Huseyn of Káshán, the last eleven from another bookseller.

1. The Bahrán-i-fa'īn', a very excellent and compact dictionary of Persian words, composed in the reigns of Fáth-‘Ali Sháh
FROM KIRMÂN TO ENGLAND


5. The Divān of Ṣanā’ī, one of the most celebrated of the early mystical poets of Persia (died about A.D. 1150). Lithographed. Not dated. Price 8 krāns.

6. The Ḥadīkūt ‘Abd-i-Shī‘a (“Garden of the Shi‘ites”), an extensive work on Shi‘ite doctrine and history. Second volume only, dealing with the Imāms. Lithographed at Ṭeherān in a.H. 1265. Price 12 krāns.

7. The mystical commentary on the Kur‘ān of Sheykh Muḥyī‘d-Dīn ibnul-ʿArabī, a very notable Moorish mystic, who flourished during the latter part of the twelfth and earlier part of the thirteenth century of our era. Lithographed in India (Bombay) in a.H. 1291 (A.D. 1874). Price 30 krāns.


10. The poems of ‘Unṣūrī, a contemporary of Firdawsī, and—

11. The poems of Farrukhī, another poet of the same period, both lithographed at Ṭeherān, the latter in a.H. 1301. Price 3 krāns for the two volumes.

12. The complete works of Ḥāfiz and Fūrūghī, two poets of the nineteenth century, together with the Ḥaddīṣ-i-Hāmi, a treatise on rhetoric by Rashīdūl-Dīn Ṣawwāt. Lithographed in a.H. 1302 (?) Ṭeherān. Price 14 krāns.

13. The Fūṣūṣūl-i-Hikam by the celebrated mystic, Sheykh Muḥyī‘d-Dīn ibnul-ʿArabī, mentioned above. Lithographed at Bombay in a.H. 1300. Price 5 krāns. (There is another edition of the same work lithographed at Ṭeherān in a.H. 1299, which I bought on another occasion.)

14. Swāl‘ul ʿAjwāb (“Questions and Answers”), a sort of catechism on Shi‘ite law and ritual, by the great divine Hājī Seyyid Muḥammad Bākir. Printed at Isfahān in the reign of Fath-ʿAlī Shāh (a.H. 1247) under the patronage of Miḥāṣür Khān Miḥāṣür Khān, the governor of that place, by ‘Abdu‘r-Razzāk of Isfahān, assisted and instructed by Mirzā Zeynūl-ʿAbīdīn of Tabrīz, who is described as “the introducer of this art (i.e. printing) into Persia.” A fine piece of work. Price 8 krāns.

15. The Ḥadīkūtul Ḥakīkat, a well-known early mystical poem by Ḥakīm Ṣan‘ā‘ (flourished during the earlier part of the twelfth century of our era); the two first chapters only, with commentary by the Nawwāb Muḥammad ‘Alā‘ ud-Dīn Khān, poetically surnamed ‘Alā‘, edited by Muḥammad Rukn ‘ud-Dīn Kādīrī Ḥiṣārī. Lithographed at Lūhārū. No date. Price 2½ krāns.


17. A little volume containing the quatrains of ‘Omar
Khayyám, of Bábá Táhir the Lur of Hamadán (the most celebrated dialectical poet of Persia), of Abú Sa'íd ibn Abíl-Khayr (a notable mystic who died about the middle of the eleventh century of our era), and of Khwájé 'Abdu'lláh Ansári, together with some kázidas by Sálimán of Sávé. Lithographed at Bombay during the vice-regency of Lord Lytton in A.H. 1297. Price 2 krání.

18. A work on the evidences of Muhammadanism, written at the request of Náṣírú'd-Dín Sháh (and hence called Sultáníyya) by the Báb's rival, Hájí Muḥammad Katím Kháń of Kármán, the leader of the modern Sheykhi school. Price 3 krání.


22. The Diván of the philosopher Hájí Mullá Hádí of Sabzawár, poetically surmamed Asrár. (There are two editions of this work, both lithographed; the one in A.H. 1299, the other in A.H. 1300.) Price 2 krání.


25. An old manuscript of a highly-esteemd collection of Shi'ite traditions called Rawzatul-Káft. Price 50 krání.


On returning to the hotel with a sturdy porter who bore my purchases, I found my old teacher Mirzá Asadu'lláh of Sabzawár, who had kindly come to bring me a short biography of his master Hájí Mullá Hádí the philosopher, and also an autograph of the great thinker.

Next day (Wednesday, 19th September) Hájí Şáfí secured the services of a tinsmith, with whose aid we packed up and hermetically sealed my books and other purchases in a large wooden chest lined with tin, which luckily proved just large enough to contain them all. When it was closed up, we got porters to carry it to Messrs Ziegler's office in the Karwánárdáy-i-Amir, where I left it in the care of their agent for transport to England by way of Bushire. The total value of its contents, as estimated by myself for the Custom-House, came to almost exactly 79 támans (£24).

On the afternoon of the following day, having concluded all my business, and said farewell to such of my friends as still remained in Teherán, I started on my last march in Persia, which was to convey me through the interesting province of Mázandáran to the Caspian. I had succeeded in obtaining through Messrs Ziegler's agent 228 roubles in Russian money (the equivalent of 752 krání, eight sháhí Persain). The rest of my money, amounting to 747 krání, twelve sháhí, I carried with me in Persian silver and copper.

Our first stage was, as usual, to be a short one, of two or three parasangs only, but the moon had risen ere we reached our halting-place, the solitary caravansaray of Surkh Hijár ("the Red Fortress"), where I obtained a very good clean room, opening on to a little courtyard, through which ran a stream of limpid water. Soon after quitting Teherán by the Shimrán Gate we had been joined by an ex-artilleryman, who had just been flogged and dismissed the service for some misdemeanour. He expressed a desire to accompany me to "Lóndan" (London), declaring that Persia was no fit place for an honest man, and
FROM KIRMAN TO ENGLAND

actually went with us as far as Amul, where I was not altogether
sorry to lose sight of him.

Friday, 21st September.—Left Surkh Hisar about 7.30 a.m.,
and, after a dull ride through a barren, stony plain, reached
the solitary and rather dilapidated caravansaray of Asalak an
hour before noon. Here I stopped for lunch, and was enten-
tained by a quaint old Seyyid who was suffering from a bad foot.
He told me with great glee how he had recently succeeded in
defrauding the revenue officers sent to collect his taxes. Being
apprised of their intended visit, he had, in spite of his lameness,
gone on foot to Téherán (a distance of six parasangs), carrying
with him all his cash (some twelve or thirteen tumans), mostly
in copper coins, which he there entrusted to the keeping of a
friend. When the revenue officers came, there was no money
to be found on the premises, and they were obliged to depart
empty-handed after a fruitless search. On my departure I gave
the old man a ryâdán, with which he was highly pleased.

Soon after leaving Asalak we entered the mountains, and
the scenery began to improve rapidly, gradually assuming an
almost English character; for our way was between green hedge-
rows, beyond which lay real grass meadows watered by rippling
mountain streams and dotted with grazing cattle. Towards
sundown we reached the pretty straggling village of Agh, which
consists of three distinct groups of houses separated by con-
siderable intervals of road. We stopped at the last group, just
before the steepness of the ascent begins. Here I obtained a
delightful lodging in an upper chamber looking out on the most
charming landscape imaginable.

Saturday, 22nd September.—Started about 7.15 a.m., and at
once began to ascend steeply towards the pass by which we were
to enter Mázdârân. The first part of our march was delicious,
for our road was bordered by moss-grown walls, overshadowed
by leafy trees, and crossed by innumerable streams, while around
us lay green grassy fields such as my eyes had not looked upon

for many a long day. As we advanced, the ascent grew gradually
more abrupt, and the path began to climb the mountain side in
a series of apparently interminable zigzags which has given to
it the name of Hadâr Châm (“the thousand twists”). At the
summit of the pass is a little building where we had lunch ere
commencing the descent into Mázdârân. Our downward
course lay at first by the side of a rushing river (the Lâr, I think),
which soon plunged into a deep gorge. Far down in this gorge,
on a little plateau which broke the sheer face of the opposite
cliff, we could see the village of Ask, of which the mother of
the Shah’s eldest son, the Zillû-ş-Şâdad, is a native. How it is
approached I could not imagine, for I could discern no signs
of a path down the beetling precipice. On our left arose the
mighty snow-capped cone of Mount Demâvend, which can be
ascended from this side without much difficulty, although the
inhabitants of the village of Demâvend, and, indeed, the gene-
rality of Persians, believe it to be inaccessible. For on its summit,
according to ancient legend, was chained the tyrant Zâhâk by
Ferdûn, the deliverer of his country, the avenger of his race, and
the restorer of the ancient royal house; and the accursed spirit
of the usurper is popularly supposed still to haunt the cloud-
capped peak of the mountain. But the inhabitants of the little
village of René, where we halted for the night, have no such
superstitious dread of the mountain, and some of them are in
the habit of ascending it frequently to collect the sulphur which
is to be found in a cave near the summit.

We left the beautiful Alpine village of René next morning
(Sunday, 23rd September) about 7.30 a.m. The pretty winding
road by which we continued to descend was so steep that for
the first hour or so of our march I preferred to walk. At the
bottom of the valley we again came to the river. In some places
this had undermined and washed away the path, so that we were
obliged to enter the water; but, on the whole, the road was a
triumph of engineering skill, for soon the valley narrowed into
FROM KIRMÁN TO ENGLAND

a mere cleft with steep rocky sides, out of which the passage had been cut. This, the new road, runs along the left (western) side of the gorge; on the opposite side were discernible the remains of the old road, which had been built out from the cliff instead of cut in it. At one point on the new road a bas-relief of Náṣiru’ll-Dín Sháh, surrounded by his courtiers, has been carved on the rocks.

About 2 p.m. we passed a village. No lodging was to be found there, so we proceeded on our way, halted for lunch in a cornfield, and, about 4 p.m., reached a house by a bridge, where the muleteer wished to halt for the night. Here also no decent lodging was to be found, and consequently, in spite of the mutterings of the muleteer, “Akhír Mázandaráni ast; ché mi-khwbhí?” (“After all it is Mázandárán; what would you have?”), we again pushed on, until, about sunset, we came to a little group of hovels, half caves, half huts, called Kalovan, where we halted. It was a sweet night, and its sweetness was enhanced by the shimmer of the moonlight and the murmur of the river; but inside the cave-hut, which I shared with the owners, it was close and warm, and the gnats were plentiful and aggressive.

Monday, 24th September.—We started about 7.30 a.m., and travelled for some time in the company of a Mázandaráni muleteer, who gave me information which I had been unable to obtain from my own south-country ebärvadd as to the position of the castle of Sheyk Thábari, that once dreadfully stronghold of the Bábis, which, if possible, I desired to visit before embarking at Mashhad-i-Sar. I found that it lay beyond Bárfurúsh, between that town and Sári, some distance off the main road near a village called Kárághál, and that if I were to visit it, it must be from Bárfurúsh.

As we advanced, the valley began to widen out, and the rocky cliffs, which had hitherto formed its sides, gave place to wooded slopes. In front, too, low wooded hills appeared, while round our path the wild pomegranate and other trees grew ever thicker and thicker, so that we could no longer see far about us. Soon we were out of the hill-country altogether, and entered a vast forest, where ferns and mosses grew thickly. Ever and anon we traversed beautiful glades, on the green sward of which were pitched here and there the black tents of nomads, whose cattle grazed peaceably round about the encampment. Save for these black tents, and a certain luxuriance of vegetation, the whole scene was wonderfully English in appearance, and I could almost have believed myself to be already back in my native land. In one of these delicious glades we halted for lunch, which consisted of cold boiled rice and fowl, called in Mázandáraní parlance “kétté.”

Later in the day the road got terribly bad, being sometimes so deep in mud and slush that the beasts could hardly advance. Our muleteer had intended to make for a village called Fírúz-Kuláh, but we, being somewhat in advance, passed the point where the road thither diverged from the road to Ámul, and were already some way advanced on the latter when the muleteer overtook us. A violent altercation arose between him and Hájí Šafar, for he would have had us turn back; but, learning from an old peasant who happened to pass by that Ámul was distant but one parasang, we insisted on proceeding thither, and the muleteer was finally compelled to a sullen submission.

Again the character of the country underwent a sudden change; for, emerging from the dense forest, we entered on a flat fennoy plain, covered with long sedge-like grasses and tall bulrushes, and dotted with marshy pools and grazing cattle. About 6 p.m. we passed a little village with thatched cottages (which seemed strangely out of place in Persia, that land of clay houses and flat roofs), interspersed amongst which were curious wooden erections, each composed of four stout poles set vertically in the ground and supporting a sloping thatch. Beneath this, at a distance of some feet, was a sort of platform on which carpets and pillows were spread. I supposed that the
inhabitants slept on these platforms during the hot weather to escape the mosquitoes, but Háíjí Şafar said that it was to avoid the low-lying fogs which at night-time spread themselves over the surface of the ground.

About half an hour after passing this village we reached Āmul, one of the chief cities of Māzandarān, a picturesque straggling town divided into two parts by a large river, which is spanned by a long narrow bridge built of bricks. Crossing this bridge, we found quarters for the night in the house of a respectable citizen, but though the room allotted to me was clean and comfortable enough, the close, moist air, mosquitoes, and vagrant cats combined to keep me awake for some time.

**Tuesday, 25th September.**—We started about 7.30 a.m., and all day our course lay through flat marshy fen-lands, covered with rushes, sedges, and scrubby bushes. Snakes, lizards (some large and green, others small and brown), tortoises, and frogs abounded in and about the numerous stagnant pools by which we passed. The road was in many places little better than the surrounding quagmire, sometimes hardly discernible; and this notwithstanding the fact that it is the main highway between two of the chief cities of Māzandarān. About 5 p.m. we crossed the river Bābul by a fine bridge, and, turning sharply to the left (north) along its eastern bank, traversed a great common, used as a grazing-ground for cattle, and in a few minutes entered Bāfrūrūsh. On our right, as we entered, was a large lake covered with water-lilies, in the centre of which was an island. This island was joined to the shore by a bridge, and on it stood a summer-palace (called Bāgh-i-Shāh, “the King’s Garden”), which serves the Shāh as a residence when he visits this part of his dominions. Farther on we passed, just outside the town, the caravansaray (now in ruins) where the Bábis under Mullá Huseyn of Bushraweyh, “the First Letter of Affirmation,” defended themselves against the townsfolk of Bāfrūrūsh in the conflict which preceded the fiercer struggle at Sheykh Ţabarsī. Entering the town, the spacious square of the Sabzé Meydān, or Herb Market, turned my thoughts to the concluding catastrophe of the great struggle of 1848–9, for there, in the summer of the latter year, Mullá Muḥammad ʿAlí of Bāfrūrūsh, called by the Bábis “Jond-i-Kudbeh” (“His Excellence the Most Holy”), suffered death, together with the chief of his surviving lieutenants, at the hands of the ʿĪād-i-ʿUlāmā and his myrmidons. As we entered the main street of the city we found one of the Muharram representations (taṣżīyat) in progress, and some of the people would have had us turn aside; but we continued on our way, while I wondered whether the Báb’s prophecy would ever be fulfilled, that a day would come when in these spots, hallowed by the blood of his martyrs, representations of their sufferings and steadfastness should move the sympathetic lamentations and tears of the children of those who slew them, and obliterate the remembrance of the martyrs of Kerbelah.

The town of Bāfrūrūsh is much finer and larger than Āmul, but less picturesque and old-world. We alighted at a rather dilapidated caravansaray near the centre of the town. Here I was visited in the course of the evening by a native of Kābul, a British subject, who showed me his passport with evident pride, and by one or two other persons, who informed me that the Russian ambassador had on the previous day passed through the town on his way to Sārū, whence, as I understood, he proposed to return to his own country by ship from Astarābād. I enquired of my visitors concerning Sheykh Ţabarsī, which I still eagerly desired to visit. They told me that it was two parasangs distant from Bāfrūrūsh, to the south-east; and that the Bábis, drawing an analogy from the early history of Islām, called it “Kerbelá,” Bāfrūrūsh “Kuṣa,” and the lake surrounding the Bāgh-i-Shāh “the Euphrates” (Furđat), and were still in the habit of making pilgrimages thither.

In the evening, after supper, I summoned Háíjí Şafar, told him of my wish to visit Sheykh Ţabarsī, and asked him whether it