

story of the Bab, about whom much now is on record. In a sense he was opposed to mysticism, for he objected to Sufis on account of their doctrine of the Inner Light, their pantheism, and their individualism. Nevertheless, he had undoubtedly enjoyed the mystical experience and his short heroic life-for he suffered martyrdom before he was thirty-gives abundant evidence of that joy and gladness, that serenity and firmness of conviction which are so characteristic of the mystical state.

Among the Shiah sect of the Islamic faith there is a perpetual expectancy-the expectancy of the appearance of the Imam Mahdi. These Shiahs believe

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that after the ascension into heaven of Mahomed he was succeeded by a line of twelve Imams. The twelfth Imam, who succeeded just a thousand years before the time of the Bab, is said to have only disappeared, and it is believed that he will reappear and fill the Earth with justice. The Shiahs expect the Imam Madhi as eagerly as Jews expected the Messiah. Among the Shiah Moslems was a sect centred at Kerbela in Mesopotamia who specially concentrated on the expectancy. The leader in the first half of last century was a mulla named Kazim. For some years he had been foretelling the advent of One who would be the bearer of a new and independent revelation. He realized, we are told, how dense were those veils that hinder seekers from apprehending the glory of the hidden Manifestation. He accordingly exerted his utmost endeavour to remove gradually, wisely and cautiously whatever barriers might stand in the way of the full recognition of that hidden Treasure of God. To his disciples he said:

"It is incumbent upon you to renounce all comfort, all earthly possessions, and even your kindred, and seek Him who is the Desire of both your hearts and mine. Never relax in your determination to seek and :find Him who is concealed behind the veils of glory. . . . How great, how very great is the cause! How exalted the station to which I summon you! How great the mission for which I have trained and prepared you ! "

Kazim died in the year 1843, and among those who were inspired by his words and were seeking the Promised One was a young mulla named Hosain, or

Husayn, a native of the Persian Province of Khorasan.

He was born in the year 1813, and for nine years he

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had remained with Kazim, preparing for the advent of the Promised One. This young mulla was described by one of his contemporaries as being the very embodiment of constancy, piety and virtue, and as inspiring others with his rectitude of conduct and passionate loyalty. Such, indeed, was the force of his character and the ardour of his faith that men felt that he, unaided and alone, could achieve the triumph of the Faith of God. Another records of him that no one could question his erudition, his charm, his high integrity, his fairness, his wisdom, or his amazing courage. And one of his fellow-mullas had paid such a glowing tribute to this character, his high attainments and his ability, that some of those who heard this panegyric suspected Husayn of being the very Promised One whom Kazim had so often declared was living in their midst, though, as yet, unrecognized. So they one day approached him, saying: "Such is our confidence in you that if you claim to be the Promised One we shall all readily and unquestioningly submit; and we here and now pledge our loyalty and obedience to whatever you bid us perform."

But Husayn replied: "God forbid! Far be it from His glory that I, who am but dust, should be compared to Him who is the Lord or Lords. . . .

Your and my first obligation is to aim at and carry out, both in spirit and in letter, the dying message of our beloved Chief."

He would not admit that he himself was the Promised One; but he determined to devote his life to the quest of the Messiah; and after first preparing himself for the holy adventure by spending forty days in retirement and prayer, on vigils and fasting, he set out from Kerbela for Bushire on the Persia Gulf.

And Bushire has interest in this story, for it is

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happened that here was born, in the year 1821, one Ali Mahomed, who, as he grew up, attracted much attention on account of his austere practices and preoccupation with religious matters. He was remarkable for his courtesy and charm, the dignity of his manner and the purity of his character. His father was a merchant, and he himself was engaged in business

for a time. But having married and lost the son born of the marriage he decided to make a pilgrimage to the holy city of Kerbela, and there it was that he, like Busayn, had listened to Kazim's prophecies and, also like Busayn, had impressed his fellow-devotees by his piety. Indeed, so wrapt would he be in his devotions that he would seem utterly oblivious of those about him. Tears would rain from his eyes; and from his lips would fall words of such power and beauty as are not to be surpassed in the noblest passages of Scripture. " Oh! God, my God, my beloved, my heart's desire," he would keep repeating with a frequency and an ardour that those near him would interrupt their prayers and marvel at his devotion. And at this time he had a vision which deeply influenced him and which he himself subsequently described.

" In my vision I saw the head of the Imam Husayn hanging upon a tree with drops of blood dropping profusely from his lacerated throat. With feelings of unsurpassed delight I approached that tree, and stretching forth my hand gathered a few drops of that sacred blood and devoutly drank them. When I awoke I found that the Spirit of God had permeated my whole soul and taken possession of it. My heart was thrilled with the joy of the divine presence, and the mysteries of His revelation were unfolded before my eyes in all their glory."

From Kerbela Ali Mahomed had returned to Bushire, HUSAYN MEETS THE BAB where he had remained until a few months after the death of Kazim, and had then closed his business and gone to Shiraz.

A few months later, Husayn passing through Bushire noted the spiritual atmosphere of the place. But proceeding on his quest he reached Shiraz, and there a little before sunset, as he was walking outside the gate of the city, his eyes suddenly fell on a youth of radiant countenance, who advanced towards him and greeted him with a smile of loving welcome as if he had been his intimate and life-long friend. He invited Husayn to his home, and as Husayn entered the house he was invaded by a feeling of unutterable joy. Oppressed by the mystery of this meeting and by the strain of his search for the Promised One Husayn breathed this prayer: "Oh! my God. I have striven with all my soul, and until now have failed to find Thy promised Messenger. Yet Thy word faileth

not, and Thy promise is sure."

After the evening prayer his youthful host began to question Husayn. "Whom do you regard as Kazim's successor and your leader?" he asked.

"Our departed teacher exhorted us to forsake our homes in quest of the promised Beloved. I have arisen to accomplish his will, and am still engaged in my quest," replied Husayn.

"Has your teacher indicated any features by which the Promised One might be distinguished?" inquired Husayn's host.

"Yes," replied Husayn, "he is one of pure lineage, over twenty years of age but less than thirty, endowed with intuitive knowledge and free of bodily defects." There was a pause: then, with vibrant voice his host exclaimed: "Behold, all these signs are manifest in me!"

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"True," replied Husayn, "but he whose advent we await is a man of unsurpassed holiness, and the Cause he is to reveal to us is a Cause of tremendous power. Many and diverse are the requirements which he who claims to be its visible embodiment must needs fulfil."

When Husayn first started on his quest he had fixed on two standards by which he would test the claims of any to be the Promised One. He had composed a treatise on the hidden teachings propounded by Kazim and to him who could unravel the mysterious allusions he would submit his second test which was to reveal an entirely new commentary on the Surih of Joseph. This treatise Husayn now presented to his host, in order to test his capacity. To his surprise the young man in a few minutes unravelled all its mysteries and resolved all its problems. In addition he expounded new truths with vividness and power. Then he made a commentary on the Surih of Joseph, without for a moment interrupting the flow of the verses.

Husayn sat enraptured by the magic of his voice and the sweeping force of his revelation. Hour after hour slipped by till suddenly the call of the muadhhdhin summoning the faithful to prayer at dawn awakened him from the state of ecstasy into which he had fallen. All the delights, all the ineffable glories which are the priceless possessions of the people of Paradise, he seemed to be experiencing that night; and he became convinced that his host was none other than the Promised One.

Then his host, who proved to be the Ali Mahomed from Bushire referred to above, addressed Husayn in these words :

" O thou who art the first to believe in me, verily I say unto thee I am The Bab, the Gate of God, and
THE BAB PROCLAIMS HIMSELF
thou art the Bab-ul-Bab, the gate of that Gate.
Eighteen BOuls must, at first, of their own accord, accept me and recognize the truth of my revelation. And when this number is complete, one of them must accompany me on my pilgrimage to Mecca, where I shall deliver the message of God to the Sherif. But it is incumbent upon you not to divulge, either to your companions or to any other soul, that which you have heard. You should continue in prayer until my departure for Hejaz. But, ere I depart, I shall appoint unto each of the eighteen souls his special mission and instruct them to teach the Word of God and quicken the souls of men."

Having spoken these words the Bab dismissed Husayn from his presence.

Little wonder is it that Husayn was dumbfounded at his experiences during that wonderful night. Here was a young man of twenty-four making this startling and tremendous claim that he was the Messiah so long promised, so eagerly expected-one who would be regarded as a divine being, as belonging to a different order of being from common humanity-one who would be the spiritual guide of all Moslems and whose every word must be implicitly obeyed ..

This revelation coming suddenly as a thunderbolt upon Husayn fairly numbed his faculties. He was blinded by its dazzling splendour and overwhelmed by its crushing force. Excitement, awe and wonder stirred him to the depths. He was transfigured with a sense of gladness and strength. Hitherto he had been feeble, dejected and timid. Now he felt possessed of such courage and power that, were the whole world with its peoples and potentates to rise against him, he would face them undaunted. The whole universe was but a handful of dust in his hand. He
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seemed. 'to hear the voice of Gabriel calling unto all mankind, " Awake, for, Lo! the morning light has broken. He who is your Promised One is come." Faithful to the direction of the Bab he performed

his devotions and organized classes. Gradually people gathered about him and marvelled at the spirit which his discourses revealed. On several occasions he would spend the entire night with the Bab and, fascinated by the charm of his utterance, become oblivious of the world. On one such night the Bab foretold that thirteen other followers would arrive and enjoined Husayn: "Pray to God, that He may graciously enable them to walk securely in that path which is finer than a hair and keener than a sword."

The next morning a certain Mulla Ali and twelve companions came to Husayn. They, too, were seeking the Promised One but were surprised at Husayn's lack of agitation and expectancy, till he hinted to Ali that he had already found the object of their quest. Then they all besought God to fulfil His promise. And on the third night there appeared before Ali, while he was wrapt in prayer, a light, and, lo! that light moved before him. Allured by its splendour, he had to follow it, till at last it led him to his promised Beloved. Inspired by the vision he arose and beaming with joy and gladness, he hastened to Husayn. At dawn the two together went to the Bab. Ali was as warmly welcomed as Husayn had been, and a spirit of close and ardent fellowship sprang up between them. The entire chamber seemed to be vitalized by the celestial potency emanating from the Bab. They glowed with intense adoration. New Day had dawned upon them.

Each of Ali's twelve companions in turn found the Bab, and were declared by him to be Letters of the THE B.A.B' S PLAN

Living. Others followed. Seventeen were gradually enrolled and appointed as chosen apostles of the Bab, ministers of his faith and diffusers of his light. One only remained to complete the number. Next day, as the Bab, followed by Husayn, was returning to his home there appeared a youth, dishevelled and travel-stained, who approached Husayn and asked him whether he had attained his goal. Then, fixing his gaze upon the Bab who was some steps in advance, he said to Husayn: "Why seek you to hide him from me? I can recognize him by his gait. None other can manifest the power and majesty that radiate from his holy person." Husayn told the Bab of these words, and the Bab told him to marvel not, for he had been communing with this youth in the spirit. The

youth was then accepted. He was only twenty-two, and became known as Quddus. So the eighteen apostles were now complete.

In general the Bab's plan was now this. He himself with one companion would proceed to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina and there, by public proclamation, inaugurate his mission. Having thus done he would return triumphantly from his pilgrimage and establish his Cause in the holy cities of Kerbela and Najaf in Iraq. One of his apostles was to be sent to Turkish territory and another to India. Others were to be sent to different provinces in Persia.

Husayn had hoped that the Bab would have taken him on his contemplated pilgrimage to Mecca, but the Bab had a higher mission for him. Summoning him to his presence the Bab said:

"My covenant with you is now accomplished. Gird up the loins of endeavour and arise to diffuse my Cause. Raise the cry, , Awake, awake, for, 101 the Gate of God is open, and the morning light

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is shedding its radiance upon all mankind' The Promised One is made manifest; prepare the way for him, O people of the Earth I Deprive not yourselves of its redeeming grace, nor close your eyes to its glory.' With those whom you find responsive to your call share the epistles I have revealed to you, that they may turn from the slough of neglect and soar into the realm of divine revelation."

The Bab then told Husayn that he had chosen Quddus as his companion for the pilgrimage to Mecca, and would leave Husayn behind to face the onslaught of a fierce and relentless enemy, though he might rest assured that a bounty unspeakably glorious would be conferred upon him, as the high mission for which he had been created would of a surety be accomplished to the full, and not all the darts of an unbelieving world could hurt a single hair of his head until his work was consummated. He was to proceed north to Teheran, where a secret lay hidden, and thence to Khorasan, where he was to proclaim the Call anew. After that he was to return to Kerbela and there await the Bab's summons.

Ali was then summoned to the Bab's presence and was directed to proceed to Najaf and Kerbela.

"Your faith," said the Bab, "must be immovable

as the rock, must weather every storm and survive every calamity. Suffer not denunciations of the foolish and calumnies of the mullas to afflict you. If you be slain in the pathway to God, remember that great will be the reward which will be bestowed upon you."

The remainder of the apostles were then called to his presence. To each he gave a special task, and to each he assigned his own native province as the field
HIS INSTRUCTIONS

of his labours. But all were to refrain from specific reference to the Bab himself. And to all he addressed these parting words:

"You have been chosen as repositories of God's wisdom. It behoves each one of you to manifest the attributes of God, and to exemplify by your deeds and words the signs of His righteousness, His power and His glory. Verily, this is the day spoken of by God in His book: 'On that day will We set a seal upon their mouths; yet shall their tongues speak unto Us, and their feet shall bear witness to that which they have done.' Ponder also the words of Jesus addressed to His disciples as He sent them forth to propagate the Cause of God: 'Ye are even as the fire which in the darkness of the night has been kindled upon the mountain-top. Let your light shine before the eyes of men. Such must be the purity- of your character and the degree of your renunciation, that through you the people of the Earth may recognize and be drawn closer to the Heavenly Father who is the source of purity and grace.' O, my disciples! Verily I say, immensely exalted is this day above the days of the apostles of old. You are the witnesses of the dawn of the promised Day of God. Purge your hearts of worldly desires and let angelic virtues be your adorning. Strive that by your deeds you may bear witness to the truth. The days when idle worship was deemed sufficient are ended. The time is come when naught but the purest motive, supported by deeds of stainless purity, can ascend to the throne of the Most High. I am preparing you for the advent of a mighty Day, the newly born babe of which will excel the wisest of this present time. Scatter throughout the length and breadth of this land, and with steadfast feet and sanctified hearts, prepare the way for God's coming. Heed

not your frailty; fix your gaze upon the invincible
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power of your God. Did He not cause Abraham to
triumph over the forces of Nimrod 1 Did He not
enable Moses to vanquish Pharaoh and his hosts 1
Has He not established the rule of the poor and
lowly Jesus over all the forces of the Jewish people 1
Has He not subjected the militant tribes of Arabia to
the transforming discipline of His prophet Mahomed 1
Arise then in His Name, put your whole trust in Him
and victory is surely yours ! "

With such words did the Bab quicken the faith of
his disciples and launch them upon their mission.
And he well knew the opposition they must expect
from the orthodox upholders of ancient tradition, for,
besides making the tremendous claim to Messiahship,
he was proclaiming drastic innovations. According
to him, the Essence of God, the Primal Divine Unity,
transcends all human comprehension. All we can
know is Its manifestations. In essence all Prophets
are one. One Universal Intelligence speaks to man-
kind through successive agents according to the capa-
city and needs of the time-through Abraham, Moses,
Christ, Mahomed, and now through the latest mani-
festation, himself. But he would not be the last of
all. There never would be a last. For the world is
eternal and progress unending. Another would follow
him. And to each a boundless devotion must be
given. This was the Bab's teaching.

The first to leave and the first to suffer was Ali.
Immediately on receiving his commission from the
Bab he set out for Najaf. Arrived in this holy city he
proceeded to carry out the Bab's intention of intro-
ducing the new Faith into Turkish territory. Ac-
cordingly, in the presence of the leading men of Shiah
Islam, he fearlessly announced the manifestation of
DEPARTURE OF HUSAYN
the Bab, the Gate, whose advent they were eagerly
awaiting. In proof of this claim Ali recounted the
number of verses, prayers, homilies and scientific
treatises which streamed from the pen of the Bab.
But instead of welcoming these life-giving evidences
of a new-born revelation the mullas pronounced Ali a
heretic and expelled him from the assembly. Even-
tually he was bound and delivered into the hands of
the Turkish Government, arraigned as a wrecker of

Islam, a disgrace to the Faith and worthy of the penalty of death. He was taken to Baghdad, where he was publicly accused of being an infidel, an abrogator of the laws of Islam, and a repudiator of its rituals and standards. He was again thrown into prison. Then he was deported to Constantinople. And after that nothing more was ever heard of him.

Husayn remained with the Bab some days after Ali's departure, and then proceeded to Isphahan, where he fearlessly and unreservedly delivered the message with which he had been entrusted. He was immediately denounced as claiming that he whose cause he was now championing was the revealer of a divinely inspired book whose tone and language resembled the Koran. Thus was he disrupting the holy Faith of Islam. His denouncers appealed to the Governor, but he refused to interfere in such a matter, and Husayn was able to remain in peace and make a few converts before proceeding to Teheran. At the Persian capital he was told of one Baha-ullah, the noble son of a noble father of high standing. This young man of eight-and-twenty had high intellectual attainments and was devoted to religious pursuits. Husayn entrusted to one of his adherents a scroll to

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be handed personally to Baha-ullah. The latter read the scroll and sent back the messenger to Husayn with a small present and an expression of his appreciation and love. Husayn, on receipt of the present and message, fervently kissed the present and then took the messenger in his arms and kissed his eyes. The messenger was amazed, and wondered what kind of a bond it was that could unite these two souls and kindle so fervent a fellowship in their hearts.

A few days later Husayn left Teheran for Khorasan. In that province he exhibited in an astounding manner the effects of that regenerating power with which the Bab had invested him. In whatever gathering he appeared, no matter how great the number, or how representative the character of the divines who were present, he alone came to the front as the chief speaker. His fine character, as well as his extreme devoutness, ennobled his already high reputation. He made many converts among the mullas, the most notable of whom was Mirza Mahomed Baquir, who became a devoted follower of the Bab. Love of the

Bab, indeed, inflamed the new convert's soul with such a consuming passion that no one could resist its force. He became the terror of his enemies and the inspiration of his friends.

As soon as Husayn had won such able and devoted supporters to the Cause he reported the result to the Bab, who, on receipt of the good news, kept repeating, "How marvellous, how exceedingly marvellous!" What especially pleased the Bab in Husayn's letter was his reference to Baha-ullah's immediate response to the divine message and the news that Baha-ullah had boldly initiated a campaign in his native province. The Bab was gladdened at the marvellous success. Now he was assured that, if he himself fell a victim to

BAB'S JOURNEY TO MECCA

the tyranny of his foes, his Cause would live: the master-hand of Baha-ullah would direct it, and under his direction it would flourish and eventually yield its choicest fruits.

His mind thus eased, the Bab, accompanied by Quddus, now joined a company of pilgrims leaving for Mecca. They proceeded in the month of October 1844, first to Bushire, and from there by sailing boat to Jeddah on the Red Sea.

High seas and the complete absence of comfort could neither interfere with the regularity of the Bab's devotions nor perturb the peacefulness of his meditations and prayers. "Whenever, by day or night, I chanced to meet them," says a fellow-pilgrim, "I invariably found the Bab and Quddus together, both absorbed in their work-the Bab in dictating, and Quddus in taking down his words."

Upon his arrival at Jeddah the Bab donned the pilgrim's garb, and mounting a camel, set out for Mecca. One day a roving Bedouin snatched the Bab's saddle-bag, which was lying on the ground, and vanished into the desert. The bag contained the Bab's writings, and his servant wished to pursue the thief. But the Bab restrained him, saying:

"Had I allowed you, you would surely have overtaken and punished him. But this was not to be. The writings which that bag contained are destined to reach, through the instrumentality of this Arab, such places as we could never have succeeded in attaining. Grieve not, therefore, at this action, for this was decreed by God, the Ordainer, the Almighty."

Many a time afterwards did the Bab, on similar occasions, seek to comfort his friends by such re-
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fictions. By words such as these he turned the bitterness of regret and resentment into radiant acquiescence in the Divine purpose and into joyous submission to God's will.

Arrived at Mecca, he performed all the prescribed rites of worship. With the utmost dignity and calm, and with extreme simplicity and reverence he compassed the Kabba. On the last day of his pilgrimage he met a noted member of the Shayki community to which Kazim had belonged, and in those hallowed precincts he fearlessly appealed to him. Holding his hand the Bab said:

"Verily, I declare, none beside me in this day, whether in the East or in the West, can claim to be the Gate that leadeth men to the knowledge of God. My proof is none other than that same proof whereby the truth of the Prophet Mahomed was established. Ask me whatsoever thou pleasest and now, at this very moment, I pledge myself to reveal such verses as can demonstrate the truth of my mission.

"Thou must choose either to submit thyself unreservedly to my Cause or entirely to repudiate it. No other alternative is thine. But if thou choose to reject my message I will not let thine hand go until thou pledge thy word to declare thy repudiation publicly.

" Thus shall he who speaketh the truth be made known, and he that speaketh falsely be condemned to eternal misery and everlasting shame."

This peremptory challenge thrust so suddenly upon Mirza Muhit distressed him profoundly. He excused himself from giving any immediate reply, and the two parted.

The Bab also addressed an epistle to the Sherif

BAB AT MEDINA

of the holy city, wherein he set forth in clear and unmistakable language, the distinguishing features of his mission and called upon him to arise and embrace the Cause. But this epistle the Sherif mislaid in the press of business, and it was not for some time after that he read it. Under these two rebuffs the Bab's mission to Mecca had little present result. The powers of

orthodoxy were too strong.

From Mecca the Bab proceeded to Medina. As he approached that holy city he called to mind the stirring events that had immortalized the name of Him who had lived and died within its walls. Those scenes which bore testimony to the creative power of that undying Genius seemed to be re-enacted before his eyes. He also remembered, as he trod that holy ground, that shining Herald of his own Dispensation, Shayk Ahmad-i-Aksai. There came to him, too, the vision of those holy men, pioneers and martyrs of the Faith who had fallen gloriously on the field of battle. Their sacred dust was reanimated by the gentle tread of his feet. Their shades were stirred by the reviving breath of his presence. They seemed to be addressing to him this fervent plea :

"Return not unto thy native land, we beseech thee, O thou beloved of our hearts! Abide thou in our midst, for here, far from the tumult of thine enemies who are lying in wait for thee, thou shalt be safe and secure. We are fearful for thee. We dread the plottings and machinations of thy foes."
"Fear not," the indomitable Spirit of the Bab replied, "I am come into the world to bear witness to the glory of sacrifice. You are aware of the intensity of my longing. You realize the degree of my renunciation. Rather, therefore, beseech the Lord your God to hasten the hour of my martyrdom and
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to accept my sacrifice. Grieve not if I depart from this land, for I am hastening to fulfil my destiny."

He returned to Jeddah, embarked on a ship and reached Bushire nine months after his departure on the pilgrimage. He had not effected the object with which he had gone to Mecca. This youth from Shiraz had been received with icy contempt by the powers that be in the holy city. But his spirit was undaunted. While still at Bushire the Bab bade Quddus, his faithful companion during his pilgrimage, to depart for Shiraz.

"~he hour of separation," said the Bab, "hath struck-a separation to which no reunion will follow except in the Kingdom of God, in the presence of the King of Glory. The hand of destiny will ere long plunge you into an ocean of tribulation for His sake. I, too, will follow you. I, too, will be im-

mersed beneath its depths. Rejoice with exceeding gladness, for you have been chosen as the standard-bearer of the host of the afflicted. You are in the vanguard of that noble army who will suffer martyrdom in His name. But you will attain the presence of Him, who is the one object of our adoration and love. In His presence you will forget the harm that shall have befallen you. The hosts of the Unseen will hasten forth to assist you and will proclaim to all the world your heroism and glory. And yours will be the ineffable joy of quaffing the cup of martyrdom for His sake."

Having thus spoken, the Bab delivered into his hands a copy of "The Seven Qualifications," a treatise in which he had set forth the essential requirements of those who had attained to a knowledge of the new Revelation and had recognized its claim..

QUDDUS

Quddus was affectionately welcomed at Shiraz by the Bab's maternal uncle, Siyyid Ali, and succeeded in persuading him to embrace the Cause. And so steadfast became Siyyid Ali's faith, and so profound grew his love for the Bab that he consecrated his whole life to his service. With unrelaxing vigilance he arose to defend the Cause. He scorned fatigue, and persevered in his task until the hour when, in company with the Seven Martyrs, he laid down his life for Him. Quddus also gave the Bab's treatise to a mulla named Sadik, and stressed the necessity of immediately putting its provisions into effect. And so enraptured was Sadik by the treatise that he unhesitatingly resolved to carry out all the observances it contained. Driven by the impelling force inherent in the Bab's treatise he one day, while leading the congregation in prayer, suddenly proclaimed the message of the Bab.

Consternation seized the entire congregation. The distinguished divines who occupied the front seats loudly protested.

"Woe betide us, the guardians and protectors of the Faith of God! Behold, this man has hoisted the standard of heresy. Down with this infamous traitor! "

The populace echoed these protestations. The whole city was aroused. Public order was seriously threatened and the Governor had to intervene and inquire into the cause of this sudden commotion.

He was informed that a disciple of the young man called the Bab had arrived in Shiraz and was propagating the teachings of his Master. "This disciple," the Governor was further informed, "claims that his teacher is the author of a new revelation contained in a book which he asserts is divinely inspired. Mulla.

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Sadik has embraced that faith and is fearlessly summoning the multitude to the acceptance of that message. He declares its recognition to be the first obligation of every loyal and pious follower of Shiah Islam."

Hearing this, the Governor promptly ordered the arrest of both Quddus and Sadik, and the copy of the Bab's treatise was seized by the police.

"Tell us," angrily asked the Governor as he turned to Sadik, "if you are aware of the opening passages of the treatise wherein the Bab addresses the rulers and kings of the Earth in these terms: 'Divest yourselves of the robe of sovereignty, for He who is the King in truth, hath been made manifest! The Kingdom is God's.' If this be true it must necessarily apply to my sovereign. Must Mahomed Shah lay down his crown and abandon his sovereignty? Must I, too, abdicate my power and relinquish my position?"

"When once the truth of the Revelation announced by the Author of these words," replied Sadik, "shall have been definitely established, the truth of whatever has fallen from His lips will likewise be vindicated. If these words be the word of God, the abdication of Mahomed Shah and his like can matter but little. It can in no wise turn aside the Divine purpose nor alter the sovereignty of the Almighty and eternal King." The Governor was sorely displeased with such an answer. He reviled and cursed Sadik, and ordered his attendants to scourge him with a thousand lashes, to burn the beards of both Quddus and Sadik, to pierce their noses and pass a cord through the incision and lead them by it through the city.

With magnificent fortitude both resigned themselves to their fate, and a joyous exultation invaded their

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souls. Subsequently, they were expelled from Shiraz and warned that if they ever returned to the city they would be crucified.

The Governor then sought out the Bab and sent a

guard to Bushire to bring him in chains to Shiraz.

On the way they met the Bab himself, who, approaching the leader, delivered himself into his hands. On his arrival in Shiraz the Governor himself hastily summoned him to his presence.

"Do you realise," he angrily protested, "what a great mischief you have kindled? Are you aware what a disgrace you have become to the holy Faith of Islam and to the august person of our sovereign? Are you not the man who claims to be the author of a new revelation annulling the sacred precepts of the Koran ? "

" If any bad man come unto you," replied the Bab in the words of the Koran, "clear up the matter at once, lest through ignorance ye harm others, and be speedily constrained to repent of what ye have done."

"What," exclaimed the Governor, "Dare you ascribe evil, and ignorance, and folly to us ? "

Then turning to his attendant, he bade him strike the Bab in the face. And so violent was the blow that the Bab's turban fell to the ground. But the leading Mulla of Shiraz, highly disapproving of the conduct of the Governor, ordered the turban to be replaced upon the Bab's head, and explained to the Governor the circumstances in which the verse quoted by the Bab had been revealed. By this means he sought to calm the Governor's fury.

" The wise course," argued the Mulla, " is to inquire into this matter with great care, and judge according to the precepts of the Holy Book."

The Governor readily consented and, after giving sureties, the Bab was allowed to go to the house of his

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maternal uncle, where he remained in strict seclusion for some time.

And there he was secretly joined by Husayn, his first disciple, who had made his way thither from Khorasan. Several times at night did the two meet and converse till the break of day. But Husayn's intercourse with the Bab became known. The populace feared his contemplating a still fiercer onslaught upon their time-honoured institutions. So the Bab instructed him to return to his native province of Khorasan. The Bab likewise dismissed his companions. And these, spreading through the length and breadth of the country, fearlessly proclaimed to their countrymen the regenerating power of the new-born Revelation. A wave of passionate inquiry

swayed the minds and hearts of both the leaders and the masses of the people. Amazement and wonder seized those who had heard from the lips of the messengers of the Bab the tale of those signs and testimonies which had heralded the birth of his manifestation. The Shah himself was moved to inquire into the matter, and despatched Sayad Yahya, the most learned of his subjects, to interview the Bab. For about two hours this envoy directed the attention of the Bab to the most abstruse themes in the teachings of Islam. But the conciseness and lucidity of the Bab's answers so excited his wonder and admiration that he, too, became a convert. And such was the state of certitude to which he attained that he affirmed that if all the powers of the Earth were to be leagued against him, they would be powerless to shake his confidence in the greatness of the Bab's Cause. So the Bab enjoyed comparative tranquillity for a time. But meanwhile the Governor was bending every effort to involve the Bab in fresh embarrassá

BAB IMPRISONED

ments. And being informed that every night eager crowds gathered to visit the Bab, he forthwith ordered his arrest. The chief constable broke into the house where the Bab was staying, arrested him, and came off with all documents. On hearing of this, however, the Shah dismissed the Governor from office. And on obtaining his freedom the Bab proceeded to Isphahan, where he was most hospitably received by the chief Mulla. There, for a time, things went well.

An unceasing stream of visitors flowed to his residence. A few indeed came merely to satisfy their curiosity, but others came to obtain a deeper understanding of his Faith, and still others to seek a remedy for their ills and sufferings, and his popularity grew. But his growing popularity soon aroused the resentment of the ecclesiastical authorities. They viewed with envy the ascendancy which he was slowly acquiring over the thoughts and consciences of their followers. With feelings of dismay they beheld on every side evidences of his all-pervasive influence invading the stronghold of orthodoxy and subverting their foundations. They accordingly summoned a gathering, and at it signed and sealed a document which condemned him as a heretic and declared him to be deserving of the penalty of death. They sent him to Tabriz and thence to Mah Ku, a place so remote that they hoped that by

sending him there the tide of his rising influence would be stemmed and every tie that bound him to the body of his disciples throughout the country be severed.

Confined within the walls of the castle the Bab was indeed separated from his disciples, but he was able to devote his time the more to the composition of the Persian Bayan, in which he laid down the laws and precepts of his dispensation, plainly and emphatically announced the advent of a subsequent Revelation, and

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persistently urged his followers to seek and find "Him whom God would make manifest."

Meanwhile, Husayn, who had been endeavouring to spread the knowledge of the new Revelation in Meshed, when he heard of the Bab's incarceration, determined to walk the whole way from the eastern side of Persia to the western to see him. The Bab affectionately embraced him. on his arrival, and at the end of nine days dismissed him. with these words: "On foot you have walked from your native province to this place, and on foot you must return. . . You should visit on your way the believers of Tabriz, Teheran and other places. To each you will convey the expression of my love and tender affection. . . You will strive to inflame their hearts anew with the fire of the love of God and will endeavour to fortify their faith in His Revelation."

Husayn proceeded first to Teheran and thence to Barfurush, the home of Quddus; and there his keen insight swiftly apprehended the magnitude of the power latent in Quddus and the nobility of his character.

Husayn then continued his journey to Meshed, where he built a house, in which he was soon joined by Quddus. A steady stream of visitors poured to see Quddus, acknowledging the claim of the Cause and willingly enlisting under its banner. In time such a conflagration was lighted in the hearts of men that its quickening power was felt to the most outlying parts. And while the Almighty, through Quddus, had in Khorasan in the East lit a fire that glowed in hottest flame, He had in Kerbela, beyond the western confines of Persia, kindled the light of Tahirih, 1 who had 1 Also known as Qurrat-i-Ayni.

TAHIRIH

been converted to the Cause of the Bab by reading his writings at Kerbela. Unwamed and uninvited,

she had perceived the dawning light of the promised Revelation breaking upon the city of Shiraz, and was prompted to pen her message and plead her fidelity to him who was the revealer of that light. She vehemently denounced the corruption and perversity of her generation, and fearlessly advocated a fundamental revolution in the habits and manners of her people. Her indomitable spirit was quickened by the fire of her love for the Bab. All who met her were ensnared by her bewitching eloquence. None could resist her charm; and few could escape the contagion of her belief. She was able to fire the imagination of a considerable number of both the Persian and the Arab inhabitants of Iraq and lead them to join forces with those in Persia. Eventually she herself came to Persia, and was sent by Baha-ullah to Khorasan with a company of believers.

In the meanwhile, disturbances had occurred in Meshed. The number of seekers had swelled to such proportions as to excite the apprehension of the authorities. And the chief constable, determining to assert his rights, ordered the arrest of Husayn's special attendant, named Hasan. They pierced his nose, passed a cord through the incision, and with this halter led him through the streets. Husayn tried to appease the anger of his companions. But their hearts burned with impatience to redress that bitter injury. A number of them banded themselves together and loudly raised through the streets of Meshed the cry of "Ya Sahibaz-Zaman" ¹ as a protest against this sudden affront to the dignity of their faith. The city

¹ .. 0 Lord of the Age I "-one of the titles of the promised Messiah.

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re-echoed with the sound of their voices. And the reverberation of their shouts reached even the outlying regions of the province and raised a tumult in the hearts of men.

That very night Quddus bade farewell to his companions, departed from Meshed and journeyed to Badasht, where he was joined by Baha-ullah and also by Tahirih. Here a memorable and decisive conference took place. Every day witnessed the abrogation of a new law or the repudiation of a long-established tradition. The veils that guarded the sanctity of the ordinances of Islam were sternly rent asunder, and

the idols that had so long claimed the adoration of their blind worshippers were rudely demolished. At one meeting, suddenly, the figure of Tahirih, adorned and unveiled, appeared before the eyes of the assembled companions. Consternation seized the gathering. To behold her face unveiled was to them inconceivable. To gaze even at her shadow they deemed improper. Yet quietly, and with perfect dignity, she advanced towards Quddus, and seated herself on his right-hand side. Her unruffled serenity contrasted sharply with the affrighted countenances of those who gazed upon her. The face of Quddus betrayed a feeling of inexpressible anger. His attitude failed, however, to move her. A feeling of joy and triumph illumined her face. Undeterred by the tumult she had raised, she rose from her seat without the least premeditation, and in language like the words of the Koran, delivered an appeal, at the end of which she declared:

"I am the Word which the Messiah is to utter, the Word which will put to flight the chiefs and nobles of the Earth. This day is the day of rejoicing—the day on which the fetters of the past are burst

THE NEW ORDER

asunder. Let those who have shared in the great achievement arise and embrace each other."

That memorable day witnessed the most revolutionary changes in the life and habits of the assembled followers of the Bab. Their manner of worship underwent a sudden and fundamental transformation. The prayers and ceremonials by which those devout worshippers had been disciplined were irrevocably discarded. The clarion-call of the new Order had been sounded. And mountain and valley re-echoed the shouts with which that enthusiastic band hailed the extinction of the old and the birth of the new Day. Husayn had now, July 1848, decided to proceed on a pilgrimage to Kerbela. Before he had departed, however, a messenger arrived bearing for him the Bab's turban. "Adorn your head," was the message he bore from the Bab, "with my green turban; and unfurling the Black Standard before you, hasten to assist my beloved Quddus." As soon as he received the message Husayn left Meshed. Outside the city he hoisted the Black Standard, placed the turban of the Bab upon his head and gave the signal for the march, and wherever he and his fellow-disciples tarried

on the way he would fearlessly proclaim the message of the New Day.

Arriving near Damghan he pointed in the direction of Mazindaran and said:

"This is the way that leads to our Kербela. I, together with seventy-two of my companions, shall suffer death for the sake of the Well-Beloved. Whoso is unable to renounce the world, let him now depart, for later he will be unable to escape."

The news of their approach alarmed Saidul-Ulama.

The widespread and growing popularity of Husayn.

MOBLEM MYSTIOS

the Black Standard which waved before him, above all, the number, the discipline, and the enthusiasm of his companions, combined to arouse the implacable hatred of that cruel and overbearing doctor of the law. He bade the crier summon the people of Barfurush to the masjid and announce that a sermon of such momentous consequence was to be delivered by him that no loyal adherent of Islam could afford to ignore it. As a result, an immense crowd of men, women and children thronged the masjid, saw him ascend the pulpit, fling his turban to the ground, tear open the neck of his shirt, and bewail the plight into which the Faith had fallen.

"Awake," he thundered from the pulpit, "for our enemies stand at our very doors ready to wipe out all that we cherish as pure and holy in Islam. Should we fail to resist them, none will be left to survive their onslaught. It is the duty of all the inhabitants of Barfurush, both young and old, both men and women, to arm themselves against these contemptible wreckers of Islam, and by every means resist their onset. To-morrow, at the hour of dawn, let all of you arise and march out to exterminate their forces."

The entire congregation rose in response. His passionate eloquence, the undisputed authority he exercised over them, and the dread of losing their own lives and property combined to induce them to make every preparation for the coming encounter. They armed themselves with every available weapon and set out at break of day to face and slay the enemies of their Faith. Three miles from Barfurush Husayn and his companions encountered their enemies. A fierce expression of savagery rested upon their countenances. The foulest imprecations fell unceasingly from their

FIGHT AT BARFURUSH

lips. And Busayn's companions, in the face of this angry populace, made as if to unsheathe their swords.

"Not yet," commanded their leader, "not until the aggressor forces us to protect ourselves must our swords leave ~heir scabbards."

Scarcely had he uttered these words than the enemy opened fire and six of the companions were immediately hurled to the ground.

" Beloved leader," exclaimed one of them, "we have followed you with no other desire than to sacrifice ourselves in the path of the Cause. Allow us, we pray you, to defend ourselves."

"The time is not yet," replied Busayn, "the number is not yet complete."

A bullet immediately afterwards pierced the heart of one of his companions who had walked all the way from Meshed. And at the sight of that devoted companion fallen dead at his feet, Busayn raised his eyes to heaven and prayed:

" Behold, O God, my God, the plight of Thy chosen companions, and witness the welcome which these people have accorded Thy loved ones. Thou knowest we cherish no other desire than to guide them to the way of Truth and to confer upon them the knowledge of Thy Revelation. Thou hast commanded us to defend our lives against the assaults of the enemy. Faithful to Thy command, I now arise with my companions to resist the attack which they have launched against us."

Unsheathing his sword and spurring his charger into the midst of the enemy, Busayn then pursued the assailant of his fallen companion. Unmindful of the bullets that rained upon him, he forced his way through the ranks of the enemy, rode straight to the

MOSLEM MYSTICS

residence of the Saidul-Ulama, and thrice making the circuit of his house, cried out:

"Let that contemptible coward who has incited the inhabitants of this town to wage holy war against us emerge from his inglorious retreat. Has he forgotten that he who preaches a holy war must needs himself march at the head of his followers, and by his own deeds sustain their enthusiasm 1 "

To the crowd which had gathered about him Husayn addressed these words:

" O, followers of the Prophet of God, and shiahs of the Imams of His Faith! Why have ye risen against us 1 Why deem the shedding of our blood meritorious in the sight of God ~ Did we ever repudiate the truth of your Faith 1 Is this the hospitality which the Apostle of God has enjoined His followers to accord to both the faithful and the infidel ~ Consider: I alone, with no other weapon than my sword, have emerged unscathed from the midst of the fire with which ye have besieged me. God has protected me and will establish the ascendancy of His Faith in your eyes."

Husayn then proceeded to the caravanserai, closed the gates, assembled his companions, and as evening approached, asked whether anyone would arise, and, renouncing his life for the sake of his Faith, ascend to the roof of the caravanserai and sound the call to prayer. A youth gladly responded. No sooner had the opening words of " Allah-a-Akbar " dropped from his lips than a bullet struck, and killed him.

"Let another among you arise," urged Husayn, " and with the self-same renunciation, proceed with the prayer which that youth was unable to finish."

Another youth started to his feet and had no sooner uttered the words, " I bear witness that Mahomed is ARRIVAL OF QUDDUS

the Apostle of God " than he, too, was struck down. A third youth, at the bidding of his Chief, attempted to complete the prayer, and was uttering the words, "There is no God, but God," when he, in his turn, fell dead. The fall of the third companion decided

Husayn to throw open the gate of the caravanserai. Leaping on horseback and followed by his companions, he charged his assailants and decimated the forces that had been arrayed against him.

A few days later he proceeded to the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsi, and on reaching it he commenced to build a fort, where he was soon to be joined by Quddus.

The arrival of Quddus was enthusiastically welcomed, and he now took over the leadership. Every morning and every afternoon Quddus would summon Husayn and the most distinguished of his companions and ask them to chant the writings of the Bab. Despising all danger and oblivious of his own needs Quddus continued his daily communion with his Beloved, writing His praises, and rousing the defenders of the fort to fresh exertions.

" My soul is wedded to the telling of Thee," he was

wont to exclaim; "remembrance of Thee is the stay and solace of my life! I glory in that I was the first to suffer ignominiously for Thy sake in Shiraz. I long to be the first to suffer a death that shall be worthy of Thy Cause."

On the other hand, the imperious Saidul-Ulama addressed a burning appeal to Nasirudin, the Shah who had recently ascended the throne.

"The standard of revolt," he pleaded, "has been raised by the contemptible sect of the Babis. This wretched band of irresponsible agitators has dared to strike at the very foundations of Your Majesty's authority. They have built themselves a fort and are MOSLEM MYSTICS directing a campaign against you. With unswerving obstinacy they have proclaimed their independent sovereignty—a sovereignty that would abase to the dust the imperial diadem of your illustrious ancestors. You stand at the threshold of your reign. What greater triumph could signalise the commencement of your rule than the extirpation of this hateful creed! But should you vacillate in your policy I feel it my duty to warn you, that not only this Province, but the whole of Persia will repudiate your authority and surrender to their cause."

The Shah referred the matter to the military authorities and instructed them to take whatever measures they might deem fit to eradicate these disturbers of his realm. An army was raised. The bread and even the water for the defenders were intercepted. But, ere the commander launched his attack, he sent a messenger to Husayn to ascertain the purpose of his activities.

"Tell your master," replied Husayn, "that we utterly repudiate any intention of subverting the foundation of the monarchy. Our Cause concerns the revelation of the Promised One and is a matter for the spiritual authorities. Let the prince who commands the army direct the ulamas of Sari and Barfurush to betake themselves to this place, and ask us to demonstrate the validity of the Revelation proclaimed by the Bab. Let the Koran decide as to who speaks the truth. Let the prince himself decide as to who speaks the truth. And let him also decide how he would treat us if we fail to establish the truth of our Cause."

The appeal had no effect on the prince. Three days

later he launched an attack upon the fort. Quartering his hosts upon a height he gave the signal to open fire.

!IEGE OF TABARSI

"Mount your steeds, O heroes of God!" Quddus exclaimed as he ordered the gates of the fort to be thrown open. And Husayn, with two hundred and two of his companions, ran to their horses and followed Quddus as he rode out to the enemy's stronghold. At a given moment the enemy discharged a thousand bullets, one of which struck Quddus in the mouth. Husayn and others hastened to the rescue of his friend and with pain and sorrow conducted their wounded leader to the shelter of the stronghold, where Quddus thus exhorted them:

c. We should submit to whatever is the will of God. Though my body be afflicted, my soul is immersed in gladness. My gratitude to God knows no bounds. If you love me, suffer not that this joy be obscured by the sight of your lamentations."

This memorable engagement took place in December 1848. In that same month Beha-ullah set out from Nur for the fort of Tabarsi. But on the way he and his companions were seized and brought before the Governor of Amul, and a Sayad urged in vehement language that these followers of the Bab be put to death.

"These obscure sectarians," he cried, "are the sworn enemies both of the State and of the Faith of Islam. We must at all cost extirpate the heresy."

The Governor, in order to check the passions which had been aroused, ordered his attendants to prepare the rods to bastinado the captives. They were commencing to bind the servants when Baha-ullah intervened, saying:

"None of these men is guilty of any crime. I offer myself as a willing victim of your chastisement."

The Governor was reluctantly compelled to give

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orders that the Baha-ullah alone should be beaten. The same treatment (beating by the bastinado) that had been meted out to the Bab five months previously at Tabriz, Baha-ullah now suffered in the presence of the assembled ulamas of Amul. And he had the additional mortification of not being able to throw in his lot with the defenders of fort Tabarsi.

Meanwhile, a renewed attack was made upon the fort, and to meet it Husayn prepared himself. He performed his ablutions, clothed himself in new garments, attired his head with the Bab's turban, and prepared for the approaching encounter. An indefinable joy illumined his face. Alone with Quddus, he poured forth all that his enraptured soul could no longer restrain. Then, as soon as the morning-star had risen, he started to his feet, mounted his charger, gave the signal to open the gates of the fort, rode out at the head of three hundred and thirteen companions and, dashing forward, overcame the resistance of barricade after barricade. Alas! he was soon struck in the breast by a bullet. Bleeding profusely, he dismounted, staggered a few steps, and fell exhausted to the ground, where he lay till two of his companions came to the rescue and bore him to the fort, into the presence of Quddus.

" You have hastened the hour of your departure," said Quddus, " and have abandoned me to the mercy of my foes. Please God, I will ere long join you and taste the sweetness of heaven's ineffable delight."

" May my life be a ransom to you," was Husayn's reply.

A long time elapsed before Quddus would admit his companions to the room. When they entered it they found that Husayn had already expired. But a faint smile still lingered on his face; and such was the

DEATH OF HUSA. YN

peacefulness of his countenance that he seemed only to have fallen asleep. Quddus himself attended to his burial, clothed him in his own shirt, and gave instructions for him to be laid to rest near the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsi.

"Well is it with you to have remained to your last hour faithful to the Covenant of God," said Quddus, as he laid a parting kiss upon his eyes and forehead, and began speaking with such poignancy that the seven companions who were standing beside him wept profusely and wished that they had been sacrificed in his stead. Then with his own hands he laid the body in the tomb, and cautioned those who were standing near to conceal even from their companions the spot which served as his resting-place.

It was at the hour of dawn on February 2, 1849, that the burial of Husayn took place. He was but six and thirty years of age when he quaffed the cup

of martyrdom. The traits of mind and of character which from his very youth he displayed, the profundity of his learning, the tenacity of his faith, his intrepid courage, his singleness of purpose, his high sense of justice and unswerving devotion, marked him as an outstanding figure among those who, by their lives, have borne witness to the glory of the new Revelation. And such was his devotion to the Bab that, says one who knew him, if anyone did so much as mention his name he could not restrain his tears; often when engaged in perusing his writings he would be almost beside himself with rapture, and nearly faint with joy.

For many weeks longer the siege of Tabarsi continued. The food of the besieged was reduced to the flesh of horses. Even the leather of their saddles was
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consumed by these hard-pressed companions. And they boiled the grass and devoured it with avidity. But as their strength declined Quddus multiplied his visits to them, and endeavoured by his words of cheer and hope to lighten the load of their agony.

" A glimpse of his face and the magic of his words, would transmute our despondency into golden joy," said one of his followers. " We were reinforced with a strength of such intensity, that had the hosts of our enemies suddenly appeared before us we felt ourselves able to vanquish any foe."

The enemy were surprised to find that the booming of their guns had failed to silence the voice of prayer and the acclamations of joy which the besieged raised in answer to their threats. Instead of the surrender which they expected, the call to prayer, the chanting of the Koran, and the chorus of gladsome voices intoning hymns of thanksgiving unceasingly reached their ears.

In the month of May, accompanied by the roar of cannons, several regiments of infantry and cavalry rushed to storm the fort. And the sound of their approach impelled Quddus to send out his companions to repulse their attack.

" Never since our occupation of this fort," said he, "have we under any circumstances attempted to direct an offensive against our opponents. Not until they unchained their attack upon us did we arise to defend our lives. Our sole, our unalterable purpose has been to vindicate by our deeds, and by our

readiness to shed our blood in the path of our Faith, the exalted character of our mission. But the hour is fast approaching when we shall have to consummate this task.'

The Commander of the enemy forces now sent an
BETRAYAL OF QUDDUS

emissary requesting that two representatives be delegated by the besieged to conduct confidential negotiations with him in the hope of arriving at a peaceful settlement. Accordingly, Quddus instructed two of his companions to act as his representatives. They were courteously received and the Commander wrote in the margin of a Koran:

" I swear by this most holy Book, by the righteousness of God who has revealed it, and the Mission of Him who was inspired with its verses, that I cherish no other purpose than to promote peace and friendliness between us. Come forth from your stronghold and rest assured that no hand will be stretched forth against you."

Quddus received the Koran from the hand of his messenger, reverently kissed it and said: "O, our Lord, decide between us and between our people with truth; for the best to decide art Thou." Then he bade his companions prepare to leave the fort. "By our response to their invitation," he told them, "we shall demonstrate the sincerity of our intentions." Attired with the green turban the Bab had sent him, Quddus mounted the favourite steed of the Commander, which had been sent for him. His chief companions, sayads and learned divines rose before him, the remainder followed on foot, two hundred and two in all.

Then followed an act of grossest treachery. Fire was opened upon them. Any who escaped the bullets were killed by the swords of the officers and spears of the men. Of the captives a few were cut to pieces with the sword, others were torn asunder, a number was bound to trees and riddled with bullets, and still others were blown from the mouth.

MOSLEM MYSTIOS

consigned to the flames. Yet in the very throes of death these unconquerable heroes were still heard to utter the words, "Holy, holy, O Lord our God, Lord of the angels and the spirit."

Quddus himself was not killed with the others: he was detained as a prisoner and taken to Barfurush.

There the Commander was reluctant to ill-treat his captive. But the hatred with which Quddus and his Cause inspired the Saidul-Ulama blazed into furious rage as he witnessed the increasing evidence that the Commander was inclined to allow so formidable an opponent to slip from his grasp. Day and night he remonstrated with him. In the fury of his despair he appealed to the mob. And the whole of Barfurush were aroused by the persistency of his call, till, fearing that his own life might be endangered, the Commander summoned to his presence the leading ulamas, to consult with them as to the measures that should be taken to allay the popular excitement; and Quddus also was brought before him.

" For what reason," the Saidul-Ulama impertinently inquired of Quddus, " have you, by wearing a green turban, arrogated to yourself a right which only he who is a true descendant of the Prophet can claim ? Do you not know that whoso defies this sacred tradition is accursed of God 1 "

Intimidated by the imprecations of the ulamas, and forgetful of his oath, the Commander abjectly surrendered Quddus to the hands of his unrelenting foes. And the people arose to perpetrate upon their victim acts of such atrocious cruelty as no pen can describe. He was stripped of his clothes, his turban bestowed upon him by the Bab was befouled. Barefooted, bareheaded, and loaded with chains, he was paraded through the streets, followed and scorned by the entire
MARTYRDOM OF QUDDUS

population of the town. Assailed with knives and axes by the scum of the women, his body was pierced and mutilated and eventually delivered to the flames. Yet, amidst all his torments Quddus was heard whispering forgiveness to his foes. "Forgive, O my God, the trespasses of these people. Deal with them in thy mercy, for they know not what we have already discovered and cherish. Show them, O God, the Way of Truth, and turn their ignorance into faith."

These things happened in May 1849. And all this time tales of the signs and wonders which the Bab's unnumbered admirers had witnessed were being transmitted from mouth to mouth, and had given rise to a wave of unprecedented enthusiasm which rapidly spread over the whole country. It swept over Teheran itself and roused the ecclesiastical dignitaries to

fresh exertions against him. For they trembled at the progress of a Movement which, if allowed to run its course, would soon engulf the institutions upon which their authority and their very existence depended. They saw on every side increasing evidence of a faith and devotion such as they themselves had been powerless to evoke, of a loyalty which struck at the very roots of the fabric which their own hands had reared, and which all the resources at their command had as yet failed to undermine. The Shah's minister accordingly issued orders for the immediate convocation of the ecclesiastical dignitaries of Tabriz for the express purpose of arraigning the Bab and of seeking means for the extinction of his influence. And the Bab was brought to Tabriz for this investigation.

This convocation was held in the official residence
MOSLEM MYSTICS

of the Governor, and a number of the most distinguished Shaykhis and doctors of divinity were amongst the convened. The heir to the throne himself attended. Nizamul-Ulama presided. A multitude of people besieged the entrance to the hall, and were pressing forward in such large numbers that a passage had to be forced for the Bab.

As he entered the assembly the expression of confidence which sat upon his brow and the spirit of power which shone from his whole being deeply impressed those who saw him, and a mysterious silence fell upon men, till it was broken by the Nizamul-Ulama :

"Who do you claim to be," he asked the Bab,

" and what is the message which you have brought 1 "

" I am, I am, I am the Promised One! " exclaimed the Bab, "I am the One whose name you have for a thousand years invoked, at whose mention you have risen, whose advent you have longed to witness, and the hour of whose Revelation you have prayed to God to hasten. Verily I say, it behoves the people, both of the East and of the West, to obey my Word and to pledge allegiance to my Person."

Immediately after he had declared himself to be the Promised One a feeling of awe seized those who were present. They dropped their hands in silent confusion. The pallor of their faces betrayed the agitation of their hearts. But not all were thus awed. A certain Mulla Mahomed who had himself, like the Bab, been a disciple of Kazim at Kerbela, sternly

reprimanded him, saying:

" You wretched and immature lad of Shiraz! You have already subverted Iraq: would you now raise a like turmoil in Adhirbayjan 1 "

"Your Honour," replied the Bab, "I have not

TRIAL OF B.A.B

come hither of my own accord. I have been summoned to this place."

" The claim which you have advanced," said the Nizamul-Ulama, "is a stupendous one: it must needs be supported by incontrovertible evidence."

" The most convincing evidence of the truth of the Mission of the Prophet of God is admittedly his own word," replied the Bab. "He himself testifies to this truth: 'Is it not enough for them that We have sent down to Thee the Book I' The power to produce such evidence has been given to me by God. Within the space of two days and two nights I declare myself able to reveal verses of such number as will equal the whole of the Koran."

A systematic course of browbeating and mockery was now pursued by a hostile set in the assembly. The Nizamul-Ulama was sorely displeased at their attitude; and a few others were, likewise, inclined to denounce the disgraceful treatment being meted out to the Bab. But the Mulla persisted in his vehement denunciation:

" I warn you," he loudly protested. "if you allow this man to pursue his activities, the day will come when the entire population of Tabriz will have flocked to his standard. When that day comes, if he signify his wish that all the ulamas of Tabriz, that the heir-apparent himself, should be expelled from the city and that he alone should assume the reins of civil and ecclesiastical authority, no one of you will be able to oppose him. The entire city, nay, the whole province, will on that day with one voice support him."

These persistent denunciations excited the apprehension of the authorities, and they took counsel together how the progress of his Faith might be resisted. Finally, it was decided that the Bab should receive, at the hands of the Governor's bodyguard,

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the chastisement which he deserved. The guard, however, refused to accede to the request, preferring not to interfere in a matter which they considered the

sole concern of the ulamas. Thereupon the Shaykul-Islam decided to inflict the punishment himself, and summoning the Bab to his home he, with his own hand, bastinadoed him.

From Tabriz the Bab was taken back to Chihrig, where he remained for some months. Meanwhile, in other parts of Persia than in that part in which Husayn and Quddus had lost their lives disturbances had occurred. And by now the authorities in Teheran were alarmed at the recurrent manifestations of an indomitable will and a fierce and inflexible tenacity of faith. Though the Imperial army had everywhere triumphed, yet it was clear that the spirit responsible for such rare heroism was by no means vanquished. The loyalty which the remnants of that scattered band bore to their captive leader remained unimpaired. Far from being extinguished it had blazed up more intense and devastating than ever. Above all, he who had kindled that flame and nourished the spirit was still alive; and, despite his isolation, he was able to exercise his influence to the full. Extinguish that light, choke the stream at its very source, and the torrent that had brought so much devastation in its wake would run dry. Such was the thought in the mind of the Grand Vazir, who, summoning his counsellors, communicated to them his fears and acquainted them with his plans.

"Behold the storm," he exclaimed, "which the Faith of the Bab has provoked in the hearts of my fellow countrymen! Nothing short of his public execution can enable the distracted country to recover its tranquillity. If you are able to advise a **ARRAIGNMENT OF BAB** better remedy acquaint me with it, for my sole purpose is to ensure the peace of my countrymen."

Not a single voice dared venture a reply, except that of the Minister of War, who urged that to put to death a banished Sayad for the deeds of a band of irresponsible agitators would manifestly be an act of cruelty. Disregarding the advice of his counsellor the Vazir despatched orders for the Bab to be brought again to Tabriz. And three days after the Bab's arrival, s. further order was received from Vazir commanding the Governor to execute his prisoner on the very day the order should reach him. The Governor, however, objected. He expressed to the bearer of the

order his consternation. "The task I am called upon to do," he said, "is a task that only ignoble persons would accept."

This refusal being communicated to the Vazir, he thereupon ordered the bearer himself to carry out without delay and in its entirety the instructions previously given.

Deprived of his turban and sash, twin emblems of his noble lineage, the Bab, together with Siyyid Husayn, his amanuensis, was taken to the barracks. As he approached the courtyard a youth suddenly leaped forward, forcing his way through the crowd and utterly ignoring the perils which such an attempt might involve. His face was haggard, his feet were bare, his hair dishevelled. Breathless with excitement and exhausted with fatigue he flung himself at the feet of the Bab and, seizing the hem of his garment, passionately implored him:

"Send me not from thee, O Master. Wherever thou goest, suffer me to follow thee."

"Mahomed Ali," answered the Bab, "rise all'd feet
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assured that you will be with me. To-morrow you shall witness what God hath decreed."

Siyyid Husayn bore witness to the following:

"That night the face of the Bab was aglow with a joy such as had never before shone from his countenance. Indifferent to the storm that raged about him he conversed with us in gay and cheerful mood. The sorrows that had weighed so heavily on him seemed to have completely vanished. Their weight appeared to have dissolved away in the consciousness of coming victory."

Early in the morning the Governor ordered his head lictor to conduct the Bab into the presence of the leading mullas and obtain from them the authorization required for his execution. No sooner had the lictor secured the necessary documents than he delivered his captive into the hands of Sam Khan, Colonel of the Christian regiment of Urumiyya, assuring him that he could proceed with his task now that he had received the sanction of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of the realm. The youth Mahomed Ali, bursting into tears, entreated to be allowed to remain with his master. So he also was delivered into the hands of Sam Khan.

Sam Khan then ordered his men to drive a nail into the pillar separating two rooms and to make fast two ropes to that nail, from which the Bab and his companion were to be separately suspended. Mahomed Ali begged Sam Khan to have his body placed in such a position that it would shield the body of the Bab. And he was eventually placed so that his head reposed on the breast of his master. As soon as they were fastened a regiment of soldiers ranged itself in three files, each of which was ordered to open its fire in turn. The smoke of the firing

EXECUTION OF BAB

was such as to turn the light of the noontide sun into darkness. And as soon as the cloud of smoke had cleared away an astounded multitude, who had crowded on to the roof of the barracks as well as the tops of adjoining houses, beheld a scene which their eyes could scarcely believe. There, standing before them alive and unhurt, was the companion of the Bab, whilst the Bab himself had vanished uninjured from their sight. Though the cords with which they had been suspended were cut in pieces by the bullets, yet their bodies had miraculously escaped. "The Bab has gone from our sight," rang out the voices of the bewildered multitude. They set out in search for him, and eventually found him in a room engaged in conversation with Siyyid Husayn. Stunned by the force of this tremendous revelation. Sam Khan ordered his men to leave the barracks at once, and he refused ever again to associate his regiment with any act injurious to the Bab. No sooner had Sam Khan departed than the Colonel of the bodyguard volunteered to carry out the execution. On the same wall, and in the same manner, the Bab and his companion were again suspended, while the regiment was formed in line to fire on them. "Had you believed in me, O wayward generation," were the last words of the Bab to the gazing multitude, as the regiment was preparing to fire, "every one of you would have followed the example of this youth and willingly would have sacrificed himself in my path. The day will come when you will recognize me. But in that day I shall have ceased to be with you."

The regiment fired, and this time the bodies of the Bab and his companion were shattered and blended into one mass of mingled flesh and bone.

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That very moment a gale arose and swept over the city. A whirlwind of dust of incredible density obscured the light of the sun and blinded the eyes of the people. The entire city remained enveloped in darkness from noon till night.

This martyrdom of the Bab took place on July 9, 1850, thirty-one years from the date of his birth. His body was dead. His spirit lived on. Husayn had been slain in battle. Quddus had been done to death in captivity. But Baha-ullah lived. The One who shall be made manifest was alive. And in him and in others had been engendered such love for the Bab and what he stood for as, in the words of the chronicler, no eye had ever beheld nor mortal heart conceived: if branches of every tree were turned into pens, and all the seas into ink, and Earth and Heaven rolled into one parchment, the immensity of that love would still remain untold. This love for the Cause still survived. And it was sufficient. Baha-ullah was, indeed, despoiled of his possessions, deserted by his friends, driven into exile from his native land and, even in exile, confined to his house. But in him the Cause was still alive—and more than alive, purified and ennobled by the fiery trials through which it had passed.

Under the wise control and direction of Baha-ullah from his prison-house, first at Baghdad and then at Acre in Syria, there grew what is now known as the Bahai Movement which, silently propagating itself, has now spread to Europe and America as well as to India and Egypt, while the bodily remains of the Bab, long secretly guarded, now find a resting-place on Mount Carmel in a Tomb-shrine, which is a place of pilgrimage to visitors from all over the world.

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