

guardhouse. He had a great reputation, and very little was necessary to make soldiers and people believe that his life had been spared by a genuine miracle. Half the population of Persia would perhaps have become Bábis, had that guardhouse contained the entrance to a safe hiding place. But there was nothing of the sort. The poor wretch was only a man, and the soldiers saw he had no supernatural powers whatever. He was dragged again to the firing place and killed. But dissent is not to be suppressed by punishment, and of course Bábism did not die with him. Two years afterwards, when the present Shah was enjoying his favourite sport, and was somewhat in advance of his followers, three men rushed upon his Majesty and wounded him in an attempted assassination. The life of Nazr-ed-deen Shah, Kajar, was saved by his own quickness and by the

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arrival of his followers, who made prisoners of the assassins. They declared themselves Bábis, and gloried in their attempt to avenge the death of their leader and to propagate their doctrines by the murder of the Shah. The baffled criminals were put to death with the cruelty which the offences of this sect always meet with. Lighted candles were inserted in slits cut in their living bodies, and, after lingering long in agony, their tortured frames were hewn in pieces with hatchets.

In most countries, the theory of punishment is, that the State, on behalf of the community, must take vengeance upon the offender. But in Persia it is otherwise. There, in accordance with the teaching of the Koran, the theory and basis of punishment is, that the relations of the victim must take revenge upon the actual or would-be murderers. In conformity with this idea, the Shah's chamberlain executed on his Majesty's behalf, and with his own hand, one of the conspirators. Yet the Bábis remain the terror and trouble of the Government of Ispahan, where the sect is reputed to number more followers than anywhere else in Persia. But many of them have, in the present day, transferred their allegiance from Báb to Behar, a man who was lately, and may be at present, imprisoned at Acca, in Arabia, by the Turkish Government. Behar represents himself as God the Father in human form, and declares that

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Báb occupies the same position in regard to himself, that John the Baptist held to Jesus Christ. We were assured that there are respectable families who worship this imprisoned fanatic, who endanger their property and their lives by a secret devotion, which, if known, would bring them to destitution, and probably to a cruel death.

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