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Much of this book is based on Florence Khánum's letters and other family papers, on Khan's correspondence, and information from my own diaries. Quotations from Tablets addressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Khan and members of his family were translated at the time by Khan himself. These translations have not been reviewed, but permission has been given by the Universal House of Justice for their inclusion in this book.

I am indebted to Harold for his account of the historically notable Howard MacNutt case.

The Author

For my mother,
Florence Khánum

One

A bomb in the luggage?

Khan often used to say that he was unlucky. Not unblessed, that is a different matter. But certainly, reviewing his life, you feel that he lacked whatever it is that is called luck—that nick-of-time occurring of the right event at precisely the right moment. Some say luck does not exist, but the lucky know that it does. It seems to be an element quite apart from one's merits. Luck was a quality the ancients insisted on in their generals; and the Japanese would not let a royal heir marry into a family known to be unlucky.

Florence and Khan were still in 'Akká when they received disquieting news from Tehran. They had been invited to stay with one of Khan's powerful uncles, half-brother of his father, the Kalántar, and now this plan had to be cancelled. For the uncle's wife, a Qájár princess, had died after being sick for only a day, leaving behind nine children and a household in chaos.

Their home would have been an excellent base where Khan could have met with personages close to the monarch. For despite the enthusiasm for a parliament, Persia still did business in her traditional way, and to achieve a post one needed influence. With his father dead so many years, and himself back from such a long absence abroad,

being the guest of his uncle would have provided immediate approval. His aunt-in-law's death at this moment removed the direct and active support of a high-placed sponsor.

As they left Haifa harbor they strained their eyes for a last view of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's 'Akká home, and thought of all the love which had enveloped them in that place. Their ship moved out to sea under increasing darkness, and Florence wrote of how 'the evening closed in, a grey veil of clouds obscuring the skies'.

She looked forward to being with the Persians. To her, they were without fault—she loved her husband and the Persians were his people. The two and their baby would be welcomed by Bahá'ís everywhere, and enjoy Eastern hospitality, all the way from tiny cups of coffee in the bazaars, to extended visits in Bahá'í homes. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had told them to visit the believers wherever they went en route to Tehran, and refresh their hosts with the joy and peace they were bringing from 'Akká.

Constantinople in 1906 was five days water-travel from the Holy

Land. Crossing the Black Sea to Batum took another three, then twenty-four hours by rail to reach the Caspian, thirty-six for the voyage to Enzeli, and still the Khans would face several days of rough overland travel before they could reach Tehran.

At each stop the friends wrote or telegraphed ahead to other believers, and so they were always welcomed and Florence never felt like a stranger. These Bahá'ís had once been of many persuasions and had kept apart, one group from the other. They had come from Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islám, to join together in the spirit as citizens of one world community.

This peaceful life of the Bahá'ís was in great contrast with the fear and unrest the Khans were to find in the Caucasus. While still on the ship at Batum they had their first experience with revolution, or rather with its aftermath. The Russian revolution of 1905 had wrung concessions from the Czar, among them a sort of constitution and promises that there would be a parliament. Then various groups—land-owners, high-ranking army officers, priests, all those with a stake in maintaining their power and privilege—organized the misleadingly-named Union of the Russian People and set out to undercut the revolutionary gains, terrorize those who favored the changes, and brew anti-Semitism. In the Caucasus, where independence is endemic, revolution could not wholly be checked by military force; violence would burst out time and again.

Death hung over Batum, as Florence and Khan were soon to learn, but the Russian customs officials who boarded the steamer provided them with a scene more suited to comic opera. Calmly and deliberately they went through all five of the Khans' trunks and all their hand luggage. They opened each small box they came to and studied the contents at length, and one Russian official carefully

read, or pretended to, the title page of the several dozen books they had with them. But the crisis came when they discovered Florence's travelling clock. They had found a bomb. Very gingerly, they shook the box, tenderly lifted the clock from its case, examined it, listened to its ticking, and finally after group consultation solemnly boxed it up again.

Florence and Khan also were treated to another by-product of the revolution: labor was in the saddle, if only for the moment.

A furious altercation arose over the charges made for bringing their luggage from the steamer. For the three-minute row to shore and a two-minute walk to the hotel the porters demanded what amounted to robbery for that time and place: four dollars. A policeman was at hand but knew too much to intervene—they would have killed him later that night. Khan told Florence that when he had spent some time in the Caucasus (on his way to 'Abdu'l-Bahá) a few short years before, a single policeman would have made forty such ruffians run for their lives.

'Alas for the Russia that is no more,' said the gently-bred Florence. Although she herself 'saw nothing to betoken the inner unrest of the people and the real danger of the place', during the days they spent as guests in the home of Khan's cousin, the Persian Consul, she became aware that their host 'might lose his life any day'.

Revolutionaries had recently killed an American honorary Consul there (an Englishman).

By day the Consul was safe enough in the consulate—by night he dared not venture abroad. The government had flooded the city with soldiers to hold the revolutionaries in check, but not a day passed without some regrettable 'accident'. The first evening after Florence and Khan's arrival, two women were shot dead. A man was shot and killed right in front of the consulate, and the Consul's wife cried for him and her own family as well. The Consul himself was friends with both the government and the revolutionaries, but this was of little help, for the violence was out of control. A Persian merchant had been killed in an outlying district of Batum. Khan's cousin notified the Russian Governor of the murder but the Governor was powerless to inflict punishment. Had he sentenced the culprits he would have written his own death warrant. 'What am I to do?' he wrote the Consul. 'I am in a state of siege myself, in my own home!' Minimizing the danger to herself and Khan, a characteristic of Florence's letters home, she said, 'yet the tourist walks, drives and sees nothing, only feels something'. And she tells of the beauty of Batum: 'a lovely city, and the boulevard and park by the sea extends for miles. We walked there yesterday, seeing all the world and the sunset,' and breathing in fresh scents of pines, firs and cypresses. There were forests to the sky, on the mountains. There was pure water, and delicate food.

Still, the revolution was constantly on her mind and she could not help writing that they smelt gunpowder in the air, and that Khan had told her there were more firearms and gunpowder in citizens' houses here than could be found in all of New York. At this point Florence said she would write no more, 'lest this letter be opened'. Florence gradually broke the news to her family that in Persia she would be wearing a chádur (the word means tent), an outer garment concealing the wearer from head to foot. Some chádurs were of black satin, others of black brilliantine (a dress fabric such as mohair or goat's wool, glossy on both sides). The chádur was not so much a garment as a humiliation, a kind of degradation, and her wearing it horrified the American missionaries, but in obedience to 'Abdu'l-Bahá she would wear it, as did the Bahá'í women of Persia. These

willingly submitted, in order not to stir up the mullás and give them a pretext to block the escape of Persian women from their captivity, by telling the people that modern agitation over the veil was a Bahá'í plot to ruin their morals and destroy Islám. Actually there is nothing in the Qur'án to say a woman's face must be covered. But the women, like so many priest-ridden believers through the ages, were designedly kept in ignorance and were not aware of their rights. Their lives had been warped by encroaching males, all down the generations.

For contrast, in a letter of July 28 to her mother, Florence described a dress worn by the Consul's wife, an example of how modish Persian women could be when not obliged to go outdoors in the tent-like chádur.

'It was like your Worth silk (the melon pattern) exactly, and in a band of gold on black velvet around the skirt were flowers all sewn with real pearls:—also the girdle, ditto around the sleeves, while the bodice was of gold on black velvet, covered with flowers of real pearls.' About face and head she wore a white veil sewn with stars of silver. Black hair, pink cheeks, round face with dimples—'I could only stare. She was such a vision of beauty ...'

To her father Florence wrote of the splendid send-off by the Persian Consul when they left for Baku. He was dressed in rich linens, dark blue coat with buttons and epaulets of solid gold. Guarding him was a 'fascinating' Kavass in a huge white sheepskin hat and a full-skirted coat, with a pistol hanging from a black and gold chain around his neck. Across his breast were cartridges, while a small dagger hung from another chain. A large dagger had been thrust through a belt which held still more cartridges—'and Heaven knows', she added, 'what other firearms or knives are concealed "about his pusson".'

She and Khan enjoyed a large compartment on the train, but there was no drinking water and very little to wash with. Communication was also a problem. Nobody knew French, English, Turkish,

Arabic, Persian or their dialects. But Khan was 'very clever', and his gestures got them everything.

They did meet one French-speaking fellow-passenger, the sister of a 'stunning' Georgian prince who favored the revolutionaries. He wore a tall hat of black astrakhan, a dark red coat to the knees, belt for revolver and dagger, cartridge pockets across the breast 'which everybody wears', dark blue trousers and knee-high boots. Some of the handsome Cossacks had their cartridge tops in silver, others in gold. Some wore bright colors, a purple cloth coat, or a bright blue silk.

'These men are born for real battle alas! And when one thinks of the American man with his gymnasiums and athletic clubs to keep his strength up, and the peaceful government under which one lives, one feels in these war-like lands and in these times when every man's life is in his hands, as if one had gone back several hundred years.' At every station they saw these wild men of the Caucasus, booted, spurred, bristling with weapons. They thought no more of dealing out death to a man, said Khan, than to a flea. With all the Cossacks on the train or at the stations, 'in their reckless bold bravery', Florence felt that come danger, the guard on the train would be 'pretty slim protection'.

She tried to tell her sister Ruby of the shepherds' and farmers' hats—white, broad-brimmed, with the sheep's wool still hanging around the brim—and of the Armenian women's fetching headdress, tied under the chin, with a black velvet band around the forehead, a gold or silver ornament in the center, and with one long curl hanging down in front of each ear. Armenians were many, she said, among the Georgians.

Florence and Khan dined in the station at Tiflis and as night came on and they left, the lighted city was twinkling in its nest among the mountains, with a bright way up the mountain at the back of the town, where there were magnificent botanical gardens in a blaze of electric light.

It would be two the next afternoon before they reached Baku, and Florence wrote her sister about the splendid views of the rich, agricultural, mountainous country, the cornfields going past for hours and hours, the best of fruits at each station. The food was 'astoundingly delicious—hardly to be had at any American table'. Toward the end of the long journey she saw the special mountain known as Mount Caucasus, where Jupiter ordered Prometheus to be chained for taking the side of mankind, there to have his liver torn by a vulture, the liver being constantly renewed for the eternal ordeal. Baku proved to be a large and growing city rising pure white among the mountain peaks, the whiteness contrasting with the blue Caspian Sea. The city's prosperity was based on its petroleum, and there were many oil millionaires there, including one, a Bahá'í, who

owned the most productive wells and was worth a hundred million dollars. Among some of the friends, he had a reputation for being 'not very helpful', which may have meant that he seemed inactive. Yet later, he is said to have rendered a very important service to the Faith, supplying funds for 'Abdu'l-Bahá's teaching journeys to the West.

Baku lacked drinking water. 'They drank the Caspian Sea water, sweetened [desalted] by machinery', she reported, saying it was healthy, a little salty.

They visited two brothers, one the architect of the Tomb of the young Prophet-Herald, the Báb—a Tomb then being built by 'Abdu'l-Bahá on Mount Carmel. Today this Shrine is protected by the magnificent superstructure and golden dome that Shoghi Effendi caused to be raised over it, and is frequented by thousands of believers and tourists, and known as 'The Queen of Carmel'.

While resting at Baku they had their laundry done, had a chádur made for Florence, and enjoyed the hospitality of the believers.

Khan wrote his sister-in-law Ruby that they would cross the Caspian on a Government Mail steamer, and that his heart pounded for joy at the thought of seeing his mother in only a week, at the longest. He had been away from her during some of the most important years of his life. Eight years had passed since he had looked on her face.

They had a stormy crossing to Enzeli, lasting thirty-five hours, and we may assume that the baby was sick, for Rahim was always a poor sailor.

Travelers were not cosseted at that time, in that place. A rowboat came out to the ship for them, and Rahim was precariously handed down. The sea was heaving and those passengers who had achieved the rowboat were repeatedly tossed up to nearly eye-level with the remaining ones waiting on deck to venture down.

'I then discovered', wrote Florence, 'I was to go down a small ladder backwards. I took a step and then jumped, a big boatman caught me, we sank way down and with me still in his arms like a stick we went way up in the air again.'

This whole business then had to be done in reverse, like a film run backward, so the passengers could board a small steamer with a shallow enough draft to enter the harbor. The wind had grown stronger: 'We were literally thrown to the land by the sea, and were wrecks.' Meanwhile she had 'managed to struggle into the chádur I had made in Baku so I was a real Persian lady when we alighted in Enzeli'.

To Khan's surprise, the head of customs turned out to be one of his best friends, a former pupil. He immediately carried them off, bags and baggage, entertained them all day and had them spend the night in his island home—a huge building surrounded by fruit trees

and flowers. While they were resting in the garden their trunks passed through customs with never a problem. (In after years, when Khan was in the service, his diplomatic immunity naturally extended to the customs as well, and breezing past the unfortunates waiting in line while their possessions were being violated was distinctly one of the family's perks.)

Since it was the Shah's birthday, Khan's friend invited them out for a sail on His Majesty's yacht, all decked out with flags. Florence wrote, 'I think every man, woman, child, and baby came to look at us as we took our little cruise with our host, and his friend the head of the Mail Service, a handsome, young Persian, just returned from ten years of study in Berlin.'

That evening they ventured out on the water with two local Bahá'ís, a boat with oarsmen having been placed at their disposal. There they watched the fireworks and viewed the spectacle of the buildings, the ships in the harbor, all illuminated, decorating the night sky and shining back from the water.

Two

The leaping shapes

The Khans' overland trip to Tehran meant long drives and little rest, from four in the afternoon of the first day after their stormy Caspian passage, till eleven that night, then up and away at six, with two hours for lunch and driving on until eight. They always had four horses abreast, with brief stops at each station to change them. The animals were fat, spirited, usually of Arab blood, showing the whites of their dark eyes, proudly curving their tails. They would fight among themselves while being harnessed; or even in harness, along the road, one of them might savagely bite the neck of the one beside him.

They came to the tree-shaded, dreaming city of Qazvín, believed to have been founded in the fourth century AD, now sacred to the memory of Táhirih. Back of it rise the hills where the 'Old Man of the Mountains' (c. 1090) carried on with his murdering life. And in the sixteenth century this city was the capital of Persia, where Queen Elizabeth sent Anthony Jenkinson with a letter and present for Sháh Tahmásb. It is known for its crows, so numerous that people say the crow is the Qazvín nightingale.

Here, the Khans were overnight guests of a Bahá'í doctor and his wife. While waiting for the customary late dinner, Florence had dozed off in her mosquito netting, which was like a small tent strung on strings. Awakened by a slight noise, she sat up and looked out at the courtyard, splashed with light by the big moon, black with shadows, its flowers flickering in the night breeze. Suddenly through the window near the foot of her bed, she saw dark shapes leaping up, one after the other, into the tall window space. They were surely preparing, she thought, to launch an attack. Half asleep, she

remembered the hostility to Bahá'ís in Persia. Probably enemies had been informed that she and Khan were here; probably at this very instant he was being dragged away. Now they had come for her. She would have to bear long and obscene ordeals before they killed her. She heard voices, they sounded hoarse and angry.

Struggling to find her way out of the mosquito net, which to her New England eyes was like a lobster trap or a fish seine, easy to enter, hard to get out of, she at last worked herself free and huddled down in a patch of shadow.

Then a door opened and she recognized a friend. 'Khánum,' her hostess called in Persian, 'are you awake?'

'Oh yes,' gasped Florence, 'What is going on?'

The friend laughed. Some ladies had been waiting for several days for Florence to arrive. They had appeared at the house and were told she was there, but asleep. Invited to return the next day, they insisted they could not wait, had gone out into the garden and tried by wild leaps to get an advance view.

On their way again, the Khans ran into a fellow American—Laura Barney, heading for Constantinople with friends—and halted for a brief visit. A strange encounter, when one remembers the old days in faraway Washington and New York, and the delicate interrelationships of these three people.

At the stopping place nearest Tehran Khan's brother, General Husayn Kalántar, had arrived to meet them. They were offered apples, white grapes, plums, pears, and sherbet. Florence and the baby were then driven away in Khan's uncle's carriage, an outrider preceding them, mounted on a fine Arab horse. 'And what a horse!' said Florence, who had ridden most of her life. 'And what riding! Like the wind, like an arrow, he will pass the carriage and go before.' The carriage, a brougham, was upholstered in orange leather and rich, old-gold satin, and drawn by matched bays.

And so they came on to Tehran, the city loved by Bahá'u'lláh, city of His birth and His happy youth, and where later, chained three flights underground in the Black Pit, He had received His mantle of prophethood. 'In thee', He addresses Tehran, 'the Unseen hath been revealed, and out of thee hath gone forth that which lay hid from the eyes of men. ... Let nothing grieve thee ... for God hath chosen thee to be the source of the joy of all mankind.'[1]

Florence saw before her a city of dun colored walls, surrounded by a dry moat, pierced by tall gates set with bright colored tiles, depicting mosaic scenes from the Persian classics. The streets were mostly lanes winding between the same dun walls of sun-baked brick, so that every house and garden was shut away from passersby.

Above the high inaccessible walls, 'only the perfumes cheer the outside world, and waving green tree tops'.

Their carriage took them to the home of Khan's brother, who was

to be their host. As they alighted a crowd of welcoming relatives gathered round, laughing and weeping. In fact, emotional scenes dominated all their first meetings with close relatives—tears and embraces and tremblings when Khan presented his young wife to his mother; Khan's oldest sister swooning away in his arms as they met again after so many years.

'At night we have great fun sleeping on the roof,' Florence wrote home on August 21, 1906. 'The air is the most marvellous I ever was in, in any city. Mountain air, so sweet, dry and "preserving", delicious and life-giving.' She told of running streams, and fresh water bubbling up in the gardens. (This omnipresence of water, which doubtless spread from Persia to Baghdad and from there to Spain during its Muslim days, has given Spanish many a waterword: *aljibe*, for example, is Persian *júb*, brook; *caño* or pipe, is Arabic *qanát*—reed, canal. Thus J. T. Shipley, *Dictionary of Word Origins*).

They took breakfast in the open courtyard, among plantings of flowers and herbs. A fine rug was spread out near the pool to sit on, although Florence herself was provided with a chair—Americans of the day did not readily sit on the floor or ground as they would later in the century. The hostess and other Persian ladies gathered around the samovar, wearing their loose, enveloping Persian house veils over pink or turquoise or green adaptations of European dress. There was tea, flaps of Persian bread, white cheese, and quince preserves. By tradition the tea had to be 'up to the lip, hot to the lip, and sweet to the lip'.

For street wear the more conservative women, particularly the older ones, wore black pantaloons barely discernible below their black *chádur*. This 'tent', more poetically referred to in English as a veil, fell in folds and covered the wearer voluminously from head to shoes. At most, only the eyes and perhaps a small triangle of face could be seen. In the old version, a flowing white scarf circled the top of the *chádur* and was caught back of the head with what might be a gorgeously jeweled clasp. This scarf had a perforated band across the eyes, so the well-hidden one could see where she was going. But with passing time, this costume would yield to the more graceful modern *chádur*, a Madonna sort of veil which enveloped the body in a black prison, and was abetted by an oblong shutter of horse-hair, to cover the face. Called the *píchih*, this square was sewed to a band that was tied around the head. (Florence herself covered her face with a see-through piece of black silk, like the Turkish ladies in the Holy Land.) The *píchih*, being stiff, could be twisted up to reveal a pair of eyes, a curl, or whatever the wearer considered her best facial characteristics. None such being available, she could pull down her shutter and produce a musical voice from within her *chádur*, the latter always grasped in a tight fist beneath her chin. At least one

hand had to hold the veil together, the other remaining free for packages and other concealed impedimenta, sometimes even including a live chicken, hanging upside down and tied by the legs to her garment's inner belt. The chádur came over the head and flowed down the back in an unbroken line to the heels, turning the wearer into a graceful black ghost.

The black pantaloons of earlier days were sometimes seen even after silk stockings and high heels beneath the chádurs had long replaced them. (In 1935 when Reza Shah would remove the veil entirely, women had to learn to walk all over again without it, and decide what to do with their arms and hands.)

As usual, obstacles increased the tension between the sexes, and veiling provided the enhancement of masquerade. Once in the street, fantasy topping reality, almost any woman might become the mysterious Madam X, the veiled might attract more interest than naked bathers on a beach. Unless she wished it, a man might not recognize his own wife if he met her in public. If she feared he might know her by her shoes, she could switch with a friend. She might follow him a while to observe his public behavior. Or he might follow the enchanting phantom, toss her a note, murmur to her as she passed by. Western women now strip to the buff to lure on the male, but the truth seems to be that a general glut brings down the value.

The essence of the old-time chádur that Florence now dutifully attempted to manage was concealment, the very opposite of Western fashion which in those days had a tightly-laced corset pulling at the waist, lifting the bust, and enhancing the curve of the hips for all to see. The Persian woman in her large, amorphous envelope could hardly have been less like the Lillian Russells and Gibson Girls back home.

Florence, accustomed to the outdoors and freedom, was much irked by the street veil which hampered her even when she tried to take the air in a carriage, but she knew it was the Master's wish and could see the wisdom in it. She, a Persian's wife, probably would have been taken for a harlot without the veil.

She would fly to champion her husband's people against prejudices from the West. One day she asked an American diplomat's wife if she always walked with others when she was going out, and received this answer: 'Oh no! I go alone! Even to the bazaars.'

But I am very careful never to touch any of the dirty native women who pass me in the streets.' Of course the American was not aware that the Persians were also taking pains not to touch her, she being an unclean foreigner herself. The victim of prejudice is usually considered dirty.

For a while the Khans stayed on with the Kalántars. The General had a beautiful young wife, Khánúm Galín, and five children (as

years passed by, increasing to nine). Of each pair, the second of two children served the first one. Allah-Kuli, for example, was utterly devoted to his older brother, 'Abbás.

When the Khans needed something, they had only to ask. The immediate answer was 'Chashm' (upon my eye be it, your footstep on my eye), and the little legs flew to serve.

If there were men guests, women and children ate apart from the men, seating themselves on the floor around a large, figured cloth, often dipping into a common bowl or platter apart from their own dish, and deftly taking up the food in the right hand.

In spite of the many kindnesses, Florence felt shut in. Used to swimming, sailing, horseback riding, tennis parties, croquet on wide lawns, she was now confined back of the veil, by house walls, in rooms giving on small inner courts, bare, devoid of greenery—not like the larger court, with its flower beds and pool. There was nowhere for the eye to roam, no windows on the street, and beyond the walls that enclosed each property there lay a congeries of blind, walled lanes.

Though she could not get used to the closed-in life of the Persian women, still, her first two months in the capital were one party after another, visiting this or that sumptuous garden, being entertained by Khan's many kinfolk and friends. It was nothing for her to meet with a hundred or a hundred and fifty ladies, and each reception, whether large or small, required a stay of at least three hours. According to Persian custom the guests ranged themselves along the walls of the room where Florence had the place of honor. As each newcomer entered the assemblage she sat down and whispered greetings to each, all around the room, and each rose slightly off her seat and nodded back compliments, smiling, moving her lips in silent welcome. Florence struggled along with the language as best she could, and promised herself never to laugh again at any foreigner who was misusing English. She wrote that after about half an hour of greetings, and conversations about her journeys, and about the United States, her Persian had run its gamut and she still had to face two and a half more hours of entertainments, refreshments, and the language barrier. Often enough she could not hold out, and would excuse herself for 'a turn in the garden, and to rest my memory from

its limited vocabulary of Persian words and proper phrases. Then I would return, be smilingly received, and endure until the end.' She never felt lonesome, walking with a few ladies who might accompany her in the garden, and was touched by all the attention they showed her. But her 'impatient American patience' was often tried as she had to walk along sedately, struggling with her chádur and square of black silk, unable to relax, even in the gardens, because she had to scramble to get her costume all together again if the ladies chanced upon a gardener peering from behind a tree.

Alas for the Persian women, Florence lamented, reduced to being black ghosts in all that sunshine under that flawless turquoise sky. But indoors at least they glittered in bright silks and brocades, a jewel or so, and at night out in the courtyard in their white headdresses they looked like butterflies flitting through the dusk. All of the ladies were made up, and not subtly, although they did not paint quite an inch thick, like those of Shakespeare's day. They had, the more fashionable ones, masques of seeming white enamel, and rosy cheeks, and eyebrows shaped, a Persian poet might say, like arches in the mosque. Cosmetics were not usual among Western women then, and Florence herself wore none. She saw no white or gray hair about, for both men and women went dyed. And among the rural or the elderly, their palms and soles might be hennaed, in an older style.

Florence carefully described minor details in letters to her parents. The flat, ecru or brownish bread which came from the bazaar in sheets four or five feet long, often draped over the bearer's arms, was good with goat cheese. The tea service: the water held in that ubiquitous brass or silver urn, the samovar (a Russian invention, judging by the name, which means self-boiler) was brought to the boiling point around a central tube packed with live coals. From a small teapot placed on top of the urn, the hostess poured strong tea into each delicate wasp-waisted glass already filled with jagged chunks of sugar hammered from a cone. Then, turning the spigot on the samovar, she diluted the tea with boiling water. Silver holders for the tea glasses kept fingers from burning.

Only women servants could assist at home meals, since men servants were not allowed in the andarún, the women's quarters. Even these serving women—house veil bunched under one arm, fold of cloth available for a quick face-cover—made a pretense of veiling from Kalántar and Khan. To clean the smoky lamp chimneys, these women, their hands busy, would bite the corners of their veil together, leave the house and rub the chimneys with dust or horse droppings from outside the street door.

Florence thought the homeliest women visitors veiled the closest when Khan was present, and she sometimes upset his decorum when he greeted them, with some comment in English such as, 'Alas, you poor Persian! What a moon-face you are missing!' The full moon on its fourteenth night was the ideal of Persian beauty.

Floods of men visitors called every day. Old friends of Khan, Muslims, Bahá'ís, relatives, sometimes a member of the Shah's court. His chamberlain, for example, described by Florence with American love of royalty as 'the biggest Prince they have'—and the Shah's physician, one of Khan's cousins. So many came that Khan could hardly get away from the house. One day he estimated that the visitors totaled a hundred. This did not mean for a brief exchange of

courtesies, but the long stay required by Persian protocol—the tea and fruit drinks, candies and cakes, cigarettes or the shared, chugging hubble-bubble pipe, and the elaborate compliments passed back and forth.

All this seemed to suit Khan very well, for a fragment of one of Florence's letters says, 'Ali looks so handsome in Persia; so young and "smoothed out".'

'Everything is exactly opposite here to our ways and conditions and I often feel bad to think of Ali in the future transplanted to America with the fogs, East winds, damp, but he says he does not mind. Here the sun is always with her Persians.' And again, in an October letter, she wrote, 'No wonder the Persian emblem is the lion and the sun! The sun is ever-present here.'

Except for problems with the language Florence actually enjoyed the coming and going, writing home, 'Once in a while I almost feel tired of being entertained, but that is when I am mad because I am not more fluent in Persian.'

She told her family that wherever Khan was invited they insisted on placing him in the seat of honor, and said, 'The young Princes, the flower of the Shah's court, are at his feet.' She wrote of his visit to 'the most eloquent man in Persia: a great prince who is called the first intellect in Persia', alas, unnamed.

Khan had also called on the American Minister, a Mr Pearson from North Carolina, and was delighted with him.

She and Khan would, at will, visit a park owned by the Shah's older brother, who was Governor of Isfahán and 'the richest man in all Persia'. There they would meet the Governor's son, nephew of the Shah and a devoted Bahá'í, though his own father (the Zillu's-Sultán) had allowed the 'twin shining lights' to be put to death. These two, the King of Martyrs and his brother, the Beloved of Martyrs, were killed because a Muslim hierarch who owed them a large sum of money denounced them as Bábís and had them destroyed. Both of the brothers were decapitated.[2] The Persians used

to say that after the King of Martyrs died, 'Ten thousand went hungry', for that open-handed merchant had fed so many on his great estates.

On these visits Florence and her women friends were of course veiled, and when men were present the prince would have them withdraw to a respectful distance and stand in a line sideways to the visitors, he alone facing them. Women did not veil from royalty. That summer 'Abdu'l-Bahá honored Florence's father with a Tablet. She wrote him that, 'He speaks of the good you have done for humanity, and tells you He will pray for you and all your family. He speaks also of the beautiful way in which you have brought up your daughter (i.e., me).'

On that same evening the Master had dictated a Tablet for

Florence as well, saying, 'Verily I am pleased with thee,' and giving her the name Rúháníyyih. On Rahim he further bestowed the name 'Abdu'l-Husayn, servant of Bahá'u'lláh.

'His bounty was beyond belief towards me, and I could only hope I may please Him, by future work.' When she asked about receiving a special Bahá'í task, 'He told me whatever I did with a pure intention would be accepted as work for the Cause.'

Grandfather Breed either was or was not a Bahá'í—that was long before the days of signing a membership card—and he never became active in the Faith the way Florence and her mother and her sister Alice and later, Ruby and Ralph were, but judging by his letters he seems to have thought of himself as a believer. The quality and degree of a Bahá'í's faith is after all for him to know about, it is his own affair, it is holy ground with no trespassing permitted.

To Alice, Florence wrote that she was touched by her mother's letter of thanks to the Master and His Household. 'Love is the real meeting', she quotes from the Master, and Florence added, 'If only human beings could express in deeds, the love the Master kindles in them, they would make many worlds happy.'

In writing home Florence also introduced Khan's brother to her people, long distance.

'A remarkable man,' she wrote, 'a general in the Persian army, with farmáns from the Shah.' She took pride in Khan's uncles too, and told how, in a photograph of the Shah with the King of England, Khan's mathematician-astronomer uncle stands directly back of the king 'and is the most distinguished-looking man in the group' (apparently relegating Edward VII to second place).

She did not neglect the women in the family either—and says her two sisters-in-law did drawings that were 'simply astonishing'.

Three

The three-minute egg

Florence spent her mornings in Tehran caring for the little boy, and staying out in the courtyard while the ladies and their womenservants busied themselves with daily chores, 'restoring the daily order of tidiness', marketing, preparing for the (lighter) noonday meal and the more elaborate late evening dinner—the latter patriarchal, with its ingredients requiring many helping hands to make ready. Some attendants stayed permanently in a household, were born, married and died there. These might be Ethiopian, Persian or of other races. Florence thought race prejudice was un-Persian. Her great-aunt-in-law, a Qájár princess, wearing a fortune in gems, held a tiny black baby on her lap as she hosted a tea party. Others serving in a household might be relatives who floated from place to place as the mood suited them, each welcomed for contributing her batch of fresh news and her help with the work. The women would sit companionably on the floor, getting the

vegetables and other components ready for the evening pulaw, which would cook a long time over tiny charcoal fires outdoors—their fingers as busy as their tongues.

To tell time, they would look up at the sun. Clocks and watches were few and far between. For many years, visitors to Persia could not be served a three-minute egg. 'Three minutes' meant 'almost no time at all'. But at exactly high noon a great cannon boomed out from the citadel: the *túp-i-zuhr* or noonday gun.

Another phenomenon of that day, noticed by some: illiterates seemed to have trouble identifying people and things in photographs, seemed to misread them. They had not been brought up, from the nursery on, with illustrations in books, or in fact with any books at all. And still another item: some, among the uneducated, were not always good at identifying animals in the wild. For example, one attendant, seeing a large jack rabbit out in the foothills, called it an *áhú* (gazelle, antelope, deer). Such glimpses of the world as they saw it provided insights into the Western Middle Ages, when strange animals were seen only, perhaps, in some once-in-a-lifetime triumphal parade or a rare, private zoo: Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II boasted a giraffe and a polar bear in his. Dante's teacher described an elephant. A thirteenth century painter who had drawn a lion, assured the public it was reproduced from life.

And instead of printed matter of all kinds—paperbacks, advertisements, signs, wrappings—everywhere the assault of print—the eye was left at rest. One saw few books in a Persian drawing room in those days, and no papers or magazines. Newspapers had begun to appear in Khan's youth—a few copies, to be seen in high circles. He told of a semi-literate courtier who was carrying a newspaper under his arm.

'What is that writing you have there?' someone asked. 'What does it say?'

'Oh,' the man replied, 'it is confidential.'

For a panoramic view of nineteenth century Persia, try Morier's classic, *Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*. You will not come away with an exalted opinion, like Florence's, of the country at that time.

But what Khan said about the book is revealing: 'I read it in Persian. Started off and said to myself, "Yes, this is how things are with us." But you see, I thought it had been written by a Persian. When I found out it was written by an Englishman, I was furious.'

Few have read the same author's *Hajji Baba* in England, now rare but as critical of the English as the other of the Persians, and showing the clash of cultures. The Persian Ambassador at a dinner, for example, uses a certain word which causes a shocked silence. But the word was all right, he believes, because he had found it in the dictionary. Again at the same dinner, he wards off the perennial question as to whether the Persians worship the sun. 'Oh yes we do,

Madame,' he replies, 'and so would you in England as well, if you ever saw him.'

If the weather was hot, salvers of fruit were brought to Florence, and sometimes a glass of buttermilk, with bits of ice in it, and chopped cucumbers and mint, or she would be served small chunks of goat's milk cheese in a nest of green herbs.

Outdoors, the gardeners, sinewy brown legs bare to the knee, bodies almost tottering from the weight of their watering cans, went rhythmically, by an ancient wavy pattern, sprinkling the paths, laying the dust. Indoors, the woman servants, bent over in their house veils, swept floors and rugs with tied, handle-less bunches of twigs.

Each day, after a relatively light luncheon, long peaceful hours of siesta, with the men, up since early morning, now back from shops and offices, stripped of their outer garments and gone to bed.

Dinner, so long in coming, was occasionally preceded by an informal nap on the floor. The heaped dishes arrived in the cool of the night, as late as ten, and were followed at once by bed. This would be on one of the mattresses (no innersprings then) stacked against a wall by day, and enclosed when necessary in a mosquito

net, suspended from strings, and looking like a small, transparent room. A bed could be here or there in the house—a sleeper might wake and move his place to suit—or he might be on the roof under the Persian sky.

So the long, drowsy days passed by, from meal to meal and from sleep to sleep. Most of the older people still said their prayers, five times a day, others less often, others not at all. Before each of the five times, elaborate ablutions.

The slow days were broken into by births and marriages and deaths, by feast days, by parties. They included social times at the baths that featured, besides hot and cold scrubbing, henna for the hair, the use of depilatories, lavish meals brought in, and the planning of brides for future grooms. Other interruptions in the rhythm were trips off to Karbilá or Mecca, or up for the summer months to the mountains.

Four

Revolution in Tehran

Khan was well aware, but for some time Florence was not, that they had arrived in the midst of revolution. It was a quiet one as revolutions go. Social affairs were not interrupted and the language barrier kept Florence from hearing the latest rumors.

Emerson's statement that things refuse to be mismanaged long did not really apply to Persia—her Augean woes had long been handed down the generations.

Under the Atábak (Prime Minister) the country had sunk to a shambles. Not a new situation for Persia, but this time no longer to

be borne. The people had had enough of their rulers, and had also observed Russia's revolution next door. In December 1905 all the top clergy had gone on strike, left Tehran and sat *bast* at the Shrine of Sháh-'Abdu'l-'Azím with its golden dome. (Sitting *bast*, come to think of it, was not unlike future American sit-ins, the difference being that *bast* provided sanctuary—force was not supposed to be used against sitters in holy places.) The clergy stayed six weeks, leaving the capital much like some medieval Christian town when placed under an interdict by the Pope, and refused to return until they were promised a Parliament (*majlis*) and Courts of Justice. By mid-June of 1906 they had seen that the Atábak had no intention of carrying out his promises. Again, closed bazaars—always an expression of crisis in Persia—with some five thousand people

sitting *bast* at a mosque. The Atábak laid siege to them with his troops, cut off their food and forced them out. There were victims, and two descendants of the Prophet, Siyyids, were killed, each with a Qur'án in his hands. The soldiers, temporarily well-paid for the occasion, had stayed loyal to the government and the ringleaders were forced to leave. Others, however, kept up the agitation. In August the protests took the form of seeking sanctuary in the British Legation compound. The numbers were small in the beginning, with some of the forty or so *bastís* being *mullás* or merchants. But soon the bazaars were closed and thousands of people were camped out around the Legation. All classes were there, teachers, guild members, divines, everybody, and tents crowded every inch of ground. An eye-witness cited by Browne (*The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*) describes how well they policed themselves, improvising a rough kitchen with huge cauldrons, and guild members taking three hours to serve each meal. The British had agreed to shelter the crowds at first, but then orders came from England to put them out. Easier said than done, for they had grown to 12,000.

At this juncture Khan's brother, the General, had a difficult task to perform: he was on duty twenty-four hours a day as head of the Government troops stationed in Tehran, and his orders were to keep the huge crowds from assembling *en masse* in the Mosque of the Shah.

This almost bloodless revolution had its effect. On August 5, Muzaffari'd-Dín Sháh grasped a pen in his failing hand and signed a document calling for a National Assembly to be elected from among the working guilds, landowners, merchants and the nobles.

Revolutionary parties forced the Shah to dismiss the Atábak, and on October 7, although the ruler could hardly make it to his seat, and proved too weak to smoke the ceremonial *qalyán* (water pipe), he handed his royal rescript to the Chief Herald, who read it out as bidden, and Parliament was declared open.

The Russians were unhappy with this victory for the Persian people, claiming it was 'another heavy blow to Russia' in the area, and a feather in Britain's cap.

Browne points out the anomaly of the priesthood standing for progress, and for reforms which would strip them of power. The reality of their true intentions is expressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in a Tablet written during this period of governmental upheaval.[3] The Master states that the Muslim clergy, while apparently clamoring for the National Assembly (Parliament) were actually trying to defeat its aims. He wrote that the Muslim 'ulamá' did not 'favor the upbuilding of the National Assembly, the civilization of Persia, the

awakening of the people, the advancement of the age, the spreading of knowledge Thieves like to lurk in darkness ... the wine seller sees his advantage in the inebriate ...': the clergy wished for a 'chaos of ignorance' to maintain their control, knowing that the country's enlightenment spelled their own downfall.

Khan had been surprised to find so much agitation in Tehran when he arrived. There were many who demanded a constitution immediately, and others who thought the country was not yet ready for one. These wanted freedom of religion, freedom of thought, and freedom of the press right then, and believed this would lead later on to a constitution that would be fairer to all parties. It was said the Shah had written four separate constitutions and the revolutionaries had torn up all four. Many concerned notables would come to Khan because of his wide experience in the West, and listen eagerly to his advice as to the regeneration of Persia.

While the country struggled from absolute monarchy toward a British-modeled parliamentary government, the old ways still persisted, and Khan wrote, a few months into their Tehran visit: '... there is as yet no precise distinction between wolves and shepherds.'

In the Khan letters that have survived, there are only faint echoes of all this turmoil. Florence may have been warned by Khan to avoid political matters because of the probability of letters being opened. Also, as has been mentioned, she was careful to minimize any possible dangers to themselves which might upset her family at home. Then, too, except for such a time as the Great Bast when the bazaars were closed, most of the city life ran on as before. Many families were walled off from one another in their gardens and courtyards, while others were up country in the cool mountain air. (It was said even of Paris in 1789 that outlying quarters remained tranquil.)

For all these reasons it is not surprising that we find so little in the letters about the political crisis.

In a letter to her father Florence does tell of how, one morning, she heard the insistent beating of a drum. Then Khan came in and told

her casually, 'There is a revolution going on in the city today. Did you hear the drum-beat?'

Revolution or no revolution, the work of the Faith proceeded as usual, as it always has proceeded in the past, and will proceed in the future, whatever the world may do. On September 7 Khan wrote Alice, his 'dearest Mother', that he had been working on the Master's Tablets received two days before, and among them he was enclosing one for Alice, one for Mrs French, one for Mrs Sanborn, and one for Dr Crocker. He also shared with her Tablets to Florence and to his brother Husayn. He asked, if the other addressees permitted, to have copies made of the translations (except for the personal one to Dr Crocker) and sent to Mr Thornton Chase, 84 Adams St., Chicago, to be spread among the believers, as 'these Tablets are so beautiful'. He asked Alice to read them to Mrs Maxwell and Mrs Cowles too, and explained that the Tablets contained 'important points ... which need several careful readings to bring them out'.

The couple had been in Tehran for some time when two Bahá'ís came to call. The two men said they had been in 'Akká when Khan's cable announcing his marriage was handed to the Master. They and a number of other men believers were in the room with Him. He read it to them with great joy, telling them, 'This is the first sign of union between East and West.' Then He sent for candies to be brought and said, 'The event is so joyous that it must be celebrated!' And He distributed the candy to those present, as is the custom for the parents of the bridegroom to do at a Persian wedding banquet. The two dwelt at length on the Master's rejoicing at news of this first Bahá'í East-West marriage, and of the love with which He gave the impromptu wedding feast.

Khan was known everywhere as a Bahá'í and one who had been in America. One day he was in the bazaar looking at Persian silks when a Zoroastrian merchant inquired, 'Are you not Ali-Kuli Khan who has been in America?'

Khan laughed and asked how it happened that the man knew of him.

'Oh, I come from Yazd', the merchant said, 'where I used to hear your letters read among the believers.'

Another time he was being introduced to the Minister of Foreign Affairs by his old friend Husayn-Qulí Khán Navváb, when the Minister interrupted with, 'Oh yes, I know him. He has been in America.'

Though always in love with Persia, a trace of nostalgia sometimes appeared in Florence's letters. She promised her family the recipe for jasmine sherbet and apple sherbet, but she also asked her sister Alice to eat some baked beans for her, besides southern sausage 'and sweet potatoes, if not terrapin'.

Autumn was drawing on now, and Florence told of one rare day following another, like a chain of Persian turquoises. There had been frosts and Mount Dimávand was streaked with snow. At sunset the high mountains to the north, bare except for gardens on their lower slopes, were pink against a light blue sky.

She lamented the high, brownish walls of the city lanes—‘one has only the street-life to fall back upon, but this is fascinating, and of course the shops are not walled.’

Now for the first time came an ominous note. Her letters were to cease, or to be dictated, in any case hiding her true condition from the family at home: ‘Ali has written you of my headaches. The doctors are fine and I expect soon to be better than ever.’

Before she stopped writing she told of contemporary upheavals: ‘Well, Persia is in a very trying phase. At the Assembly [majlis] a Prince of the highest family sits next a Mahometan soap-boiler, for example—one, cultivated, the other absolutely ignorant, not like an American or English soap-boiler. Oh! the contrast is complete, the two sets of brains at exact antipodes.’ Khan, she wrote, was disgusted with the current situation in Persia. ‘He wants to get away, and you know he has always been loyalty itself. He is surprised to find certain things worse than when he was here [before], and Persia is no longer the Persia of his father’s day But we believe it is on the road to better things; the getting there, though is something awful. But the Persians are not blood-thirsty; there is rarely a murder or a killing; it is remarkable for this.’

Discouraged or not, Khan continued to be active. A letter from Khan to Alice mentions his cousin, the new Governor of Tehran, who had asked his help. Khan had also attended a family gathering of one of the princes—unnamed—to effect a reconciliation between the old prince and his sons. He was often in touch with Mr Pearson the American Minister, and closed with praise for him.

Khan’s letter to his father-in-law shows that the latter had given out with his often-to-be-disregarded advice, a lifelong habit, this time on government. Khan praised Francis W., saying, ‘It indeed surprised me to find an idealistic side to your brilliant, matter-offact, practical nature.’ Only a precious few businessmen could equal this, he wrote. ‘Whenever circumstances favor and I may find a field of activity to undertake the betterment of my country either here or in America—I shall consider it the highest boon to apply your noble ideals to procuring that end.’

Five

A band of golden lights

After two months in Tehran, where Florence was lavishly entertained, she lost her appetite. It fell away, and whatever she ate or drank made her worse. Continuing the round of parties in spite of her increasing weakness, for she did not feel herself to be seriously

ill, the Khans were visiting the families of several Bahá'í brothers when the disease she had contracted somewhere else finally struck. These brothers were prosperous bakers, and forty years before, in 1866, Khan's father had begun to study the Faith in their father's home in Káshán, apparently after the future Kalántar of Tehran had heard the Báb Himself in the Kalántar's native city. It was, Khan's sister recalled, 'from a Siyyid in a green turban' that he had heard of the new teaching, she thought in the mosque.

With typical hospitality this loving family had told the Khans:

'Come to us for several days, or, better, several weeks; or still better several months, or years!'

A prophetic invitation, because soon after arrival Florence began to run a high fever and had to take to her bed. One afternoon, lying briefly alone and burning with fever, she saw an 'Umar Khayyám sort of water jug, filled daily, she knew, from the Shah's gardens. It stood out in the hall beyond her door. However, longing so for water, she crawled and rolled across the floor, managed to get to the earthen vessel and drink deeply again and again.

'I did not realize', she wrote later, 'that I had nearly drunk my way into Paradise.'

Somehow she had regained her bed, and Khan found her burning up yet chattering with cold. The next morning she was in a delirium which lasted six weeks, and it seems that for twelve days of that month and a half, they thought she had died and would have buried her except that a faint vapor formed on a mirror when it was held to her mouth.

All this time the dying young woman was in ecstasy, she wrote later on.

'I thought I was constantly in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.'

Finally, Dr Scott told Khan, 'What this case needs is more nursing than medicine.' This was before the days of trained nursing in Persia,

and the one English nurse was away. For five months, Florence wrote afterward, Khan gave up everything to nurse her—'and to the marvel of the doctors, the English, Americans, and especially Persians, my husband accomplished alone what in America would have taken relay after relay of night-and-day trained nurses. It was the daily talk of the Court—his patience, so untiring, so self-sacrificing.' But there came a day when her Scottish doctor discovered a great black circle on each of her legs below the knee. Had he not seen them then, the gangrene would have made it necessary to amputate both legs. Dr Scott was enraged; another doctor, entrusted with giving her shots, had not sterilized the needle. This proved more than Khan could bear. He had already endured so much day and night in the sickroom for so long, that he ran the length of the room and beat his head against the wall. But Dr Scott thought he could save the legs. And he did.

It must have been at the peak of the crisis that Florence found herself floating, off her childhood home in Lynn, cradled in a warm delectable sea, and being wafted slowly from wave to wave out from the shore. She was enjoying the sun and the drifting from one small, gently-pushing wave to the next, idly drifting toward the open sea. Way beyond the faraway horizon she saw a band of golden lights. And her mind said, 'That band out there, that is the light of Heaven, and if you reach that light you will be dead. So make your choice.' She was drifting on, when the thought came to her of her little son. How would he survive, motherless in the world? With a huge effort of the will, she gave up that heavenly floating, that 'lovely loitering' on the waves, and returned to Rahim and Khan.

Florence's daughter Marzieh, thinking over that time, looking back to those days when she was not so much as imagined herself, could only wish her then not-mother had let herself be carried on to the band of lights. Florence would have been spared so many agonies to come. Khan would have been left with his memories of happy days when their love was young and many victories were envisaged for them both, and the little boy was bright with promise.

Yes, had Florence left the world then, she would have been spared much anguish, but would have lost many joys and successes too, and long years of service to the Bahá'í Faith. God's wishes for us are often not our own, and as Khan always taught, 'Whoso sayeth "why" or "wherefore" hath spoken blasphemy!'[4] God's plan is not orderly like our plan, the Guardian teaches.[5]

We can see that an infinite number of things, universe upon universe wide, are going on simultaneously, and He juggles them all, and never drops one. What rich green summer, created in ecstasy,

leaf by leaf, but He rips apart? What flower but He withers it and blows it away? What line or curve of a beautiful face but He blots it out? He fashions and destroys, fashions and destroys, He creates, He ruins, He casts off. X number of things have to happen because x number of other things have to happen. And yet nothing is lost. The cupboard of the universe never goes bare. 'All things are eaters and eaten', 'Abdu'I-Bahá tells us.

We try, but we can never add the world up, because we lack most of the numbers that make up the sum, and misinterpret even what we have. Many of the public today say that our God is cruel, or He could not be making children suffer in the wars. But they are our wars, not His. We could stop them forever, if we wished. And when He kills members of the race in a natural way, He still folds them to His breast.

If you came here from another planet, landed in a large room, saw a man strapped to a table and men and women gathered around him, cutting into him with knives, you might think, 'A torture scene! Stop!' Yet you might be looking at surgeons and nurses rescuing a

life.

A Bahá'í prayer says: 'I testify to the potency of Thy Cause, the pervasive influence of Thy decree, the immutability of Thy will, the endlessness of Thy purpose. All things lie prisoned within the grasp of Thy might ...' [6]

Florence had about twenty doctors, and prominent among them was Dr Arastú Khán, brother of Dr Lutfu'lláh Khán,[7] the latter destined to become a member of the first Universal House of Justice. Of her British doctors, one was Dr Lindley, brother of Lord Lindley and physician to the Shah. He was tall and distinguished, with a beautiful blonde wife and two children. Dr Lindley affirmed that on only one occasion, on a steamer coming out of China, had he seen Florence's disease (eventually diagnosed as sprue), but never in Persia before. At this time Muzaffari'd-Dín Sháh was mortally ill himself. Of his royal patient, the doctor said, 'Today we told the Shah, who has begged us to take him off his milk diet, that he must keep on with it. And he turned his face to the wall and said, "Then, gentlemen, let me die."'

All that winter Florence had, when the delirium lifted, watched her young husband warming his hands over a little charcoal brazier, weeping, praying. And one day her hostess, the matriarch, widowed mother of the father of her host brothers, said that not only were the Bahá'ís praying for the first Bahá'í bride from the West, but prayers had gone up for her even from one of the mosques. 'Even the beggar at our gates', she added, 'has prayed for you, and today he came and asked about you and thanked God that you live.'

One of the British doctors told her that all had asked after her condition and expressed sympathy, all except just one group. 'They never inquired once. They never sent anyone to express the least interest. Apparently they hoped you would not survive.'

'Who could that be?' Florence asked, surprised.

'The Christian missionaries,' he said.

'But did they know I was ill?' she asked.

'The whole town knew.'

Florence could not help remembering the thousands of dollars poured out by her father and grandfather to missionaries so that they could convert 'the heathen'. Now it was primarily 'the heathen' who were showing her love. Once, on foot in a group of Persian women, all of them veiled, Florence had seen a missionary couple drive grandly by in their carriage, drawn by a spanking horse. A sort of greeting took place between the couple and herself, and she noted their shock and horror at seeing an American 'gone native'. Florence was shocked too. She could only contrast what she knew was their simple life back home with how they lived in Persia. She could forgive them their pride as Americans, but she wondered if it was suited to them as servants of Christ. E. G. Browne wrote that many

of them would rather associate with a white-skinned atheist than a dark-skinned Christian.[8] She too would have been like them, she thought, except that Bahá'u'lláh had freed her from prejudices of race and religion. That one brief glance from the carriage showed her the 'mountain of prejudice' in the West toward the East. Other people, not missionaries, suffered from the same blindness. To this day some Westerners still resent Ghandi's perceptive remark when he visited London.

'What do you think of Western civilization?' he was asked.

'I think it would be a very good idea,' he replied.

And the Persians in their turn scorned India in the days of the Raj.

'All that Sáhib, Sáhib business,' one of them remarked. 'Why, all

those Indians would have to do is get together once, and spit, and it would flush the British out.'

During the agonizing days and nights of Florence's illness Khan wrote more often to his father-in-law than to Alice. He seemed to need Francis W.—a father figure—and perhaps he feared Alice's intuitions about what was happening to Florence, and thus avoided the mother.

He told Francis that the Persians, half awakened, were going about like somnambulists, as history showed had been the case with every

nation molded into ancient forms of existence—at the time when they struggle to break away and pass into a wider sphere of new activity. 'The Assembly is warm in its discussions for measures to up-build the country, but the first means to this end is wanting. They have no money to do business with, and the whole discussion ends in nothing. On the other hand the Minister of State, and heads of administrative [bodies] are unable to execute anything, as the real authority is possessed by two men amongst the clergy, who do whatever they will.' He said he believed a great change was imminent, since things could not go on much longer as they were.

'I am doing my best to arouse the intelligent people here to the advisability of asking the Americans to help us in developing our country, and it is hoped this will prove effective some day. I know Persia at present cannot get along without foreign help, and I know that any appeal to any of the European Powers would invite them to call for concessions and territorial acquisitions. But to my mind, America would be the safest to be called upon to help us, and to be rewarded in a business way, and by the thanks of a grateful nation.' He had talked of all this with the American envoy, who said that 'Americans would come here as soon as there were the means for safe and comfortable travelling in the country'. But Khan believed that even in this regard, the Americans should be the ones to help Persia build her railroads. 'These things will come to pass some day ...'

By November 24th, Florence wrote her family that she was

beginning to convalesce in an ideal city. 'The pure cool air has not a sound of electric car bells, train bells, electric rail-roads, and the silence falls on the ear like a golden blessing ... winter is coming very gently ... and in each of these quiet days my spirit rests in a paradise of sweet silences ... many, many callers are forced back until I am better.'

Gone was the fun, the joy of the new country, the ebullience, and although she called it 'convalescing' she still had a long, hard way of sickness ahead. By now she had stood as the poet says all must stand, on her own grave, and she had looked at death, and had contrived to transcend her fears.

When Khan wrote home to America that winter, he apologized for sending 'such dry, empty letters, but you know I do not go out and know nothing of the outside world, and so these letters are not worth writing, were it not because you eagerly expect to learn about Florence's health every week. The baby is very rosy and husky and has a fine free time with so many to care for him. We have him come part of the time into our room to eat fruit, to play or to do lots of boyish tricks he has learned.' Rahim had become 'quite a Persian boy', and knew Persian words but still remembered some English.

Khan says the American Minister supplied him with newspapers to read, but he did not yet know whether Hearst or Hughes had been elected Governor of New York. Not wishing to write more frankly, he told them, 'The dear Shah is just the same in health as I wrote last', and that the Crown Prince had arrived two days before.

Six

A mountain of champagne bottles

To struggle for Florence's life, Khan had set aside his prospects for an important position with the government. On October 13 he was writing full of hope: 'This morning I called on my cousin the new Governor of Teheran, who had especially sent for me. He said he had some work for me to help him in doing; as to what it is, I shall learn when I see him again on Monday ...'

Again, 'I am already calling at some important places, and before many days I shall begin work.'

But two months later found him writing in a very different mood after the long imprisonment in the sickroom. It is clear that he has had no chance to follow up in the leisurely Persian fashion of that day the opportunities that otherwise would have been his.

As Florence began her long convalescence she was too weak to write and would dictate her letters to Khan—letters necessarily concerned with the small details of her severely restricted life.

On December 18 Florence wrote through Khan to her 'Dearest Mother, Darling Mother' about her invalid's diet of raw beef juice, champagne, a sort of blancmange, and two port wine flips a day. At least eighteen women took turns squeezing out the raw beef

juice during her illness, and at one point their host had bought a whole beef carcass to make sure there would be no lack of this lifegiving substance. Later, Khan was to write Alice that it was embarrassing to see a mountain of champagne bottles piled up in the back garden.

Florence told how kind everyone was, and of her fine doctors. Of Doctor Scott, she said that his treatment was 'bringing me out into a healthier woman than I have ever been'. In the event she never completely recovered from the sprue, which would occasionally recur throughout her life.

Obviously wanting to reassure the family at home, she apologized for sending them 'an invalid's letter, all about herself'.

Khan added that Dr Scott's wife would send over 'milk puddings and plasmin sauce'. He ended, illuminatingly to any who knew their real situation during the previous horrible months, 'our lives seem much more cheerful as we can talk and chat together'.

On December 29, in another dictated letter Florence lamented that no family mail had come for two weeks because the steamer could not land at Enzeli to make a delivery, 'So the American Minister waits, and we wait.' She again praised the extreme kindness to her of the Persian Bahá'ís and said, 'We are still with the Bahá'í household we came to visit ten weeks ago.'

On January 13 she wrote her parents, 'My first letter in my own handwriting goes to you.' Here she again told of the great, generous hospitality of their hosts, Mírzá Faraju'lláh, the royal baker, and his brother Mírzá Mihdí (and other brothers too), this family in whose father's home, long years before, Khan's father became a Bábí (later a Bahá'í). 'How little did he dream of a future American daughter-inlaw sheltered during a nearly fatal illness beneath that family's overflowing hospitable roof-tree!'

The old father had tried his best to live long enough to greet Florence, but died before she reached Tehran. It was his widow who took care of Rahim as one of her own all that winter. She, A'h gee, had a mind 'innately humorous, shrewd and observant, and made a Persian baby out of Rahim'.

Florence, Khan and Rahim had been invited, as said before, to stay for 'one month—two months—or all winter' in the beautiful, justbuilt home, no one foreseeing that they would be there from

October till May. First they were the guests of Mírzá Mihdí, in his group of buildings with their pretty courtyards, presided over by his 'dignified and self-sacrificing, devoted Persian wife'. Their boy of eight attended an excellent boys' school and their brilliant little daughter also attended school every day and was 'marvellously clever with her English'. A tutor came in daily to teach the children English, a language that Bahá'í children especially wanted to learn. Rahim was the children's pet, Florence wrote; they adored him as

if he had fallen from a star. (Indeed, when Khan was in America his brother in Tehran would ask his small daughter and sons, 'Where is your uncle?' they would point to the stars and say, 'Up there'.) Persia had a deep love for America in those days. Two things must have turned her away later on—inconstant propaganda by America's foes, on the air for hours every day, year in year out, and the attitude of some Americans themselves, toward the people they met. 'Americans are cold,' a Persian would tell you. 'An American might be out walking with his own brother, and if the brother fell down in the street, the American would leave him where he was, say "Time is money, goodbye", and just walk away.'

Rahim still understood English but spoke only Persian—his first language, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá smilingly said it would be'. Florence said she had to be taught 'Baby Persian' to talk with her own child.

On February 7, a small triumph, recorded in Florence's dictated letter: 'Dearest Mother and Father, This is the fourth day I have been out of bed, and in a magnificent lounging chair sent me by Khan's cousin (the eldest son of his uncle)—a perfectly stunning young prince, on the mother's side the great-grandson of Fath-'Alí Sháh ...'

More improvement was implied by this news than was actually the case. After the long months in bed Florence found she had forgotten how to walk. Only with Khan helping, and two canes, could she reach the chair, and sit wanly in the sun by one of the long French windows. There, the host family, passing below in the courtyard, would greet her with encouraging smiles, having concealed their first shock at the ravages made by the illness. Her cloud of light brown hair had been shorn away. She was skeleton thin. 'If you don't get her out of Persia before the summer heat', their British doctor told Khan, 'you'll have to bury her in the Protestant cemetery.'

There was word in this letter, too, of improvement in the political situation:

'Tell Father the National Assembly has been calling the big cabinet ministers to account. They had Khan's uncle up before them to inquire into the transactions of the Ministry of Mines. He handled them so well that they pronounced his ministry the best regulated of all. This proceeding was published in detail in the record of the National Assembly.'

Despite Khan's discouragement with the general state of affairs there were other signs of reform.

In the days when the Shah, Muzaffari'd-Dín, was Crown Prince and Governor of Tabríz, Khan's brother Husayn Kalántar had been his chamberlain and adjutant. Since, as was fairly routine in Persia, the government owed him for his military services as General,

around this time he sent a telegram to the Shah. Kalántar knew that the Shah had a special telegraph station and would personally attend to telegrams sent there. Within a day or so, the General received his answer, the Shah commanding the Minister of War to see that the money came through. Khan said that, before, it might have taken his brother two years to reach the Shah, bribing now this courtier and now that.

In Tehran, hundreds of men and women came and went, inquiring after Florence at the gates; thousands prayed for her.

The diplomats were kind too. The American Minister's wife brought newspapers and magazines, water in the desert. For, while the American public was continually absorbing information, the average Persian home was empty of books and papers. Just living took up their hours. And one afternoon Lady Spring-Rice, wife of the British Minister Sir Cecil, came to visit—in an open victoria, two Bengal lancers with fluttering pennants to guard it, the equipage preceded and followed by some twenty outriders, we assume turbaned Sikhs. Florence noted that her visitor wore a blue tailored suit, very simple garb in those elegant times for an afternoon visit. That must be the custom in London, Florence thought. Around her neck were three strands of flawless pearls, and over the little toe of her right shoe, Florence observed a shabby little patch.

Their conversation centered on the rise of the women's suffrage movement in England. A year or so after this, in 1908, Mrs Pankhurst and her daughter Christobel would be arrested and sent to Holloway Prison for inciting to riot. She would plead in the dock that the status of women must be changed at all costs, and tell the Court: 'We are here, not because we are law-breakers; we are here in our efforts to become law-makers.' [9]

It would be a few years more till 1913, when British suffragette Emily Wilding Davison took herself out to the races at Epsom Downs, forced her way through the crowds, broke through the barriers, ran in front of the galloping thoroughbreds and seized the bridle of the fastest horse, the King's. The animal fell, throwing his jockey and crushing the woman. She died four days later. She 'gave up her life', as Pankhurst wrote, 'for the women's cause by throwing herself in the path of the thing, next to property, held most sacred to Englishmen—sport'. [10]

Queen Victoria thought that at least one advocate of women's rights, Bertrand Russell's mother, 'ought to get a good whipping'. Writing in 1870 Victoria said: 'The Queen is most anxious to enlist everyone to join in checking this mad, wicked folly of Woman's Rights, with all its attendant horrors ...' [11] Yet Victoria herself was an outstanding ruler, 'really superior', 'Abdu'l-Bahá says, 'to all the kings of Europe ...' And Harold Macmillan, looking back when he

was almost eighty-seven, said of her, ‘The Queen had great power.’[12]

Neither Florence nor Lady Spring-Rice realized that afternoon—for Bahá’ís did not know their history well, before Shoghi Effendi gave us *The Dawn-Breakers* and *God Passes By*—that a Persian, Táhirih the poet, had died for women’s rights, had become ‘the first woman suffrage martyr’, killed by the men in this very city of Tehran over half a century before their conversation.[13]

‘Can you imagine women sitting in Parliament?’ the British Minister’s wife said, smiling amusedly.

‘Hardly!’ agreed Florence. ‘Quite unthinkable!’ ‘And we both smiled’, she added later, ‘in our ignorance of how near we were to just such an event.’

Another kindness offered her was from the wife of Dr Scott.

Every day, to relieve the convalescent’s prescribed, monotonous diet, she sent Florence a dainty dessert, the sort the patient might be given in America: a rice pudding, a custard, a blancmange. So the days went by, and Florence, recuperating, kept on an almost starvation diet, spent long hours day-dreaming about the meals she was going to have once she got home.

As befitted a young lady of her time and place, her repasts at home were usually not frugal. Her mother often recalled the dismay of one of Florence’s many beaux when he had taken her to dinner. A youth not in her league, and with a nervous stammer, he had worked up his courage, saved his money and tendered the invitation. Returning from dinner, he unburdened himself to Mrs Breed, his eyes bulging out as he recited the dreadful litany of Florence’s menu:

‘L-I-lobster,’ he began.

Florence used to say she hoped to die eating lobster.

On February 28 Florence wrote that because of a recent *Tablet* from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, ‘The Bahá’ís are giving up ... none of them has any connection whatever with the many organized political clubs, the Assembly etc., and are solely devoting themselves to the unity and betterment of humanity—their mission being peaceful, spiritual, and moral.’

Now, when early spring was coming on and Florence was better, Khan had been able somewhat to resume his own life.

For example, Dr Arastú Khán had him address some seventy guests at his home, members of every group—Jews, Muslims, the military, men of business, all were represented.

Now, too, he could occasionally absent himself from the sickroom and visit the bazaars, where he chose gifts for his American family. He found the bazaars overflowing with treasures (many, alas, in these modern times of imitation and adulteration, available no more). He bought a piece of Persian embroidery, ancient and

beautiful, of a kind he had thought lost forever. For Florence, he discovered a table cloth—probably a banquet cloth—an old piece from Káshán, with a profusion of birds and vines embroidered in

Persian blue. His natural talent for selecting what was good and valuable, and his technical knowledge of Persian products, were responsible for his later success at San Francisco's Panama-Pacific Exposition, and his many American lectures on and exhibits of Persian art.

'There are such beautiful Termeh shawls of all descriptions in Persia', Florence wrote, 'Made in Kashmir, in Kirman, Yezd and other Persian provinces. Sometimes the men wear long coats made of shawls, lined with fur. The "Robe of Honor" conferred by the Shah is made of shawls—and the Termeh shawl accompanies the engagement ring sent by the lover to his betrothed, while it is also used in funerals, a Kashmir or Kirman shawl covering the dead. It has in short a thousand uses—to cover furniture, pillows, cushions—it drapes the pulpit from which the mulla may read a passion-play, the men make it into fancy waistcoats, in short it is used wherever a costly tapestry or covering is desired.'

In spite of all her suffering, most of Florence's memories of Persia were romantic, but one less so remained: late during the long nights she would hear a father in the neighborhood, holding, sequentially, his numerous young brood out the window, and commanding, 'Pee!' (Bishásh!). Then would come an obedient rattling onto the courtyard down below.

Khan hoped to get his wife well enough to travel by spring. He added that God 'seems to want us away from Persia and all its seemingly glorious prospects, we must be perfectly resigned and satisfied. I am grateful that His favor and grace responded to the prayer I offered to heal Florence so that I could bring her back to her home safe.'

As would often happen to him, disappointed at one pole of his being he yearned for the other: he now said he had been looking on this trip to Persia 'as a mere visit'. He longed to get back to America and then to accomplish much on a later Persian trip.

He told how he was constantly at home helping Florence recover sufficiently to travel: '... she is taking a perfect rest.'

Meanwhile he was devouring every line of the American papers, and had not known he would miss America so much: 'I presume you would like to know what I think of Persia after having lived in America so long ... America has spoilt me. And physically speaking, I have so outgrown the present outward Persia, that I think of her just as ... the snake of its cast-off skin ... I can serve Persia and humanity at large, better in America than anywhere here, and I say this with all my love for the real Persia as the land of Zoroaster and various Divine Wise Men, and the cradle where the great Daniel

had his visions. I am a Persian every inch—as much as I am cosmopolitan and a citizen of the world, because the true, unmixed Persian spirit is a universal one, considering the marvelous Bahá'í Revelation which had its dawn in Persia in this great day.' After careful deliberation on his problems, Khan did what he had done and would do throughout his life (until that terrible day in November, 1921)—he wired the Master for instructions and guidance, and on April 11, 1907 wrote Alice he was awaiting a reply. 'At any rate,' he told her, 'why don't you go ahead and make lecture engagements for both of us, or either of us; and if we don't get there in time, you can personally, perhaps, take them. I know as soon as we arrive we will sit down and get busy on Florence's book ...' [to be written from her letters home].

When Florence had grown strong enough she would be driven out beyond the city walls, where she could push back the little black silk veil over her face and breathe the mountain air—a dazzling, pure air, under translucent skies with snow-wrapped Dimávand at the north. Her diary notes on Persia close with 'an early summer night on the flat rooftop—in a mosquito-netting "room", on a mattress. Stars. Camel bells. Muezzin call to prayer, at dawn.'

Seven

Boston Press greets Khans' return

As soon as Florence smelled the Caspian Sea, she knew she would be well. The sea was home. She was brought up where she could watch the Atlantic from her windows.

The Khans traveled by way of Constantinople and Vienna to Paris, and their daytime crossing of Austria was 'Paradise'.

They remained in Paris for some time in order that Florence might gain strength for the rest of the trip, though she herself felt that it was Khan who needed recuperation more. He was exhausted. 'He does his utmost to get me well. It is so slow ... I don't know when Heaven will send him rest. He really ought to get away and have me out of his mind.'

They were still at a hotel and Florence happened to be alone in their room, the wig she wore to cover her short new growth of hair not on, when there came a discreet knocking at the door. She stooped down to take a look through the keyhole, and found a large,

solemn blue eye looking back: it was the distinguished Hippolyte Dreyfus, come to call.

Paris was full of Bahá'ís, either residents or visitors passing through. The Khans attended a Bahá'í meeting at Laura Barney's in Neuilly, where she and her sister Natalie each had a house and garden. Ellen Goin was arriving, and Alice Pike Barney. Mary Hanford Ford was about to escort a group of ladies to Italy and Switzerland (round trip tickets would cost them only thirty-five

dollars apiece and the second class was excellent.) Florence and Khan had tea with Miss Sanderson, sister of the well-known singer, Sybil, who had died. Florence thought she would run into Sigurd Russell and other American believers when she was driven in an auto to the Bois de Boulogne, but Khan reminded her that 'Paris is not Lynn'. After the hotel, Mme Jackson, an American Bahá'í, had installed Florence and Khan in an apartment of her mansion, dispatching a maid to wait on them; and 'each evening she sends her own cook over and has her dinner here with us, usually two or three friends coming too.'

Mme Jackson herself was then living in another apartment in the rue Copernique. Her 'huge' home was built around and opened onto an inner garden. One of the apartments in this home was let to a Princess Radziwill from Russia, while two others were tenanted respectively by a Prince and a Marquis. When the King and Queen of Denmark dined next door at the Danish Embassy the street was suddenly full of guards.

Florence also caught sight of a 'femme cochère', a woman coachman. 'They have to handle trunks, be out in all weathers, do just like the cabbies. Often their horses and themselves are covered with sores.'

Mme Jackson also invited the Khans to the Sarah Bernhardt theatre, to see the great actress in 'Les Bouffons'.

The day of the big races, the Grand Prix, came, and while Florence could not attend, she took a walk with Rahim along the Champs-Élysées and watched the elegantly dressed crowds. 'The hats and dresses are wonderful!' The West, preening itself on its civilization, its state of social culture, which would be blotted out seven years from then, was at its peak.

As often happened, Florence and Khan were news when they returned from that first journey to the East.

The Boston Herald, July 9, 1907, featured two large photographs, respectively captioned: 'Mrs Ali Kuli, Who was Miss Florence Breed of Cambridge and Who has Just Returned from Persia,' and 'Mirza Ali Kuli Khan a Leader of Bahais Faith Who Arrived in Boston Today to Lecture and Make Converts'. In heavier type

below, the paper said: 'Cambridge Girl Spent Many Days Visiting the Abbas Effendi, Cult's World Head.' There were nine column inches:

'During my stay here I shall speak before clubs upon Bahaism, and shall confine my efforts to teaching its doctrines,' said Mirza Ali Kuli Khan, the Persian exponent of the doctrine known as Baha Ullah [sic] or the Persian revelation, who with his wife, formerly Miss Florence Breed of Cambridge, and his little boy, the direct lineal descendant of Cyrus the Great, arrived in Boston today by the steamer Marquette from Antwerp. They were met at the pier by Mr. and Mrs. Breed, and left almost immediately for

Cambridge.

After over a year's sojourn abroad, Ali Kuli Kahn [sic] returns to this country more fully convinced than ever of the stability of his doctrine and more eager to disseminate its truths.

'My sudden return ... I consider more in the nature of a flight,' he said.

'My wife could not stand the high altitude of Teheran, and was ordered by the doctors to get to the sea immediately. The other [reason] is that I believe I can do more good to humanity at large and to Persia in particular by living in the United States than ... at home ... as I have travelled and studied, I have absorbed such great high principles that Persia cannot appreciate them. Her people have not been educated up to what I wish to teach them ... She is alive, wide awake, but what to? She does not know ... She is only beginning to realize what is in store for her in the future, and she does not know how quite to bring herself up to date. Public men in Persia today talk more liberally and freely than the most outspoken progressive Democrat or Republican you have in the United States.'

Florence told them she was 'delighted to be home', said, 'Boston is so dear to me', and added, 'Oh it is so different in Persia and so lovely.'

The account went on, telling of their thirty-three days in 'Akká, 'visiting the master of the Bahaist religion, Abbas Effendi', and stating that Florence had adopted native dress in Tehran and that 'through her influence the English and American ministers received introductions at the palace of the Shah'. It referred to Khan's English as 'perfect' and mentioned his uncle, 'the present minister of mines', and the fact that the new Shah 'favored his family with many high appointments', but that Khan had 'chosen to devote himself to the dissemination of Bahaism. The Bahaists are all followers of Baha Ullah, who they believe to have been the reincarnation of Jesus [!], and who died in Persia in 1892.'

In Tehran, the paper reported, there are 50,000 Bahaists 'and as many more throughout the world. Boston has a colony of Bahaists, including many prominent people. There are also Bahaist centres in New York, Brooklyn, Washington, Chicago and San Francisco.'

The article concluded with the statement that Florence 'is noted for her beauty', had earlier 'won fame on both the amateur and professional stage', and would now 'write a book on her experiences in Persia'.

Khan could speak optimistically to the ship reporters about devoting all his time to teaching the Bahá'í Faith, and he did teach at every opportunity, but his immediate concern was financial. He had Florence and Rahim to provide for, and despite all his energy and his many talents, this would prove difficult. He could translate, but except for 'Umar Khayyám, Americans were not interested in Persian literature. Nobody wanted to learn Persian. In spite of his

English and academic background, he had no transferable credentials to a university faculty, and as to commerce as a last resort (in those days Persians of a certain class had a contempt for business pursuits, much as the British and hence the Bostonians looked down on persons 'in trade'), that required capital. Anyhow, not even the foes he collected during his life could accuse Khan of being a shrewd businessman.

There remained the lecture circuit. Emerson, one of his idols, had taken that route, and so had many another literate New Englander. Mark Twain had solved his cash-flow problem in that way. But one had to have an agent to sell one to Lyceum managers, arrange itineraries, collect fees—and this was expensive. What with influential connections in Boston and Washington, however, Khan and Florence did succeed in setting up engagements, and some uncertain money did come in. But the schedules were haphazard, and society women who had agreed to be sponsors would let the matter lapse and have to be tactfully prodded, a contradiction in terms.

Meanwhile Khan continued to lecture on the Bahá'í Faith in various Eastern cities, enriching the railroads as he traveled back and forth. Also, however secular his other lectures, he rarely left a platform without having told the audience at least something about the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

What with his speaking, deepening the believers, translating, traveling, worrying, his soul 'wore out the sheath', and he was frail and often ill.

His erratic schedule kept Khan and Florence apart a great deal during the first year of their return to America. He lacked the money to establish a home for Florence and Rahim in Washington where he had important connections, but found an inexpensive haven for them and a home base where he could recuperate from his labors.

This was Wilton, New Hampshire, a small town climbing the hills

above the Souhegan River. There, Florence, Khan and the little boy shared a house with Julia Culver, an early American Bahá'í.

Later on Julia left for Tuftonboro in the Lake Winnepesaukee area, and the Khans rented a house recommended by Julia as 'the choicest location in Wilton', belonging to Annie Gage. Since Wilton had a population of only about a thousand souls, the competition may well have been negligible. A creased, worn receipt dated May 22, 1908 shows that Khan had paid fifty dollars 'half rent for house season' of that year.

It must have been around this time that Khan made one of his puns. The Persian poem says,

What turns the lions into foxes sly?

It is need, it is need, it is need.

(Ihtíyájust, ihtíyájust, ihtíyáj).

But Khan preferred his own version:
What turns the lions into foxes sly?
It is, it is, it is the marriage tie.
(Izdivájast, izdivájast, izdiváj).

Julia, though in delicate health, slept in a tent, retreating indoors only when the temperature dropped to zero. She believed (perhaps not knowing too much of Persian psychology) that Khan would enjoy looking at the footprints of wild animals in the New Hampshire snow, and that his health would benefit from chopping wood.

For lack of money, the Wilton period was probably the Khans' most desperate time in all their lives, except for Florence's illness in Persia. Nearly every letter that passed between them spoke of their pressing need for money. Still, they had their Faith, and their love was young. Florence almost always floated above every hardship, and, unless Rahim were involved, remained calm. ('Your mother is so serene!' Khan once cried out in desperation to his daughter.)

Of their countless letters, a special one of Florence's remains from February, 1908. Khan had apparently given a successful lecture in Washington but she disliked the news account's 'racy' and 'flippant' tone, not realizing perhaps that such publicity was exactly what would serve best. 'That royal business is tiresome,' she wrote. (The newspapers, no doubt as a heritage from the Arabian Nights, always associated Persia with Shahs and Princesses, and were forever making the Khan family royals. One reason was that Khan's ancestry went back to Núshíraván, the Sásáníyán king (whose long-ago dynasty was very different from the nineteenth century's Qájárs). Of

Núshíraván, Muhammad said, 'I was born in the reign of a just King.'

Florence went on to tell of her own activities: 'I am writing Mrs Cabot as often as possible,' she informed Khan, referring to a member of a New England family who reputedly spoke 'only to God', 'and doing all I can for the February 27 talk. She is a little dilatory, so I am now after her, yet in a nice way ... Inquiries and applications for tickets are continually coming in.' Expecting her confinement, Florence had given up work on the Persian book and told him, 'the new baby has won the race!'

Mrs Parsons, a Bahá'í prominent in Washington society, was sponsoring a series of talks for Khan. Florence wrote him about hiring an agent, but obviously had doubts as to Khan's business acumen: Before signing anything he must show the contract to Mr Ayers' lawyer, so he would make 'no error'. One agency, Breese-Stevens had offered a contract giving them sixty dollars and Khan forty out of every hundred. Florence wrote of the whims of one sponsor, the change of mind of another, the do-nothingness of a third, the three months' delay of a fourth.

Real distress began to show in her letters: 'Do you forget the food

for December, January and this month not yet paid for, nor the coal; do you forget all the increases of expenses we shall inevitably have even with one more little Baby? Do you forget our debts, even this last six months ... Ali, you need money ... How can you live through the summer ...?’

The ‘racy’ news account, with its large photographs of Florence and Rahim, and full face of Khan, although it offended Florence, still made good reading. Forgetting the sics, here are excerpts from the Washington Times, February 5, 1908:

Mira Ali-Kuli, the Persian lecturer is here. He comes straight from the hothouse atmosphere of Boston culture, but about him there still clings the breath of the wild rose and in his vest pocket is the intoxicating perfume of the gardens of Persia. There, let no man heed the rumble of the distant drum. Rather, let all approach in reverence the red room of the Willard Hotel Friday night, when Mira Ali-Kuli will discourse profoundly on ‘The Real Omar Khayyam’, the Persian who lowered the drinking of wine to the level of mere genius ... The lecturer will explain in excellent English what old Omar meant ... [and] will also have pure and piercing things to say ... To this task of explaining the verses of a man who sold his reputation for a song and sighed through endless quatrains his discontent with the scheme of things Mira Ali-Kuli will bring a mind brilliant by nature, trained to profundity of thought and schooled in brilliant epigrams and phrases. He has been a deep student of Omar, Persia, and the Bahai movement, which is striving for universal peace and the brotherhood of man. He lectures on subjects other than those dealing with the Persian who cried out for a jug in the wilderness. He talks on mystic teachings, the immortality of the soul, predestination and free will, Emerson and Carlyle, and the doctrine of unity.

Florence comes in about here, as being from Boston and ‘an authoress of international fame’. Followed by the imputed royal connections and the very real list of leading patrons, including the Persian and Turkish Ministers and Mrs Arthur Jeffrey Parsons. How Khan, in his then situation, could see to the niggling details of all these engagements—publicity, program, tickets, transportation, hall, scheduling—and still have enough energy left for the lectures themselves we do not know. The Boston Sunday Globe of March 11 (presumably 1908) referring to him as the ‘Persian scholar’ enumerates his lecture programs just past and to come: he would give a series on Poets of Persia in Boston in April; he spoke before the Atlantic Club of Lynn, was guest of honor at a dinner given by Boston’s Victorian Club at the Westminster, lectured in Washington under the patronage of the French Ambassador and Madame Jusserand, Senator and Mrs Henry Cabot Lodge, the president of George Washington University, Dr Charles W. Needham, and so on.

Success, names, but little money. He would soon be featured at

the Parliament of Religions under the auspices of the Unity Church of Montclair, New Jersey, the honorarium for which engagement was twenty-five dollars. He would gladly have spoken on that occasion for nothing, because his subject was 'The Bahá'í Faith'.

Eight

New baby, new luck

Twenty minutes before April Fool's Day would end, Florence's second baby arrived. Evidently Khan—absent at the time arranging his lecture dates—had to be prepared for the infant's looks. 'Don't mind the boys,' Florence wrote of her brothers, Francis and Ralph. 'They both said nice things to me about Baby and probably will to you of course—but young people really usually do think new babies homely. Pay no attention.' Where Rahim had come out fair, this one was very dark.

Grandmother Alice, thinking of what to say on her first visit, noticed the newborn stabbing randomly at her face with her thumb.

'You have a good-natured baby, Florence,' said Alice, voicing the folk wisdom of the day. 'She's trying to suck her thumb.' As for Rahim, he took direct action, and made a valiant effort to upset the crib.

The confinement had been at a small private hospital near Boston, and Florence wrote Khan from there, 'Please telephone when you will arrive, so we can be all ready for you and not keep you waiting a minute in the little parlor.'

An old school friend of Florence's, identified only as Mabel, had sent by messenger 'a big bunch of ten new ten dollar bills', and she assured Khan that with the hospital charges already taken care of, this exceptionally generous gift would be 'intact' when he came to take her home.

There was good news, too, about the subscribers to his forthcoming lecture, among them being 'Mrs Schlesinger, Mrs Malcolm Forbes, Rose Nichols, Mrs Henry Higgins'. She reminded him that the husband of the last-named, who had originally brought the Symphony Orchestra to Boston and continued to sponsor it, had heard Khan speak at Mrs Cabot's. Florence also congratulated him on others who were coming: Mrs John C. Phillips, Mr Coolidge, the Bowkers. She mentioned the newspaper publicity and the notice of 'our little daughter!'

Clearly, the anxious scrimping through long winter days was shifting over to an easier spring. But there was still more reason for cheer. Khan might soon be named Persian Consul at Washington. He always said that the birth of Marzieh had brought him luck. Indeed he had some evidence of this: a fragment remains of his letter to Florence fifteen days after Marzieh was born, announcing his appointment as Persian Consul. They would be moving in October, he said. Naturally, he could not foresee that this would begin a

public career which would last almost till the downfall of the Qájár dynasty in 1925. He would serve as Chargé d'Affaires of Persia under Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Taft and Wilson, would be made a member of Persia's Peace Delegation to the Conference at Versailles, be appointed 'Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary' (in the phraseology of the day) to Warsaw, not assume that post but become Chargé with the rank of Minister to Constantinople (1921), then be carried away by the Crown Prince Regent (the Shah being under medical care in Europe) as Head of the Crown Prince's court, and end up again in that position after a brief interval as Minister to the Five Republics of the Caucasus with headquarters in Tiflis (Tbilisi) about the time these Republics ceased to exist.

In 1925 the Qájárs, who had ruled Persia all his life, and many of whom he and his family had served, were replaced by Reza Shah

Pahlavi, and Khan returned to private life in the United States, having left Tehran and public service in the fall of the previous year. Since Bahá'ís are directed to obey and serve their kings and rulers, he kept in touch with the new Shah's appointees, showed hospitality to the sovereign's twin sister when she visited New York, and participated in embassy functions in Washington.

His career began without pay. This was partly due to his ingrained Persian belief that a gentleman does not haggle over money. The mystique was much like that of England in the days of Lord Byron, who disdained payment for his works. Khan continued through the years to make sacrifices for his country at his own personal cost, when promised funds were not forthcoming. Persia would withhold payment for months, years, sometimes forever. Persuaded of his just claims, even near the end of his life he would be dictating futile letters to the Persian government, trying to collect the 'monies' owed him from long before. Without considering interest, they amounted to a very substantial sum. Not even a pension was ever granted him.

Instead of that endless correspondence, if he had been able to work on a book-length autobiography, his posterity would not now be struggling to reconstruct his life from multitudes of crumbling, discoloured letters, yellowed official documents in outmoded language, and powdery newsprint.

If, as one hopes, Bahá'í Archives remain safe, much more would have to be added to what is found in this book, since we have made no effort to decipher the considerable amounts written in illegible Persian script. In view of Khan's and the family's constant travels and change of scene, the fact that so much remained is a minor miracle in itself.

The Khans were always good copy and the usual long newspaper accounts of their backgrounds, together with considerable reportorial error, greeted their move to the capital. Both were photogenic and

quotable. Large photographs were accompanied by captions telling of Khan's versatility as lecturer, teacher and poet, and of Florence's writing, her charm, her talent as a dramatic reader.

As it turned out, he had little time to enjoy the fall diplomatic season, for he was soon to set out on a lecture tour that would carry him across the continent on Persia's behalf.

Khan's hope was to enlist American business leaders on the side of Persia by showing them the very real commercial opportunities in a country now threatened by the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907. England and Russia had formed a pact, according to which Persia, not herself a party to this 'Convention', was divided into 'spheres of

influence'. Russia took the north, England the area bordering on Afghanistan and Baluchistan in the southwest, while Persia was allotted the middle with its huge areas of desert. Not surprisingly, this looked like dismemberment to the Persians, who saw themselves eaten up by the bear and the lion. As a matter of fact, the

Persians were right: for as Sykes says in his book *Persia*, 'Russia undoubtedly aimed at the annexation of Northern Persia, and we [Britain] in self-defense, would ultimately have been obliged to take over the southern provinces.' [14]

In her mortal peril, Persia cast about for help. A few, like Khan, realized that America was growing into a world power and might provide a countervailing influence. The problem: to persuade American business to invest in Persia, on a scale large enough so that Americans would be anxious to protect their interests and forestall the Anglo-Russian takeover.

The magazine *Iran and the U.S.A.* (Feb. 20, 1950) reproduced a talk Khan gave in Tehran in 1949, recalling those early times, and telling how he resolved to spread the news of business opportunities for Americans in Persia.

'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself encouraged commercial ties between the United States and Persia. On April 20, 1912, He thus addressed the Orient-Occident Unity Conference in Washington, DC: 'For the Persians there is no government better fitted to contribute to the development of their natural resources and the helping of their national needs in a reciprocal alliance than the United States of America; and for the Americans there could be no better industrial outlet and market than the virgin ... soil of Persia. The mineral wealth of Persia is still latent and untouched. It is my hope that the great American democracy may be instrumental in developing these hidden resources and that a bond of perfect amity and unity may be established between the American republic and the government of Persia. May this bond—whether material or spiritual—be well cemented.' [15]

Friends of Persia's new regime wrote to ask Khan if there was anything he could do. After a letter along these lines from 'Alá'u's-

Saltanih, Khan as Consul (the Minister having been recalled) at once left for New York City where he conferred with friends in the press and arranged speaking engagements throughout the country, coast to coast, telling of Persia's great natural resources to sympathetic audiences. Result: Khan managed to interest several business and industrial groups, who promised to invest in Persia on condition that the United States would be requested by Persia's new Constitutional Government to recommend experts who would reorganize the nation's finances. These points were incorporated in three contracts which Khan took to Persia for the consideration of the Imperial Government and the Majlis.

'In December of 1909', he wrote, 'I started out alone for Tihrán ...'

But before this could take place, an almost fortuitous happening, a simple exchange of letters in San Francisco, renewed Khan's friendship with Phoebe Apperson Hearst, whose help made the journey possible.

Nine

The manuscript vanishes

Florence wrote much of her book from old letters, on summer afternoons at the Wilton farmhouse. The new baby slept in a crib under an apple tree. This was one infant who lived by the clock, but if she did wake, Florence simply put her face-down on her lap, used the baby's back for a desk and went on writing. The genesis, no doubt, of Marzieh's literary career.

Florence hoped to improve the family finances by writing an account of her experiences in the Holy Land and Persia. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had encouraged her to keep on with it. She recalled His Tablet thus: 'By all manner of means, publish your book. Even though at first it will seem of no importance to the people of the world, yet hereafter it will gain great importance, and it will remain as a sign between the beloved of the East and of the West.'

That first manuscript, with no carbon, was eventually lost at McClure's, who 'turned the office over three times, looking for it', so Florence was told. What happened to the handwritten manuscript copied by the typist no one seems to know. And was it McClure's or some other publisher?

When, at a dinner party a few years later, she told William Randolph Hearst of the loss, his comment was, 'Sounds fishy to me.' Perhaps W. Morgan Shuster, then or soon to be a publishing executive, was of a similar mind. When told of the manuscript that had disappeared he thought Florence 'could sue'. Her friend Norman Hapgood said she should do the book over, since she still had the large box of letters to work from.

When she told 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the lost book, He said, 'Write another.'

And Florence did try, as is proved by the great bundle of notes she left behind. But she says that each time she started work, there came

‘some new grief or tragic occurrence affecting the fortunes of my family, and the writing would be laid aside ...’

The trouble with writing is obviously that books are written by people and people are targets of continual events. A writer is much like someone in the circus who stands flattened against a board while knives are being tossed at him (except that all the knives don’t miss). The writing process exacts a forced withdrawal from the scene, a postponement of responses to what transpires, a suspension of living. It does produce oblivion, and if it is true that happiness is when you are not conscious of time, then to write is to be happy.

Even autobiographical notes are apt to contradict themselves and have to be closely watched. For example, Florence gives her mother’s name as Alice Esther Ives and says she was born in a little town in an Illinois valley called by the Indian name of Tiskilwa. Alice herself says her birthplace was Pavillion, Illinois, but later on she tells in her notes on her life written when she was eighty that her father ‘organized the Baptist Society in Tiskilwa, Illinois and built the church, giving back his salary and heading every subscription list’. He was Dr Franklin Benedict Ives, a physician who graduated in the first class ever of Rush Medical College (later a part of the University of Chicago). After establishing a good practice and ‘knowing his Bible from cover to cover, and being a ready speaker’, he decided his duty lay in becoming a minister as well as a doctor. Alice provides an example of a typical Sunday: ‘My father would preach in the morning at church, show up at Sunday School, see a patient in the country ... preach at the country school-house at four p.m. and go home and preach at the church in the evening ...’

Alice Ives inherited her father’s energy and left her home in the Middle West at nineteen to teach in a Lynn, Massachusetts private school, and to study voice at the Boston Conservatory of Music. In Lynn she met and married that city’s most eligible bachelor, Francis W. Breed.

Florence was much interested in her mother’s name, Ives.

According to her, both Carlyle and Greene affirm that Christianity was introduced into the British Isles by a Persian monk named Ives—a Christian, and the bearer, an old poem says, of a sweet message in his heart, to bring the world.

Originally called Slepe, the name of the town was changed to Saint Ives in the Persian’s honor. Drayton writes in his *Polyolbion*, xxiv (1662):

From Persia, led by sea, St Ive this island sought,
And near our eastern Fens a fit place finding, taught

The faith; which place from him alone the name derives,

And of that sainted man has since been called St Ives.

Khan's comment was, 'I have married back into my own family!'

As for the children, they would take cover when Florence inevitably informed one new guest after another of the Persian-monk-named-Ives.

Marzieh, as she grew up, was more interested in Grandfather Breed's true provenance, and still wonders about it, but very mildly. A mysterious lady brought him across the Atlantic when he was an infant of about six months, and placed him in a foundling home, and he was soon adopted by a substantial couple who wanted to perpetuate their name. There was one clergyman who had the facts, and when Florence was a young girl he asked to take her picture, so the assumption is that he was still in touch with Anglo-Irish blood relatives across the sea, perhaps even with the adopted boy's real mother. But just before his camera clicked, Florence jumped up and hid her face with her muff. She simply felt like being annoying that day.

In later years Florence believed that her father was, or should have been, heir to the considerable holdings of the presumed distinguished Anglo-Irish family. Marzieh herself never quite knew what to think, it was all a sort of fairy tale to her.

When the boy was fourteen a classmate told him that he was not the son of his adored 'parents', Isaiah and Mary Preston Breed. The shock was so terrible that he fell ill, was struck by typhoid fever while his body's defenses were down, and nearly died. Once recovered, he insisted on going to work and supporting himself. At fifteen he was teller in a bank and later went into business and became one of New England's leading shoe manufacturers. He grew up handsome, like the classic sculpture 'Dying Gladiator', Florence always thought. He gave lavishly to Lynn, civic movements, the poor, and his Congregational Church, donating a stained-glass window to that church in memory of his adoptive parents. When the original church was burning down he risked his life to save the silver communion service.

It was said that everything he touched turned to gold, but this did not always hold true. When the model for the Bell Telephone was offered him for, Florence writes, five hundred dollars, he listened to the advice of his elderly millionaire partner: 'Now Frank, don't throw your money away on any of these new-fangled inventions!' According to family memory, he did, however, invest with predictably disastrous results in a monorail train for Persia. Everything went well with him for many years, and he lived the

(from this distance) uncomplicated life of a successful New England gentleman of that day—a club man, traveler, connoisseur of what was best.

At twenty-seven, he was chosen by the city of Lynn to accompany

one of their leading older residents to Rome, where the two of them were to order a Soldiers' monument for the city. He thus happened to be in Paris in 1870, and kept a diary describing what he saw of the Franco-Prussian war. He visited other European cities, loved Switzerland, was impressed by the passion play at Oberammergau. It was on his return from that first European trip that he, the young Francis Breed, met Alice Ives and fell in love. She returned to Illinois but not before they had become engaged. He then wrote a letter to her father—not asking for her hand, but simply informing Dr Ives that he was coming West on a business trip, and planned to marry his daughter and take her back East.

The marriage must have worked; they had seven children, five of which lived, and they themselves were still together beyond their golden wedding day. Belying the cliché that the two never exchanged a cross word, in the course of a spat Francis cried indignantly, 'What do you mean I've never done anything for you? I've given you seven children, haven't I?'

He also provided wealth and status, and he was patient during her continual comings and goings, and put up with her, which must have been something like putting up with an avalanche.

One journalist, avoiding the usual 'active in club affairs and traveled extensively in Europe and the Far East', summed things up thus: 'Mrs Breed has been to the theatre in Venice in a gondola, to church in Hong Kong in a sedan chair and to address a club in Yokohama in a jinrickshaw ...'

Alice Ives Breed made her home a salon where she entertained what was (in that parochial age) a wide variety of guests. For example, when in Japan she sent pleas to the Empress that Japanese women be allowed to attend the convention of the General Federation of Women's Clubs which would meet in Denver in 1898, and the Empress, not without arousing opposition, appointed two Court ladies to attend. These two progressive women were later guests in Alice's home. Another personality sponsored by Alice, whom she met at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, was Swami Vivekananda, and he too became her house guest. When Khan was translating for Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl at Green Acre (Maine), Mary Hanford Ford introduced him to Alice and it was quite natural for her to listen to and accept the Bahá'í Faith from this young Persian. Besides Florence, her daughters Alice and Ruby and son Ralph all became Bahá'ís. Only Francis held back, saying he was 'not good enough'. As for Grandfather Breed, he was, so far as one can tell, a de facto believer.

Long a distinguished clubwoman, in that era when the women's clubs were a growing force for progress, and as the song says 'brought culture to Buffalo', Alice Breed, Vice-President of the General Federation, was widely expected to win the presidency at the

Denver Convention. But the ladies of the Western delegations envied and disliked the 'effete East'. Being on their home ground, and thus having the support of the local press, they succeeded through skulduggery worthy of male politicians in defeating her. Alice, however, remained unbeatable (just as she remained some years later when her husband lost his fortune). She never recognized defeat.

Marzieh had always thought that a financial panic ruined her grandfather, but years later her Uncle Francis told her that F. W. Breed—like so many manufacturers of the day—was too autocratic, refusing to give in to the workers' demands, and it was this fact combined with a series of panics following in quick succession which brought him down.

Even in reduced circumstances, wherever Alice and the family lived was beautiful, enriched with some of their old treasures. Her dress was still elegant. She still had many friends. She was never defeated—her view was that 'failure kills only the coward'. Years afterward she remarked to Marzieh, who had not known her in her days of social glory: 'There comes a time in life when you either do or do not give up. Your grandfather gave up—but I, never.'

Today of what they owned a silver spoon is left. Inside, the bowl is engraved with their large and handsome home, 'Deer Cove', with the trees about it, and the tennis court. It was one of many spoons Grandmother had ordered, souvenirs of a tennis party, as favors for her guests.

Ten

A power for good

The resuming of Phoebe Hearst's connection with Khan early in 1909 would greatly affect his future. She had been much impressed with his abilities during the years when he served as translator for Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl in Washington and had thought of sending him to Harvard at her expense.

The Hearst fortune came from the gold and silver mines of California and Nevada and was among the largest in the West. A Persian might, *mutatis mutandis*, have compared her to Qárún, the Croesus of Islam. She herself, however, often complained of being short of funds, and would not have put herself in the same league with Qárún—of whom they say that it took 300 mules to carry the keys to his treasure houses. Also, Phoebe was a power for good. She took pains to distribute her wealth and died blessed, whereas Qárún came to an unsavory end, for he was swallowed up by the earth along with his palace because—let alone his other sins—he was not bountiful.[16]

Phoebe's burden was wearisome at times, and her life illustrates what Bahá'u'lláh has written: 'In earthly riches fear is hidden and

peril is concealed.’[17] Bahá’u’lláh also promises that polarizing extremes of wealth and poverty will be done away with, and He further says that all must work. ‘The best of men are they that earn a livelihood by their calling and spend upon themselves and upon their kindred for the love of God ...’[18]

‘Abdu’l-Bahá praised and Himself exemplified poverty. The poor, He says, ‘... are very dear to God. The mercies and bounties of God are with them.’[19] He speaks of how lonely many of the rich are at the hour of death, and of ‘the regret that they must be separated from that to which their hearts are so attached’.[20] ‘Eternal happiness is contingent upon giving, ...’[21] He says.

Good flowing in and flowing out is the Bahá’í desideratum, not penury. There is no harm in comforts and good times. Bahá’u’lláh liked those around Him to wear pretty clothes. He would send to Beirut for materials, and let each child select what he or she wished, after which the ladies would cut and sew the garments. He would take the children on outings to the Ridván, and when a box of sweets came in He would put some aside for them. For otherwise, He warned them, ‘Áqá [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] will give it away to the people.’[22]

‘Abdu’l-Bahá once remarked to Khan that money is ‘the very meanest of God’s blessings’.

Yet wealth is not hated in the Bahá’í Teachings, it is only regarded as an obstacle. ‘Know ye in truth’, Bahá’u’lláh writes, ‘that wealth is

a mighty barrier between ... the lover and his beloved. ... Well is it then with him who, being rich, is not hindered by his riches from the eternal Kingdom The splendor of such a wealthy man shall illuminate the dwellers of heaven even as the sun enlightens the earth!’[23]

Certainly Phoebe Hearst ranks among these resplendent suns.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá called her ‘the servant of Baha’, the “Mother of the Faithful”[24] He writes that she had ‘sincerely turned unto her Master

... completely faced toward the Kingdom of God ... [she] shall surely have a firm and steady footing in the Cause of God, her face shall shine forth from the Horizon of Loftiness, her fame shall be spread in the Kingdom of God, and [she] shall have a ringing voice ... and the light of her glorious deeds shall beam forth during cycles and ages.’ In the same Tablet He prays for her son that he would ‘deliver the necks of all men from the chains of superstition ... feed the needy ones upon the food of the Kingdom of God and support the weak ones with a ... power from the Word of God.’

Phoebe Hearst was ‘an Empress’, Khan said.

Born Phoebe Elizabeth Apperson in Franklin County, Missouri, December 3, 1842, in her young days she was called Puss. By the time she was seventeen, Phoebe was teaching school in St. James,

Missouri. She could play the piano and speak some French, and, avid to learn, used to hold a book in her left hand and churn the butter with her right. She made her own clothes, and rode about on horseback.

In 1860, after ten years out West in the gold fields, George Hearst came back to the bedside of his dying mother in Franklin County. He brought with him, besides a nugget collection, glittering tales of the West, of gold towns and silver towns, of buffaloes and Indians. Like most habitually successful people, he played down the struggles involved for many, the toil and diseases and the longing hopes defeated. He had turned out to be a mining genius and was now prospering, but said little of his own possessions. He emancipated his old slaves and built them strong, waterproof cabins. And Phoebe, his young neighbor, whom he had last seen when she was seven, often rode over to visit his mother, who lingered only a few months. Phoebe was small, porcelain-pretty, and eighteen; George, tall and bearded, was forty. She was unlike any of the women he had been seeing over the years—stringy, prairie-schooner women, or entertainers in the gaudy ‘fandango houses’, named for a West Indian and Spanish-American dance. Despite opposition, the two were married on June 15, 1862 at Steelville, Missouri, whereupon Phoebe bought herself some brown merino cloth, to make into a dress on her way West, since she expected to live in the rough camps as a miner’s wife. In September 1862 they left for New York City to travel westward by way of the Isthmus of Panama. Phoebe sewed assiduously whenever she could on the journey. There was no Canal then. After the boat trip to the Isthmus, they set out on the way overland which proved fatal to many, leading as it did through jungle country, alive with parrots, monkeys and snakes, poisonous insects and yellow fever. Then came another boat to San Francisco, and Phoebe’s puffed and ruffled brown merino dress was ready by the time she sailed through the Golden Gate.

The Cinderella part of her story began at this point. They disembarked at a small wooden wharf and Hearst took her to the city’s best hotel, the Lick House, all velvet and plush, brass and tall mirrors. He ordered a hack, and they drove off to an elegant emporium, where he bought his bride a dress of heavy black silk, trimmed with white lace. Thereafter package after package was delivered to her at the Lick House: a stream of dresses, shoes, hats, gloves, a fan, jeweled trinkets. His extravagance frightened her. How would he pay for it all? A friend told her not to worry, her husband George was part owner of the Ophir mine, with its ore at \$10,000 a ton.

She did eventually ride through mining country with him, rattlesnake and tumbleweed country, over glaring deserts and up and down rocky slopes, into the rowdy camps. George Hearst was paid

as much as \$50,000 simply for his opinion as to the value of a mine. He had already known about mining as a boy, exploring the lead mines and visiting with the French miners at home in Franklin County. The Indians had called him The-Boy-That-Earth-Talked-To.

Together, Phoebe and George Hearst acquired beautiful homes. Their name (Anglo-Saxon Hyrst meant a stand of trees) became a household word. Phoebe, thirsting for knowledge, studied French, history, politics, art, literature. She filled their houses with treasures and entertained celebrities. Usually more than rich, at one time Hearst desperately needed money during the panic of 1874. His mining knowledge had led him to stake everything on two of his mines, the Ontario and the Daly. Then Phoebe stepped in. She sold her house on Chestnut Street, with its view of the Bay and the ships, gave up her horses and carriages, sent her servants away, and with husband and son went to live in a boarding house. A year passed and they were rich again.

As he became an empire-builder, his manner, say the Fremont Olders in their biography *George Hearst, California Pioneer*, turned distraught, and he would sit at table crumbling bread, while his eyes were on faraway places—Mexico, Idaho, Arizona, Nevada, Dakota, Montana. At such times Robert Turner, the black butler who served the Hearsts for thirty-five years, would brush away the crumbs and bring him a new piece of bread and, oblivious, Hearst would go on crumbling. Although his food was served on a gold plate, it had to be like that of the mines, pork spareribs, hominy, beans and bacon. As a rule, Hearst preferred his old western cronies like Mark Twain to Phoebe's eminences, and he especially liked the rare

evenings with her and a few who were close to them. He would say, 'Puss, get out the begging letters. Let's read them.' 'Let's give them

all something,' Hearst would tell her, even when obvious parasites had yet again asked for a handout. The two were continually giving. The list of his and Phoebe's known charities is staggering. Besides sponsoring academic careers for the young (this was long before the days of government grants), she gave to hospitals, old people's homes, kindergartens, the Infant Shelter, the University of California across the Bay, on and on forever. Once, snowbound on a train, Phoebe fed all the passengers for nine days. She even saved Mount Vernon, the first American President's home, from ruin, and restored its historic furniture.

When Hearst, by then Senator, died in Washington on February 28, 1891—as Phoebe and their son William Randolph held his hands—he was carried back to San Francisco on a mourning train full of dignitaries, for a service in Grace Episcopal Church, during which they sang his favorite hymn, 'Just as I am'. They buried him in a

mausoleum at Cypress Point, where Phoebe would not join him for twenty-eight years. He left everything to Phoebe, and her great memorial to him was the Hearst Mining Building of the University of California at Berkeley. There at the building's entrance a bronze tablet tells how he took his wealth 'from the hills', and 'filched from no man's store'.

With only two years of schooling George Hearst had become a United States Senator and given away to education and charity over fifty million dollars.

The truly great moments in Phoebe Hearst's life, the moments for which she will always be remembered, came after the death of George.

It is certain, and indeed has been prophesied, that the earth's powerful will be raised up to spread the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. But we are sure, as well, that shouldering the burdens of the Bahá'í Faith is often the privilege of many whom the world would call unqualified. It was always so: what human pundit would have chosen a band of fishermen and a village woman of bad reputation to spread the Faith of Christ worldwide? Or chosen an illiterate caravan driver to produce a Book that has shaken the globe? An American industrialist has remarked that in his opinion the Almighty is not a good business man, and surely that is how things seem at the time. Looking back, the spread of the Bahá'í Faith seems to have been mysterious, haphazard, tenuous at best. Shoghi Effendi writes in another connection of 'the over-all Plan of God, moving mysteriously and in contrast to the orderly and well-known processes of a clearly devised Plan [our human "Minor Plan," the Bahá'í "World Spiritual Crusade"] ...'[25]

In any case, Phoebe Hearst's contribution to the advancement of the Bahá'í Faith is incalculable. Her funds were given generously (in cash or by money order or through her business agent), her care was given to many through correspondence, just by being herself and existing she helped many Bahá'ís. Still, and no doubt there is a mystical reason for this, she did not throw the full force of her powers into Bahá'u'lláh's work as did, say, the 'Star-Servant', Martha Root, or those countless pioneers, often poor, often on foot, who carried His Message even into the huts of the head hunters. Or Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, the Guardian's consort, who in a time to come would spend seven months visiting the Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia, would spend six months working her way up the Amazon to Indian villages, would drive a Jeep 36,000 miles with only one attendant, across Africa, would meet international leaders including the Malietoa Tanumafili, Haile Selassie and Indira Gandhi and many other rulers, and address vast audiences—the list of her accomplishments goes on and on. (When future historians will catalogue all the services, great and small, of all the followers of this

new Faith, as impelled by its dynamic, they will not believe their findings.)

Phoebe Hearst had her own role, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gave her the title ‘Mother of the Faithful’. Certainly God has also chosen to establish His Cause not only through the great ones of this world but even through the helpless, the feeble, even the analphabetic. When the powerful Governor of Isfahán made his plan to win over the Shah to the Cause of the Báb, and through his royal friend spread the new Faith to the kings of the earth, the Báb told him that providence would bring about the triumph of His Faith ‘[t]hrough the poor and lowly ...’[26] We read much the same in the memoir of Jináb-i-Samandarí, regarding a leading Persian official who had arisen to serve, only to be removed by death. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, ‘The Blessed Beauty has desired that His holy Faith be spread by us who are weak and helpless.’ Otherwise, He said, ‘the Manifestations are fully able to raise up important personages, leaders of men, to promulgate Their Cause ...’

And there was the Sifter of Wheat, who is referred to both in the Bayán and The Book of Aqdas.[27] This youth was the first person who accepted the Faith of the Báb in Isfahán. He served the new religion for some years, then heard of fellow-believers who were encircled by the Persian army at Fort Tabarsí. He rose up at once to join them, and ran through the bazaars with his sieve, crying out that he would ‘sift the people in every city through which I pass’, and whoever believed, he would ask to hurry on with him to certain martyrdom at the Fort.

‘We were sometimes led in America by dreams and visions,’ said Georgia Ralston, a member of the Hearst circle. ‘We had to be. There were no books.’ Also, there were no local, national or international Bahá’í bodies then. The individual simply wrote to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, that he believed.

Ella Goodall Cooper, famed West Coast believer whose will provided for San Francisco’s imposing Bahá’í Centre, told this writer and Alice Dudley how the Faith was brought to Mrs Hearst through Lua Getsinger and members of her group in the early days of the Faith in California.

Lua, Ella Cooper said, was Khayru’lláh’s best pupil. She had recently married Edward Getsinger, who had the idea of taking the Teachings to Mrs Hearst. He had gone to Pleasanton and finally secured an appointment at the Hacienda. Lua was sent for, and began to explain about the Faith. The teaching shifted to Mrs Hearst’s apartment on top of the Examiner Building, at Third and Market Streets, San Francisco, where serial classes were held for those who had become interested.

It was Nell Hillyer who convinced Mrs Cooper (then Miss Goodall) that she should come to the apartment to hear Lua. Ella

arrived one evening but had to wait in the bedroom until one a.m. since only initiates were allowed to attend classes. Lua finally came in from teaching, radiant, vital, hungry. Nell sent to Gobey's Saloon for an oyster loaf. They also shared a little white wine, in the same glass. Lua gave Mrs Cooper lesson one of the series—nothing in it about the Cause.

Mrs Cooper and her mother (Mrs Goodall) felt, however, that they must learn more—and at once. They did not wait for more classes, but took the train for New York, where Anton Haddad was teaching the Bahá'í Faith.

Haddad used Khayru'lláh's method of giving a series of preliminary lessons, the eleventh being the climax: the Advent of Bahá'u'lláh. This is how Khayru'lláh taught in Kenosha and Chicago, except that he interpolated Oriental lore, and teachings such as reincarnation—not a part of the Bahá'í Faith, which says that only the qualities return, not the individual. He taught also that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was Christ returned, a statement strictly forbidden by the Master, who repeatedly declares Himself to be the Servant of Bahá, as His name implies. Khayru'lláh called the Bahá'í part of his course 'The pith of the Teachings'.

Using the same method in New York, with the series culminating in the eleventh lesson, Haddad was preparing Mrs Cooper to receive the Bahá'í message, when Nell Hillyer, unable to wait for him to give Ella the famous eleventh lesson, sprang it on her the night before.

Convinced of the truth of, and urgent need for the Bahá'í Faith, Mrs Goodall returned West while her daughter remained in New York with friends.

Meanwhile, Phoebe Hearst, stirred by the message that another Manifestation of God had only recently walked the earth, organized a party of friends and attendants to go as her guests to see 'Abdu'l-Bahá where He was being held captive in the prison city of 'Akká. Their numbers grew to fifteen when they neared the Holy Land, and because so many coming at one time would have alerted the Turkish authorities, increasing the dangers to the Head of the Faith, they divided into small groups, the first arriving at 'Akká December 10, 1898. Among the fifteen was Ella. When she reached Cairo, a noted believer, 'Abdu'l-Karím, gave her just one bit of advice: 'You are going to the well-spring. Empty your cup.'

Another member of the party was Robert Turner, Phoebe Hearst's butler, the first black to embrace the Bahá'í Faith in the Western world. Carried away by the power of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's love, he remained firm—even during Mrs Hearst's estrangement from the Cause—till the very end of his days.

The following account was found in Ali-Kuli Khan's papers, and bears a note in Florence's hand saying 'Written by [your] father, in

reply to Mrs Ella Cooper's questions.'

'In the spring of 1909 when I was in California as a guest of Mrs Hearst at Pleasanton, Mrs Hearst, who had informed me of the illness of Robert Turner ... suggested my going with her to San Francisco to call on Robert. I found him quite ill in bed. He was happy to receive me and inquired of the news in 'Akká. He then, with great joy, described his visit to 'Akká in the company of Mrs Hearst, a few years before the end of the last century. He asked me to write and send his love to the Master and to ask for His prayers.

'Soon after, I wrote the Master and described our visit with Robert Turner. In a Tablet which I received from the Master later in Washington, He wrote four lines regarding Robert Turner which I translate as follows: "Convey wondrous Abhá greetings to Mr Robert, the servant of that honorable lady, and say to him: 'Be not grieved at your illness, for thou hast attained eternal life and hast found thy way to the World of the Kingdom. God willing, we shall meet one another with joy and fragrance in that Divine World, and I beg of God that you may also find rest in this material world.'"

* * *

'In the summer of 1909, I received from the Master a Tablet acknowledging my letter of June 22, in which I had reported the death of Robert Turner. This letter came to me while I was spending the summer in Carmel, California with my family ... This Tablet came in my name in "care of Mrs Goodall, California". On the second page of the original Persian Tablet, the Master writes as follows:

"As to Mr Robert (Turner), the news of his ascension saddened the hearts. He was in reality in the utmost sincerity. Glory be to God! What a shining candle was aflame in that black-colored lamp. Praise be to God that that lighted candle ascended from the earthly lamp to the Kingdom of Eternity and gleamed and became aflame in the Heavenly Assemblage. Praise be to God that you adorned his blessed finger with the ring bearing the inscription: 'Verily I originated from God and returned unto Him' ... This too is a proof of his sincerity and that in his last breath, he breathed the Alláh-u-Abhá, whereby the hearts of those present were impressed.

"O Thou Creator! O Thou Forgiver! Glorify the precious Robert in Thy Kingdom and in the garden of the Paradise of Abha. Bring him in[to] intimate association with the birds of the celestial meadow. O Thou Knowing God! Although that sinless one was black in color, like unto the black pupil of the eye, he was a source of shining light.

"O Thou forgiving Lord! Cause that longing one to attain Thy meeting and cause that thirsty one to drink the water of life in abundance. Thou art the Forgiver, the Pardoner, the Compassionate ..."

(Signed) ‘Ayn-‘Ayn[28]

Thornton Chase, the first American to accept the Faith (1894) had also been invited to join the Hearst party but was not free to make his pilgrimage until 1907. This he has described in the book *In Galilee*. Before the historic, landmark pilgrimage of Phoebe Hearst, no pilgrims had come to the Master from the West.

Mrs Hearst remained in the fortress-city three days. After her pilgrimage she wrote: ‘Those three days were the most memorable days of my life ... I believe with all my heart that He is the Master, and my greatest blessing in this world is that I have been privileged to be in His presence ...’ [29] She was so deeply moved by the chanting of an Arabic prayer that fourteen years later she told her guests of it, when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá visited at the Hacienda, and yielding to her request He chanted a similar prayer in His powerful voice.

Eleven

The Hearst connection

To Khan and later his young family, Phoebe Hearst offered a mother’s care. When she had wanted to send him to Harvard, circumstances had not permitted. The years passed, he became Persian Consul, and when he reached San Francisco on a speaking tour he again got in touch with her.[30]

‘My dear Mrs. Hearst,’ he wrote from the Fairmont Hotel on February 13, 1909, ‘You may have seen in the papers that, by invitation, I am here to deliver a course of lectures on Persian Poetry and Art. As you have been so kind to me during my early years in your country, I cannot think of leaving your home-state without having, or at least trying to have, the pleasure of calling upon you ...’ His letter was delayed, being addressed to her former residence in Berkeley, across the Bay.

She replied February 18, ‘When I heard that you were here I intended sending you an invitation to visit me at my country home. I would be very much pleased if you could do so. If your wife is with you, I shall hope to have the pleasure of meeting her ...’ And she planned to attend Khan’s lecture at the St Francis Hotel ‘this afternoon’.

With her lifelong attention to detail, she instructed Khan just how to reach the Hacienda at Pleasanton, the instructions of nostalgic interest to San Franciscans: ‘Take 9 o’clock broad gauge boat to Oakland Pier, and train from the pier to Verona station—beyond Suñol. Carriage or auto will be waiting at Verona.’

Khan had planned to stay in San Francisco only until February 20, but Mrs Hearst at once began to arrange lecture openings for him and he apparently stayed over. Two letters from Stanford University, both dated February 23, one to her from David Starr Jordan and one to Khan from Jordan’s secretary, discuss the possibility of Khan’s addressing the student body at Stanford. On the same day President

Wheeler wrote her from the University of California at Berkeley, 'I have received your letter of February the twenty-first, and have in accordance therewith arranged to have Mirza Ali-Kuli Khan speak in Hearst Hall Friday afternoon at four o'clock. I had already written to Mirza Khan at the Fairmont when I received your letter ...' He added that he was going to have 'abundant posters' distributed

throughout Berkeley as well as across campus. His letter of February 22 inviting Khan to address the student body anticipated a large attendance, 'provided only our moody California winter climate will allow ...'

As her letters prove, Mrs Hearst's activities were unending, and she had to pay for her labors with frequent bouts of illness. She was a power in her state and nation, and internationally as well. Leading dignitaries, to use the old expression, would jump when she said frog. Beginning simply as a young school teacher, she had risen by her own merit to imperial heights.

Khan may well have accepted the University lecture appointments and stayed longer than he planned to, since a March 4 letter addressed to him at the Fairmont Hotel by Mrs Hearst's agent, R. A. Clark, enclosed a check for \$150, besides a ticket for a lower berth on the Santa Fe train. Khan already had his return ticket East, and the agent reminded him that he must go to the railroad's office in the Monadnock Building to have it validated. The train pulled out at ten o'clock on the fourth.

Ten weeks later, on May 18, 1909, Mrs Hearst was writing Khan from the New Willard Hotel in Washington regarding his next trip West. The envelope is addressed to Mirza Ali Kuli Khan, Imperial Consul of Persia, 24 The Decatur, Washington, DC but is evidently meant for both Florence and Khan since she writes:

Dear Friends,

Every day since my arrival here has been so full, I have not been able to see you, or any of my friends. On Sunday I was in the country from nine in the morning until ten o'clock at night. Every other day at Mt. Vernon from nine to six [in connection with the restoration of the first president's house], returning here about seven p.m. Council may not adjourn until Saturday. I want to see you and should enjoy having you come to dinner with me tomorrow, Wednesday, at half past seven o'clock. We can discuss plans for your western trip, and arrange matters according to your wishes and convenience.

Hoping to see you tomorrow, believe me yours most cordially,
Phoebe A. Hearst

Mrs Hearst then financed this follow-up trip to the West Coast. Her letter, mailed in Washington on May 20, 1909 shows her usual remarkable concern for exactness. Part of it reads: 'Penn Central to Chicago. I prefer a slower train. That is, I object to the train that goes

through in 18 hours.' Washington to San Francisco would take four days. She asks Khan to let her know what the amount will be 'for railway tickets, drawing room, etc.' Another letter from about the same time says: 'I think it may be best for you to stop over in Chicago and give a lecture for Mrs Pullman ... [These were, naturally, the Pullman car Pullmans]. You must engage your drawing room for Tuesday instead of the 30th ...'

She was clearly on top of all her myriad interests, for Khan, after all, was only one of her preoccupations. 'I have written to Mr Clark, to send you a check for the \$400 remaining due on the purchase of articles owned by your friend.' (This referred to Persian articles.) Thanks to Mrs Hearst, the Khans were able to spend the summer vacation, first at Pacific Grove, then in Carmel.

A rough draft of a letter from Khan to Mrs Hearst probably dating from the fall of 1909, shows how his next trip to Persia came about. His mother, seventy, had sent word that she very likely was dying and longed to see him once again. Further, there was Khan's wish to secure a higher position with the Persian government than the Consulship he had been given the previous year. Even if he failed in this, he could bring back art objects, photographs, and other materials of interest to Mrs Hearst and also for his own lectures, articles and books. But there was a problem. He asked if she would be 'willing to continue to send to my family here their expenses during the few months of my absence'. Mrs Hearst must have agreed to this arrangement, for there are a number of letters from her to Florence in which postal orders or cash were enclosed.

Khan sailed for Persia and on January 26, 1910 wrote Mrs Hearst that he had reached Enzeli.

When she learned that Florence was pregnant (the baby would be born July 23, 1910) Phoebe Hearst seems not to have been entirely happy with the added complication. Nevertheless, she moved Florence, Rahim and Marzieh to a cottage in Berkeley where she could more easily see that all was well with them.

On March 21, 1910 she wrote Khan to the English Hotel, Tehran, that she was glad to receive his letters and that 'Your wife was kind enough to allow me to read, also, some of your letters to her, so that I have received much of the news of your trip ...' She was pleased that he had crossed the Atlantic 'on one of the greatest steamers afloat', had seen friends in Paris and his cousin in Berlin, been met by his brother at Enzeli, and finally, reached his mother and other members of the family. 'I sincerely hope', she wrote, 'that you will be appointed to represent your people in America. They certainly cannot find anyone better suited for that high office, as you are so thoroughly familiar with the customs, the politics, and the business of the American people.'

She went on to tell of her own 'very trying winter', her many ailments and the fact that 'My son came home the day before Christmas, adding thirteen persons to my household'. Then the children had taken sick. For five weeks the place was full of trained nurses and doctors. Little William had still not fully recovered from his pneumonia.

'My son, also ... has had some heart trouble ... very much run down from the strain of the campaign [William Randolph had tried but failed to become Mayor of New York] and business anxieties, and over work generally. He was, indeed very miserable a great part of the winter.' Now he had gone to Mexico with his wife.

Mrs Hearst was pleased with the fine art collection that Khan could secure so reasonably, had asked her agent to send him \$1,000 and said she would try to arrange for another thousand later, and also to purchase some other items he had selected.

She made it clear that she did not wish to subdivide her large holdings and other than these had 'no land whatever to dispose of'.

This may have referred to Khan's long-contemplated project of establishing a colony of Persian craftsmen in the United States.

On this date also, she wrote a long letter to Florence. Her stationery is worth describing. The page says at the top on the right, Hacienda del Pozo de Verona (obviously she enjoyed, and had time for, the delightful name, she used it so frequently). Diagonally on the left are small drawings like those in a Guide Michelin: first comes an auto, vintage about 1906, then in tiny letters the word Verona, and after that a flag, presumably meaning a flag stop. The line below shows a sealed envelope, indicating the presence of a post office, beside it a pole with cross-bars, showing the place also has a telegraph office, and next to that a quaint, old-fashioned railway engine, followed by the words, Pleasanton, California.

She writes to express pleasure at the good news from Khan, and with her usual sensitivity and superlatively good manners, thanks Florence 'for allowing me to see portions of his letters'. There were details about financing his return trip, and her wish for art purchases: 'How I wish I could send a few hundred dollars to be applied to purchases. There are no doubt rare opportunities.' (There were. In those days Persian merchants arrived at the door, laden with treasures of the ages, and Khan had the necessary knowledge and taste to buy Persian art of museum quality.) She adds that she will try 'this week ... to send the blankets, linen, etc.' and if possible to see Florence in Berkeley where she would attend the Charter Day exercises at the University and have luncheon with President Wheeler. She said the whole thing would be difficult 'but I must try, even if I should be in bed the next day'. A postscript says, 'I will write to the children to express thanks for, and appreciation of, the coins. P. A. H.'

A letter dated May 20, 1910, says she was greatly disappointed that she had not been able to visit Florence during her stay in Berkeley, that she had been so weary she 'was forced to lie down every half hour' she could spare. At this time she was, after all, sixty-eight years old. We give the letter here in its entirety because it shows so well how Phoebe Hearst habitually lived.

The Hacienda

May 20th [19]10

Dear Florence;

It was a great disappointment to me that I was unable to go to see you during my short stay at Berkeley. I felt the fatigue of attending the various exercises and having guests—to such an extent that I was forced to lie down every half hour that I could spare. We went to Berkeley on Monday afternoon arriving at half past five. Three friends from the east dined with us at seven. We all went to the play at the Greek Theatre that evening. On Tuesday morning we attended the Jubilee exercises at the Greek Theatre. I had to be ready at 9.15 a.m. to go in with the Regents [of the University of California]. I sat on a high chair that was most uncomfortable (on the stage) for my lame ankles and held a parasol to protect my eyes from the sun. At luncheon I had ten guests. From two-thirty to four p.m. I was in bed. Then I dressed quickly and took friends (who came from Washington and from Europe) to see the Mining building. I sat down and rested most of the time while Prof. Christie took them over the building.

We went back to my nice little temporary home (1629 Euclid Ave). I rested for fifteen minutes. We dined at 7—Large party—went to see the Pageant. I was asked to go on the platform that had been erected at one end of the athletic field. There with Pres Wheeler, Pres Hadley, the Lt Governor, several Regents and a few members of the Faculty we stood for two hours. You can imagine how exhausted I felt. On Wed morning I attended the Commencement and the luncheon at Pres Wheeler's house. I went to Euclid Ave at 3:30. Several people came to call. I left at 5 p.m. to go to S. F. where I spent the night, had osteopathic treatment, remained in bed until noon yesterday, and came home in the afternoon. Every hour was full and I was obliged to deny myself the pleasure of seeing you and two other friends who I was most anxious to see. You can understand the conditions. I came home just before 7 o'clock yesterday evening. Went to bed at once, and will remain in bed until tomorrow—Saturday afternoon when eight guests are coming to stay until Monday. I must have these friends now as several are going east in a few days.

Some time ago I accepted an invitation from Director and Mrs Campbell (of the Lick Observatory) to go to Mt Hamilton and visit them from the 23rd to the 25th. Mrs Leonard is also invited. We hope that the weather may be favorable and we may have a fine view of the comet [Halley's] as well as

the pleasure of a visit with such delightful people as the Campbells. I will come home on the evening of the 25th.

The following day, the 26th, a large number of guests will arrive and

remain until Monday 30th.

I have given you this outline that you may see how fully my time is occupied.

I must put this letter aside now, and will write again this p.m. Friends have come to my room to discuss plans, etc.

I hope you are feeling much better and the children are well.

Yours affectionately,

Phoebe A. Hearst

She returned home [Pleasanton] 'early Thursday morning, as six people were coming up to spend the day'. All day Friday she spent in bed. The next day twenty-five guests were coming for the day and six would stay over till Monday. Several of them were from New York and abroad and she hoped to have a luncheon or picnic for them under the trees. She referred to housekeeping funds she was sending on to Florence.

Such letters, illustrating only a small fragment of Mrs Hearst's life, make one wonder how she kept up the unrelenting pace. But with all her activities she still took time to look after Khan's family while he was gone.

It did bother her when people could not accept the fact that she herself, having many uses for her money, might be short of funds.

On May 22nd she wrote Florence that she could not supply more than the \$150 she had promised to allot her during Khan's absence, or more to Khan than the agreed-upon \$50 per month she was giving him since William Randolph had not purchased any articles about Persia from him. 'You do not seem to believe that I was making a statement that was true, when I said I could not add to the amounts' or to buy art objects.

Florence, alone in an unfamiliar part of the country, with two small children and expecting the baby, and her husband gone, and her family back on the East Coast, and her own mother unable to come out and help, was going through a bad patch. Understandably annoyed, Mrs Hearst wrote: 'It is unfortunate that another little child is coming just at this time ...'

Certainly, a young man, brilliant, and especially single, makes a much more desirable protégé, and Phoebe's own background, simple and hardworking, was a far better preparation for life than Florence's, till her late teens the cosseted daughter of a substantially rich family.

It was during this bad time that 'Abdu'l-Bahá remembered Florence, whom He called Rúháníyyih, with a Tablet:[32]

He is God! O thou beloved maid servant of God! His honor Khan departed for Persia, no doubt you are sad and alone. Be thou not unhappy, neither grieved or disappointed. I hope that ere long his honor Khan will return and become the cause of thy happiness and joy, pleasure and delight. I have not [forgotten] nor will I ever forget thee. Continually do I beg

Divine bounty and favor in thy behalf. Kiss thou the two cheeks of thy two beloved children on my behalf. Upon thee be Bahá'u'l-Abhá.

(Signed) 'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás

Then came the big day of giving birth, July 23, 1910, in the Berkeley house. Florence used to say that while she was producing Hamideh, the other two were playing in the next room, stamping around and singing, 'Oh where, oh where, has my little dog gone? ... Oh where, oh where can he be?'

The baby received a string of names: besides Bahíyyih and Hamideh, one was California, bestowed by Marzieh, the logothete, who said, 'Call her California'; another, never heard before or since—and perhaps this is a good thing—was Clanricard, for, it seems, an old lady acquaintance who had been kind to them; and of course one of the names was Phoebe.

Twelve

Khan becomes Chargé d'Affaires

In the many meetings Khan had with leading men in the Persian Government when he reached Tehran in late January, 1910, he so impressed them that he was granted a special farmán appointing him Chargé d'Affaires at Washington. The document was signed by the Regent, 'Adudu'l-Mulk. But this could not and did not happen overnight. This was not the Persian way, and Westerners who dealt with Persia were always repeating, with shakings of the head, Kipling's verses that end:

A fool lies here,

Who tried to hustle the East.

Briefly to ponder the imponderable, Khan had now moved up from Consul to Chargé d'Affaires and in the normal course of events would expect to be named Minister.

An Ambassador is a diplomatic official of the highest rank, heading an Embassy. Next comes a Minister, a diplomatic representative also with full authority to speak for his government,

heading a Legation (which ranks next below an Embassy). A Chargé d'Affaires carries on the same duties and has the same privileges as an Ambassador or a Minister when such an official is absent or not appointed.

A Consul represents his country's commercial interests in a given city and assists his compatriots there. He is not a member of the Diplomatic Corps (the resident body of diplomats) at the capital. He did not arrive back from Persia till August 17, 1910. By this time he was used to ocean travel, and the difficulties of his life on shipboard in 1901, with no one to show him the ropes, were far in the past. He no longer ordered toast for dessert.

That same morning he wrote Phoebe Hearst from the Park Avenue Hotel in New York. He says he thanked God for bringing him safely back, and tells Mrs Hearst with feeling: 'I am grateful to

you for your kindness and benevolence to which I owe all the success of my journey.’ He planned to come West and bring Florence and the children East. ‘Oh,’ he writes, ‘I miss my Florence and the children very much, and I crave to see them soon.’

Khan had brought with him three Persian nephews to be educated in the United States. The clipping in the Washington Star of August 21 that Mrs Hearst retained in her files, gives their ages as fifteen, fourteen and ten. The oldest, Muzaffari’ d-Dín, and the youngest, Sayfi’ d-Dín, were great grandsons of Fath-‘Alí Sháh who reigned at the time of Napoleon; the fourteen-year-old was Muhammad-Amín Khán, descended from court historian, ‘Tongue of the Empire’.

As would happen on every trip from his own country, he could not come back without bringing some of Persia with him.

Phoebe Hearst already foresaw the problems of Khan’s adding to his family in America, when she wrote Florence from her summer place, Wynton, on August 28, 1910. Enclosing ‘currency and a Bank of England note’, she congratulated Florence on ‘the safe arrival of your dear baby girl’, and said, ‘Rest assured that many good thoughts went to you every day.’ She was off to the Fairmont Hotel and then the Hacienda. She felt that Florence, a nurse and the children should go East in September, since it would be difficult for Khan to come West, as ‘he has the young men with him, and if they were to enter schools or colleges they would have to enroll in September’.

However, we find her writing to Khan at Berkeley (2416 Tyler St.) on September 19, inviting him to Pleasanton and congratulating him on his ‘success and the joy of being with your family and finding them well’.

Khan’s constant Drang nach Osten included the urge to transplant

Iranians to the West—not always a happy thing for Florence. In his favor it can be said that benefits usually resulted. Intellectually and spiritually, when he later brought over his Bahá’í nephew, Allah-Kuli Khan Kalantar, there were spectacular outcomes. Married to an American, Emilie Moore, Allah fathered Alfred and Kenneth, the first now a university professor in Alberta, Canada, his wife a Canadian—the second a specialist in Latin American education and married to a Colombian, the offspring remarkable in both cases.

(Perhaps never before had children been born who were part American, part Persian and part Colombian. Such international Bahá’í children are now being produced worldwide.) Allah’s brother Abbas, also a Bahá’í, went home and supported a number of others as an engineer. Muhammad-Amín Sepehri also did well at home. Muzaffar, descended from a half brother of Khan’s father the Kalántar and a Qájár princess, was immortalized by appearing in a photograph taken at table with the Master, where Topakian the Persian Consul in New York is also present. This nephew and his

brother Sayfi'd-Dín went back to Persia and are lost to memory, except that Muzaffar reportedly fell ill in Persia and died when they took out his appendix on the wrong side. Of the two nieces Khan imported, one, Bihjatu's-Saltanih, became the first Persian woman to be received at the White House, and married into a Persian fortune. The other, a Muslim grandniece, brought over on his final trip, also fared well materially, becoming part owner of a fashionable beauty shop. She also inherited what remained of Khan's worldly goods. These included a family treasure, a fifteenth century manuscript all the text of which together with the magnificent miniatures were from the hand of Bihzád—named by some the Raphael of the East. (His daughter Marzieh was made his literary executrix.)

Before Khan went West to collect his family he looked for the remains of Persia's past missions to Washington, which had been placed in charge of the Minister of Belgium. All that Persia had left behind, the results of previous missions, was three old trunks.

In Washington again, Khan and Florence set out to find a suitable building to house the Legation. The one they chose stood at 1832 Sixteenth Street, NW. An old photograph shows a stone building of three main stories with attic and semi-basement. The lease has been preserved and from it we know that the real estate agents were Moore and Hill, Inc., and that the annual rent of \$1,320 began on November 1, 1910. There is another lease, signed October 24, 1911, at the same rent.

In extreme old age, walking through the quarter where many legations and embassies once had been, but by now was shabby and forgotten, Khan stood outside the house which bore the shamed look that old buildings seem to have, once they have come down in the world, and he moaned a little and shed tears. Probably he saw again his old ambitions and hopes, his young and promising family, the then successes, and clearest of all a day in 1912 when, at a luncheon offered Him by Florence and Khan, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had honored this house with His presence.

So Khan was back in Washington again.

The Washington Star, August 21, 1910, in an article on his return, interested itself in his 'Persian students', especially for their royal birth. They were the first to come from Persia to be educated in the United States, but were to be followed, the account says, by 'other Persian boys of ranking families'. (Amín, as related, was descended from 'Tongue of the Empire', author of the history 'to annihilate all previous histories'—Násikhu't-Taváríkh. The other two, with their Qájár blood, had that dynasty's good looks.) They were expected to spend fifteen years in the United States and complete studies in medicine, agricultural and political science. High hopes which in the event came to little.

The Star goes on to tell of Florence's decoration, and her new state title, Muravvihu's-Saltanih (Who Gives the Kingdom Life), in recognition of her services to Persia, and adds: 'That distinction has never before been conferred on a foreign woman.'

A Society report in The Washington Herald, Sunday, September 4, 1910, welcomed Khan to the city: 'The appointment of Mirza Ali-Kuli Khan as Persian charge d'affaires here is another gratifying return of an old friend. He has been absent in Persia for eight months, and has returned with a little party of sons of Persian noblemen to be educated in this country. His wife was ... a member of one of Boston's oldest and most exclusive families [they turned Florence into a Brahmin here, which she never was]. He speaks many languages, is earnest in his efforts to bring modern methods into Persia, and is an authority on art and literature. His lectures on art, including the gorgeous rugs and bric-a-brac of the Orient, were the feature of the Lenten season for several years, and were given here in the homes of some of the smartest society people ... his wife acted as hostess for the [Persian] Minister in the absence of the women members of his family.' This account ends with the statement that Khan 'presented his credentials as charge d'affaires to Acting Secretary of State Huntington Wilson Thursday'.

An article with a group photograph of the Khans and the three boys captioned 'Mirza Ali Kuli Khan charge d'affaires of Persian Legation, and his interesting family', appeared in Washington Society

(December 10, 1910) on page 4, titled 'Among the Diplomats', and is devoted primarily to Florence. Some of the piece is understandably wide of the mark but like many legends more interesting than the truth. She is described as 'another American hostess of a foreign legation in Washington, and right gladly is she welcomed as an old friend with new honors'. She 'was born in Boston', the reporter erroneously says, 'well, not so many years ago as the civil war, and yet, long enough ago to have gained considerable prestige as a literary and club woman in her home city and New York ...'

Her new title is mentioned (with Khan's translation, 'Life-giver of the Empire'). Here the account goes somewhat haywire, saying that with this title she is privileged to wear 'a garment of dull, old-gold silk, made kimona [sic] style, and called the "abba", and a gold decoration of learning conferred upon her by the Persian government'.

Florence liked to wear clothing made from Persian fabrics or trimmed with lavish Persian embroideries. This custom, routine in modern times when clothing is global, was new enough then in the diplomatic corps and society in general. Certain wives proudly displayed the spoils from their forages abroad or brought them by traveling husbands. For example, it was said that Mrs Peary's was the rarest fur coat in the world: sable from the North Pole. And California ladies like Phoebe Hearst wore pastel-colored 'tea gowns'

hand-embroidered in the Far East.

The article quotes Florence on her memories of Persia and her aim of helping in the progress of Persian women:

‘When I went to Persia with my small son, four years ago,’ said this happy representative of the new and very old civilizations, ‘I was urged to establish

schools and colleges for girls all over the country, but before I could inaugurate the real work of the undertaking, I became almost fatally ill, and was never to do more than everlastingly talk to the Persian women on the subject of American educational methods. The seeds thus sown from a sick bed must have fallen on good soil, for my husband tells me that on the trip to Persia from which he recently returned, he found twenty-two native schools for girls established in Teheran alone, in the incredibly short time since I left that ancient city. It seems indeed, to have become the fashion for princesses of royal blood to found, support and personally supervise a school for girls in one of their own courtyards.

‘But while Persian women are reaching out for broader education for their sons in Europe and America, and for their daughters in native schools and colleges, the latter are not allowed to neglect the arts for which their feminine ancestors for centuries have been noted—embroidering and cooking. If in either of these they excel, it is in cooking, and nowhere—not even in Paris, of far-famed cuisines—have I tasted such elysian food as is served at an afternoon tea in the land of flowers and perfume.’

The account goes on to describe the Khan children, singling out five-year-old Rahim, ‘who makes a brave figure in his uniform of a Persian field officer’, and says the boys brought over by Khan ‘are in this country to be educated to take their place as links between the old and new Persia’.

Of these three nephews, all Muslims, Mrs Hearst took a special interest in the education of Muhammad-Ameen Sepehri (he chose to use Ameen as a first name in America, spelling it Ameen for convenience). She sponsored him at the Miramar School in Santa Barbara and maintained a correspondence with the headmaster about the boy’s progress. Ameen’s report cards were sent her, one being marked ‘a very good report’. His laundry, however, had been above the stipulated amount. The school provided him with a horse but charged him for half its monthly fodder, which totaled \$18. They said he was conscientious and had controlled his ‘talkativeness’ better. Ameen, son of Khan’s younger sister Hamideh, a direct descendant of the old historian, was not of a lineage to be envied, for it was said that the posterity of that ancestor were under the curse of insanity because of his slanderous attacks on the Faith of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh. Ameen was brilliant but unstable. In after years we knew him as an archivist at the British Legation, and he would walk the streets of Tehran reading an English book. The love of his life was his little son, who fell ill of one of those endless anonymous

diseases then familiar in Persia. Ameen tried all the doctors, gave up, visited Muslim shrines, finally brought in a magician. The child survived, but was never the same again.

Thirteen

A public tête-à-tête

Phoebe Hearst continued to take an affectionate interest in Khan and Florence after they went to Washington.

She wrote Khan on February 15, 1911, 'I was happy to hear that you attended the dinner to Mr Straus, and met my son, and in all ways enjoyed the occasion so much ... Both you and Madame Khan must be leading just now a strenuously busy life! I hope in your zeal you will not over work.' She sent her love to Florence and the children and looked forward to the pleasure of seeing the Khans in the East 'in your new home'.

This letter was in reply to Khan's of February 1, 1911, which is now in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, telling

Mrs Hearst of his visit to New York to attend a dinner given for Oscar Straus. Over five hundred people were present at the dinner, Khan being the only diplomat among them. When William Randolph arrived, Mr Straus introduced Khan and Phoebe's son to each other, and Khan felt, he writes, as if he already knew Hearst well, his face and voice being so like his mother's. At table William Randolph and Khan sat at the left of Mr Straus, from whom they were separated only by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Khan talked with the latter almost the whole evening, hoping to attract him to Persia, hoping that at a future time some assistance for Persia in the field of education might result.

Mrs Millicent Hearst, whose table was just below the platform for the guests of honor, sent around her autograph album for Khan to sign along with the other special guests. WRH said a warm good night to him and told him he had heard from Phoebe of Khan's visiting her in California. Khan was much impressed with Hearst's lecture that evening and summed him up as 'a remarkable man'. Also in the Bancroft Library, a letter from Florence to Phoebe Hearst, February 3, 1911, refers to the Straus dinner and says in passing that Khan 'is at work all alone, doing the work of the whole Legation, the dear blessed man'.

'Washington people', she continues, 'are so lovely, dear Mrs Hearst, and the White House is especially kind and gracious to us.' She and Khan had attended the Tafts' White House dinner for the Diplomatic Corps, 'which of course is the most brilliant function of the winter', and she could not resist telling Mrs Hearst of her own small social triumph on that occasion. When the President and the men guests, after their liqueurs and cigars, rejoined the ladies in the East Room, Taft walked straight through 'all that brilliant throng', came up to Florence who was standing in a doorway, and began to

chat while 'all the wives of Ministers, Ambassadors and the Diplomats themselves [many of whom outranked the Khans] looked on in silence'. Re-entering the East Room, Khan was astonished to witness his wife and the President having a public tête-à-tête. He joined them, and the President continued to speak with the young couple 'for a good five if not ten minutes more'. (Florence was never too exact about time. She would ask people to wait for her 'a short five minutes', or 'a long five minutes'.)

'Was it not a wonderful compliment?' Florence rhetorically asks Mrs Hearst, and adds tongue-in-cheek, 'I thought it was because my gown was so "wonderful" really! (being a Persian tablecloth cut up into a dress, given me when I left Persia, wonderful embroideries on blue velvet, etc.)' Khan, however, took Florence down a peg by telling her the President was a skilled politician and had purposely stood with them 'to clearly and plainly show the friendship of America for Persia'.

Haunted by his country's plight, Khan used the connection he had formed with William Randolph Hearst to write him about the disastrous situation in Persia. His hope was to put the Hearst papers on Persia's side in her struggle to remain free.

Khan's following letter to Hearst, dated December 15, 1911, was marked 'Personal and Confidential'. Whatever came of the letter we do not know, but it deserves its place in the long elegiac accounts of his afflicted homeland.

He believes, Khan says, that Mr Hearst had seen the Tehran dispatch in that day's New York Herald, 'depicting the sufferings of the innocent inhabitants of Qazvin by the entry into that city of 4,000 Russian troops and their driving the people out of their houses into the deep snow on the streets ...'. He notes that the people and clergy (as he had advised them to do) were strongly supporting W. Morgan Shuster [chosen by Khan to bring order out of the chaos of Persia's finances] and that they 'are determined to stand by him until the very end ...' but that Anglo-Russian officialdom has disregarded the appeals of Persia 'to be let alone to work out its own salvation'. He asked WRH to continue to do all he could to help that harried people. He trembled at the thought of disasters that would involve many nations unless public opinion were brought to bear on the situation, and voices anxiety still expressed today: 'There is no doubt that the peace of the world depends upon the balance of power which will be overthrown if Persia loses her independence.'

He says that, trying to avert the crisis, his country has exhausted every resource, and that to many urgent calls he was receiving from his people, he could suggest no further means of relief, for all his previous suggestions—appeals to the Hague, to the world's parliaments—had been duly implemented by Persia, with no result. He asks, as many must be asking today in the whole world's plight,

whether love of liberty and progress was to be crushed by the power of the aggressor, whether humanity's ear had gone deaf, whether all the unprepared and unequipped had left to do was fight and die. He goes on to say that WRH had for years helped the wronged and friendless, and asks if in this hour when Persia's 'very existence as a nation is threatened' Hearst could devise some means to save her. 'My people know you well and the Persian Nationalists look upon you as the champion for right and justice in America.' He points out that during the six years of Persia's new Regime, there had been no fanaticism shown toward any group, the life and property of all were safe, Christian, Jew and Parsee sat in parliament together.

What he begged for was the arousal of public opinion to combat foreign aggressive encroachment in Persia, so that his country could then 'develop our mineral and industrial resources and take our place among the great nations'. He said Persia's neighbors were 'bent upon forcing upon us the fate of Morocco, Finland and Corea. Will the civilized world allow the nation of Cyrus—whose tolerance and magnanimity is a matter of Bible record—to be withheld from realizing its ambition to become free? Today to the Persians Shuster is a matter of life and death. Will you help up keep Mr. Shuster?'

He wished WRH could be fully informed about conditions in Persia, suggested that Hearst might send his own man there to report back, and pled for him to deflect if he could, by exciting public opinion, the imminent anguish, in that winter season, of potentially millions of people.

A postscript gave WRH permission to publish any part of the letter, 'provided it may appear dated in Europe', and as coming from a Persian statesman in exile, for if connected with Khan at the Legation it would be 'very injurious' to him.

On December 26, 1911, Khan wrote Phoebe Hearst a kind of follow-up letter. He said she had certainly noted in the papers word of 'the wholesale massacre of the Persians by the Russians in my country'. He said he had done all he could for the past two months to avert the crisis, 'but this is what happened in the end'. What Russia had done in the north, he said, was far worse than what the Italians had allegedly done in Tripoli. He said the Italians denied the Tripoli affair, but that the Persian massacre 'is even going on at this hour [and] is literally true. I have just had a cable to the effect that the streets in Tabriz run with blood. Please forgive me for writing you of these things but I am in agony and have to speak ...'

He wonders if WRH received his recent letter (above), says the survivors of the killed are in terrible want and that New York friends were wondering if a relief fund could be raised for them, through the press. Hundreds of families in North Persia had seen their homes destroyed and survivors of the butchery were out in the snow. 'The

unanimous support', he wrote, 'of Mr. Shuster by the Persians who are still clinging to him, justifies every act of generosity that the American people may show ...'

We do not know if anything came of it all. Individuals and even nations have little power to act where other governments are concerned. Only Bahá'u'lláh's principles of supranational institutions supported by the whole human race, a world police force and collective security can tame the world. Until that day comes,

predator nations will continue on the prowl, and savage governments will continue to enslave and devour even their own people.

Mrs Hearst—and to a lesser extent her son and his wife—continued to write at intervals to the Khans prior to their departure for Persia in 1914, at which time Khan was to assume new diplomatic duties.

Much of this correspondence had to do with social matters: invitations to luncheon or dinner, gifts received or sent, commemorative cards and the like. But two letters, one following and another mentioned later, show how Phoebe Hearst relied on Khan's guidance in delicate matters connected with the Bahá'í Faith.

On April 11, 1911, Phoebe wrote Khan from San Francisco. She tells him, 'Dear friend:—I enclose a letter from Ameen U. Fareed which received no answer from me.' Dr Fareed, later a breaker of the Bahá'í Covenant which all believers accept, had written her from the Hotel Argonaut in San Francisco on March 28. Fareed said he had not made himself clear when he phoned her. That he was 'not seeking an interview with you on business matters, but out of respect and appreciation'. All he wanted was to pay 'a short friendly call' at Pleasanton or her hotel in San Francisco.

Obviously, she did not care to receive him.

Her letter closed with the usual almost unvarying announcement of an imminent departure, this time for New York City.

Probably soon after the above, Mrs Hearst wrote the Khans that she would like to have them lunch with her on the Sunday. Although hard at work on the preservation of the first president's home, she could in turn visit them the following Tuesday, if convenient for them, as 'I shall be able to get away from Mt. Vernon a little earlier on that day'.

On May 22, she sent them a dinner invitation addressed to the Hotel Astor in New York. They were to dine at her home at 137 Riverside Drive, corner of 86th Street.

The Khans seem to have visited New York fairly often. February 29, 1912 is the date of an invitation sent by Press Telegram to Florence and Khan (at the Persian Legation) to have dinner at the New York house of Mrs William Randolph Hearst. An undated letter from William Randolph thanks Khan 'for the beautiful lacquer box' and adds with his mother's courtesy, 'I am still more pleased

however at your kind remembrance of me and I appreciate most highly this evidence of your friendship'. The letter was written on Hearst's intriguing personal stationery, which bore a helmeted Greek warrior and the legend 'I steal the victory'.

In May 1912 Khan sent Phoebe Hearst a telegram saying,

according to a draft, 'As a tribute to your broad services to cause of education the Persian Government has conferred upon you the highest gold decoration of learning just received with imperial charter. Am mailing you both today congratulations.'

On May 20 she wired 'His Excellency Ali Kuli Khan (after he became Chargé, Khan and Florence began to be referred to, according to then prevailing custom, as His Excellency and Her Excellency). The wire was sent to the Persian Legation at 1832 16th Street, Washington, and said:

'Please present my sincere thanks to your government upon the honor so kindly conferred upon me and an assurance of my appreciation. Accept for yourself many thanks for your letters and to you I am indebted for the suggestion of such honors will telegraph on Wednesday regarding business matters Best wishes for all Phoebe A. Hearst'

Fourteen

The strangling of Persia

By 1909 Persia's Prime Minister was no longer the Atábak, the belated dignitary for whom, on January 30, 1904, Khan had stopped an ocean liner in New York City, at high tide, when from moment to moment she was due to cast off. Khan had explained to the captain that only by this liner could the Prime Minister (leisurely touring the city while the liner waited) catch his camel caravan to Mecca. Should he miss the pilgrimage, Khan said, relations between America and Persia would be gravely endangered. Persia in those days was a country about relations with which few Americans worried, having thought it became extinct in the long ago. Their usual response to the word 'Persia' was: 'Oh, that's the country that the Greeks were always defeating.' And Khan would reply: 'Yes, George Bernard Shaw says that the Persians were good fighters, but the Greeks were good historians.'

As he sailed down the harbor, that Prime Minister, the Atábak, had three years and seven months more to live. He had been recalled to office by Muhammad-'Alí Sháh, the Shah who bombarded the Parliament with the members inside because he did not cotton to representative government.

The Atábak had not gone home to a rich country. He found the treasury in what W. Morgan Shuster would later describe, from the heart, as its 'normally void condition', and predictably tried for yet

another loan from Russia. He would be assassinated on August 31, 1907, and the killer's suicide would be observed as a public holiday. Sir Percy Sykes says of the Atábak that he was 'able, if unscrupulous', and says the Shah had re-instated him 'to overthrow the Constitution [of 1906]'. [33]

Believing that of all countries, the United States was best fitted to develop Persia's resources, Khan had, as we saw, traveled widely to make his nation known through the press and from the lecture platform, and especially to attract American business leaders to her potentialities for investment. Several groups of industrialists were interested, offering to pay off Persia's debt to her neighbors and invest large amounts of capital to develop her oil, minerals, roads, railways and factories, but on one condition—that Persia engage American experts to re-organize her finances.

Khan accordingly had left for Persia with all the necessary documentation to present the case to his Government's Minister of Finance and other Cabinet members. The Minister raised the objection that America had no business interests in Persia and was far away. Better, he told Khan, to try the Germans instead.

But Khan reminded him and the others of what had happened back in 1898. That was the year when the Kaiser visited Jerusalem and declared himself the protector of all the Muslims. Later on, however, he gave the Czar a free hand in northern Persia as a tradeoff for Russia's non-interference with Germany's project, a Berlin-Baghdad railway. In 1907, when she was being partitioned by Russia and England, Persia appealed to the Kaiser for help. The only reply she received from the Protector of the Muslim World was a message from Germany's Foreign Office to the Persian Legation at Berlin, that in this delicate situation Persia should desist from embarrassing the German Government.

Khan made his point and they had approved his American program and dispatched him to Washington, DC as Chargé d'Affaires of the Persian Legation. In December 1910 he applied to the United States Government for financial experts and approved W. Morgan Shuster—recommended by President Taft—as Treasurer-General. Shuster and several colleagues sailed from New York on April 8, 1911.

Khan had succeeded in getting Morgan Shuster appointed and into Persia before the English and Russians knew what was happening. He used to tell how, attending a party in Washington, Britain's Sir Cecil Spring-Rice gazed down at him and asked, 'How did you manage to do this thing without my knowing about it?' 'If you had known about it,' Khan told him, gazing up, 'I could not have managed to.' And he would add the prophetic words of the dean of

the diplomatic corps, Jusserand the French medievalist, who congratulated him on his coup but said, 'You have made for yourself

two ruthless enemies.’

In Tehran, Shuster and his family lived in the late Atábak’s palace of white stone, with its thirty great rooms and precious furnishings, its huge walled park, its trees and flowers, wide lakes and channeled streams—all later owned by the distinguished Zoroastrian merchant Arbáb Jamshíd. (Years afterward Khan acquired, doubtless out of nostalgia, a part of those furnishings, and the family used for some time a handsome, green leather set of large dining room chairs, each blazoned in gold, inside the back rest, with the inscription: Atábak-i-A‘zam, Most Great Father Lord.)

The new Treasurer-General’s own account of his appointment is given in his book, *The Strangling of Persia*:

As a result of the friendly negotiations entered into between the Persian diplomatic representative at Washington and the American State Department, the writer was tendered by the Persian Government a contract to serve as Treasurer-general of the Persian Empire for a period of three years, to organize and conduct the collection and disbursements of the revenues of Persia. Four American assistants were likewise engaged to serve under the Treasurer-general in this important work.

I had never even dreamed of going to Persia before my appointment, but the eloquence of the Persian Chargé d’Affaires at Washington, Mirza Ali Kuli Khan, removed my early doubts and I finally decided to do what I could to help a people who had certainly given evidence of an abiding faith in our institutions and business methods. One of the first things I did was to read Professor Browne’s book on the Persian Revolution, and his high opinion of, and desire to secure justice for, the nascent constitutional movement in Persia, strengthened my own determination to proceed.[34] Shuster’s ultimate analysis of the Persian situation as he found it is this:

... Persian political affairs, fraught as they are with misfortune and misery for millions of innocent people, are conducted very much as a well-staged drama ... some critics say, as an opera bouffe ... Cabinets are formed and dissolved with unreal rapidity. Men high in the councils of the nation sink in a day into perfect obscurity,—only to emerge again as the ceaseless whirl of intrigue drags them into public favor. All these men belong to ... the professional governing class in Persia, and there is very distinctly such a class. Indeed it is only in recent years that the idea has been even admissible that a man of mediocre parentage, or without a title, could fill any official position. Thus the fortunes and hopes of millions of voiceless subjects are largely dependent upon the line of action which some professional cabinet officer, or governor, or self-styled general may decide to adopt at a given time. Couple with this the fact that the principal object of holding office has always been, with slight exception, to enrich oneself and one’s friends, and the strange actions of Persian personages become somewhat clearer. He also saw there, Shuster writes, ‘two powerful and presumably enlightened Christian countries [who] played fast and loose with

truth, honor, decency and law, one, at least, hesitating not even at the most barbarous cruelties to accomplish its political designs and to put Persia beyond hope of self-regeneration'. And he felt the struggles and deaths of modern Persians would not have been entirely for nothing if the world should come to perceive 'the spirit of international brigandage which marked the welt-politik of the year 1911.'[35]

Some weeks after arriving, Shuster learned that the Americans were thought to be Bahá'ís, come not to reform the finances but to proselytize, and that his own fifteen or twenty very efficient locally hired servants were Bahá'ís. He was called in by the Minister of Finance and asked to discharge his servants "as they were all Bahá'ís". Shuster says this was news to him. 'I had never thought to put our personal servants to a religious test as to their orthodoxy ... I told the Finance Minister that the Americans were not Bahá'ís, but that I did not propose to have the Persian Government or people pass on the religious faith of ourselves, or our servants, or the color of our neckties, and that if the Government had not something more important than that to think about, it should find something.'[36]

As for the country's finances, Shuster says: 'I might say that the Persian finances were tangled ... had there been any to tangle. There were no Persian finances in any ordinary sense of the word.'[37] He had not been in Persia long before deciding that the Augean stable of corruption could be cleansed only if he received extraordinary powers.[38] These were granted by the Assembly, and Shuster 'threw in his lot' with the so-called Democrats, as having the most strength. 'He showed great energy but, unfortunately, an almost equally great lack of tact.' Russia, says Sykes, the British author whom we follow here, 'was a formidable opponent'. Shuster took off on the wrong foot by not paying the usual courtesy calls on the Legations.

Although the Regent told him to leave the Customs Department alone because its Belgian officials were doing a good job, Shuster started in on this very department. Then he engaged a British officer 'of strong pro-Persian and anti-Russian proclivities to organize a Treasury gendarmerie' for the whole country. The Russians objected and the officer was sent back to India.

According to Sykes, the Russians wanted Shuster out, and they soon found a way. When Persia decided to take over the property of the ex-Shah's brother, Shuster directed his Treasury gendarmes to seize the brother's palace. The Russian Consul-General, however, either prescient or well-informed, averred that the brother owed money to the Russian Bank. Accordingly, he dispatched two of his secretaries and ten Russian Cossacks to capture the palace first. When Shuster's Treasury gendarmes arrived, the Russian squad arrested them.

Shuster's war expanded the next day: he sent over more

gendarmes and they ousted the Persian Cossacks who had later been left in charge of the palace by the Russian Consul-General. No, they did not, Shuster's victorious gendarmes said, point their rifles at two Russian officials who passed by. But since the Cossacks guarding the palace had been posted by the Russian Consul-General, the Russians presented an ultimatum to Persia, and Shuster was dismissed. 'Most regrettable,' laments Sykes, but he adds that Russia would have ousted the American Treasurer-General sooner or later in any case. We do not know whether or not Sykes's tears were crocodile. Shuster had agreed to serve the Persian Government for three years, and had reached Persia in May 1911. Forced out, expelled, he sailed for Baku on January 14, 1912. His book, based partly on his diary, was copyrighted that same year. The London Times of January 31, 1912, criticized him for having expected England and Russia to assent to his plans for the reorganization of the finances of Persia 'irrespective of their own interests and as a matter of course'. It might be mentioned that after Khan had selected Shuster, an ambitious American lady, name forgotten, begged Florence and Khan to choose her own husband for the post instead, and offered to sponsor their son Rahim's entire education as a quid pro quo. So far as the Khan children were concerned, what they remembered of the experience was the fascinating fact that Mr Shuster's left eye was glass. We could add here that after Persia, the right one was probably jaundiced.

Khan's correspondence with American leaders in pursuing his country's interests sometimes yields unexpected glimpses into American history. For example, he has left a letter from the renowned Charles William Eliot, author, editor and teacher. Eliot was a man with top academic credentials, from Boston's Latin School and Harvard, and teaching Analytical Chemistry at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and being the President of Harvard (1869–1909), and editing the 'Harvard Classics'—fifty volumes which make up Eliot's famed 'Five-Foot Shelf of Books'. He did much to promote self-education and also went around the world on a mission for peace—but his words open one's eyes as to the narrowness of his vision.

He begins his letter, dated from Asticou, Maine, on July 13, 1911, with discouraging comments regarding Khan's projected 'Americo-Iranian Coöperative Union':

I must confess [he says] that I do not personally see where you could find leading Americans who knew enough about Persia and its institutions to induce them to take a hand in your undertaking ... Professor Raphael Pumpelly of Dublin, New Hampshire, Professor William M. Davis of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Mr. Charles R. Crane of Chicago, are the only men I can think of as having a good knowledge of Persia. Doubtless in your official position you have found many more. I hope you will succeed

in bringing them together into your proposed 'Coöperative Union'.

Then comes the most revealing part:

Co-öperation between the distant races should be the common aim of international benevolence. The merging, or blending, of races is undesirable. The preservation of each distinct race in its separate bodily and mental qualities is the true aim; and coöperation is the effective means of promoting mutual good will and national felicity.

It might discourage Professor Eliot to learn posthumously that many of Professor Raphael Pumpelly's family became Bahá'ís (who unlike Professor Eliot believe in the oneness of the human race): among them were his son Raphael and his daughter Daisy—friend and sponsor of Bahá'í artist Juliet Thompson—and his granddaughter Amélie. The last-named married a handsome black, a boxer, John Bates, known at one time as 'Brooklyn Johnny Bates'. John, also a Bahá'í, nothing daunted by Boston Brahmins, used to refer in private to Raphael as 'my Great White Father'.

As for Persians, to reassure Eliot we can say that they are Aryans: Iran, Aryan, a word from the Sanskrit meaning noble.

Another letter of historical interest is from Khan's friend, Albert H. Putney, Dean of the American University School of Diplomacy and Jurisprudence in Washington. This one is dated May 15, 1925. It refers to Khan's newly-established Persian Art Center on Fifth Avenue in New York and adds this paragraph:

You may be interested to know the result of a law suit which has just been decided in Chicago affecting the right of Persian-Assyrians to become naturalized in this country. After the decision by the Supreme Court of the United States that Hindus could not be naturalized, the Government decided to test the right of the various races of South-Eastern Asia to be naturalized. The Government, therefore, brought a Bill in Equity in the

United States District Court in Chicago to cancel the naturalization certificate of Rev. Shumil David. I argued the case for Mr. David before the Court on Oct. 13th, last, but I have only just received the decision which was handed down by the Judge on April 20th. The decision was that a Persian-Assyrian could be naturalized. The Government will appeal the case to the Supreme Court, of the United States, but I feel confident of winning the case there also.

Fifteen

'Abdu'l-Bahá' in Washington

'Abdu'l-Bahá might never have reached America at all. When He sailed for Europe in September, 1910, He was sixty-six, and after forty years of exile, captivity and persecution, so frail in health that He had to break His voyage for a month's rest in Port Said. Then He set out again, but had only reached Alexandria when He had to abandon the journey. It was nearly a year after He left the Holy Land before, on August 11, 1911, He boarded the S.S. Corsican, bound for Marseilles. By December He was back in Egypt, where He spent

over four months recuperating after strenuous teaching work in London and Paris.

Early the next spring He started out for America, despite continuing ill health. Once across the Mediterranean He might have sailed on the Titanic. Some of His fellow-travelers, on the Cedric with Him as far as Naples, urged Him to book passage on what would be the maiden voyage of that magnificent luxury liner which the whole world was watching, a ship of which it was said 'even God could not sink it'. This would have been a logical choice, but later He told the believers why He did not sail on her: 'My heart did not prompt me to do so.'

Instead, He remained on the Cedric, and she docked in New York April 11. On April 14, in the night, the Titanic hit an iceberg off Newfoundland and went down with an awesome loss of life, 1500 people, and today she lies on the ocean floor.[39] 'When I think of them,' 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, 'I am very sad indeed. But when I consider this calamity in another aspect, I am consoled by the realization that the worlds of God are infinite; that though they were deprived of this existence they have other opportunities in the life beyond ... They were called away from the temporary and transferred to the eternal ... they now partake of a joy and happiness far more abiding and real; for they have hastened to the Kingdom of God.' [40]

One of the Persians in the Master's suite had cabled Alice Ives Breed in New York City, of the Master's arrival date. Thus alerted, Khan directed the Persian Consul, Topakian (an Armenian business man), to officially greet 'Abdu'l-Bahá with full courtesies. Mr Topakian carried this out, and the Master was much pleased with his services. It was noon, April 20, 1912. Florence and Khan were at luncheon, and like the other Washington Bahá'ís were wondering when 'Abdu'l-Bahá would arrive in the capital. Suddenly there came a phone call from Mason Remy: 'Hurry! The Master is arriving at the station in half an hour!' They dropped forks and knives, collected Rahim and Marzieh, and ran out into the street, breathless, trying to catch a public victoria—their chance of reaching the station on time. With fervent prayers, and urging short cuts on the driver, they made it five minutes before the train pulled in. Florence rushed to the florist's in the station and bought two bouquets for the children to present, violets for Rahim and red roses for Marzieh. Mason Remy and Joseph Hannen were there, and one Persian friend. There had been no time to inform the others, except for Mrs Agnes Parsons. (The Master was to spend His first week at her beautiful home, newly built, and furnished to be ready for His visit. Then He would leave for Chicago to lay the Temple corner-stone.) Three autos drew up outside the station to receive the party, one bringing Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney.

Washington's palatial railroad station was new in 1912 and loomed above those who had come to meet the train. The passengers poured out through the gates, and suddenly, 'like a light from Heaven', there was 'Abdu'l-Bahá, striding along, dressed exactly as in the Holy Land, surrounded by His suite of Persian assistants. Various members of the railroad personnel stood staring. For a moment, to greet the welcomers, the Master paused, and traffic was blocked. 'Move on!' called a guard.

Florence was indignant and about to reprimand the guard but the Master, sensing the meaning of the English words, courteously started forward again. With Khan beside Him, and grasping Rahim Khan by the hand, He said, as usual wasting no time: 'What education are you giving Rahim Khan?'

'He is studying in English,' Khan replied.

'Good,' said the Master. 'And later you must give him a sound Persian education. He must have an even better education in Persian than your own.'

As 'Abdu'l-Bahá paced along the walk beside the tracks and was about to enter the vaulted station, Marzieh looked above her at His left shoulder, way above, it seemed to her, and saw on that shoulder a silver, almost fully opened curl. She knew about curls—her own were first moistened and then firmly shaped around a curling stick, but the Master's was natural and falling open. This was the only visual memory of Him that she could bring to mind in after years. Most of the rest that she remembered was an atmosphere about Him, an electric feeling of something always going on. In any case, of a number of crowded gatherings where she was in His presence, most of what she could see was the guests' skirt hems, and their trouser legs from the knees down.

The welcomers were distributed among the three autos, and Florence found herself in M. Dreyfus' car, with 'dear Mírzá Asadu'lláh'. Marzieh had disappeared. Florence jumped out and ran up to look in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's car ahead. Marzieh was on His lap and He pointed to the child and smiled. His smile was so happy and loving that Florence could not believe it was for her, and turned her head, but there was no one else behind, only a blank wall.

Mrs Parsons' house had a large ball-room that would seat around two hundred people, and a crowd of this size would be invited whenever He spoke in her home.

Khan dined there, the evening of the second day of the Master's visit, and at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's place were heaped up telegrams and cables of congratulation on His safe arrival in America, sent by friends from across the world, as well as from many welcoming American groups, and even Khan was amazed at the number of them.

As a good will gesture toward Turkey, Florence had earlier arranged

a dinner honoring the Turkish Ambassador, Zia Pasha, and told him of the Master's forthcoming visit.

Before dinner was over the Ambassador requested Florence and Khan to ask 'your illustrious friend' to dine one night at the Turkish Embassy, and asked Florence to send him a guest list of some Bahá'í friends of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the capital.

Upon arrival, the Master accepted this invitation, and Florence and Khan had the honor of escorting Him to the dinner. Two gigantic powdered footmen in livery opened the Embassy doors to them, and the Master greeted them kindly in Turkish.

At table Florence found herself on the Master's right, He sitting opposite the Ambassador, across the width of the table. Zia Pasha was beaming.

Florence spoke a little to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in praise of the Bahá'í women of Persia. 'Such humility of spirit,' she said, 'such a great self-sacrificing love. I think they are really the most wonderful women in the world. Do you not consider them the best women on earth?' she persisted.

'The women of Persia are indeed very kind,' He said.

The Master gave a brief talk, interpreted by Khan, in which He referred to Kipling's statement so often repeated (even today) by Occidentals, 'East is East, and West is West and never the twain shall meet.' And He pointed smilingly to Florence and Khan and to the Ambassador's beautiful daughter-in-law from Virginia. 'The East and West have already met,' He said, 'apparently with happy results, and in future these unions will increase.'

After dinner the gentlemen withdrew with Zia Pasha for liqueurs and cigarettes. It was then, when a footman offered them, that 'Abdu'l-Bahá directed Khan to accept a cigarette 'out of courtesy to your host'. Khan had undergone considerable difficulties to give up smoking in obedience to the Master's 'Purity Tablet', but he instantly obeyed, lit the cigarette, took a puff or two and laid it down.

Florence wrote that Zia Pasha 'became really enamored' of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and called upon Him day after day and attended certain of His talks. Often, when He was driving about the city, 'Abdu'l-Bahá took the Ambassador along with Him.

Looking back, we see how, in symbol, the two realms that had brutally persecuted this Faith in its early days and tried to extinguish it forever, now showed the Master homage: both the Persian Legation and the Turkish Embassy (legally, even in America, the countries themselves), opened their doors to the one-time prisoner. We remember, too, how much malevolence had been directed toward Bahá'u'lláh from the Persian Embassy at Constantinople, which ultimately for a time was to be headed by Khan, a Bahá'í, and where Bahá'ís such as Jináb-i-Fádil Mázindarání[41] would be

received

with honor. Again, the last member of the Qájár Dynasty—that dynasty which had sent thousands of Bahá'ís to their death—would be hosted by Khan at this same Embassy in Constantinople and would come to rely heavily on this follower of Bahá'u'lláh.

Whenever Khan entered the presence of the Master, as He sat with His Persian suite, the Master would show respect to Khan's official station by a semi-rising greeting, and then place him in the seat of honor. 'We must honor and respect the official station when held by a Bahá'í', He said, 'even as when held by another.' Florence wrote that when she, too, appeared, 'the dear Master rose slightly but unmistakably', and she wanted to find, as the saying went, 'a hole in the ground to hide in, and then pull the hole in after me'.

We cannot yet estimate how very many influential persons in America were directly affected by contact with the Master. Often, guest lists were not kept, but we know that what with publicity in the papers, and many believers working nationwide to welcome

Him, great numbers of persons were presented to Him, and their names are only gradually coming to light.

From their list compiled in after years at the Guardian's request, here are some of the well-known individuals whom the Khans brought into 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence:

Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone. At Graham Bell's home, the Master addressed a brilliant group of scientists, Khan translating.

Mabel Boardman, National Secretary of the American Red Cross.

Mrs Colonel House, who called on Him. He gave her an autographed copy of His photograph taken with the Khans' three children, and invited her and Colonel House (noted diplomat, confidant of Woodrow Wilson) to visit Him in Haifa.

Sir James Marwick, who gave a dinner for the Master.

Mrs Dave Hennen Morris, granddaughter of Commodore Vanderbilt, and recently Ambassadors to Belgium, met the Master in New York and received His blessing.

Admiral Robert E. Peary, discoverer of the North Pole—at this time the 'lion' of Washington society, and Mrs Peary.

The Hon. William Sulzer, later Governor of New York. At the Persian Legation, the Master granted him an interview of over half an hour, at the close of which Mr Sulzer said, 'I feel as though I have met Elijah. As though I have talked with Moses.'

Before He came to Washington, Marzieh had written Him, in block letters, penciled, undoubtedly an adult holding her fist. Her message went, 'Dear Abdul-Baha, I love you. I hope you will come to see us.'

And He had written a line in Persian on it, turning it into a Tablet, and signed it, and sent it back: 'O God, make her who is pleasing to God (Marzieh), well-pleased with God (Razieh). Inshá'alláh I shall

see her.’ (The words pleased with and pleasing to God are from the Qur’án, 89:28.) With Him, there was room for every one, no matter how heavy His own work load, or how weary His body, no matter how small the person was, or how unnoticed by the world. Florence told her how, in a crowded vehicle, He held her little cousin Charlie Godfree on His lap, and when her Aunt Alice expressed the fear that her son was too heavy, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá answered: ‘Love makes the burden light.’

She also told Marzieh how, as He would be conversing with her elders, He would casually braid the child’s curls to either side of her face, and tug hard, see-sawing at the braids; would slap her cheeks and pretend, with the side of His hand, to saw off her head, and she would laugh at the joke. ‘Marzieh stuck to Him like court plaster,’ Florence said.

He knew each person personally. He taught belief, not in some Blind Force,—but in ‘a personal God, unknowable, the source of all Revelation ...’,[42] to be approached and communicated with through acceptance of the Mediator, the Messenger that God has always sent periodically to save humanity, Who proves God’s existence, and will prove it forever.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá had given Florence permission, much coveted, to have her three children photographed in His presence, and had assigned a definite hour and date.

The Khans’ Washington house was closed at the time, the family were staying in Virginia and came into the city a day before the great event. Khan himself was off on an official mission, to speak at an International Agricultural Conference in Alberta, Canada. Florence and their nurse brought the children, they in crisp white clothes and temporarily spit and span, to the large Washington house rented by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

A crowd had already gathered at the house to hear the Master’s morning address, and there were several photographers milling around in the lower entrance hall with their cameras and tripods. Florence and the children, having an appointment, were at once ushered upstairs to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s reception room. The room was full of light, with transparent white curtains. There was as usual a party atmosphere when He was present, a quickening. Comings and goings, flowers, candies, electric air, the people somehow enhanced. As Juliet wrote of Him in her Diary, ‘The Master has a strange quality of beautifying His environment ...’[43]

As ever, He welcomed Florence with the great dignity of a highborn Persian gentleman. Time and again, she writes in her notes that His manners were faultless, His courtesy unexampled—although His thus noticing her, as it had in ‘Akká at His table—embarrassed her much.

Florence asked Him if she too could be in the photograph.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá answered, ‘Khan is not here. Later, when he returns, it may be done.’ And it was done, later on, and the result was a remarkable portrait of the Master, with Florence and Khan behind His chair. Florence complained afterward that it had rained that day and dampened down the feathers on her hat (but they may well have looked better dampened down).

Now Florence worried, thinking that if the photographers did not come upstairs at once, the three active children would play about and crush their well-ironed clothes. Everyone’s garments were complicated then, for it was long decades before the era of do-it-yourself,

and a maid could spend half an hour ironing an infant’s lacy, layered dress.

The youngest began running back and forth, to the Master, then away from Him.

‘Come here!’ He said to the tiny girl. ‘Give me a kiss!’ Hamideh leaned toward Him and then coquettishly withdrew her face.

Florence called out, ‘Kiss the Master!’ The child tossed her head.

‘Very well,’ He said, ‘if you will not kiss me, I will kiss you.’

At which the little girl turned up the right side of her face to Him.

He bent and, as if inhaling scent from a flower, kissed the soft cheek and as she darted away, He said, ‘Ah!’ as though He had tasted nectar.

The photographers came in and requested ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to sit in a large chair while they grouped the children about Him. They took a long time fiddling with the equipment and adjusting positions.

While the photographers were doing this, a woman appeared at the door.

‘Please tell the Master the audience is getting restless,’ she said.

‘Time is passing!’

He turned to Florence and said, ‘Shall we take the picture later, Khánum?’

‘Just as you wish, Master,’ she answered. ‘But I brought them specially for this, from Virginia, and now their clothing is fresh.’

He sent word, ‘I will come downstairs shortly.’ Then He asked the photographer to please hurry, as the time was up.

The children were told to hold very still because there was going to be a flash and a loud noise. The older girl braced herself, the right hand a tense fist, the left supporting her rigidly against the side of the Master’s chair. She looked out the window while the photographer was again adjusting his camera, and saw a chestnut tree with burrs on it. ‘Whenever I see a tree with those burrs on,’ she told herself, ‘I must remember this.’ (Who could have put that unlikely thought in her mind? In any case, from that day on, such a tree with burrs on it has, like a message, invariably made her think of that morning.)

He is shown seated for the photographer, one child at either side of Him, the third held before Him in a standing position and encircled by His arms. He is pressing candy into her hand, not making a special thing of it, not demonstratively but routinely, feeding her the way a bird feeds its young in the nest, because it has to: He could not help helping, He was all-bountiful. A prayer of His tells us, when we call upon God, to be 'expectant and full of hope'—clearly a fledgling's stridently confident and open-beaked attitude, and clearly the Divine cannot be separated from ceaseless grace. (It is we who may separate ourselves.)

He could not help serving. Khan often quoted a sacred tradition, a hadíth of Islam, which says that a day would come when God would appear in His Divinity, and all on earth would be struck with terror, and would flee away. Then He would disappear, and would reappear in the garment of servitude—for 'Servitude is an essence the substance of which is Divinity'. This, Khan would say, was fulfilled by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whose very name 'Abd means servant.

As He passed her with His interpreter on the way to the door, He paused, and poured forth 'such an unexpected volume of praise, of bounty, of confirmations and promises for the future', that Florence was 'speechless with a kind of paralyzed wonder and amazement at such overwhelming statements of loving kindness'. She hung her head 'and could only with my deafened ears hear His blessed voice going on and on, anointing me with the divine blessings of God'. There was also Marzieh's own dim memory of the children's meeting in Washington. After 'Abdu'l-Bahá's talk, each child was told he should walk forward to where the Master was seated, and receive His blessing. Each child—this was in the days when children were 'seen and not heard'—sedately walked alone down the aisle to Him, stood beside Him, was patted and blessed, and walked sedately back. But Marzieh, when it came her turn, exploded from her chair, bolted to Him, ran between His knees, banged her head against His breast, and then bolted back, to the accompaniment of faint titters throughout the hall.

Sixteen

You will give me a cake

'Abdu'l-Bahá had told Florence He wished to have a talk with her, and appointed the following Sunday at five o'clock for her to visit. On the door step at five to five, Florence had a tiff with one of the believers, a red-headed, somewhat 'roughish' man from the Middle West. (Eastern seaboard prejudice? Spoiled beauty? Chip on someone's shoulder? Who knows? Bahá'ís are by definition a motley crowd, and have gradually to acquire the ways of Bahá'í love. Love is a discipline that has to be learned.)

'What are you doing here on Sunday afternoon? Nobody is around,' he said.

‘Rather presumptuous,’ she thought to herself.

‘I have a five o’clock appointment with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Hence I am here,’ she said dismissively.

‘Why don’t you circulate more among the believers?’ he asked in a rude non sequitur.

‘Who says that I do not?’

‘Well,’ a bit sheepishly, ‘some tell me you don’t.’

‘I’m a very busy person,’ she said. ‘I have three small children.

Many guests, as I am the chatelaine of a Legation. Besides, there are my Bahá’í duties.’

Fortunately, the front door was opened at this point.

‘Is the Master at home?’

‘Oh no,’ was the reply. ‘He is not expected until late this evening.’

‘I will wait,’ said Florence.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s interpreter appeared.

‘I came to see the Master,’ she explained.

‘Why, Khánúm, He is never here on Sunday afternoons. Useless to wait.’

‘Just a little longer,’ she said.

The interpreter looked out one of the broad windows, paused and exclaimed, ‘The Master!’

There He came, striding across the street, majestic as one of the planets across the sky. Only Varqá, the martyr’s son, was with Him.

‘Whatever the Master tells you to do, do,’ Florence said to herself, ‘regardless of people’s opposition.’

Waiting for the Master that afternoon, Florence had yet another test. Someone she identifies as M. R., we assume Mason Remy, came in.

‘Is Khan going to return in time for the large banquet the Washington Bahá’ís are arranging for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?’ he asked her.

‘I hope so,’ she said. ‘His Government sent him to Alberta. I’m afraid, though, that the Convention will not be over in time. Why do you ask?’

‘Because we wish to seat him at the Master’s table, with the other guests of honor,’ he said.

Florence waited for him to add, as customary in diplomatic circles, ‘But of course you can represent him, and sit at the head table in his place.’

Not a word. She had invited thirty guests to the banquet and was being passed over in silence.

On the morning of the banquet she struggled with the idea of not attending. Her guests would be welcomed by others. Then she ‘about decided’ that her duty was to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, not to herself, and she would go.

Later that day she met Him, coming along the street with a

number of His Persian friends. He stopped to greet her.

‘I wish to pay you a visit this afternoon, Khánum,’ He said.

‘Where are you stopping? Will you be at home?’

She knew that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá knew. She was speechless but managed after a moment or so to give the address to an interpreter, and the Master named the hour. Florence had been treated badly and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would make it up to her Himself—and with His suite He visited her and the family where she was staying, to heal the hurt. Haddad translating, Florence told the Master that afternoon she hoped to see Him in ‘Akká another time.

‘Inshá’alláh,’ He said. ‘This is my hope, too.’ And as the children collected around Him He added, ‘and bring Marzieh’.

A postscript here: the Marzieh of that time was not a child you would have wanted to encounter in a dark alley. Though tiny and few in years, she was brash, dictatorial. Dark, with sausage curls. Judging by photographs, she seems to have worn, for years, a sort of uniform consisting of a white, starched dress with a wide black velvet belt around what passed for her hips. Her stance was, at the very least, determined.

One day Florence found Marzieh in the drawing room telling a guest from the White House to go home.

On another occasion she came upon her dictating to an imposing butler whom the caterers had sent in for a party. ‘Give me a cake,’ she was telling the unresponsive man. ‘You will give me a cake, or you will get right out of my Legation.’

Her Bahá’í specialty in those early days was mostly misbehaving at the Nineteen-Day Feast, getting at the refreshments prematurely, extracting a piece of cake from a plate and shoving the adjoining pieces over to fill the gap. Like most parents, Florence serenely noticed nothing.

When Khan complained, ‘Your mother is so serene’, he meant above the battle. This was true, except of course when she felt slighted, or later on, when her life was shattered because of what happened to her son.

The Master was always kind to Marzieh, commenting that she had átish (fire) and namak (salt). ‘Give her to a Persian,’ He said. A statement that Khan held over her for years, since she married two Americans. Later Khan said, ‘He was joking.’

Another Washington memory: one evening at dinner at Mrs Parsons’, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asked with a smile, ‘What would you say if a woman were to become President of the United States?’ In 1912 the remark ‘came like a bombshell’, Florence wrote. Again, He said,

‘The time will come when the Presidency will go begging, so advanced will civilization have become that no one will want to leave his social and humanitarian tasks to take the time to assume the Presidency.’

Florence comments that from any other than the Master this ‘far cry into the future—these two to her totally new ideas—would have been incredible’.

Seventeen

The fallen birthday cake

In one section of her memories, called ‘‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Three Visits to Cambridge’, written in long hand on bright yellow scratch paper, Florence tells of a woman, unnamed (Florence was not good at names—so much so that Khan sometimes charged her with inviting persons to dinner who were long dead).

She says that a despairing woman had come all the way from California to Massachusetts to see ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. This was before the friends knew if He would undertake the Western journey, its goal some 3,500 miles away, so far away that when it was nine in the morning Massachusetts time, it was only six in San Francisco. These distances are included for readers in many other countries, countries so small in area that after a journey of an hour or so—and not by plane—you bump into a frontier. But in America, all the way from the Atlantic to the Pacific, there is no frontier, no opening of baggage, no demanding of passports, no change of currency, no change of language.

This woman was a widow who had been left with the care of a simple-minded boy, and had also managed to support a brilliant son through the University at Berkeley. Hardly graduated, he stepped outside the garden gate, was struck down by a car and died. Ahead of the woman, bound to the simple-minded one, there now stretched, instead of increasing joy, a future of unending grief.

At the request of Florence’s mother, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá visited this woman. He dismissed two Persians who accompanied Him, and Florence was left, to her dismay, with her sketchy Persian, to translate. But her Persian began to flow, she said, and the Master spoke to the woman in words such as these:

‘I seem to see your son’, He told her, ‘like a great bird soaring through the heavens of God’s love and grace. He says and asks, “I am completely happy here. Why does my mother weep?” He knows

when you cry for him, and when you sorrow and pray. As for him, would you like to hear of his only grief?’

‘Oh yes, Master!’ she said.

‘It is his mother’s tears.’

‘Oh, Master, what am I to do?’

‘It is only human,’ He told her gently, ‘to grieve and weep and mourn the ones we love. But perhaps you could weep a little less? Perhaps you could temper your sorrow just a little?’

Florence said her memories of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá were burned into her soul ‘as images are burned into wood panels’.

He paid two visits to the Breed home, which was in Cambridge at 367 Harvard Street (according to the address given in Promulgation of Universal Peace). The first was on May 23, 1912 (and before arriving in the early evening, He had proceeded to Worcester and addressed Clark University there). Bahá'í children had gone into the fields to gather wild flowers for the occasion, and Mrs Joseph White, sister of Madame Jackson of Paris, had sent over luxurious flowers from her conservatory. The beautiful apartment was furnished with treasures the Breeds had brought home from many journeys, including such then far-off places as Russia, Alaska and China.

Over a hundred guests had come to welcome the Master.

Florence's mother Alice Breed had baked Him a birthday cake with sixty-eight candles, and to symbolize universality and the love many bore Him then and would in increasing numbers bear Him down the ages, had decorated it with tiny flags of the United States, Persia and England. Her first cake fell and she had to bake another. This may have produced a number of stories we have often heard but could never verify. It is reported that of a failed cake, whose creator told Him she had used her prayer book while preparing it, the Master responded, 'You should have used your cook book instead.' We like the anecdote but somehow it does not sound like the Master to us, and we are fairly sure it did not happen in the present case.

Significantly, He did not stay for the festivities. He forgave this time, but had forbidden the celebration of His birthday. Six years before He had told Khan and other pilgrims that besides Naw-Rúz (New Day) the Holy Days were only for the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, that His birth on the twenty-second/twenty-third of May (the Bahá'í day begins at sunset) was 'only a coincidence', and now in His address He spoke only of the Bab's Declaration on this day, saying not a word about Himself. Afterward, Alice persuaded Him to step into the dining room and at least see the festive table and the cake, and take a little refreshment. He sat in the large, brocaded 'grandfather' chair but soon left.

The Master's second visit to the Breed home was for the wedding of their youngest daughter, Ruby, to her Lynn schoolmate, Clarence Johnson. Ruby, tall, blonde and beautiful, had been presented by Florence and Khan to Washington society, but Clarence, the 'boy next door', was the one she chose.

The Johnsons were Episcopalians and the rector of St. Stephen's at Lynn was to read the church ceremony. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had accepted Alice Breed's invitation to be present if she first ascertained that His coming was agreeable to the rector. Alice phoned the rector, who replied, 'with the most cordial enthusiasm that he would be perfectly delighted to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá as he had long wished to do so'.

The rector arrived first, and retired to put on his robes. The Master then came in with several of His Persian suite. The only

others present were members of the two families, including the groom's widowed mother, and his sister and four tall brothers. Florence had come up from Washington to be Matron of Honor. Marzieh as flower girl was in the procession with her young blond cousin, Charles Godfree.

They had set up a flower-embowered prie-dieu in the drawing room, and the rector stood back of it.

The bride and her father entered to Mendelssohn's wedding march, vows were taken, rings exchanged, and the couple knelt for the marriage blessing.

Alice had placed a green-damask grandfather's chair to one side of the prie-dieu, and there the Master sat 'enthroned like an Eastern King'.

The rector left to perform another wedding, and the couple stood beside the Master. He had them sit down, and then spoke on marriage, on the union of the sexes in all four kingdoms—mineral, vegetable, animal and human—and passing on to the next life in the Heavenly Kingdom.

Before the ceremony He had sent a little box to the bride, and in it to her surprise and pleasure was a diamond ring. He was particularly kind to the groom's mother, taking her hand in both of His and saying, 'I hope the marriage will be very blessed.'

The couple had one child, Clarence Jr.

In his excellent book, *239 Days*, Allan L. Ward includes an account of this wedding from the Boston Evening Transcript of August 29, 1912. Marzieh's own memory of her distinction as flower girl is primarily the usual one of ladies' wide skirt bottoms and the gentlemen's trouser legs.

One other item remains in memory. In the confusion there was no one to button her shoes and she personally tackled the problem for the first time in life. The button hook of that era, now a collector's

item, could be vicious. You slipped the hook part through the buttonhole and then passed it around the button. Then, using the handle, you reversed the process, twisting and pulling back the button through the hole. This was the tricky part. By twisting too tight, you gave yourself a bad pinch.

In Boston on Florence's birthday, May 26, her much-loved father, Francis Breed, came to the Master's hotel for his first private interview. She and her tall father, who limped badly from an accident with a runaway horse long before, walked down the hall together to the Master's room. Her father was very agitated.

'What is the matter, Dear?' asked Florence. 'There is nothing to be afraid of. 'Abdu'l-Bahá is very kind. He is always friendly and considerate.'

'I'm not afraid,' her father said. 'But I don't know what to say to Him.'

‘Oh, you can at least thank Him for His great kindness to me, during my visit to Him in 1906. And you remember how He wrote ahead to many places in the Near East and Southern Persia and the Caucasus, telling the Bahá’ís to receive us, and welcome “the first Bahá’í bride to come out of the West”.’

‘Oh yes! Yes indeed. I can do that,’ he said gratefully.

They entered the room where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stood, to greet them.

There was one Persian interpreter present.

They were invited to be seated and the Master asked, as was His custom, after their and their families’ well-being.

Then Florence’s father said, ‘I want to thank you, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, for your hospitality and your many great kindnesses to my daughter when she went to Persia.’

The Master seemed very touched. ‘Why do you thank me?’ He said. ‘You are my own family.’

When they left (as if He knew it was her birthday) He filled Florence’s arms with white roses.

On the cool veranda of the house where the Master stayed in Malden, Massachusetts, Alice and Florence, with others, sat in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence.

Marzieh was standing between His knees. As He spoke, He played with her hair. Playfully, with tiny pats He tapped one of her ears and then the other. He pulled back her head by her hair, then, His eyes twinkling at Alice, with a gentle loving motion He drew His finger across the child’s throat and pretended to cut off her head.

When Florence heard that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would speak at Boston’s historic Faneuil Hall, she went alone, and found the place, with room for thousands, jammed, and sat down in the back row.

Suddenly, without warning or any previous signal, a door opened onto the stage and out walked ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in His Eastern turban and robes, with great dignity, followed by four or five of His Persian suite and various American officials.

Involuntarily, Florence rose, as the Master crossed the vast stage and proceeded to His chair beside the speaker’s table. Then to her joy, as if on cue, the whole audience rose, tier upon tier.

Among all the thousands present, she saw only four of the Master’s close friends, but His very presence had won the homage of the crowd.

The artificial reverence people sometimes showed Him was unacceptable to the Master. The film that was made of Him shows His displeasure when a woman kissed His hand (formal hand-kissing to show obsequious reverence being forbidden in the Book of Aqdas). It is the outdoor scene where a line of persons passes before Him, the women in their large 1912 hats tending to hide His face from view. Marzieh often thought of this scene as the clouds that

conceal the Sun of Truth.

Florence tells of an episode in Boston, when a devoted Bahá'í woman told her the Master was about to leave for an out-of-town visit.

'Come along with me', she suggested, 'to the rear entrance of the hotel, and we can wave goodbye to Him.'

'Eagerly accepting', Florence wrote afterward, 'any and every opportunity to look upon that Divine Face, I sped away from the rest', and was able to glimpse Him once more.

Just before the car started off, the woman darted forward to the open window, raised her hand and tossed down pink rose petals upon the Master.

'So utterly uncalled-for,' wrote Florence, horrified. 'So ill-timed. So graceless a gesture. I gasped—and looked at 'Abdu'l-Bahá to see how He would take it.'

He gave the woman 'a slight bow and glanced at the men with Him in the car. Perhaps He even blushed.'

The woman had put 'so perfect a gentleman' in a very awkward situation, 'and I seemed to read this in the Master's fleeting, startled expression as He glanced at His Persian interpreters.'

Shortly after His arrival in Green Acre, as the Master was leaving a group of Bahá'í women, one of them asked Him:

'“Abdu'l-Bahá, am I rightly informed? We believe that the Persians neglect to honor age in women, and aging women—always preferring the youth. And that the Persian women always try to make themselves look younger than they are. If this is true, why is it?”'

Marzieh, reading this note years afterward, could not help laughing. In the Occident, older women (unless saints) have had a bad press down the ages. Literature usually depicts them as witches and crones. As for Persian men, they prefer to marry two generations down (one does not know what Persian women prefer), and to the average man almost anywhere, 'woman' means nubile woman, and devil take the hindmost. She hardly dared read the Master's answer—but Florence does not give it, simply says it was 'dignified'.

Victorian that she was, Florence thought there was 'a bit of sauciness' about the question, and that it seemed to cast a slur on the Persians, and their well-established courtesy and good manners.

Besides, Florence wrote, it was not based on truth. (And certainly Bahá'í history shows many an older woman greatly revered.)

That afternoon the Master sent for the questioner and gently admonished her. In her position, with her influence, she ought to uphold the honor of Persia, He told her, so as to bring about increasing friendliness between East and West.

'I want you to be a great lady in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh,' He said. 'For setting an example, I want you to be the very first among

American Bahá'í ladies.'

The lady, whoever she was, retired to her room and wept her heart out.

The next day, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent for her again. This time He spoke to her through another interpreter, and explained that it was important to keep an attitude of respect toward Persia, so that among the American believers there would be friendliness for the Persian ones.

Back she went to her room and re-wept her heart out.

The Master did not relate this Green Acre incident to Khan, but merely mentioned the name of the woman who had gone to pieces when He counselled her.

'These American women, apparently, are superlatively sensitive,' He said.

Then, during one of the Master's three visits to Washington, this woman asked Florence to take a confidential message to Him, and she agreed.

One afternoon the Master sent for Florence. No one else was present except the interpreter, Valíyu'lláh Khán. When the interview was over, it occurred to her that this was her chance to deliver the message. Florence knew that the Master was unerring, and accordingly began in this way:

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Mrs _____ has asked me to tell you that she ...'

(Florence was about to repeat the exact message, which was an apology to the effect that the woman had not said what she said, that the Master had misunderstood.)

He was already leaving the room. He passed near Florence on His way out, bowed and smiled. Then, said Florence, a shower of needle-points pricked her from head to foot.

She paused. He was almost at the door. Florence began again: 'She said ...' Again the needle-point shower. He left the room.

'My God,' Florence told herself, 'This woman has lied. She did say it. And the Master has saved me from telling Him a lie in her name!' The Bahá'í Teaching is that all the sins are on one side of the scales, and lying on the other, and that lying outweighs them all. Certainly it is hard to think of a sin that does not require some kind of a lie to go with it.[44]

To many this episode may seem either trivial or meaningless. But for one who knew Florence, often half in and half out of the world, her needle-shower sounds natural enough. This small happening also affords a glimpse of what 'Abdu'l-Bahá had to put up with all His life, and sheds light on what can be found under the surface in human souls. In fact, these under-the-surface goings on are the reason why interpersonal relationships are so difficult to keep in order, and why Utopian communities devised by humankind do not work, so that only the Prophet of God can establish enough unity in the hearts of

men and women to create a new world.

Eighteen

The stolen signet ring

October 13 to 16, 1912, were the dates when the Master and His suite spent a weekend as Mrs Phoebe Hearst's guests at the Hacienda. She rode up to San Francisco and escorted Him to her home, invited prominent guests to meet Him, then escorted Him back to San Francisco. All this in spite of her estrangement from the Faith, which originated, Hasan Balyuzi writes, in her having been victimized by one or two individuals.[45] On the way back 'Abdu'l-Bahá 'warned her not to consider anyone a true Bahá'í who was covetous of the goods of others and who tried to extort money from them.' Like the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh before Him (Bahá'u'lláh is the 'Manifestation of detachment'[46]), the Master always exemplified complete detachment from possessions, harking back like the Báb in His farewell to

the Letters of the Living, to the words of Christ that when a disciple left a city he should carry away nothing, not even its dust on his feet. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had come to America to promulgate universal peace when He was old, in poor health, and had been a captive forty years. He was paying His own bills, accepting nothing of money value, only such gifts as flowers and candy, which He promptly distributed as was His way. We still have two linen handkerchiefs, exquisitely embroidered with His name, a present to Him which He gave to Florence for her children. Time after time, the American Bahá'ís had offered to finance His visit to the new world. They should give the money to the poor, He told them; they should sell the offered jewels toward building a Bahá'í Temple in Chicago. When they raised £3,200 sterling for His travel expenses He returned the money with His thanks.[47]

'Abdu'l-Bahá could easily have accumulated great wealth had He so wished. His lovers were ready to give Him their lives, let alone their substance. But like the Báb, a prosperous merchant Who cast His young days away to deliver the Message He brought from the Unknowable—like Bahá'u'lláh, a wealthy nobleman Who knew that all His worldly goods would be snatched from Him if He followed the path He had chosen—like Them 'Abdu'l-Bahá fixed His eyes on His one goal, the redemption of humanity, and let earthly riches pass Him by unnoticed. When the funds provided for Him in the Book of Aqdas came in from the Eastern believers, He used them to further the welfare of humankind.

'The generations that have gone on before you—whither are they fled?' His Father had written. 'And those round whom in life circled the fairest and the loveliest of the land, where now are they? ... Others ere long will lay hands on what ye possess, and enter into

your habitations. ... Build ye for yourselves such houses as the rain and floods can never destroy, which shall protect you from the changes and chances of this life.’[48]

On the last night of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s life, when they wanted to change His night robe to cool His fever, and looked for His other one, a new one which had just been offered Him, it was gone. He had given it away.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s signet ring disappeared during His Western journey. The Master had confided his loss to Florence and Khan, and named the thief, but He did not wish them to speak of it. We in the family always thought that it took place during His stay at the Hacienda—that a member of His suite crept into His bedroom as He slept, felt under His pillow and stole the ring. Thereafter the Master signed all His Tablets instead of using a seal, capitalizing neither ‘Abdu’l nor ‘Abbás, but only Bahá.

Fareed’s efforts to destroy the Master (who had seen to his education from childhood) make a page of triple darkness in the annals of human evil. The Bahá’í Faith does not teach that there is no evil—only that there is no absolute evil. Relative evil is, however, very strong. We see Jesus and Judas, Muhammad and Abú-Lahab, the ‘Father of Flame’—Bahá’u’lláh and Siyyid Muhammad of Isfahán. Evil is the shadow cast by the light.

Fareed was capable of whispering to the rich in the United States that although ‘Abdu’l-Bahá needed funds He would not openly accept them, but if they would pass over the money to him, Fareed, he would deliver it to the Master. On other occasions, according to Khan, Fareed would ask for funds to build a hospital on Mount Carmel.[49]

Frances Jones Edelstein, a friend of Marjory Morten who was very close to the Holy Household, quotes from Marjory that during her visits over the years, she heard from the Family that the Master returned saying that Fareed had been His nemesis. He told Munírih Khánúm, His consort, that Fareed, her nephew, had been impossible. Both Marjory and Juliet Thompson spoke to Frances of the ring theft, ‘by that time no secret’. (Nemesis is a non-Persian term, but the idea is clear.)

The noted Dr Zia Baghdadi, son of a renowned Bahá’í father from Baghdad, had accompanied the Master and His suite on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s journey across the American continent, and told Khan of much that took place along the way. After returning to the Holy Land ‘Abdu’l-Bahá sent Dr Baghdadi a Tablet, and directed that copies be distributed to every community so that all could read it. The Master wrote here that during His stay in America He had forgiven a certain member of His suite four times, but that He would forgive the man’s misdeeds no longer.

Some will wonder why Fareed was retained in the Master’s suite.

The question of why spiritual Beings, obviously of another sphere than ours, make decisions that we as ordinary humans cannot evaluate, is always present. It would be presumptuous to attempt explanations for the Master's acts: we lack the figures to add up the sum. We observe, but do not ask why. On what basis did Jesus select the Twelve, and among them Judas, and send them forth to teach? (Matt. 10:4, 10:6) Not for us to ask. He said: 'Have not I chosen you Twelve, and one of you is a devil?' (John 6:71).

'Abdu'l-Bahá told the friends that at a future time, during a weakened phase of the Faith, certain enemies in whose possession were stolen writings of the Faith would slightly falsify their contents, their hope being to confuse the believers and create divisions within their ranks. As every forger who is familiar with Arabic-Persian script knows, even the placing of a single dot can completely change the meaning of a Persian or Arabic sentence.

Florence also reports that after the great Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl died in Cairo (Jan. 21, 1914)[50] this same individual, Fareed, entered and secretly remained in Mírzá's house, between the time of Mírzá's death and his burial, and removed precious manuscripts which, slightly changed, he would spread among the believers in an attempt to undermine their unity at a later time.

A glimpse of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's foreknowledge of what certain individuals would do in the future was shared with Marzieh and Alice Dudley by Ella Goodall Cooper. The locale of the episode was New York, the time, 1912. Marzieh's diary for 1940 (May 6) says: 'Mrs. Cooper was quite taken with Ruth White, gave her a rosary. The Master called Mrs. Cooper to Him, asked, "What was she saying?" Then He nodded His head to Himself and said, "Be very careful." Mrs. Cooper heeded the warning but did not then understand it.'

Ruth White attacked the Bahá'í faith in later years.

It should be said that Covenant-breakers are neither those who happen to leave the Bahá'í Faith, nor the hostile outside the Faith, nor the indifferent—they are those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit. And as Jesus said, this 'shall not be forgiven unto men'. (Matt. 12:31)

Of such blasphemy the Master teaches:

'If a soul remains far from the Manifestation, he may yet be awakened ... But if he loathe the divine perfections themselves, in other words the Holy Spirit ... he is like a bat which hates the light.

'This detestation of the light has no remedy ...'

'Abdu'l-Bahá says that many who were enemies of the Manifestations later became Their friends. They were 'enemies of the lightholders,' but not of the light. But if a soul remains deprived of the grace of the Holy Spirit, of the light, 'the banishment itself puts the

soul beyond the reach of pardon.’[51]

Such individuals are neither hated nor harmed by the Bahá’ís, they are simply avoided.

About the time when the Master was due to leave America, He sent for Khan and entrusted to him four confidential missions, each of which he was to fulfill when and as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would direct him by cable or letter.

One had to do with a traitorous Persian (to whom the Master had shown years of continued great kindness but received only hostility in exchange) whom He had forbidden ever to return to America.

‘If’, the Master told Khan, ‘you ever hear that he has disobeyed and has returned, cable me instantly.’

Some years later, when the family was in California, that individual did return to America. It was during the First World War, a time when getting a cable through to ‘Akká seemed impossible. The Western Union office declared that such a cable might have to go through many countries—perhaps ten, Florence seemed to recall—on the way, and they could not possibly guarantee that it would ever be delivered.

Florence asked Khan what he was going to do. After all, he had to carry out the mission.

‘I know,’ he said helplessly, ‘but it would cost me seventy dollars and you know what that means just now.’ (They had a large household, family, guests, servants, a number of Persian students to support, and their expenses were heavy.)

‘Well,’ she said, ‘we can live on bread and water for a few days if we must, but that cable has got to be sent.’

‘I will send it today,’ he told her.

Several nights later, Florence was about to leave her house in Piedmont to attend a meeting at Mrs Goodall’s spacious Oakland home ‘when a most heavenly sweet calm suddenly descended upon my spirit’. She had to stop everything and sit down. ‘I recognized the spiritual atmosphere—a Bahá’í would call it a wafting of the breezes from the Garden of Abhá. I stayed motionless as the heavenly beauty, healing and refreshment bathed my soul.’

When Florence entered the great hall of the Goodall home from which branched several large rooms, now all crowded with people, she saw the co-hostess, Ella Goodall Cooper, standing with Khan beside her, and Ella waving a yellow paper in her hand, and both trying to get silence in the hall. Once the audience quieted down, Khan stepped forward, introduced the subject, and read ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s answering cable to the one he had sent. The Master had cabled in French, ‘J’espère [que] mes amis seront fidèles.’ (I trust that my

friends will stay faithful.)

From the moment this message was spread all over the United

States and Canada the door of every Bahá'í home was shut to that individual, who was plotting to undermine their unity, and no such door ever opened to him again.

Each of the other three confidential missions was also successfully carried out, though we do not know what they were.

Obedying the Master in another respect almost sent Khan spinning into what was then known as a nervous breakdown.

Looking back, Marzieh remembered that time of great stress in the family. It had to do with the coming of a Persian notable as a guest at the Khan's summer home, an estate they had rented at Highmount in the Catskills. A photograph remains of that visit.

This man, much then in the news, was a high official of the Persian government and Khan was Persia's envoy to the United States.

Afterward, Marzieh could dimly recall the visit. Children, knowing their intelligence will not suffice, have their psychic tentacles out to bring in information from the atmosphere. When she saw her parents pacing distractedly about a large bedroom and whispering to each other, she knew that something was wrong and that it had to do with their important guest.

What had happened was a cable, just received from the Master, that Khan must get rid of the man at once, that he was a violator of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh.

Somehow, Khan obeyed. Probably he discovered an urgent summons from Washington, and escorted him off. We have not found an account of the actual proceedings.

As to Mrs Hearst's estrangement, it had to do with murky matters of the heart. The same test which drives one soul away only confirms another. One can only pause to think of what life is like to the extremely rich—open palms all about them, forever extended. Nor, worse yet, do they find many charitable thoughts coming their way. If they are sick, people think to themselves, 'She can afford it.' If they mourn, 'She can buy distractions from her grief.' Their good deeds are routinely belittled. If they provide someone with financial aid, onlookers toss the kindness off, saying, 'Well, to her, that's only a drop in the bucket. I'd do the same.' (But would they?)

Years afterward in San Francisco (on April 15, 1938), during a long talk with Marzieh, Ella Goodall Cooper spoke of Phoebe Hearst's last days. 'Aunt Ella', as she liked to be called, was wearing gray lambskin that day, and sitting beside Marzieh in a corner of her limousine. She began to speak of the very last time she saw Phoebe Hearst. Incidentally, her husband, the well-known heart specialist, Dr Charles Miner Cooper, was one of the two physicians who were looking after Phoebe—Wilbur was the other. Not a Bahá'í, Dr Cooper still publicly approved of his wife's generous bequest in favor of the Faith. He has his own footnote in history, for he was called to the deathbed of President Harding in San Francisco's Palace

Hotel.

The early American believers liked to choose a certain favorite color for themselves, she said, and Mrs Hearst's was violet. Aunt Ella used to call her 'Violet Lady', and that day she took an armload

of violets to Mrs Hearst's bedside. Aunt Ella herself, slender and beautiful, hair prematurely white, always elegantly turned out, had worn a hat covered with forget-me-nots and a blue dress of China silk, no doubt looking as usual like a French marquise in a La Tour pastel. She knew that Mrs Hearst always wanted her guests to look their best.

The meeting was at Mrs Hearst's home in Pleasanton, the Hacienda. Mrs Hearst, wearing a violet bed jacket, was out on the sun porch.

This was at the end of the First World War, and news had come through Lady Blomfield in England that the Master was safe. In the spring of 1918, the Turks and the British were fighting for possession of the Holy Land. The Bahá'í world was in terrible danger because the Turkish Commander-in-Chief, should he win, 'had sentenced 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His family to be crucified on Mount Carmel'. [52] Informed of this through Lady Blomfield and Lord Lamington, Lord Balfour cabled General Allenby in the Holy Land to protect 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His household. The British took 'Akká September 23, 1918, and Allenby's march on Haifa prevented the tragedy. A guard was immediately placed around the Master's home and the public notified that 'prompt retribution would follow any attempt to injure Him or any of His family'.

In October, 1918, Khan, again Chargé d' Affaires of the Persian Legation in Washington (after a few years absence during which he was Commissioner General of the Persian Exhibit at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco and then took the exhibit on tour), who had tried to get news of the Master for several days, received this letter, signed Barclay and dated October 4, from the British Embassy there: 'My dear colleague: With reference to your letter of September 28th begging me to enquire as to the health and whereabouts of His Eminence 'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás, I have much pleasure in informing you that I have received a telegram from my Government stating that that gentleman is at Haifa and that he is in good health and is well cared for ...'

General Allenby's now famous cable about the Master states: 'Have today taken Palestine. Notify the world that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is safe.'

Aunt Ella told Mrs Hearst the good news.

'I am very happy about this,' Mrs Hearst said. And then, 'like a little child', said Ella, 'she repeated the Greatest Name, Alláh-u-Abhá, God is All-Glorious, nine times, after me. "It is so comforting," she said of the prayer.' She died on April 13, 1919.

It was a legacy from Aunt Ella that gave the San Francisco Bahá'ís their beautiful center, dedicated to the memory of her mother, Helen S. Goodall. In this center, welcoming all who come, as she did in life, there is a painting on the wall of the smiling white-haired donor, dressed in a turquoise gown.

Carefully preserved in Khan's papers is a clipping from the New York Tribune of April 14, 1919, with the following headline and subheads:

Phoebe Hearst

Dies After Long Illness at 76

Philanthropist, Leader of Society and Mother of
Publisher, Expires at Her Home in California

Gave Much in Charities

Endowed Many Libraries
and Schools and Relieved
Poor by Thousands

Phoebe had died at the Hacienda the previous day. She had been ill several weeks. Her only child, William Randolph Hearst, was with her when the end came.

The article, part legend at variance with the Fremont Olders' more accurate account (Fremont Older was an editor for William Randolph Hearst, his wife Cora an established author, and Hearst himself read their book in manuscript) says she was governess-reared but was 'of those hardy American pioneers who went into the West of trackless deserts and dangerous mountains ... shared the hardships of her husband, the late Senator Hearst, who won millions from mines ... gave to the unfortunates in rough mining camps something of her own courage and developed early the rule of "help the individual to help himself." This maxim she took as a guide in the life of philanthropic work to which she devoted herself.'

The paper says she gave away 'probably millions', was a patron of the arts, and made gifts and loans to art institutions.

Beginning in 1886, her husband by then a Senator, she became a social leader in Washington, traveled, went around the world. She collected treasures and had to build a special storehouse of reinforced concrete to house those valuables not lent or given to museums.

Phoebe Hearst gave over one million to the University of California at Berkeley, including the Hearst Memorial Mining Building, which cost \$800,000, and twenty scholarships for women. The National Cathedral School for Girls at Washington was one of her gifts. She founded libraries and kindergartens, and encouraged

women's organizations. (The article does not mention what is usually said of her today, that she co-founded the National Congress

of Parents and Teachers, better known as the PTA.)

Khan was in Paris as a delegate to the Peace Conference at Versailles when news of Phoebe's passing reached him through the press. Marzieh was with him, going somewhere by bus that day, and was much embarrassed to see him weeping on a public conveyance, the passengers implacably staring. Parents are embarrassment enough to children in any case, and this was too much, and so lingered in memory.

Certainly the 'Mother of the Faithful', from wherever she then was, could look down and be sure that here, at least in this one heart, there was true sorrow. Who knows, perhaps Khan was also weeping over times past, and Mírzá, and Eleanor, and the days of his lost youth. For such purgings are brought on by a mourned death, and ease the hoarded grief.

Nineteen

A clash of autocrats

During the days when Khan was striving to direct the attention of American businessmen toward Persia, he once traveled to Texas with Florence and they took Marzieh along. They were going to visit Judge Terrell, met when Khan gave the baccalaureate address at the University of Texas (the president here was the brother-in-law of Colonel House, adviser and close friend of President Wilson). Judge Terrell had large interests in sugar.

They had a long trip in a sleeping-car, but the wonder to come made the journey seem well worth it to Marzieh. When they arrived in the gracious entrance hall to be welcomed by their hosts, she looked about and felt that once again the adults had told her something wrong.

'Where is the big sugar man?' she piped.

There was another moment at the luncheon table. Marzieh refused to sit down. They had thoughtfully set up a high chair for her and she was insulted. A high chair, at almost five. Family and attendants scurried around and produced a chair such as the others had, plus cushion, dictionary and phone book to raise her level.

As the Judge was escorting them to the train he turned to Marzieh in the car and said, 'I am going to send you a Shetland pony.' At this she opened her small bag, laboriously produced a nickel and paid him.

On March 25, 1913 he wrote her: 'My dear little girl, I have received your sweet little letter, and while I am not sure that I spell your name correctly [he didn't] you can rest assured that the pony will be shipped to you in September and it will be a nice beautiful pony. I have always regretted that you did not "lose that train" when you were here, and go out with me to the farm. Sincerely your Friend, J. O. Terrell.'

A follow-up letter of July 12 said, 'That colt of yours is now about three months old and is as spotted as a leopard, and I will ship him to you about the 15th of September.'

However, the pony must have undergone a sex change because the Judge's Western Union telegram of October 12 said, 'Shipped Marzieh yesterday spotted mare pony which I trust will arrive safely.'

Sure enough the pony got to Washington in due course, tiny and white with tan markings. At Khan's suggestion she named it Rakhsh—Lightning—for the charger of Rustam, the Persian Hercules. It could do a good four miles an hour.

A photograph of Marzieh standing beside the pony and holding on to its bridle was sent to relatives in Persia, where they had never seen Shetlands. Their comment was, 'She is as big as a horse.'

Marzieh probably considered herself an accomplished horsewoman by this time.

Certainly she had improved from the time about three years before when a snapshot shows her riding (or at least prone on) a pony at Mrs Hearst's Hacienda.

It was typical of Phoebe Hearst to go out of her way to remember the Khan children, sending them gifts, and messages in her letters. For Christmas, 1912, she sent a card, the envelope of which says in her hand, 'Miss Marzieh Khan'. This greeting is a small booklet, rose-bordered, still fastened with a pale blue ribbon, now faded away like most of the people of that era, and almost all the memories.

When opened the left page says, 'Wishing you well in the way you go. Dickens.' The right side says, in Gothic letters: 'Christmas 1912 with Hearty Christmas Greetings from Phoebe A. Hearst/Hacienda del Pozo de Verona/California.'

A letter from Phoebe to Florence, January 5, 1913 has this: 'I was very much pleased to have the interesting photographs you sent me with your greetings for my birthday. They are excellent photos—a wonderful picture of Abdul Baha.'

She also thanks the Khans for 'the beautiful miniatures' they gave her for Christmas, and goes on to her usual report of an indisposition and an imminent departure, this time for several weeks in New

York, ending, 'With love to you, and kindest greetings to Mirza Khan ...'

A year later, on January 28, 1914, Phoebe would thank Florence for mailing her 'little Marzieh's papers', and writes, 'I was very much surprised by her letter; I think she is quite advanced ... splendid work.' Since she thought the family might want to keep the papers, she returned them, and Khan proudly marked them, 'Marzieh's at the age of 5.' One of them goes, in handwriting rather better than it is now, although it lacks something in content:

See my tin cup.

Will you fill it with milk?

Now it is full to the brim.

Do not spill the milk.

Give it to my cat.

She will drink it.

A few months before this, Khan had been to San Francisco in connection with the Persian Exhibit for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition and Mrs Hearst had written him from Pleasanton on November 18, 1913, 'Your letters have been received, and I see by the papers that you are in San Francisco. I fear that you are having a very bad day for the dedication of the site at the Exposition Grounds.

'I may possibly be in San Francisco Wednesday and Thursday, and I hope to see you. It will be quite convenient for you to come to the Hacienda any time it is agreeable to you. It will give me great pleasure to see you again ...'

On December 20th, she thanked Florence for birthday greetings, expressed hopes for the family's health and happiness, and signed, 'Yours affectionately', adding, 'A box went off to you yesterday.'

On the sixth of the new year she wrote on Fairmont Hotel stationery that she had forgotten 'to instruct that a cheque be sent you for the children for their Xmas. Mr. Clark was away and it was not attended to ... With Mirza Khan absent it must have been lonely for you, but the children no doubt enjoyed themselves as children will. So little is needed to make the little people happy.' The letter explains that she is sending the cheque so that 'you could get them whatever they would like, or you might think best for them to have'.

Marzieh's own relations with Mrs Hearst were tenuous in the extreme. When the family returned to New York from Persia in 1914 and went to see Mrs Hearst on Riverside Drive, Phoebe, visiting with Florence, told Marzieh to run in the other room and

play with the children. Marzieh, an autocrat in those days, expected things to go her way, and of course, so did Mrs Hearst. These remarks then ensued:

Mrs Hearst: 'If you do not join the other children you will have to go home.'

Marzieh: 'Mother, where is my coat?'

The following spring saw Khan in charge of the Persian exhibit at the Panama-Pacific Exposition, and Mrs Hearst wrote him on April 28, 1915, inviting him 'and your niece and Ameen ... to the Hacienda on Saturday, May first, by the four o'clock S.P. train (4:27 from the Oakland Mole)'. An auto would meet them at Pleasanton, and they were to stay till Monday morning. She then explained that they need not worry about her grandchildren having been down with the measles: 'My little grandsons have had measles but are now recovering and will be out of quarantine on Thursday. They will

remain in their own portion of the house and not come over to the main house where the guests are until early next week.'

On October 7, 1916, she sought Khan's advice as to whether she should try to help some persons (no names given) who had applied to her for money.

Mrs Hearst's last letter in the collection, October 31, 1916, was forwarded to Khan by the Persian Legation to his vacation spot, East Quogue, Long Island, and from there to the Brighton in Washington. She writes: 'Dear Mirza Khan—thank you very much for your prompt reply to my letter which was received last evening. I have no intention of sending that woman anything, and felt sure she is the daughter of Khierallah so wrote you to be sure that I was not mistaken.'

Ibráhím Khayru'lláh was a Syrian doctor who had become converted in Cairo, had received a Tablet from Bahá'u'lláh and communicated with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He reached America in 1892 and began systematically to teach the Faith in Chicago. Remarkably successful, he won over to the Cause many who became its prominent supporters, including Thornton Chase, Louisa A. Moore (Lua), Howard MacNutt, Arthur P. Dodge and Helen S. Goodall. In 1898, Dr Khayru'lláh was a member of the Hearst party to the Holy Land. On his return to the United States the following year, strongly influenced by the Arch-Breaker of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, Muhammad-'Alí, bedazzled by the dream of personal leadership, he defected from the Faith, and joined the enemies of his benefactor, 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

In this instance, as in the case of Fareed, Phoebe Hearst clearly shows her loyalty to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Twenty

The Krugs

A distinguished family whose patriarch, a leading New York surgeon, Dr Florian Krug, was brought into the Faith by the Master, entered the Khans' life in 1912, when 'Abdu'l-Bahá placed the hand of Grace Krug in Florence's.

Florian Krug, you might say, was an unlikely Bahá'í, according to his son Charles's account. He was born in Germany in 1859, he attended Freiburg University and was a member of the Hasso-Borusso Studenten Korps. This means his face bore scars. He had fought forty-seven duels. Once the tip of his nose was cut off but the thoroughgoing Germans sewed it back on again. He was especially proud of a deep scar running almost the length of his jawbone on his left cheek. Of his father's duels, Charles said, 'I don't think he ever lost.'

Charles's awe of his parent was not diminished one day when he rummaged in Florian's closet and discovered a mason jar in which floated a large piece of scalp, covered with about six inches of hair.

No question, Dr Krug definitely had his belligerent side.

Florian and Charles Steinway, President of Steinway Sons (Pianos), married sisters, and Florian had two children, Charles (Karl, before the Great War), and the beautiful Louise. By 1912 Florian had married his second wife, Grace.

There were historic family quarrels after Grace, their determined stepmother, became a Bahá'í. The siblings cowered, watched and trembled on their perch at the head of the stairs, as their father below them would scream at his wife and hurl down Bahá'í books.

In spite of everything, Grace Krug invited the Master to speak at their home, and the young people heard their father shouting, 'If that old man comes into this house I'll have the doorman throw him out!' Both Charles and Louise described the fateful day of the visit.

Charles said his father's attitude was: 'Now I can get my hands on the ringleader of this bunch!'

Louise said, 'We were terrified. Charlie and I were standing there by the door as 'Abdu'l-Bahá came in. He put His arms out with that wonderful gesture—you could feel the love pouring out. He walked right up to my father and looked him straight in the face. And He said: "Dr. Krug, are you happy?"'

'I don't know,' Louise went on, 'my father just wilted. He was like a bird letting its wings down, to enjoy the sun. From that time on, never a word against the Master ...'

Charles said that after 'Abdu'l-Bahá had finished His lecture, and all the ladies rushed toward Him, 'Pa came out of his corner like a traffic cop, all but knocking the women down. He shouted, "Can't you see, 'Abdu'l-Bahá is tired?"' Then he took the Master's arm and led Him to a chair.'

Grace very much wanted to attend the Unity Feast at West Englewood, the Feast given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and now commemorated every year. But Dr Krug said Saturday was his only free day, and he wanted her to play golf with him. She asked the Master what to do. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: 'You must always consider the Doctor. You and Miss Krug must play golf with him.' So she and her young daughter had to go to the country club, not more than a mile from the Unity Feast—and play golf.

The Doctor became a Bahá'í, and both he and Grace were present in Haifa (1921), when the Master left this life.

Charles said that his father had crotchets, and that he might for no reason take a dislike to someone. Among those whom he took a dislike to was the famed early Bahá'í, Ethel Rosenberg.

One day in the Holy Land, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was giving a talk on love and unity. The Master said that we must learn to love everybody.

Dr Krug said, 'Everybody, 'Abdu'l-Bahá?'

'Yes, Dr. Krug, everybody.' Then pointing His finger, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: 'But you stay away from Miss Rosenberg!'

Twenty-one

The Khan boys

Many a traveler of importance only to himself has found his Government officials abroad too preoccupied to bother much about his concerns, but Khan was one diplomat who really took care of his people. True, a Persian in the United States at that time was a rare avis. (Not till decades later was the Bible prophecy fulfilled: 'And upon Elam will I bring the four winds ... and will scatter them ... and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come.' [53])

During World War I, Persia, the 'Belgium of the East', was neutral, and Khan was able to rescue one or another of his citizens from American military service. Their problem seemed to be that they did not understand the word, 'waive'. Asked, 'Do you waive exemption from military service?' they would smile and say 'Yes'. They thought waive meant want, and were clapped into uniform forthwith.

As for the Persians who came over theoretically to study, and some of whom Khan brought to this country himself, the case of one we have chosen to call Mr Hasan is fairly typical.

Khan wrote a letter on January 31, 1912 to the unfortunate president of Valparaiso University in Indiana, asking him to 'cooperate with me in the matter of this student ... and do the best you can for him, at the least possible expense ...' A second letter to the same president says that Mr Hasan is pleased to enroll at 'your great University' ... to study those useful branches for which he has journeyed thousands of miles away from home.' Mr Hasan is, Khan assures the president, 'full of zeal and an ardent patriot', and his sole motive is to seek higher knowledge, the better to serve his country. Khan particularly recommends as suitable to Iranian needs, Political Economy Administration and International Law, and asks the departments to send him regular reports, bi-monthly or monthly, as to Mr Hasan's 'progress, standing in class and conduct', since these have been requested by the Persian Government.

We do not know who was going to read up on Mr. Hasan's academic career at the Tehran end, but obviously the ardent patriot would be closely checked. Khan adds that he is 'expected to do nothing but study for three consecutive years'.

Khan further confides in the President, who must have been delighted with the information, that Mr. Hasan had been 'detained in Europe during his trip for some weeks', and was thus 'obliged to spend a good deal more than he had at first expected'. It is clear that, as Khan omits to say, Mr Hasan had been living it up in Paris on his Government funds. Accordingly, Khan adds, Mr Hasan 'will be very grateful if he is enrolled and given time for the payment until he gets the money from Persia ...' and adds reassuringly, 'I expect he

will receive his money from home through this Legation in a couple of months.'

Valparaiso wrote back to Khan that Mr Hasan had 'selected a room at a higher price than I quoted to you—taking a suite of two rooms in a private house. They are very comfortable indeed,' says the letter, in apparent disapproval, if not envy. By now Valparaiso University and the Persian Legation were friends, and Khan replied, 'confidentially: as he is a stranger in this country, and does not know about conditions ... I deem it necessary for him to profit by suggestions.' He would do better to live with the other students, 'to be Americanized'. Also, 'living in rooms by himself may divert his studies, especially as he is not [very] young. Besides ... he must economize.'

Khan then proceeds to tell Valparaiso in strictest confidence what they probably had already guessed, that Mr Hasan was 'a little thoughtless about money matters'. By way of illustration, and the University must have been fascinated to hear it, he says that while in Washington Mr Hasan had 'bought a load of second-hand useless books' and shipped them to Valparaiso. 'I advised him strongly against it but he seemed too eager to be influenced.'

Khan had also informed the patriot that when his money came through, Khan would pay the University for a whole year, remitting to Mr Hasan only whatever remained. He adds that when Mr Hasan had reached Washington he was so pleased with the city that he wished to stay on indefinitely. He 'tried hard to persuade me to permit him to remain here and spend his time in visiting museums, libraries and public buildings, and also attending lectures, but I did not hesitate to make him see that he had come to America to study and that I meant business.'

Whether Mr Hasan did is hard to say. Khan closed with a rather dismal foreboding: 'I hope he will do nothing to absent his mind from his studies, and that he will not make frequent trips to Chicago.'

Along with Indiana came Utah. Writing in the Washington Post (Sept. 12, 1951) reporter Ferdinand Kuhn, back from travels in the Middle East, sheds further light on the Persian students of Khan's day.

According to him, 'Iran's best neighbor ... is the State of Utah. Partly by accident, partly by intelligent planning, a link of friendship has been forged between an ancient Moslem kingdom and a Western American State ...'

It all began, he says, at an international dry-farming Congress which met at Lethbridge, Alberta in 1912. The Congress' president was a Mormon elder who was also president of Logan's Utah Agricultural College. 'One of the delegates was Ali-Kuli Khan Nabil, then the young chargé d'affaires of the Persian Legation in Washington ...'

Khan, the reporter says, was invited to lecture at Logan, felt at home there, found the Mormons to be non-drinkers and nonsmokers, and decided to send them his four nephews as students.

The four soon became known as 'the Khan boys'. One of them, Ameen Sepehri, later headed the agricultural school at Karaj near Tehran. Another, Abbas Kalantar, became a successful civil engineer. Another, Siyyid Ja'far Khan (actually a nephew-in-law) became

Reza Shah's adviser on animal husbandry, and in 1939 the Shah chose Dr Franklin Harris, by then president of Brigham Young University, for a similar function. The same Mormon adviser served Ambassador Henry F. Grady on the Point Four program, and a number of Utah graduates also followed 'the Khan boys' to service in Iran.

By 1951 there were at least 150 Iranians back home with Utah degrees.

The Iranians, this reporter says, gradually learned American ways. They gave up hiring chauffeurs, and helpers to clean their laboratory test tubes. They discovered that experimental work in agriculture meant that you got your hands dirty. Thoroughly Americanized, in some cases they married Utah girls.

We personally, being related, had many a visit with some of 'the Khan boys', heard their memories of those student years, and wondered how the people of Utah responded to the invasion. 'We would be invited to a tea,' said one (tea probably indicates a non-Mormon host, for other religious groups also tried to convert them), 'and we had a private code. When anyone said something we did not think was true, we would signal the others by tapping the side of our cups with our spoons. A quiet tapping would go round the room.' One of the cousins was invited by some fundamentalist group to speak briefly at their gathering, using the Persian tongue. He stood up and solemnly announced to the other Khan boys in the congregation: 'Boys, do not laugh, no matter what I say'—and proceeded to deliver, in portentous tones, as they struggled to maintain a reverential passivity, a ribald address that could only have gained—when well cleaned up—in the translation.

Anyway, it all started with Khan's interest and help, and it did accrue to Persia's benefit, and to Utah's as well.

The continual presence of Persian youth in the household was not always easy for Florence. There was in particular a Muslim niece, Bihjatu's-Saltanih, who made life difficult with her fanatical Shiah ways. The young woman, although not a beauty, and, in her twenties, hardly the right age (fourteen) for a Persian bride, was eventually married off to a man of substance, who was in the oil business. It is amazing what prestige, pull, clout, will accomplish, and how many doors would swing open to the magic phrase, His Excellency's niece. This fact is un-American in theory, but never in

practice. All is clout in Iran too. 'I do not marry the daughter, but the family patriarch,' a Persian bridegroom told the writer. 'I marry her father.'

Those who know the intrigues and vicissitudes of Shiah family life will understand what this girl's presence meant to Florence. And,

from the niece's point of view, Florence to a Shiah was simply an unclean foreigner, as were her guests and servants.

The behavior of the wealthier Persian college students as reported by Ferdinand Kuhn was not atypical. In Constantinople, young princes of the exiled Shah's household would hire their lessons studied and their examinations passed.

As for the Khan boys' domestic arrangements, Marzieh sometimes felt sorry for the people of Utah. 'We would invite a guest to supper,' one of the boys said, 'and naturally after the meal he would offer to help with the dishes, and just when he thought he was through, we would start handing him stacks of unwashed dishes he had never seen before, stored up from other meals.'

The boys were popular enough, in any case, with the beauties of the town, and we recall that years later, though married in Persia and settled down, some were still nursing broken hearts.

Marzieh's closest cousins, the brothers Abbas-Kuli Khan and Allah-Kuli Khan Kalantar, came over from Persia with Florence and Khan and their party in 1914. The teenage cousins, bursting with life and culture shock, inaugurated their stay in Washington by unwinding a roll of toilet paper all the way from the family apartment down to the pavement (not a cliché then—a Persian first). Lacking English they had to be put, their Washington school decided, in a room with the smallest tots. Each looming from his tiny bench and desk, the two worked away earnestly with their large fingers at stringing colored beads along with the rest of their classmates. When recess time came, Allah-Kuli started to join students of his own size who were using the gymnastic equipment in the schoolyard, but a tot stopped him. 'That's for the big boys,' he said.

Twenty-two

The MacNutt case*

Khan's utter devotion to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the confidence the Master placed in him are perhaps best exemplified in the unfolding of the MacNutt affair.

As the record shows, Howard MacNutt, although an active and valuable early Bahá'í, failed to understand the true station of 'Abdu'l-

Bahá. This could perhaps have resulted from the influence of

*

This chapter was researched and written by Harold Gail primarily from the Khan papers.

Khayru'lláh. In any case, MacNutt had been teaching that the Master's station was like that of Peter, Prince of the Apostles, in the Christian Dispensation. It is enough to recall that Peter denied his Lord three times and that Paul called him blameworthy and 'withstood him to the face'. [54] 'Abdu'l-Bahá was 'the occupant of an office without peer or equal in the entire field of religious history ...' He was the designated Interpreter of His Father's Teachings, and the Exemplar for all to follow. He delineated the features of the New World Order founded by Bahá'u'lláh, and was the Vicegerent on earth of His Father. [55]

On April 5, 1913 Mrs Helen S. Goodall wired Khan from San Francisco: TALK GIVEN BY VISITOR VERY SUBTLE NOT TRUE TO CENTER MY LETTER ON THE WAY. [56]

The 'visitor' was Howard MacNutt, with whom Khan had worked closely in bringing out the 1902 edition of The Behai Proofs, and after that Bahá'u'lláh's Ighan. They had often corresponded about these important publications and Khan had frequently been a guest in the MacNutt home.

Howard MacNutt was president of the Standard Motive Power Company with offices in New York and a factory in Ohio. He was very active in the Faith, administratively as well as in teaching and the publication of Bahá'í literature. Together with his wife Mary, he had become a believer as early as 1898, had visited 'Akká with her, and was elected to the first [Bahá'í] Board of Council of New York City, serving for a number of years. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá arrived in the United States in 1912, MacNutt and Mountfort Mills were given the honor of escorting the Master from the ship to the Mills automobile. (MacNutt's name is variously written, but his signature is as here given.)

Nevertheless, Howard MacNutt had his detractors. As early as March 16, 1904, writing about the Ighan, he told Khan, '... and I think the wisest course in order to avoid misapprehension and harmonize all ideas upon the matter of the Ighan title page, will be to cut out my name entirely. This has always been my wish in the matter. I have suffered in the Behai Cause from the fact that I have been too conspicuous. I am getting out of sight now rather than "getting in".' [57] Whatever his good intention, MacNutt's assertive nature could hardly permit this, and he naturally wanted his ideas to prevail. Even Khan gradually had reason to complain of Howard. In 1907, Khan was writing him that he could not understand why MacNutt and Arthur S. Agnew, as influential members of the Publishing Society, had chosen to bring out Asadu'lláh's School of the Prophets instead of Bahá'u'lláh's Ishráqát, which Khan had already translated. [58] This was especially difficult to accept, since Khan knew from

his own experience in Chicago that Asadu'lláh had been a cause of division among the believers by promulgating his brand of cloudy mysticism instead of adhering to the Bahá'í Teachings.

In its early American days, many extraneous beliefs became temporarily attached to this Faith because so few printed texts were available in English, and the teachers of that time often included in their lessons predilections of their own, which had little or no connection with Bahá'í principles.

Again, some were dazzled by the harvest of gold which they could so easily reap in this country. Just as, during the nineteenth century the United States offered a brisk market for European titles of nobility, during the twentieth supposedly religious leaders both local and from abroad have stripped the American public of sums far more than respectable.

One man in particular, Khayru'lláh, was so 'blinded by his extraordinary success' that he wished personally to take over the hearts and minds of the believers, seceded from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the appointed Center of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, vilified 'Abdu'l-Bahá, joined the Master's arch-enemy and dealt the young Faith body blows in attack after attack for a period of twenty years until his own death.[59]

Responding, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent over a succession of five chosen messengers as His deputies, one of the five being Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl. These five established the beginnings of the Bahá'í Administrative Order[60], and 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself founded the symbolic edifice of this American-born Order in 1912. Under His instructions the victims of the above assaults initiated 'a series of activities which by their very nature were to be the precursors of permanent, officially recognized administrative institutions.' This period has been characterized by Shoghi Effendi as 'the most turbulent' in American Bahá'í history. 'Launched through these very acts [their conspicuous accomplishments in response to the virulent attacks] into the troublesome seas of ceaseless tribulation, piloted by the mighty arm of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and manned by the bold initiative and abundant vitality of a band of sorely-trying disciples, the Ark of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant has, ever since those days, been steadily pursuing its course contemptuous of the storms of bitter misfortune that ... must continue to assail it as it forges ahead towards the promised haven of undisturbed security and peace.'[61]

Gradually, the false ideas fell away as the Writings of the Founder became available in the West and inquirers could study for themselves instead of having to rely on word of mouth.

When spiritualism and the like had been separated out, two serious problems remained. In spite of the Master's crystal clear statements on the subject, two differing attitudes, both wrong, had developed among some of the believers in America as to the station of 'Abdu'l-

Bahá. Carried away by admiration and love, quite a number of early Bahá'ís believed, and for a long time taught, that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was the return of Christ. Over time, and as the Teachings were more widely spread in print, this erroneous idea died away. It is the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh—essentially one as are all the Manifestations of God—Who are the long-awaited return.[62]

At the opposite pole were those who, for one reason or another, could not fully accept the authority bestowed on 'Abdu'l-Bahá by Bahá'u'lláh. This presented a challenge to the basic structure of the Bahá'í Faith, its principles and world system. Like the other great religions, of which it is a continuation, the Bahá'í Faith places some constraints upon the individual that human nature rebels against, and contradicts some of the accepted theories of the time in which it appears. This is inevitable, for it looks into a future invisible to human sight. To go against it, or what is in effect the same, to try to re-interpret its teachings, is to substitute human fallibility for divinely-inspired guidance. The history of religion is full of egocentric, often brilliant individuals who found themselves at odds with some tenet of their faith and tried to substitute for it an interpretation consonant with their particular bias. Howard Mac Nutt appears to have been, if only temporarily, one of these. (Heresy comes from the Greek word for choose: a heretic chooses out for himself what he wishes to believe.)

Influenced perhaps by Covenant-breakers, he began to put forth the idea that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was like Peter in the Christian Dispensation. Juliet Thompson tells of this in her Diary where she writes, 'Mr. MacNutt had been one of the few who, when I first came to New York, had taught that the Master was "like Peter"—just a glorified disciple. But for years he had never mentioned this point of view, and I thought he had gotten over it.' [63]

In likening the Master to Peter, who had denied Christ three times, MacNutt's teaching implied that 'Abdu'l-Bahá also could fall into error. Not only would the spread of such a theory undermine the authority of the Master, it would open the way to multiple divisions among the believers, the sort of thing that has plagued Christianity (which has no book written by Jesus) from its earliest years, and even Islam, which from the beginning has had the Qur'án. It would mean that individual believers, lacking the divine guidance assured 'Abdu'l-Bahá by Bahá'u'lláh, could reject any given statement made by the Master that ran counter to their own concepts, on the ground that in this particular case He had made a mistake.

Juliet continues her account by explaining:

In Chicago there are some so-called Bahá'ís who are still connected with Kheiralla, the great Covenant-Breaker, and last week the Master sent Mr MacNutt to Chicago to see them and try to persuade them to give up Kheiralla; otherwise he was to cut them off from the faithful believers. He—

Mr MacNutt—wrote Zia Baghdadi that he had found these people ‘angels,’ and did nothing about the situation.

He had just returned to New York and was to meet the Master at the Kinneys’ house that evening, November 18 [1912], for the first time since his unfruitful trip. I was in the second-floor hall with the Master and Carrie Kinney when he arrived. The Master took him to His own room. After some time they came out together into the hall.

An immense crowd had gathered by then on the first floor, which is open the whole length of the house.

I heard the Master say to Mr MacNutt: ‘Go down and tell the people: “I was like Saul. Now I am Paul, for I see.”’

‘But I don’t see,’ said poor Howard.

‘Go down and say: “I was like Saul.”’

I pulled his coattail. ‘For God’s sake,’ I said, ‘go down.’

‘Let me alone,’ he replied in his misery.

‘GO DOWN,’ commanded the Master.

Mr MacNutt turned and went down, and his back looked shrunken. The Master leaned over the stair rail, His head thrown back, His eyes closed, in anguished prayer. I sat with Carrie on the top step, watching Him. This is like Christ in Gethsemane, I thought.

We could hear the voice of Howard MacNutt stumbling through his confession: ‘I was like Saul.’ But he seemed to be saying it by rote, dragging

through it still unconvinced. Nevertheless when he came upstairs again, the Master deluged him with love.

By that time the Master was back in His room and as Mr MacNutt appeared at the door, He ran forward to meet him.

Juliet tells how the next night someone brought up Mr MacNutt’s name and ‘spoke gloatingly of his chastisement’. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá sighed and said, ‘I immersed Mr MacNutt in the fountain of Job.’[64]

All one needs to know about MacNutt’s then failure to understand the station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is the fact that he said the Khayru’lláh people in Chicago were in his view ‘angels’, and so wrote to Dr Baghdadi. What faithful believer would place his own evaluation above the unerring judgment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?

The word to notice from MacNutt’s informed critics is ‘subtle’: his audiences found him eloquent but in the end, on certain points, evasive, holding something back. Experienced Bahá’ís such as Mrs Goodall in San Francisco, Mrs True and Mr Windust and Dr Baghdadi in Chicago, Juliet Thompson in New York, Khan in Washington, were unanimous in this appraisal.

Now, little more than four months after that public humiliation, Khan had reason to fear that MacNutt still did not understand the Master’s station. This was soon confirmed by a cable from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to Khan at the Persian Legation. Dated April 16, 1913, it read: MCNUTT REPENTED FROM VIOLATION OF COVENANT BUT WAS NOT

AWAKENED AWAKEN THE BAHAIS

ABBAS[65]

This put Khan right in the middle of the MacNutt affair. He would have been involved to some extent in any case because he had long been the transfer point for much of the communication between 'Akká and the American believers. Recipients of Tablets usually relied on Khan for their translation. Many sent their messages to the Master through him. And because of his long association with 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl he was often called on to explain difficult points of doctrine.

Faced with the present situation, Khan seems not to have been able to reach MacNutt for some time because of the latter's travels out West, but wrote to him in care of Albert Windust in Chicago. Meanwhile, MacNutt realized that news of his activities was spreading from coast to coast, for he wrote Khan from Seattle on June 6, 'I have just received a letter from New York informing me that I have been accused of "Speaking in violation of the Covenant" in San Francisco and the West ...'[66]

Earlier, John Bosch of Geyserville, California had asked Mrs Corinne True in Chicago about MacNutt, for she told Khan in a letter dated June 14, 'Some time ago Mr. Bosch of Geyserville wrote me for information regarding MacNutt ...'[67]

Word was reaching into Canada too. On June 27, Mrs May Maxwell thanked Khan for his translation of a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá and went on to say, '... I am very sorry for him [MacNutt] and I hope and pray that this shock may awaken him. It is strange how differently the believers receive this knowledge concerning MacNutt and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's action toward him—although the matter seems simple, it is in fact very deep and vital. I have found in it a touchstone of the true attitude of each soul—the measure of their own faith and firmness.'[68]

Unfortunately, not everyone was as thoughtful and fair-minded about the case as Mrs Maxwell. Attitudes were hardening and instead of the 'Come now, let us reason together' of Isaiah (1:18), many wanted to ostracize Howard MacNutt.

By the time he reached New York it had become a matter of considerable importance among some believers not to have talked with him after his trip to the West Coast. Nellie Hope Lloyd, writing to Khan in regard to the record of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's voice and the

moving picture made of Him while in the United States, reported, 'It was very natural that friends should enquire of one another;—have you seen Mr MacNutt, and in each instance the response was No! With one exception, and that was one of the men who met Mr. Mac Nutt a few days ago, but it was not necessary that they should talk, in-as-much as they did not come face to face.'

Nellie Lloyd continued, 'You will remember some two months

ago, one of these men, Mr. MacMechan remarked “that he would be the first one to go to see MacNutt when he returned, for the purpose of finding out where he stood.” It is so good that this brother did not deem it necessary to take such a course, and that he has held aloof from the “sick man” till by the Bounty and Mercy of God, he may be well again.’ [69]

Indeed, there seems to have been a general tendency to prejudge Howard MacNutt’s case, probably because of his repentance a year before. In order to be even-handed we go back to MacNutt’s letter of June 6 to Khan.

The letter is well-written, carefully organized, and rises to eloquence, although the rhetoric becomes rather high-flown sometimes for our more prosaic age, and some religious references of the day might now be unfamiliar.

The problem is not what MacNutt said but what he left out. His letter does not say that he accepts ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s power, God-given through Bahá’u’lláh, to interpret, teach and administer the Faith, with no possibility of error.

Seattle, Washington

June 6, 1913

Dear Brother Khan

I have just received a letter from New York informing me that I have been accused of ‘Speaking in violation of the Covenant’—In San Francisco and the West. In self-defense and justification I write you this letter.

For many years in obedience to the express command of Abdul Baha I proclaimed Him only as ‘Abdul-Baha’, realizing the supreme wisdom of this announcement to the world. Later and likewise by His command I proclaimed the Divine Covenant and Abdul Baha Its Center, not deviating from this announcement to the world. During our recent visit to California and the West I have neither proclaimed nor uttered in public or private anything but this. God and human witnesses will testify to the truth of what I say. I have never received other commands than these from Abdul Baha as to the proclamation and mention of His Station. Whatever He has commanded I have obeyed. Whatever He commands I will follow.

Now beloved brother, I will speak to you from the innermost sanctuary of my heart, realizing in the great love I have for you the absolute sincerity and fidelity of your life in the Service of Abdul Baha.

Know then my inner, sacred, true and real belief.—

The Ancient Glory, Effulgent Emanation, Abha Splendor, Logos and Word of God which shone resplendent in the Temples of its Divine Manifestations Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed and others, revealing Itself in Sinai, Olivet, and Paran in the Utterance of the Heavenly Books became again manifest ... in the Bab,—voicing and proclaiming Itself in preliminary degree of Revelation.

After the Departure of the Bab, the Effulgent Word, the Divine Splendor shone fully forth in Its Majesty and Undimmed Glory from Its Manifestation in

Baha Ullah the Glory of God.

Since the Departure of Baha Ullah, the Ineffable Splendor and the Glory has become manifest and is visibly reflected to the world from Its Temple of Manifestation in Abdul Baha, Servant of God, Center of the Divine Covenant, Expounder of the Book and Word of God, Unveiler and Unsealer of the Divine Mysteries.

This Divine Manifestation and Appearance of the Word of God constitutes the Christhood, the 'Christ'—promised by Jesus and foretold in

Its former Manifestations, even as Malachi the prophet hath said 'Behold I send My Messenger and he shall prepare the way before me; And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His Temple And the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in,—behold He cometh saith the Lord of Hosts.'

We will return to New York the latter part of this month. I will greatly appreciate some word from you in Chicago, care of Brother Windust. We reach there about 20th.

Faithfully your brother in the Divine Cause and fellow-servant in the Heavenly Covenant,
Howard MacNutt[70]

The day following, Mrs Mary MacNutt wrote Khan, enclosing a letter for 'Abdu'l-Bahá which she asked Khan to translate and send on:

Seattle, Washington

June 7, 1913

Dear Brother Khan

Enclosed you will find a letter for our Master Abdul Baha. Will you be kind enough to translate it and send it to him? By this time you have received Howard's letter and can imagine our feelings. I am so sorry for him. There is a horrible mistake somewhere and we cannot understand. We are on our way home and will be in Chicago about June 20th. I wish you would drop us a line there and give us some word of explanation. We will be at the Plaza in Chicago for a few days. With Bahai love and greeting to your wife and thanks for your kindness and trouble I am, in love and devotion to Abdul Baha

Yours faithfully

Mary J. MacNutt[71]

On June 10, Howard MacNutt wrote a short letter to Khan from Vancouver, BC and enclosed a letter to 'Abdu'l-Bahá which he wished Khan to translate 'closely' and send on to 'Akká.

Vancouver BC

June 10, 1913

Dear Brother Khan

Enclosed find letter to Abdul Baha. You will confer an inestimable favor upon me and, I believe, assist the Cause of God by translating it closely and

forwarding it to the Blessed One.

Comment is unnecessary. I love you—trust you completely and you know me truly and deeply. I shall see you soon. We go homeward tomorrow, reaching Chicago about 20th where I hope to get word from you c/o A. R. Windust 515 South Dearborn St.

With unspeakable love, dear brother

Yours in Service of Abdul Baha

Howard MacNutt[72]

Wrote you from Seattle a few days ago.

The next day MacNutt wired a Day Letter to Khan in Highmount, NY where he had moved the Persian Legation and his family to escape Washington's summer heat.

WROTE YOU FROM SEATTLE JUNE SIXTH UPON HEARING ABDUL BAHA SENT CABLEGRAM MAILED YOU LONG LETTER TODAY FOR TRANSLATION FOR HIM KNOW NOTHING ABOUT DETAILS WINNIPEG GENERAL DELIVERY HAVE NEVER CHANGED NEVER VIOLATED SERIOUS MISTAKE SOMEWHERE DEPEND UPON YOUR INFORMATION AND EARLY CONSULTATION INFORM ABDUL BAHA I AM LOYAL ALWAYS
HOWARD MACNUTT[73]

Khan's response to MacNutt's communications is found in a letter dated June 18—a letter written as a Bahá'í and as a friend, but one whose friendship does not blind him to what he sees as evasions, and he firmly states what MacNutt should and should not do. He tells him that many have sent word to 'Abdu'l-Bahá about MacNutt's teaching. 'No one wrote', he says, 'that you have openly spoken against the Covenant, but they understand from certain subtle remarks of yours, or from the omission of certain points about the Covenant, or from your likening the Master to certain disciples of the past Dispensations—that perhaps your attitude was not wholly clear concerning the Covenant.' This letter deserves to be read in full for its careful analysis of the situation, free of the bias verging on vindictiveness of some of MacNutt's critics. Marked 'Personal' and copied apparently by Alice Ives Breed, the letter reads:

June 18/13

[Highmount, NY]

My dear Mr McNutt:—

Your telegram and letters, forwarded to this our Summer Legation, reached me duly and I have already sent a translation of your letter to me to the Master. Your long letter to Him came to me yesterday and it will be closely translated and sent to Him in Port Said by registered mail today. I shall of course do all I can to help you in this matter. But you know I have been your friend all these years and I have been ever interested in your favor. Therefore I wish to tell you that all my friendship for you has been due to our mutual devotion to this Cause, and if anything comes up which may call your attitude toward the Cause into question, you will of course

grant that I shall remain with the Cause rather than with you; for I am willing to sacrifice my three children for the Cause if need be—
But please do not misunderstand me. I am not judging you but only stating facts—I am very sorry that such a situation has developed and you remember how I foresaw the present situation when I spoke to you so solicitously the day the Master was sailing, on board the ship. If you seek my help to clear up the situation you must also follow my advice. I therefore wish to tell you that you must not use the word ‘accused’ when you speak to any one about the Master’s recent Tablet or cables. Be also careful to keep silent and quiet until we hear from the Master, for if you speak to the Believers in the spirit of protest and plead innocence or represent things as being wholly based on some misunderstanding or [other —a blot obscures some words on this and next two lines. Actually, the copier seems to have largely written around the blot, so the text probably should be read: ‘misunderstanding on the Master’s part ...’] even tho’ your intention may be wholly pure, you will not win any points and the confusion may be more confounded. I say this because we, as Bahais cannot believe that the Master ‘accuses’ any one, or that He can ever be influenced by any one who may be ‘jealous’ of you.

As I must see you when you reach N.Y. and, as I shall tell you when we meet, many from the various cities in which you have travelled, have written the Master giving reports of your talks. No one wrote that you have openly spoken against the Covenant, but they understood from certain subtle remarks of yours, or from the omission of certain points about the Covenant, or from your likening the Master to certain disciples of the past Dispensations—that perhaps your attitude was not wholly clear concerning the Covenant.

Of course your letter to me and to the Master contains nothing but declarations of firmness, but before the believers can change their attitude, an answer to your letter must come from the Master, and certain instructions from Him must reach America.

Meanwhile, please say nothing to any one, but wait patiently for the Master’s answer.

In your letter to the Master you review the last 15 years and you state that you have said nothing that was wrong. But, dear Mr McNutt, you seem to forget the meeting at Mrs Kinney’s where you admitted certain points

before the believers and promised to serve the Covenant thenceforth, so the best thing for you to do is to await the Master’s reply, as anything else you may say or do is harmful to your own interest. I shall be very grieved if you let the present opportunity pass and not do the right thing after 15 years. I hope my frank letter will not offend you as you know I am your friend. As soon as you reach N.Y. write me, as I must come and see you at once. If you obey the Master’s wishes literally you will succeed, and if you follow your own thoughts, you will suffer great loss.

Until we meet, I am very Sincerely yours,

Mirza Ali Kuli Khan[74]

That same day, Khan wrote a kindly letter to Mrs MacNutt.[75]

Doubtless he could see from her letter of June 7 that she was torn between two loyalties. Beneath the firmness with which he repeats the advice he gave MacNutt one senses his belief that through her deep love for 'Abdu'l-Bahá she could influence her husband to 'proclaim the Master in the same way that Baha Ullah has proclaimed Him'.

By the 24th of the month the MacNutts had reached Chicago and Howard was replying to Khan:

Chicago June 24, 1913

Dear Khan

Your letter sent in care of Mr. Windust was received by me today. We will reach New York Saturday 28th and I will be glad to see you there at any time you wish to come. I have said nothing and will say nothing about the matter in question. Be assured that I will make no 'statements'. To Dr. Baghdadi over the telephone today I said 'Whatever Abdul Baha wishes me to do I will do, and whatever he wishes me not to do I will not do.'

Awaiting your visit and with assurances of friendliness and appreciation I am

Yours sincerely in El Abha

Howard MacNutt[76]

Two days after this was written Mrs. Corinne True reported on MacNutt's reception in Chicago. Her letter to Khan leaves no doubt as to where she stood in the case:

9 [Chicago, Ill.]

June 26, 1913

Dear Mirza Khan:

On Tuesday morning Mr MacNutt and party arrived here and went to the Plaza Hotel.

Your letters c/o Mr. Windust were held by him and Mr. MacNutt went to his office to get them. He spoke to Mr. Windust about this trouble which had been stirred up during his absence and proclaimed firmness in the Covenant and declared 'Tho' He slay me yet will I love Him.' Mr. Windust

told him he was certainly up against it and he would advise him to get back to New York City as quickly as possible and see Mirza Khan and settle this matter with Abdul Baha. Why he should remain here at all after the pointed way Mr. Windust talked to him is a mystery. Mr. MacNutt wanted to see Zia [Baghdadi] for two minutes privately. Zia said 'No but if you will see the Chicago Committee of which I am only one then I will see you.' Mr. MacNutt refused to do this. Zia asked him if he had called Mrs. True over the phone and he said 'No he didn't think it best.' He told Zia he would leave Chicago Wednesday night. I do not know whether he has left or not. We held the 19 Day supper in my home on Tuesday evening and to a few

of the firm friends I read Roy Wilhelm's tablet [from 'Abdu'l-Bahá] regarding Mr. MacNutt and a heated discussion took place over association with the violators [of the Covenant] ...[77]

Between June 24 and July 13 there is a gap in the Khan-MacNutt correspondence. In the meantime the MacNutts had reached their home in Brooklyn and Khan had traveled down from the Catskills for at least one conference with Howard. The latter had hoped to meet with him again as is shown below:

935 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn July 13—1913

Dear Khan

Enclosed find letter for Abdul Baha as promised. I called you on the telephone this morning but learned that you had left yesterday. This was a disappointment, for I hoped to talk with you again and ask for more information upon this important question. Since June 4th the date upon which I first learned of the matter, I have been completely in the dark except the somewhat indefinite explanations made by you on Wednesday. I had hoped to be allowed to read the Tablets of Abdul Baha and obtain clear knowledge of His statements and commands. Under the circumstances I have done the best I could;—stated the facts, expressed my soul's regret and

set forth my complete and absolute willingness to be guided by His Wishes. Be assured that I will neither see nor talk with Bahais. The capacity of some of them for making trouble is shown in the statements repeated by you that we have had a picnic and meetings at this house since our return from the West. Truly my brother their wicked actions and falsehoods outrival Satan. During the past years I have often been disheartened and discouraged under the lash of their persecution. Had it not been for Abdul Baha,—His Love and faith in me, I would have succumbed broken-hearted. He alone has sustained me. I pray God He will extend His arm of strength to me now, for if the Spiritual sustenance is withdrawn, I shall lay down my physical life as worthless.

Do not think dear brother that I am blind to my own faults. They are indeed many, grievous, constant and overpowering. But what I endeavored to say to you when you were here is this;—that in my recent journey to the West I thought I was truly serving our Great Commander;—my heart was joyous and exultant in that belief;—I longed for the journey's end and awaited the loving words 'Well done'. How different it all seems! How dark and hopeless.

I tried to explain to you also that when I went to Chicago last summer, I carried out His Wishes and Commands completely,—but after returning home, trusted my own judgment and wrote a foolish letter in the hope that these people who had asked me to intercede for them might be brought into the shelter of complete allegiance and obedience to Him. How his few words of tender loving reproach have tortured me during the year past! I

promised Him to make amends and atonement,—went into the West to do it,—and—failed. Verily I am without power. Verily God has deprived me. Pray for me! I will say to you what I said to Windust in Chicago when I went to him for your letter recently. His face usually so bright and loving was darkened and turned away from me. I took the letter,—stood at the doorway and said ‘Windust! whatever happens, follow the Commands of Abdul Baha. Turn away from me,—but remember my words—“I have always loved Him devotedly and though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.”’ He looked at me with a clear eye and answered ‘He doeth whatsoever He willeth.’

Trusting in God the Knower of Hearts and with sincere devotion to the Divine Covenant.

Faithfully Yours

Howard MacNutt[78]

The Master read Howard’s anguished heart and on July 18 cabled Khan from Port Said in care of Roy Wilhelm:

Ali-Kuli Khan Wilhelmite, NY

DOOR REPENTANCE OPEN SURELY STOP RECEIVED TABLETS YOURSELF
MCNUTT ACT ACCORDINGLY
ABBAS[79]

MacNutt’s letter to Khan of July 22 must have been written before he learned of the cable, since there is no mention of it. This letter is a long cry of grief over the treatment MacNutt received from the believers. Mrs MacNutt’s letter of the same date deals mostly with the record of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s voice, arranged for by Howard and paid for from Mary’s own funds.

The importance of the MacNutt case can be judged from the fact that the Master, in the oppressive summer heat of Port Said, and constantly harried by letters, cables, arrivals and departures, individuals requiring His immediate guidance, let alone His weariness from His Western tours, ‘which had called forth the last ounce of His ebbing strength’, [80] took the time to dictate four Tablets about the MacNutt case, three of them analyzing it at great length. The first two were addressed to Khan, the next two were for each of the Mac Nutts, and were solely about the case.

Making the translations, Khan used the spelling ‘McNutt’ throughout, and enclosed parenthetical material as a gloss or amplification.

After addressing Khan thus: ‘O thou intimate companion and constant associate of Abdul Baha,’ the Master discusses a problem brought up by Khan in his letter of June 14. Mrs Florian Krug is praised highly by the Master, but told she ‘must treat her husband with consideration’ and bear with his occasional outbursts of temper.

Then the MacNutt case comes up for a lengthy review, but not before the Master contributes His amused irony:

Praise be to God you are spending your days in a delectable, verdant and

refreshing place. We too are, praise be to God, enjoying ourself in the hot weather of Port Said with its excessive humidity, dust and dirt, while suffering with nerve fever. As the friends are comfortable, Abdul Baha is in the utmost joy.

Convey my great affection to the maid-servant of God Mrs. Breed, and also to the honorable Khanom ...

As to the matter of Mr McNutt:—During this trip he has met the Nakezeen [the violators of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant]. This is sufficient.

What

violation is greater than consorting with the Nakezeens? Moreover he has been openly stating that the station of Abdul Baha is the station of Peter. The conclusion is this that he (Abdul Baha) is liable to error; like unto Peter who denied the Christ.—I do not even claim the station of Peter; I am the servant of the Blessed Beauty; but the preserving protection of the Blessed Beauty is my shelter, and I am placed under the shade of the Infallibility of the Blessed Beauty. For Essential Infallibility is specialized to the Blessed Beauty; even as the sun, whose light is essential. But Abdul Baha is under the protection of this Infallibility and is the recipient of the lights. I am, therefore, praise be to God protected and guarded from the darkness of error; that is to say, the Blessed Beauty protects Abdul Baha from error [or sin].

I send you a supplication herein enclosed. Consider it.

The honorable McNutt has repented of the letter which he wrote in favor of Dr Nutt [Knott, as spelled by Mr Balyuzi]; but it was a superficial repentance. Now, if he in reality repents of all that has gone before and seeks to become firm and steadfast in the Covenant, it is better that he make a 'Pauline repentance'. For at first Paul scoffed at the Cause of Christ.

But in

the end he was the first faithful servant. Thus an open and clear repentance is conducive to everlasting firmness and steadfastness, and to attaining the invisible confirmations of God. Had he been a herald of the Covenant during his trip, and had he befriended [God] and made himself free, I swear by the Blessed Beauty, that America would have been set in motion. How strange! Mr McNutt became so humble and submissive toward Dr Nutt, while he refuses to be evanescent before the Center of the Covenant! This is very amazing.

To be brief; do thou exhort him saying that the powers of the whole world can not withstand Abdul Baha. His Holiness Christ had only eleven persons at the time of His Departure. See what happened afterwards! The Emperors of Rome and Greece could not withstand Him! Now, praise be to God, and by the help and providence of Baha Ullah, Abdul Baha has sincere and life-sacrificing friends throughout the entire East and West.

Since even at the present, I have love for Mr McNutt, therefore say through Bahai affection that he make a Pauline repentance with all courage and boldness and proclaims his thorough entrance under the protection of the Covenant. I will [then] give him strong assurances that he shall become

blooming like unto a rose and lighted like unto a lamp.

The matter of Green Acre has, praised be God, been somewhat [or a little] arranged. Exert yourself greatly so that it may become a Bahai center.

The press clippings which referred to your speeches have been considered.

Praise be to God thou wast rendered successful in giving such speeches.

Upon thee Baha ul Abha!

[signed] Abdul Baha Abbas[81]

Received the same day, July 25, was a second Tablet because their communications had crossed in the mail. This Tablet was in the Master's own hand and translated by Khan July 27, 1913. The translation is in Khan's hand.

HE IS GOD!

Excellency Khan:

I wrote you a long letter yesterday. Now too I have received your recent letter. As regards McNutt:—I have written answers to his and his wife's letters, which I enclose. It is exactly what you have written to him.

He must set aside un-necessary talk; and he must make a Pauline repentance and confess, saying: 'I was asleep, I was heedless, I was deprived. Now I have become awake, and I repent and am quit of the past.' Then, after making a Pauline repentance, he will bathe in the spring of Job.[82]

On April 13, 1919, from Haifa, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote MacNutt regarding his writing the Introduction to Promulgation of Universal Peace: 'O thou old friend! ... [t]his service shall cause thee to acquire an effulgent face in the Abhá Kingdom and shall make thee the object of praise and gratitude of the friends in the East as well as the West.'
[83]

And in a Tablet from Bahjí to Mr Windust (July 20, 1919), the Master named the compilation Himself, and added: 'As to its Introduction, it should be written by Mr MacNutt himself when in heart he is turning toward the Abhá kingdom, so that he may leave a permanent trace behind him.'
[84] The introduction was sent to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, approved by Him, and at His direction translated into Persian.

Looking back, we see that Howard MacNutt had served the Bahá'í Faith from its earliest days in America for a total of twenty-six years, was serving when he died. His was a distinguished career, marred only by one brief aberration, from which he was saved by the firm hand of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

'How to write you ..., of the passing of that great soul and teacher, Howard MacNutt ...' said John Grundy in a letter to Shahnaz Waite. (The letter is reprinted here in Appendix B.) John, with his wife Julia and Howard had undertaken to teach the Faith in a section of Miami called 'Colored Town', an area forbidden to whites by city authorities and the then very active Ku Klux Klan.

'Much work was laid out here to be done. Julia, Howard and myself arranged and spoke at many colored meetings, in churches,

schools and homes; perhaps thousands of people have come to our meetings. Abdu'l-Baha personally and strikingly instructed us that we must make every effort to help the colored man.'

It was eight o'clock on the night of December 26, 1926, and the two men were scarcely a block from the meeting they were to address when a motorcyclist crashed into Howard. Help was summoned, but Howard died within six hours. The motorcyclist may not have been at fault. John describes how abstracted Howard had become, because he had lost his wife Mary a month earlier, despite weeks of round-the-clock nursing by Julia and Howard. During the long ordeal Howard lost forty pounds and John writes that his friend had grown 'silent and absent-minded'.

John goes on to tell of an unexpected victory which resulted from Howard's dying: 'During Howard's service we had many colored folk present. For the first time in history the doors of Combs' funeral home were opened to the colored man. It seems Combs knew Howard and when I approached him he said: "Howard MacNutt can have as many colored friends to see him as want to, and in future this door will never be closed to them ..."'

Marzieh knew Howard MacNutt as a tall, handsome man with an imposing presence and a shock of white hair, and he spoke beautiful English, which matched his fine Spenserian hand. An excellent teacher, he impressed the young college group, and had a good deal to do with confirming Howard Carpenter as a Bahá'í in 1924, as we read in Marion Carpenter Yazdi's *Youth in the Vanguard*.

Marzieh remembered him particularly for his response to the question, 'What do you think about reincarnation?' 'Reincarnation,' he said.

Twenty-three

Journey back to Tehran

A small fat boy, black-uniformed, aigret feather decorating the front of his cap, sword and jewels, is still to be seen on old Persian stamps. This was Ahmad Sháh, last of the Qájár line. He was to be crowned King of Kings, replacing the so-called 'Monster', his father Muhammad-'Alí Sháh, now exiled, and in the spring of 1914 the Khan family were on their way from the United States to Persia for the coronation.[85] Hamideh, the four-year-old, had been left behind with Grace and Florian Krug. The journey took about a month, with a stopover in Paris.

That particular Paris always remained a dreamy memory, green and sweet-smelling. Mornings the wide Champs-Élysées, the Elysian Fields, the groves where the happy live, was given over to children, rolling their hoops, riding up and down sedately on the tinkling merry-go-round, trying to spear the brass ring and missing—or else screaming from their wood benches with laughter at the small Punch and Judy show, especially when the minuscule couple

cursed and whacked at each other, or one of them stiffly emptied a chamber pot out the window on a jerky passerby.

Those were the days, in much of the world, of blue skies reflected in clear water, of sweet airs and fanning green trees, and flower scents, and earth and animal scents, before noise-and-air pollution would rob humankind of its birth-right, its breath-right, and endless hate and slaughter blow out its joys.

Another memory of the visit was glimpsing King George V and Queen Mary at the races (she mostly remembered today for her monumental hats), and Marzieh wishing she had the Queen for her mother.

Khan was being drawn back to Persia not only for the coronation but mainly because he missed his mother, wanted to see her again, if only for one last time, and for another important reason as well: There was about to be a fairy-tale International Exposition beside the Golden Gate, and the Governor of California had invited Khan to have Persia take part in it. Accordingly, the Shah's Government appointed Khan as Persia's Commissioner General for San Francisco's 1915 Fair, and he duly traveled to Tehran so that he could select

exhibits of Persian products and arts—most of which would be brought to his door by merchants and collectors for him to choose. Phoebe Hearst was both a patron of the Exposition and Honorary President of the Woman's Board, and she had high hopes for the Persian art collection. On April 3, 1914, she wrote Khan that she had instructed her agent Mr Clark to send him a cheque for two thousands dollars 'before you sail', and asked Khan for a 'statement of all the old accounts, how much paid and the amount due' as her papers were in a safe deposit box in town, and she wished Khan and the family 'a good voyage and success'.

The trip seemed endless for Marzieh, especially the long train journey from Paris to Berlin and across Russia, going on forever. Then the Caspian Sea, then the long, swaying, carriage drive away from the forested mountains over a landscape barren as the moon. One night Florence was jolted awake to find the carriage teetering on the edge of an abyss, the horses stumbling, the coachman halfslumped over in an opium trance. Mostly, however, unlike Marzieh, Florence chose to remember only the good parts of it all.

In the spring of that coronation year Florence could ignore the primitive road as the carriage bumped along toward Tehran. She recalled as they left the Caspian Sea how, seven years before, the fresh salt air was a promise to her that she would live again after being near death so long. It delighted her to be in Persia now. After all, Persia had given her both her Faith and her husband.

She wrote of the wide rice fields they passed, and the miles of young wheat, a 'symphony of translucent colors', of pure skies and

snowy mountains, of diamond-sparkling streams, of fragrant vegetation ‘that only Persia breathes’. Wrote of many kinds of birds, their joyous flights and songs, and for the rest ‘the golden silence’ broken only by camel bells from high soprano to bass. Sky, birds, fruit blossoms, fields, all bejeweled with color. Iran, she wrote, meant Aryan, the noble people.

When, she asked herself, would the Land of the Aryans be revealed to the world in all its true splendor?

The women, like most of Persia’s treasures, were hidden behind walls and veils. Queens had ruled in Persia once, but no more. The Court of Sháh ‘Abbás (d. 1629) three hundred years gone, was probably more lavish than Elizabeth’s. Sir Anthony Sherley—in Persia to clear the way for Christianity and Christian trade—had told of that Shah’s ‘infinite treasure’, of gold and silver coins, ornamented swords, horse trappings of gold, all begemmed, vases studded with jewels, particularly rubies and turquoises, and ‘pictures which are brought from Venice’. Of special interest, looking back from today,

were the lamps lit by animal fat, not oil. On arrival, Sir Anthony had tried to kiss the Shah’s foot, but ‘the Great Sophi’ [Safaví] declined the courtesy, quickly putting his hand between the royal extremity and Sherley’s lips.

Sultán Ahmad Sháh would be crowned July 21, 1914. Florence says he was the first Shah to be crowned by ‘universal suffrage’, doubtless meaning with the consent of parliament. After all, in those days women and peasants had no franchise.

At last they had reached Tehran, and were in a carriage going to see Khan’s mother, the horses trotting briskly, Rahim and Marzieh holding bouquets for their grandmother, Khan trembling with happiness. They drew up to the house with its many small rooms. The household crowded forward to meet them, and Khan cried out, ‘Why are you all wearing dark brown?’ and looked, stupefied, at the tears on the women’s faces. Persians have a horror of relaying news of a death. His mother had died before the family left Washington, and the relatives led them to her empty room.

That was an apocalyptic day because the shock was not to be borne and Marzieh, out of the house, alone with her father, saw him tear at his shirt and repeatedly beat his head against the wall in the courtyard and heard his gasping sobs—all those things brand new in her life.

Twenty-four

A visit from the Shah

Prince Farmán-Farmá married to Ahmad Sháh’s aunt, invited the Khans to stay in his luxurious ‘garden’ (as Persian estates were often called). It was here in the Shimírán foothills that they, along with their hostess, his royal aunt, received a visit from Persia’s young ruler. That afternoon they watched as a victoria, its lamps surmounted by gilded royal crowns, the Shah taking his ease on

upholstery of ivory leather, swept into the estate behind four black Russian horses with black plumes, while mounted courtiers galloped alongside.

A royal arrival is always an event, no matter who the royalty may be. He was a plump, healthy-looking, short teenager, in riding clothes—which meant a knee-length coat over trousers, and a black brimless hat or kuláh. He shook hands with the guests and asked the foreign ladies to sit. He had both presence and (in those days) a joyous laugh. Small tables had been placed for him and the others, laden with flowers, sweets and pyramids of fruits. But all he wanted

was a drink of the cool mountain water for which this estate was famous, and a little ice cream.

During some two hours of visiting in French, the talk turned to beards and mustaches, the latter, at least then, *de rigueur* in Tehran but rare enough in the United States where many were clean-shaven. At his age, the Shah's own chubby face was bare. Smiling, he said to Florence, 'I wear my mustache à l'américaine!'

At one point during the visit something happened that greatly impressed Marzieh. The Shah retired to a part of the garden which his retainers had quickly curtained off with a canvas wall. She learned that in the royal train there was a mule fully equipped with all the necessaries: His Majesty had his own traveling bathroom. Ahmad Sháh was one potentate who did not have to worry about the British royal family's adage: 'Never miss a chance to pass water. Never miss a chance to sit down.' For him, the plumbing was always at hand. A chair was always ready for him too. We read that once, while taking a walk in England, Násiri'd-Dín Sháh simply, without looking back, sat down, knowing that a chair would inevitably be found beneath him. Or else.

It was in that same garden, Farmáníyyih, that Marzieh learned the meaning of the word 'vicarious'. She was sick with malaria, a strange ailment, it seemed to her, because you knew ahead that you would be ill one day and well the next, on and on. They brought her an apple one sick day as she lay in bed by the window. The apple was taboo—probably because, in accord with the Persian diet for malaria patients, it was 'cold'. (Persian medicine divides foods into the categories of 'hot' and 'cold', which has nothing to do with their temperature.) She longed for the apple. But there was her donkey, just outside the window, and she reached the apple out and watched him enjoy it. Vicarious.

This was her gray velvet donkey with black velvet markings, and a large orange velvet saddle, on which, plump legs sticking out to either side, she rode through the streets of Tehran, grandly led by her own personal servant. On one occasion, when a street boy taunted her with 'Farangí!' (meaning European, derived from the days of the Franks), she called back, 'Man Írání hastam, I am Persian.'

Florence's notes on a visit to Ahmad Sháh's summer palace, Sáhíb-Qiráńíyyih, up in the cool mountains north of the capital, have been pruned here of excessive enthusiasm, since in their entirety they sound as if written to be read aloud to His Majesty. No doubt she expected them to be published during his reign.

The palace stood in a lofty park on a spur of the Alburz foothills.

The Khans drove in through rows of royal horses, tethered in the

open, and rows of tents for the Shah's Cossack guards. At the gates they left the carriage and walked through several arched gateways, reaching a vast open courtyard. Here they were guided up a flight of steps to a path along terraced gardens that gave on the courtyard.

Proceeding at a leisurely pace, they passed royal servants, silently salaaming, gracefully and low. Then they came to the imperial tent, a large open-air salon. Canvas walls screened off another garden—walls covered, like the tent ceiling, with hand-blocked cotton prints. At the far end of the salon was a group of imposing sofas and chairs where the council of cabinet ministers would meet. At its center was a pool of snow-white marble, and near it a fountain pool for goldfish, this one lined with tiles of turquoise blue.

Entertained here by an old prince, they drank cherry sharbat in silver filigree holders, and also tea, and ate delicate Persian cakes.

When Florence brought up the subject of the Shah's jewel collection, considered the world's finest, the Prince immediately sent off an attendant who returned with a heavy oaken box. The Prince unlocked it and lifted out one of the Shah's ceremonial black lambskin hats.

On the front of it was a 'glorious clasp of diamonds, bearing a white aigret feather that glistened with diamond sprays'.

The old host told her about the pageantry of the two mourning months for the martyred Imáms, Hasan and Husayn. In the Shah's immense building which accommodated thousands, they would put on religious spectacles, like the miracle plays of the Christian Middle Ages. Although illumination with electricity was a new thing in Persia—Tehran did have an avenue lined with electric lights, but the people said you had to hold up an oil lamp to see the electricity by—the lighting for these plays was spectacular, the roofs and walls on fire. Under giant candelabras the bridles and embroidered saddle cloths of prancing Arab mounts glittered with precious gems as they passed before your eyes.

On certain mourning days the Shah himself would arrive with notables of his court, the box hung with costly cashmere shawls and golden brocades, the Shah himself ablaze with diamonds. 'Around his neck', the Prince told Florence, 'he wears the Sea of Light (daryáy-i-núr), sister gem of the world-famed Kohinoor (Mountain of Light). And on his head is this same ceremonial hat. His uniform is alight with enormous single diamonds sewn across it, and his sword is heavy with gems.'

Perhaps thinking he had gone on too much about the royal grandeur, the old courtier then quoted the Shah: ‘His Majesty says, “Je n’aime pas la pompe, la cérémonie! J’adore la simplicité!”’

Where

thousands used to escort previous Shahs, he added, ‘the present one now rides into his gardens at the center of a small cavalcade—six

ahead of him, six behind, one or two princes abreast, all, of course, superbly mounted on Arab horses’.

To illustrate his new ruler’s consideration for others, the whitehaired host, who had served three Shahs before this one, offered an intimate detail of life in the royal household:

‘One day His Majesty woke up suddenly from a nap, found himself alone, and clapped his hands for help.’ (Florence knew that the Qājárs never fell asleep or woke up unattended—they were even unable to undress and dress themselves.)

‘He wanted someone to draw on his boots. I heard the clapping, hurried in and knelt before him.

“How is it you came yourself, Prince?” His Majesty asked.

“As one who served Your Majesty’s great-grandfather, grandfather and father, I now crave the honor to serve Your Majesty as well,” I answered. But he forbade me.’

Summoned to the royal presence, the Khans crossed the wide courtyard, at a turning entered a rose garden, and confronted a stately villa, the Shah’s summer palace, with crowds of courtiers before it. Up one flight they found themselves in a huge high apartment with great windows at each end. Walls and ceiling were ‘all diamonds’, that is, inlaid with bits of mirrors in complicated floral and geometrical patterns—the diamond-and-rose design—and wall panels enclosing large solid mirrors framed by carved rose vines in bas relief. Parqueted floors, flowering carpets, French hand-carved and gilded, tapestried furniture. The seemingly bejewelled walls, each tiny mirror set in by hand (a lost art now), shone in the light of many candelabras ‘as if’, Florence says, ‘one were in the heart of a diamond’.

She paused here in her narrative to say that Persia should not be judged by Western standards. ‘They are too ancient and poetic a people,’ she wrote, ‘and too innately cultivated.’ Each of the two peoples, Persians and Americans, could take on the virtues of the other, she said, and thus ‘advance world civilization incredibly far’.

The young Shah was standing at the head of the salon with three or four of his court. He was in the court dress of the day: a frock coat, narrow trousers, black brimless hat. After ceremonial greetings he stood with them for about ten minutes, which often, would constitute the whole audience. Then, to their surprise, he invited Florence to sit down, and sat himself, the others standing. The Crown Prince, a thin little boy, not chubby like his brother, came in

and remained standing. (In after years when this little boy grew up to be Regent, he made Khan the head of his court. Still later he was about to become the next Qájár Shah, and was completing plans for

Khan to join him when, not old, he suddenly dropped dead in London. All Marzieh could think of when the tragic news, disruptive of Khan's possible future, reached the family in New York was, 'He used to brush his teeth for twenty minutes at a time, and now it's all gone to waste.')

The Shah's diminutive sister, thin and dark in a pink silk dress, her hair plaited Persian fashion in many narrow braids down her back, entered with the dignity of a woman full-grown. She flung her arms around the Shah's neck and said of Marzieh, 'Command this dear little girl to stay and play with me!' (Reading this seventy years later, Marzieh was sceptical about the 'dear little girl'. Florence's account was obviously written when she had returned to America and Khan was at his post in Washington. She was being diplomatic—not her usual style.)

The Shah said, 'Take her hand and go with her to the rose garden.' A courtier promptly suggested naming Marzieh as the Princess' lady-in-waiting.

Once out in the garden the Shah's sister ran to a channeled mountain brook, crouched down and started practising a trick she had recently learned. (She was about six and everything in her life was recent.) It was not unlike what Marzieh learned years later in the dining room at Stanford University's Roble Hall: you filled the bowl of a spoon with water, turned the bowl toward you, took aim, then flipped down the handle, thus catapulting the water at your victim. Now, the princess cupped the water in her left palm, and slapped it fast with her other hand, expertly aiming the spray at Marzieh. The latter, soon damp, was already disgruntled with Persia anyhow, was sick with malaria, turning democrat, and had promised her parents she would even eat her oatmeal if they would only take her back to America. Lady-in-waiting indeed.

Meanwhile Florence and Khan were safe in the audience hall, answering the Shah's questions (royalty always initiated the talk), and enjoying the panorama of summer spread out through the high windows—all the way south to a single spark that was the gold shrine of 'Abdu'l-'Azím.

The interview proceeded in French and Persian.

'Do your parents still live, Madame?' the Shah asked. When she said yes, he raised his eyes swiftly and reverently upward and said, 'Dieu merci, Madame.' The boy had not seen his own exiled parents for five years.

The audience over, they backed carefully out of his presence. They descended to the rose garden and there at a side door saw the Shah's favorite horse: a wonderful Arab, an aristocrat, Florence said, and

yet all gentleness. Over its saddle and hindquarters and reaching almost to the ground lay a scarlet covering richly embroidered by hand.

In later years this same Ahmad Sháh would give Khan a horse, a white Arab from the imperial stables. Like all the Shah's horses this one's tail was dyed a bright purple. The British looked down their noses at the gift and made some remark about circuses, but the family and the stablemen were proud of the magnificent animal and kept his tail fresh dyed. He too was an aristocrat, his skin satin, tail lifted, great liquid black eyes showing the whites. These special horses, despite their hidden fires, were so gentle the Arabs might keep them under their tent roofs with the family. This one had been taught to sink to his knees when His Majesty wished to mount. He was a single-footer: riding him was like being in an easy chair. Certainly this quiet Ahmad Sháh was not at all like his greatgrandfather, Násiri'd-Dín. This one grew up to be a mild, often absentee ruler, usually in Europe. At one point he became so fat that he stuck inside a large armchair which they tugged off him, and he finally realized he must reduce. His doctors made him take long walks and stand up for a time after every meal. Naturally his entire retinue had to do the same and reduce along with him.

Ahmad Sháh could not, as his great-grandfather could, with a barely discernible gesture have a man's head chopped off. The Constitution forbade one-man rule (for some reason 'rule' generally means treading people down).

However charming in his early teens, Ahmad Sháh did not grow up popular. Once when Persia was suffering from famine he cornered the grain market, and after that the people called him 'Ahmad the Grain-Broker' (Ahmad-i-'Alláf).

In Paris, in the Shah's suite at the Hotel Meurice, the family once had a brief audience with him. This would have been in the early twenties when Marzieh was about twelve. Leaving, she stood before him, and ignoring protocol, extended her hand. After a moment's pause, His Majesty took it. Safe from contamination, he was wearing brown kid gloves. Say what you like, when it came to quirks and crotchets, the Qájár royalty had them.

However, on that early time in his summer palace, Ahmad Sháh seemed to be only a plump and dignified and even wistful youth, lonely without his parents.

On their way home from the audience to the country house where the Khans were guests, the hidden villas of Shimírán lay all about them, and as they drove, they could hear the cold thunder of mountain streams. The walls of the Alburz, bare mountains against clear sky, were streaked from their minerals with rose, peacock and gold. Off to the East was snow-capped Mount Dimávand, nearly

nineteen thousand feet high, a Persian Fujiyama. Here, back of the endless mud walls, were green gardens and miles of stately parks, and outside the walls and twisting mud lanes were golden fields, a shimmering sea of wheat. In the tiny villages, bazaars aglow with vegetables and fruits, the main street was a tunnel of shade cast by boughs laid across from confronting roofs above the road. Out in the late afternoon, intermittent songs of reapers. Lumpy flocks of fattailed sheep, black and brown. Donkey caravans, each donkey, seen from behind, only a great bundle of alfalfa, moving on two thin legs. At night stars would burn through the trees in the walled gardens: stars on fire through the great branches and quivering down in the deep pools; and the hurrying streams silver, and sweet flower scents, and always through the night, there would come the repeated, single note of the Haq bird, the bird that cries 'God! God!' all through the dark hours till, legend says, its throat bursts blood with the dawn.

A later audience took place under the Shah's crystal chandeliers in his vast salon with the jewel-glittering mirror-walls that came alive when anyone passed by.

Florence had with her a collection of photographs, mostly of American notables, to show him. Eagerly, he studied the autographed portrait of Woodrow Wilson, a gift to Khan, and asked many searching questions about him, showing real admiration for the American President. He was also much impressed with a photograph of Mrs Phoebe Hearst, and pictures of different American beauties, which latter he called 'très artistiques'.

She unwisely chose this time to show the Shah a photograph of the President's daughter Margaret.

Margaret had inherited her father's strong features, which did not make for beauty in a woman. Today, with film stars to go by, and modern beautifiers, the image-makers would doubtless have transformed her, but then, in the photo that is still among the Khan

archives, she appeared in unbecoming glasses, a severe hairdo and a prim white blouse. Before leaving Washington in 1914 Florence had told her, 'I will show this to the Shah and tell you what he says.'

In the event she could not make good on her promise because what His Majesty said was, 'How very homely she is!'

Wilson himself was under no illusions as to his looks, distinguished though they were, and would repeat to his family:

For beauty I am not a star,
There are others more handsome by far,
But my face I don't mind it,

Because I'm behind it,
It's the people in front that I jar.

At this interview Florence also had Rahim and Marzieh recite for Ahmad Sháh. They stood in front of him side by side and repeated lines on the evolution of the horse, and its ancestor Eohippus.

Florence had obliged them to memorize the words out of the 'Book of Knowledge'—no doubt to vindicate her purchasing those volumes one slow summer at East Quogue from an enterprising salesman at the door. What His Majesty, who did not speak English, made of Eohippus one does not know.

The day Ahmad Sháh visited his aunt in Farmáníyyih, Marzieh carried on a debate with the fourteen-year-old ruler. Their theme centered on whether black was better, or white. It was conducted in Persian, for she had studied some Persian in America and also, like most small children arriving in a foreign country, she had gotten the hang of the language almost the way animals instinctively know how to swim. The Shah was seated, with a few courtiers standing behind him, and Marzieh, dark herself, her hair in corkscrew curls, confronted His Majesty, white and plump.

H.M.: 'Is black better, or white?'

M.: 'Black.'

H.M.: 'Is a black horse better, or a white horse?'

M.: 'Black.'

H.M.: 'Well, are black teeth better, or white?'

M.: (Laughing) 'White.'

The Shah laughed and instantly the courtiers laughed too. His Majesty had won.

When the family had come through Paris that year, Khan had invested in a new wardrobe, the *dernier cri*. His many suits now hung on the wall at Farmáníyyih, near his bed. Florence and the children were in beds at the other end of the large, airy room.

In the dark of one night Marzieh almost awakened; afterward she remembered, or thought she did, eyes scrutinizing her, Rahim and Florence where they slept at their end of the room. In the morning, Khan's wall of clothes was bare. Everyone searched diligently, high and low, but even the magician with his carved brass bowl who was brought in as a last resort to find the clothes could discover no clue.

Twenty-five

Last train from Berlin

Before the coronation would take place, Khan hurried the family away to America, bringing along Abbas and Allah Kalantar, his brother's sons. The reason for the departure must have been rumors of war, but this seems not to have worried Rahim, Marzieh, and their cousins. They loved Berlin those late days in July, because the hotel where they stayed served them five meals a day.

Then one day Marzieh learned about war. War was a fever in the streets. It was a city erupting with its contents, tight-packed people, hardly room to budge, and a black excitement in the air, and someone shouting, 'There's the Crown Prince!' and Marzieh looking everywhere, and seeing then the back of a head passing in an open

car, and that was the Crown Prince, in a gray uniform with a flat back to his military hat.

They were almost trapped in Berlin. With the help of United States Ambassador Gerard, Khan got them out the night before August first when Germany declared war on Russia, and they escaped on what was called 'the last train out of Berlin'.

A scene she remembered was in the hotel late at night, Florence sick in bed and Khan coming in:

'You'll have to get up. We have to leave. We're taking the last train out.'

How he managed to get all of them out of the hotel and on board, no one knows, except that he was the kind of man who did manage. In the jammed train, Marzieh could see herself reflected past the other passengers in the black car window, her face red with excitement, leaning against her mother's knees.

At last they reached the one thing that all refugees, wherever they are fleeing, concentrate on to the exclusion of everything else: the border. It was Holland and somehow they were in another train, bedded down in their own compartment, between fresh, clean sheets.

Then they were in a Dutch hotel, looking from their windows one morning at the gray-overcoated Queen encouraging her young troops, standing among them, talking to them like a mother. Khan even succeeded in acquiring adequate space for the family on the Nieuw Amsterdam, when many were sleeping in the ship's corridors, or lifeboats or anywhere.

The waters of the North Sea and the Channel had been mined and the Nieuw Amsterdam was stopped frequently by Dutch and English warships and warned of dangers ahead. A British torpedo boat guided her through the Channel and into Plymouth harbor.

Out on the Atlantic there were still submarines to be feared, but Marzieh's main memories of the mid-voyage were peaceful ones: Florence and her old friend, New England writer Norman Hapgood, visiting on an upper deck; or Florence in the solarium where the bright blue sky came blaring through the glass roof, having her tea. A clipping from the Brooklyn Standard Union of August 18 gives a more complete account of the trip:

DUTCH LINER ENDS EVENTFUL VOYAGE

Dodged Mines in North Sea and
Brought home Nearly
2,000 Refugees

Nearly two thousand refugees were aboard the Holland-American liner Nieuw Amsterdam, which docked at Hoboken last night. The passengers had the usual tales to tell of hardships and adventures in European cities, of

dodging warships on the way over and of undergoing discomforts on the crowded passage. She was stopped by the cruiser Essex when 370 miles from Ambrose Channel. The Essex gave chase and fired over the liner's stern before the Nieuw Amsterdam was brought to a stop. As soon as her identity was learned the ship was allowed to proceed.

The Persian Minister to this country, Mirza Ali Kuli Khan, was in Berlin when the war started. Abandoning most of his baggage, he made his way to Rotterdam and caught this ship. He praised Ambassador Gerard for his work on behalf of stranded Americans in Germany and declared relatives and friends of tourists in Berlin need have no fear for their safety.

Other refugees declared they had been courteously treated by German officials. Americans suffered in Germany only when they were mistaken for Englishmen, it was stated.

Now the time had come to collect Hamideh. The Krugs had taken beautiful care of her. They had even bought her a tiny set of golf clubs. They wanted to adopt her, and there was some doubt as to whether the child might not want to stay with them.

We stood in the entrance way of their home, looking up the stairs. Hamideh had been summoned from her room, she knew not why. Hesitantly, she started down the stairs. Then there burst from her throat a shout of incredulous joy. For unfathomable reasons, her people had vanished—had deserted her. Now, unbelievably, they

were back, surrounding her again. There were the lost faces, looking up.

She ran tumblingly down the rest of the stairs.

Twenty-six

Persian treasures by the Golden Gate

Back in Washington Khan was informed by his Government that it could not participate in the Panama-Pacific Exposition, on account of the war, and that if Persia was to be represented he would have to use his own resources with no support from home.

This came as a severe blow. However, determined to carry on, he knew he must succeed in San Francisco through his own energy and initiative (neither trait, as readers may have gathered, typically Persian, at least not then). At considerable sacrifice, and because he felt the chance was priceless for Persia to become better known, he exhibited his own collection of Persian art together with whatever rare pieces were then available throughout the United States, and arranged for suitable display quarters with the authorities, including the beautiful 'Shah's Room' for the best pieces. At first, the entire task seemed impossible.

That loveliest of world fairs—sited primarily on made land by the Golden Gate, constructed out of framing and stucco—was created to last only nine months.

The initiators of that once-only fair had planned to celebrate the

new city of San Francisco, rebuilt after the earthquake and fire of 1906, to attract capital following the opening of the Panama Canal (completed in 1914), and to promote new trade with the Far East. However, in his official, five-volume history of the Exposition, *The Story of the Exposition*, Frank Morton Dodd cites other reasons for the great celebration. It was held, his title page says, 'to Commemorate the Discovery of the Pacific Ocean [somewhat belatedly: Balboa found the Ocean in 1513], and the Construction of the Panama Canal'. Not a word here about the 1906 earthquake, which many San Franciscans prefer to think of as the Fire, and no hint of anything so vulgar as trade.

The Exposition was dedicated by Vice-President Thomas Marshall on March 24, 1915. As days passed there was William Jennings Bryan, the silver-tongued Great Commoner, his speaker's platform surrounded by crowds like a raft afloat on a sea of faces. He was

caught by the camera from afar, a tiny figure, visibly eloquent, with his tiny index finger pointing skyward.

One reads now about some of the Fair's wonders with the amused, rather patronizing fondness allotted to so many efforts and attitudes of the past. On July first, Wilson's 'Day', the President, three thousand miles away at Windsor, Vermont (near his summer home in Cornish, New Hampshire) pressed an electric button which unfurled a flag at the Exposition while Sousa's Band played 'The Stars and Stripes Forever', and the crowd rose as one, 'and all stood at attention, the men uncovering'. (One does not know exactly how modern readers would take this participle.)

Also worth a photograph were the crowds flocking to see 'an "aeroplane" flight from the Marina'.

Todd's long explanation as to just why there was no Woman's Building is also of the time: 'It would have been inconsistent with the fine spirit of equality that characterized the Exposition ... There was never a hint of a policy on the part of the Woman's Board that might tend to embarrass the Exposition Management or any of the Exposition officials.' (In other words, there was to be no Mrs Pankhurst.)

Emblem of the Fair was the 'Tower of Jewels', sparkling with brilliants by the thousands and thousands. Taken to see the Tower one night with her German governess, Marzieh gasped when, from her insignificant level, she craned up and beheld huge, manycolored, shining gems, ruby, aquamarine, emerald, sapphire, piled one above the other, jutting up, climbing into the night sky. The Tower's arch was billed as being higher than the Arc de Triomphe. As usual she would remember most of the Exposition by food. There was Ghirardelli's swimming-tank pool of rich chocolate, ebbing and flowing. There was marzipan shaped like tiny carrots, radishes, potatoes. There was Turkish Delight, re-named Shah's

Delight by Khan for the duration, small rose or amber squares of honey-sweet gelatin and pistachios, buried in boxes of sugar, powdery and white. Even though the Khans lived in Piedmont and had to come over the Bay by ferry, that was a pleasure too, and at the Fair there was always something to see or do.

Khan's portrait with that of the other Commissioners-General, each in its separate medallion, is featured in Todd's book, and the historian's Chapter XXII, vol. IV, titled 'The Persian Section', is friendliest praise. 'One of the most beautiful features of the entire Palace of Manufactures was the official Persian Section ... equipped and furnished through the energy and resources of Mirza Ali-Kuli Khan, Nabil-ed-Dovleh, Persian Chargé d'Affaires at Washington, appointed Persian Commissioner-General at San Francisco by His

Imperial Majesty the Shah ... Persia did not erect a pavilion, as its government had intended, owing to disturbances incident to the European war and the transition to a constitutional régime at home, but made her official representation in this Palace.'

He speaks of the 'Shah's Room' as 'that most delightful spot to every discriminating visitor', tells how it represents 'one of the chambers in the Museum Palace at Teheran' and says that with 'its treasures and art works all about, it became credible that in the sixth century, while the ancestors of most Americans were a lot of gibbering savages, a Sassanian King had paid the equivalent of three quarters of a million dollars for a single carpet'.

He dwells on the various treasures—the tapestries 'like woven paintings', the brocades, hand-loomed velvets, calligraphy, ceramics, mosaics, ancient manuscripts, gems and furniture.

In glass cases were a 'royal crown piece of two green diamonds weighing about 70 carats'—an enormous turquoise, a 10-carat Badakhshán ruby that once belonged to Nádír Sháh, 'a little diamond rose bush made by Persian artisans over 300 years ago', and a necklace of ninety-five gems thought to have been a gift from an Indian queen to a Persian princess two centuries past. He also catalogues a rosary of pure black amber, early Muslim armor, and Yemen agates engraved with verses from the Qur'án.

'... In the woven scenes of the tapestries, and in the delicate miniature paintings and lacquers you met old Bible characters as known to the East. One sixteenth-century bit of pen-and-ink work depicted Job sitting on his favorite dunghill scraping himself with a potsherd. Another showed Joseph in prison, and another Daniel in the lions' den trying to spoil the largest lion's appetite by stuffing him with a large loaf of bread. And a creamy-white velvet tapestry of Kashan showed Adam and Eve in Eden, with apples in both hands, while a line of seated male figures represented mystic Sufis engaged in contemplation—probably of what was going to happen to Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve were not dressed yet, but the raiment of the

Sufis was in what was known as the “lost color”, a shade of red said to have been unattainable through any ordinary dye for centuries ...

‘The Persian Section was opened to the public on July 28, and the opening was celebrated with appropriate ceremonies in a beautifully decorated corner of the Court of the Universe. H. I. M. Sultan Ahmad Shah Kadjar, the Shah of Persia, sent a cablegram of congratulation to Mirza Ali-Kuli Khan, and there were appreciative addresses by Judge Lama the National Exposition Commissioner, Mr M. H. de Young, a Vice-President of the Exposition, who presented the bronze testimonial to the Commissioner General, by State Commissioner Arthur Arlett, representing the Governor of California, by Mr Edward Rainey, representing Mayor Rolph, by Mirza Ali-Kuli Khan in response, and by several others. H. A. van Coenon Torchiana presided. A most enjoyable reception was held at the Persian Section, which became the scene of similar events weekly thereafter, when lectures on the art of Persia were given by that accomplished Orientalist the Commissioner General. The exhibit attracted great multitudes throughout the remainder of the season ...’

Khan’s account, from which we omit ground already covered, elaborates:

‘I had in attendance some ten Persians in Persian costume and hat, who daily showed and explained the exhibits to great multitudes. The distinguished Americans who during those months visited the exhibition and signed their names as visitors of the Shah’s Room, included the former President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt; the Secretary of State William J. Bryan and numerous college presidents, artists, merchants, bankers, industrialists, etc. The Persian display received widest publicity in the American press. Pages were published describing the beauty of the Shah’s Room where, daily, I lectured on Persia and her arts.

‘The result was that more than 100 museums, art galleries and great stores invited me to send the exhibition to their cities. For over two years this collection in charge of my attendants was shown in many cities. Each exhibition was opened by a special banquet to which I was invited. Thus, I had to make frequent trips from Washington to give a lecture on Persian art and culture. I have in my files thousands of newspaper clippings, other published accounts and photographs of these objects, thus spreading information on Persia and its art and culture in every important city of the United States. This was many years before others appeared on the scene and identified themselves as exponents of Persian art and gained a reputation in that field.’

It goes without saying that always, wherever he went, he assisted the local Bahá’ís, giving talks on the Faith and promoting it through the lavish free publicity which he generated. Wherever he traveled,

he was news.

Khan, a Bahá'í, an ardent believer in the unification of East and West, was the first individual to plant the flag of Persia on American soil. Much later (June 16, 1928), Khan wrote an account of this to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States. A photograph shows him, in 1915 at the Exposition, surrounded by dignitaries, planting the proud flag of the lion and the sun. An additional honor

for Persia at this ceremony, given to Khan as Persia's Chief Diplomatic Representative, was the nineteen-gun salute.

'Abdu'l-Bahá greatly desired, as He said in 1912, 'a perfect bond between Persia and America', and wished America's material civilization to be established in Persia, and Persia's spiritual civilization to become accepted in America:

'For the Persians there is no government better fitted to contribute to the development of their natural resources and the helping of their national needs in a reciprocal alliance than the United States of America; and for the Americans there could be no better industrial outlet and market than the virgin commercial soil of Persia. The mineral wealth of Persia is still latent and untouched. It is my hope that the great American democracy may be instrumental in developing these hidden resources and that a bond of perfect amity and unity may be established between the American republic and the government of Persia. May this bond—whether material or spiritual—be well cemented. May the material civilization of America find complete efficacy and establishment in Persia, and the spiritual civilization of Persia find acceptance and response in America.' [86]

Today of that bubble-brief magic city by the Golden Gate only two buildings remain—the French pavilion, now the Palace of the Legion of Honor, and the domed Palace of Fine Arts, held up in the sky by large caryatids, decently-draped, buxom Victorians all—the whole reflected in a small lake, surrounded by trees and lawns, and harboring San Francisco's popular-science museum, the Exploratorium, famed worldwide.

Twenty-seven

The fault of Columbus

Around the time of the Exposition, Khan's and Florence's marriage hit a bad patch. Although certainly wed for eternity, they would undergo crises from time to time. Today's people simply divorce at the first snag, but the part of wisdom is to tough it out. Seasoned marriages are best.

Looking back, we are not sure either of them was to blame. Khan saw his home as patriarchal, and full of relatives under his control, just as it would be in Persia. But to Florence a family was two parents with their children.

They had rented a big house in Piedmont, sprawled on a hillside. It

had a large rose garden, where Florence, basket on arm, would pick bouquets; there were pepper trees with small rose-colored berries on them, and dull-green eucalyptus, its leaves curved like rooster tails; there was silence and birdsong, and in those not-yet-polluted days the air was warm and sweet.

Thin Abraham, the butler, was a genius at intricately decorating the dinner table with the flowers Florence had picked for him in her garden. Fat Abraham was in his kitchen. There was a German governess, and there was handsome Abdul, later on the chef, who played his flute at the bottom of the garden. No one's future being written on his forehead, they could not foresee that Abdul, on a day to come, would marry an American who would shoot him to death in their double bed, or that her looks (and perhaps his being a foreigner) would get her free. Meanwhile, Abdul and the governess were friendly, and even eloped one weekend, but returned with the knot still untied.

It was a day when pageants were put on as a form of social activity, and someone in another Piedmont garden staged a Persian Night's Entertainment. Marzieh's role was to walk across the stage with a diaphanous veil on her head, Florence and Khan following in Persian garb, while handsome Abdul led them all, playing on his flute.

During this period some of the Persian youth brought over by Khan were growing up, and not busy enough, so they occupied themselves with annoying Florence one way or another. She went to Khan and told him about the strange phenomena she was encountering, such as bent pins worked into the rug in front of her dressing table for her to step on in her bare feet. The perpetrators were clever enough to remove the evidence, and, Shiah-fashion, they had thoughtfully prepared a cover story for themselves and carried it to Khan ahead of time. The result of all this was that Khan, unable to believe anything bad of his people, began to think Florence was losing her mind and might have to be placed in a sanatorium. Not till several decades later, when Khan paid his last visit to Tehran, did one of the mischievous, a dignified engineer by then, confess. Khan could hardly believe his ears.

Mary Hanford Ford was visiting, and much distressed, since after all she had made the marriage, and Khan now assigned the blame half to her and half to Columbus. Had there been no Columbus, Khan could not have come to America. And had there been no Mrs Ford ...

It was Mrs Ford who turned Marzieh into a sceptic.

'We must love all things,' Mrs Ford told her, 'and they will love us back. You can even walk through poison oak and no harm will come to you, if you simply tell it, "Little Brother, you can't hurt me."'

'Really?' asked Marzieh, her eyes wide.

This was marvelous to know. She promptly went outdoors into the scented countryside and pushed her way, arms spread out, through the shoulder-high jungle of red and green, shining poison oak, rapidly albeit somewhat tentatively repeating as she went, 'Little-Brother-you-can't-hurt-me. Little-Brother-you ...'

She was sick a month, face swollen into a balloon, the poison operating both inside and out. A trained nurse had to be engaged for her.

There is no harm in a Bahá'ís being sceptical, once he has accepted Bahá'í standards to judge by. Indeed, such an attitude is encouraged. The Teachings say: 'see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others';[87] and 'look into all things with a searching eye.'[88] Mrs Ford was actually a premature 'sixties person', as her life and opinions clearly show. See, for example, O. Z. Whitehead's valuable book, *Some Bahá'ís to Remember*. [89] She, who had known poverty herself, stood for labor and the underdog. She, an intellectual, stood for beauty, art, the life of the mind. It was she they chose to deliver the main Bahá'í address at the reception given by the Panama-Pacific International Exposition to the Bahá'í Congress. On that occasion the Chairman of the Exposition also presented the Congress with a bronze medallion in recognition of Bahá'í services to humankind.

Twenty-eight

The fourteen points

There was now an interval in Khan's life when someone else was appointed to head the Persian Legation. At this time Khan traveled, lectured and exhibited his art collections throughout the United States.

Before the middle of 1918, certainly, Khan was back in charge of the Legation—in a different house, not the one of 1910. A letter from Joseph Hannen to Juanita Storch, dated July 18, 1918, is written on 'Imperial Legation of Persia' stationery, surmounted by Persia's royal crown, under it Persia's sword-brandishing Lion with the Sun over his back, the whole encircled by a wreath of leaves, oak on one side, laurel on the other. Joseph wanted Juanita to 'share with me the beauty of Mirza Khan's new correspondence paper. At present he is again Chargé d'Affaires of Persia in Washington. Persia is sadly affected by the war situation, being as it were, a "buffer state" overrun at different times by the English, the Russians, the Germans and the Turks. One result of this situation is that the Legation is

without attachés, other than our wonderful Khan, and so I am helping him out some, of evenings, writing some of his letters which must be typed. It is "on the cards" that I may become Honorary Secretary of the Legation, or Consul at Washington, when the Government can be reached to make the appointment. I care less for this, however, than for the opportunity of serving Persia, and helping a dear and wonderful Bahai Brother.'

The letter continues with a tribute to Juanita's letter-writing and descriptive talents and an account of Washington's Fourth of July Pageant, an affair of many nations, and is signed in the Bahá'í fashion of the day, 'Brother Joseph'.

Joseph Hannen, a Washington believer, was one of Marzieh's first Bahá'í teachers, and she could always remember the principles he taught her and the other children by rote:

'Every-human-being-has-the-right-to-live.

He-has-the-right-to-rest-and-to-a-certainamount-of-tranquillity ...' He was married to Pauline, a sister of

Fanny Knobloch. He had a smiling face and a rather large nose and wore a pince-nez with a black ribbon. He was always serving the community and it was while rendering them a service that he died: responsible for the Bahá'í mail, he had gone to the Post Office to get it. When he left the building, letters in hand, he was struck by a car and soon died. His blood spattered the envelopes.]90]

Like so much of Khan's life, this particular period was one of intense activity. He was busy contacting industrialists such as Henry Ford with a view to developing trade between America and Persia once the war had ended. There was also the task of interesting American investors in the largely untapped natural resources of his homeland.

And more than this, the correspondence of the fall of 1918 shows that he was functioning not only as Chargé, but also as a vital diplomatic link between Tehran and Washington. Though without the title, he was de facto Persia's Minister to the United States.

He had not been given the title of Minister on the ground that he was too young. His own gloss on this was that the Foreign Minister's son had written him, asking for five hundred dollars, and he did not provide the money.

For some time Khan had been urging the Persian Foreign Office to make sure Persia would be included in whatever negotiations were undertaken, now that the end of the Great War (1914–1918) seemed near. His Foreign Office had delayed taking action, doubtless influenced by Britain who, conveniently overlooking the losses Persia had suffered as a fought-over neutral, opposed Persia's participation on the ground that she was not a belligerent. At this stage Britain was the dominant factor in Persia's immediate future,

for Russia, long her rival in that area of the Middle East, was too much occupied with her own grave problems following the 1917 Revolution to take any significant action.

Now a cable reached Khan, sent him in code by Persia's Foreign Minister late in October 1918, which indicated an apparent change in the British position. It authorized Khan to 'engage in earnest actions' to secure American assistance in furthering Persia's claims and a place for her at the peace conference that would reshape the postwar

world. Khan decoded and translated this cable, and on October 29 sent a copy to the American Secretary of State, Robert Lansing. The cable, after referring in a general way to the Foreign Office's 'current conference with the British', and other steps taken on various occasions by the Persian Government to present its requests, and stating that Khan had already been apprised of these moves, went on to say that this work was being continued and the Government was 'hopeful as to the results to be obtained'.

Persia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Goli Khan (no relation) then acknowledged the receipt of Khan's reports and stated that they had been read at the Council of Ministers, going on to say:

It is evident that you will continue your démarches in order that, now the British Government have promised to be agreeable, the objectives of the Imperial Government of Persia as to the evacuation of Persian territory by foreign forces, Persian representation at the Peace Conference, as well as other matters pertaining to the safeguarding of Persian sovereignty and independence, may be achieved through the assistance of the American Government.

[italics ours.]

And you of course know that whereas during the War they converted the territory of neutral Persia into a theatre of the War, they inflicted vast losses

upon Persia, to indemnify which will be in keeping with the love of justice of America to insist upon.

Other matters which must of necessity be taken under your Excellency's consideration, include the question of the cancellation of treaties which are by no means in conformity with the present day situation in Persia.

In changing these Treaties, the authorities of the American Government should be requested to fortify the actions of the Persian Government.

I expect you to devote particular attention to the contents of this telegram, engage in earnest actions and inform me of the results.

The Imperial Government, having confidence in the friendship of the American Government, expect that, upon this occasion, they will be helpful towards the objectives of the Persian Government, and that they will be good enough to favor us with their earnest assistance and good offices in fulfilling these requests of the Persian Government, which are based upon the solid foundation of perfect justness.

(Signed) Ali Goli, Foreign Minister.

Khan's covering letter concluded with a summary of the cable:

'As the foregoing dispatch points out, the Government and people of Persia look to the Government of the United States to assist them in their difficulties and in fulfilling their just hopes. These include the evacuation of Persian territory by foreign troops and securing the reparation justified and necessitated by the great losses and sufferings which neutral Persia has endured during the War. My Government's sole hope in safeguarding her sovereignty and future is centered in

the principles enunciated by the great President of the United States, which vouchsafe to all the nations of the world, great and small, the opportunity for unhampered development and progress.’

Khan had every reason to believe that the United States would help his country. Wilson’s ‘Fourteen Points’ made it clear that the President stood for a just settlement of territorial disputes and against domination by any of the Leading Powers over a country such as Persia. Again, on July 4 at Mount Vernon, the President had taken a strong stand for the self-determination of all peoples.

Khan’s embossed invitation from the American Secretary of State (dated simply June 29th) says that the President ‘would be pleased to have Mirza Ali-Kuli (sic) as his guest on board the MAYFLOWER for a visit to Mount Vernon on July 4th, the occasion of a pilgrimage ... to the tomb of George Washington. The MAYFLOWER will leave the Navy Yard at two o’clock.’

Legends aside, we know that President Wilson was influenced by the Bahá’í Teachings in formulating his Fourteen Points, although it is not true that Khan ‘rode up and down on the Mayflower teaching the Faith to the President’. We are indebted to the researches of Paul Pearsall for the information that at least three Bahá’í volumes were known to be in the White House. Pearsall also tells us that Margaret Wilson introduced Bahá’í literature into her father’s reading, between 1913 and 1918. The Hidden Words ‘appears on a 1921 listing of Wilson’s private library’. Also, a compilation on peace given the President by a delegation of Washington Bahá’ís ‘turned up in general reference at the Library of Congress marked “transfer from the White House”’. And Abdul-Baha on Divine Philosophy (Boston, 1918) is said to have much influenced his thinking.

Around 1913–14 would have been the time when Florence was most in contact with Margaret Wilson and very probably spoke to her of the Faith. Margaret, later on, retired to a religious community in India and died there.

Khan has left his own account of a ride down the Potomac to Mount Vernon, fifteen miles below Washington, with the whole Diplomatic Corps and various other officials, guests on the Presidential yacht, the Mayflower. She was anchored in the river, and they disembarked,

the President walking ahead of the rest, leading them up the slope to the tomb of George Washington. Thousands were looking on, for every foreign language group had also been invited to the Fourth of July pilgrimage.

As the flag went up, John McCormack, a celebrated tenor of the day, sang the Star-Spangled Banner. Arthur Walworth states in his Woodrow Wilson that Wilson stood beside the tomb as he gave his address, which included the following: ‘... Washington and his associates ... spoke and acted, not for a class, but for a people ... they spoke and acted, not for a single people only, but for all

mankind ...' The President went on to list four root principles for peace:

The destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere that can separately, secretly, and of its single choice disturb the peace of the world; or ... at least its reduction to virtual impotence.

The settlement of every question ... upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation ...

The consent of all nations to be governed ... by the same principles of honor and respect for the common law of civilized society ... that all promises and covenants may be sacredly observed, no private plots or conspiracies hatched, no selfish injuries wrought with impunity, and a mutual trust established upon the handsome foundation of a mutual respect for right.

The establishment of an organization of peace which shall make it certain that the combined powers of free nations will check every invasion of right and serve to make peace and justice the more secure by affording a definite tribunal of opinion to which all must submit and by which every international readjustment that cannot be amicably agreed upon by the peoples directly concerned shall be sanctioned.

These great objects can be put into a single sentence. What we seek is the reign of law, based upon the consent of the governed and sustained by the organized opinion of mankind.[91]

Wilson knew that leaders in Europe were laughing at his proposed league. 'But I am satisfied', he said, 'that if necessary I can reach the people of Europe over the heads of their rulers.'

The parallel between Bahá'í principles on world peace and the stand taken by Wilson, both in this speech and the Fourteen Points address given before Congress on January 8, is clear. This is not surprising, for 'Abdu'l-Bahá says in a Tablet that Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings are 'the spirit of this age'. [92] Commenting on the Fourteen Points laid down by the President for the world community, the Master says that twelve of them derive from principles advocated by Bahá'u'lláh fifty years before, and that these Teachings had been spread worldwide through various publications, thus becoming known to leaders in Europe and America (Persian Tablets, vol. III, p. 312).

'Abdu'l-Bahá's book, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, which He wrote in 1875, has this, in a famous passage translated by Shoghi Effendi:

True civilization will unfurl its banner in the midmost heart of the world whenever a certain number of its distinguished and high-minded sovereigns—the shining exemplars of devotion and determination—shall, for the good and happiness of all mankind, arise, with firm resolve and clear vision, to establish the Cause of Universal Peace. They must make the Cause of Peace the object of general consultation, and seek by every means in their power

to establish a Union of the nations of the world. They must conclude a binding treaty and establish a covenant, the provisions of which shall be sound, inviolable and definite. They must proclaim it to all the world and obtain for it the sanction of all the human race. This supreme and noble undertaking—the real source of the peace and well-being of all the world—should be regarded as sacred by all that dwell on earth. All the forces of humanity must be mobilized to ensure the stability and permanence of this Most Great Covenant. In this all-embracing Pact the limits and frontiers of each and every nation should be clearly fixed, the principles underlying the relations of governments towards one another definitely laid down, and all international agreements and obligations ascertained. In like manner, the size of the armaments of every government should be strictly limited, for if the preparations for war and the military forces of any nation should be allowed to increase, they will arouse the suspicion of others. The fundamental principle underlying this solemn Pact should be so fixed that if any government later violate any one of its provisions, all the governments on earth should arise to reduce it to utter submission, nay the human race as a whole should resolve, with every power at its disposal, to destroy that government. Should this greatest of all remedies be applied to the sick body of the world, it will assuredly recover from its ills and will remain eternally safe and secure.[93]

Khan was very close to the President while he spoke at Washington's tomb that day, and says, 'I and very many other diplomats were weeping. He was giving hope to all the small nations of the world. We thought that at last all the wrongs suffered by our countries would be righted, because such a man—representing the world's greatest nation—was speaking out, standing up for their rights and their territorial sovereignty.'

Khan said the President 'spoke extemporaneously ... very naturally, but with great emphasis and reiterated his Fourteen Points'.

Khan cabled Persia that night.

Twenty-nine

The assault on the Persian Legation

There are no lines marked out on time, events inter-penetrate. In Marzieh's mind, at least, it was the 'assault' on the Persian Legation which became what would be a watershed date for the family: the Khans would be swept away from the American scene, and gone for six years.

She used to look back and wonder how things would have been had she stayed in America, instead of spending those years in Paris, Constantinople, Tiflis and Tehran.

Had she remained in America instead of living so many of her formative years abroad, her education might have been more orthodox, instead of derived from a succession of tutors, and she would have been among her contemporaries instead of mostly with

adults. Because of her over-protective family, she had been, during all those years, planted among grownups in foreign countries, brought up dependent, and never going anywhere without an adult till she was seventeen.

To her, age ten, the family's departure for Europe began when several members, including Aunt Alice and Hamideh, were laid out on beds in a large third-floor room of the Legation, suffering from the 'Spanish Influenza', which killed millions of people that year. All she remembered afterward was the fuzziness and the bad taste in her throat and mouth. This sickness was the 'influence' which astrologers once assigned to heavenly bodies, saying it was due to an ethereal fluid streaming down from the stars. (There is no need here to be patronizing—modern scientists can mislead just as much.)

One evening Khan came in to visit, sat down on his older daughter's bed and asked her if she would like to go abroad with him or stay in America. She answered, go abroad with him.

With the rank of Minister (Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in the language of the day), Khan had been made a member of Persia's Peace Delegation to the Conference at Versailles, where so many of the world's powerful were bound, to end the Great War. (This was its name then. Obviously it was not called World War I.) Florence was jubilant. 'The tremendous promotion', she wrote Miriam Haney on December 26, 1918, 'is a long

prophesied event in his life. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, twenty-two years ago, foretold this day, when Khan would become a "Voice of Guidance" between the East and West, and the "First Standard Bearer" ... a great international task. And now, as a Bahá'í, he wins out against long opposition; and goes as one of several, to direct the destinies of his people and nation.'

Now, back to the assault. Late one night, not long after that talk between Khan and Marzieh, the family was jolted awake by a frenzied battering on the street door. Except for the two Abrahams, butler and chef (the latter fat Abraham, the former thin Abraham) Florence and the children were alone in the house. By common consent they huddled together in Khan's bedroom next to the reception area on the second floor. Facing 16th Street, it was a great red-walled bedroom with heavy mahogany furniture, including a meticulously kept chiffonier where the children were wont to rummage for their father's invariably hidden-in-the-same-place box of Turkish Delight.

Downstairs the battering continued. Marzieh was deputized to carry the message, as it were, from Ghent to Aix. She burst from the room, ran upstairs past other family apartments, and gasping, her short legs pumping, tackled the stairs to the fourth floor, terra incognita, a vast, dark area across which were the rooms of the

Abrahams. She shrieked the news, and reversing course, scuttled back to what was, she hoped, the safety of Khan's red bedroom. Meanwhile fat Abraham lumbered down the stairs, thin Abraham in his wake, the battering coming louder than ever. What happened next was, they flung open the Legation door, and discovered two belligerent inebriates; whereupon fat Abraham picked up thin Abraham and hurled him at the drunks. Along about then the police arrived and all quieted down.

Whether this episode was of any significance we do not know, although the media briefly reported it. But it may have had some repercussions higher up, because the United States showed itself very protective of Khan and Florence, saw to it that they were given the Presidential Suite at the old Waldorf on lower Fifth Avenue, and—at a time when everything that could float was crossing the Atlantic laden to the gunwales—sent them, the children, and Khan's male Persian secretary to France on a transport ship as guests of the Government.

President Wilson and his daughter Margaret were friendly to the Khans, not only because of Florence's being an American, but because of the President's ideal of self-determination for all peoples. Otherwise, as we have said before, Persia was almost unknown in

America then, and probably thought by the general public to be long dead. Neutral and overrun during the Great War, she was called 'the Belgium of the Orient'. The Middle East was still the Orient then, and people who were learned in Persian and Arabic were called Orientalists. Today (since the illiterate Reza Pahlavi made all the world say Iran as the Persians do) Persia seems to have disappeared, and people tend to confuse Iran with Iraq, just as Churchill warned that they would.

One day Margaret had invited Florence for tea at the White House, along with Rahim and Marzieh. The children were sitting quietly enough, ominous in itself, when Margaret offered a plate of cookies to Florence, only to find it bare. While the women were chatting comfortably, Rahim, the cookies being perilously near him, had improved the shining hour. Margaret, smiling, rang for more.

That day, Florence looked down the hall and saw the President coming out of his wife's sickroom. He had told her that when she died, he would die. Men do not lie to women, they tell temporary truths.

Florence, like Khan, held President Wilson in high regard, but had one reservation. She felt some kind of identification with the memory of Ellen (who died August 6, 1914), and was sorry that the President, some months after the invalid was gone, had found that 'great big beautiful doll', Edith Bolling Galt, who, as the second wife, accompanied him to Versailles. Florence was one of those women who thought it more seemly for a widower, like the canine

Grey Friar's Bobby in Edinburgh, to quietly starve on the grave of his departed loved one.

Thirty

Departure for France

At the end, in America, Florence was corresponding with Miriam Haney, and said she was trying to catch Khan to get some Persian stamps for Paul. On December 30th, 1918 she wrote: 'Once more adieu, my dear sweet Friend ... The chapter of youth is closed:—of the infancy of our children—and now the responsibilities of maturity, and our children's growing years. Pray for us—we go in Peace and Unity and in Faith in the Government. Always count on us in Persia ...'

The name of the transport the Khans sailed on was the U.S.S. Mongolia, historic because she sank the first submarine after America

entered the war. When they left the harbor several destroyers and a big observation balloon escorted them for hours, looking for mines. They had good food and a smooth sea except for a few times when the ship rolled so much her deck nearly touched the water. Then trays crashed out of the stewards' hands and they could hear crockery smashing all over the ship.

Many 'field clerks' were crossing to help expedite demobilization—also some war-relief workers for Mr Hoover. At meals some two hundred passengers showed up, all in army or navy uniforms. Florence passed some of the time playing bridge with Hamid, Khan's secretary, and 'two nice young officers'. Little Callie (Hamideh), already a card sharp, played with the officers, surrounded by an admiring group of other officers. Everyone was good to the children.

Khan rejoiced to Florence that he was through with the Washington post, 'out of the rut', and hoped for success in France and Persia. On the ship, Florence had a dream: the hand of an unknown friend held a great, shining butterfly to her ear and said, 'Listen to it singing.' The butterfly hummed a song to her, kissed her on the forehead and flew up and away. Khan (it was a family custom to share dreams and suggest interpretations) said it meant 'Fame'. Florence wrote her parents, 'The fame I care about is if the three children grow up good in all ways! and if I can live to make you and dear Father happy ...'

It was by sufferance of the British that Persia would attend the Peace Conference at Versailles. On December 21, 1918, the U.S. Acting Secretary of State, Frank L. Polk, acknowledged Khan's note of three days earlier, stating 'that the British Legation at Teheran has informed the Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs that the British Government is willing that a delegation from the Persian Government be admitted to the Peace Conference and that ... your

Government has instructed you to request the United States to assist Persia on this occasion’.

On arriving, the family lived in several Paris apartments, one after another. The first was near the Seine and Notre Dame, and had a Moroccan nook, where a former, old-fashioned resident, not young, had surely worn a red fez and smoked a hubble-bubble pipe. The second was contemporary chic—in Passy, 5 Avenue du Colonel-Bonnet.

It was a shabby Paris then, emerging from years of butchery in the trenches. Men in black arm bands, widows in fluttering black weeds, the mutilated with their crutches, canes and guides, thronged the streets. A song heard everywhere was ‘Madelon’. She was the

soldiers’ sweetheart—if you chucked her under the chin or grabbed her waist, she only laughed. People were wearing in their lapels a small couple made out of colored yarn, a tiny plump man and his wife named Nénette, and Rin-tin-tin, apparently expressing a longed-for return to domesticity. One often saw a picture of the ‘Unknown girl from the Seine’, drowned hair swirled by the river, eyes closed, eyelashes swept sideways and on her dead lips a smile of unutterable bliss—as if to assure the people for all those they had lost—that the dead did not grieve.

Khan’s Packard Twin-Six, burgundy and black, soon purchased from him by Prince Fírúz, was one of the few handsome cars in Paris, a great contrast to the old battered taxis, many of which had ferried young men out to be killed at the Battle of the Marne.

The family apartment’s owner—a tall woman in spectacular widow’s weeds, eye makeup, skirt to her slim knees, long black veil streaming from her hat, showed them to her dead son’s room. A boy’s room, done in red, with a series of English pictures along the wall illustrating the dire consequences of neglecting even the smallest detail in life. The pictures began with ‘For want of a nail a shoe was lost’ and ended with disaster to horse and rider, and the legend: ‘All for want of a rusty nail.’ Now the boy was gone, the room empty, and it did not matter whether he had paid attention to detail or not. In Passy the two girls slept in a room with red curtains and the windows shut tight against that horror to the French of those days: the current of air. It was like sleeping in a candy box.

In that room the two received a Tablet from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (or part of a Tablet) saying He was happy to know they were so united. Reading it they died of shame, for their battles were frequent, and their card games usually ended with the fifty-two cards turned into missiles and covering the floor. From then on, they attempted reform.

Actually, Hamideh worshipped Marzieh, ran errands for her and was her slave. A point of contention between them was Marzieh’s art work. Marzieh fancied herself as an artist and especially good at

getting likenesses. She would draw a portrait of someone in the family, show it to Hamideh and say, 'Who's this?'

'Well,' Hamideh would equivocate, afraid to cause offense, 'It's—I think it's—it must be—'

Marzieh, highly indignant, would lash out at her sister for not being able to tell who had been depicted.

A florist nearby provided lavishly for Florence's Friday afternoons, and Khan maintained that the man added on a wing during the family's stay. A harp would also be delivered to provide discreet music, and the Persian delegation and others would attend. Isadora

Duncan, who had known Florence in the long ago, called briefly at one of those afternoons, a plain-looking woman wearing a cloche hat then in vogue, crammed down to the bridge of her nose. She stayed only to alight and leave. Afterward Marzieh, quoting a popular song, improvised to her mother: 'Isadora said, "Where do we go from here, boys?"' and went.'

The Khan children were growing up critical and already knew which beauty was the mistress of whom on the Persian delegation (although not sure what a mistress meant) and who was somebody, and/or respectable, and who was not. When the family was away at one or another of the social gatherings she hated, Marzieh stayed home and tried to pad out her education by reading the forbidden *Vie Parisienne*.

Meanwhile the girls were beginning to differentiate between the younger visitors to the apartment. The delegation head, whose name was the same as Khan's, but not a relative, had a beautiful son, dazzling to behold. And Marzieh's diary tells of a pair of 'cute little Persian boys' who came to visit one afternoon, though these, being too young, were of less interest. She noted down their conversation and their ages: 'One's about eleven and the other's fourteen. They are very polite, and they never talk above a whisper. What they (I mean the oldest, the youngest never talks) generally say is, "We are not allowed".'

One of the embarrassments of Paris life—so far as the girls were concerned—was when the family was out in a crowd and needed a taxi. At that point, Khan would try for a taxi in one direction, and so, off on her own, would Florence. They would then have two taxis, and a situation. One segment of the public would gather around Khan's taxi, another would take the side of Florence's. Khan would upbraid Florence, and then the two drivers would fight with each other over who was to get the fare, while the girls pretended they were with somebody else.

The French were always looking for a chance to altercate.

After Passy, the Khans lived briefly in the Rue Alphonse XIII, the shortness of their stay due perhaps to Nénette, their Boston bull

terrier. A small brindle with large innocent eyes and a ruffled white shirt front, she had a technique of her own for dealing with the concierge. About to be led out for her morning walk, she would wait till the concierge issued from her loge and then squat down just inside the front door. The Khans were not much in demand at this apartment.

They then moved to 4 Avenue de Breteuil, where Napoleon's

tomb lifted at right angles almost beside them, the tattered gilt of its dome facing the wide, leafy avenue in front of their windows.

Unlike the more modern Passy, the Avenue breathed history, with its ancient trees, and its centuries-old street cries floating up. There was one special cry, 'Marchand d'habits, chiffons', dealer in old clothes,

and rags, which one likes to think went back to Mání the Persian.

His Manichean dualist-heretics had been transported to Bulgaria, whence their opprobrious by-name Bugger, and they also became known as 'Weavers'. Their cloth merchants peddled doctrine with their wares from East to West across Europe, and their shops were centers of heresy. Runciman's *The Medieval Manichee* lists the terms by which they were known. The notion that the Roman Church was a monolith until Martin Luther is of course only a notion.

In the living room here, a gold cupid hung by a toe from the ceiling, holding out a bouquet of electric light bulbs. In this room Khan would sit writing letters Persian-fashion on the palm of his hand, his handsome dark brown 'abá (worn at home, over Western dress) drooping down over one side of the chair and making a circular bed on the floor, just right for the family's gray, yellow-eyed velvet cat, so that cupid, Khan and cat were one unit in space.

One day Edna True, who had been in France driving an ambulance during the war, visited Florence here, and Marzieh overheard this dialogue as Edna was leaving, about to descend from the living room hall in the wobbly, self-service elevator:

By way of farewell, Florence called lightly, 'I hope you will always be true.' And Edna, as she sank from view, replied, 'I hope I won't ... I have told you a heart secret.'

Thirty-one

Versailles

It is useless in this book to name all the other countries who were there at Versailles, to put forward their claims at the Peace Conference. Enough to say that diplomatic channels were clogged and other ways had to be found to advance Persia's cause.

It must be recalled that only through the Americans at Paris could Persia hope to reach her goals, yet except for Khan and Husayn Ala the Persian delegation spoke no English. Other than Khan, none of them were familiar with the United States, if indeed they had ever been there. They were cultivated men, spoke French, may have

attended a European university, certainly had been present at social gatherings with prominent Westerners, but knew almost nothing of the Great Republic that had come relatively unscathed out of the war and was now leading the whole world in its struggle for a lasting peace.

Looking back on it all we can see that two Bahá'ís, Florence and Khan, by birth and experience were the key figures there for Persia in 1919. Nor should we fail to mention, in thinking of the delegation, the typical Persian *mañana* mentality and peaceful lack of initiative, and love of those elaborate establishments where, surrounded by houris, some delegates could pass their time very comfortably in Paris.

As might have been expected, the Persian delegation arrived about three weeks after the Peace Conference opened.

Khan at once had a long confidential talk with delegation head Musháviru'l-Mamálik, who was Persia's Foreign Minister. Khan told him it was crucial for him to meet the American delegates. Mushávir kept repeating that he must, rather, go to the French Foreign Office.

'But the power is with the Americans,' Khan insisted.

As a first step, Florence telephoned Mrs Wilson and requested her to receive four or five members of the Persian delegation. She accepted. The Khans offered their own car for the visit. It was perhaps the handsomest in Paris—in that war-ruined time when even Lloyd George's car was battered. No, said Mushávir, they must go in Samad Khán's car, for otherwise he would be offended. Samad Khán, the Persian Ambassador to France, also handled the Shah's funds there, and was jealous of the delegation (in which he apparently had no role). In fact, he had not wanted them there at all. Florence and Khan went to the Hôtel des Deux Mondes to join the others. But alas, no car ... and still no car. Samad Khán's car, purposely delayed, did not appear for three-quarters of an hour. When they finally reached the Élysée Palace, Mrs Wilson was occupied with a delegation of some fifty women, and graciously apologized for not receiving the belated Persians.

At last Khan obtained an appointment with the President—a kind of miracle when one considers Wilson's schedule—and this time, they, Khan and Mushávir, went to the Élysée Palace in Khan's car. The three of them, apparently all three in cutaways, sat down before the fire: Wilson and Mushávir to either side of Khan. The Persian Foreign Minister asked if he should speak French. Wilson replied, very modestly, 'My French is not so fluent. It would be better to speak in English and Mirza Ali-Kuli Khan will translate.' Mushávir said, 'We have received all the communications between the two governments, and the promises of the United States to help us. Since you are returning to America, I have come to hear from

your own lips that you will help us—we who, though neutral in the war, have suffered so much.’

The President answered, ‘As you know, in a day or two I am returning to the United States for a short time. During my absence, Mr Lansing [the Secretary of State] is in full charge. Send any word through Mirza Ali-Kuli Khan, as coming from both you and me, to Mr Lansing. Whatever help Persia needs from the United States will be granted. I will instruct Mr Lansing to give Persia all financial and technical help and assist you with any Conference business that you may have here in Paris.’

Then the three of them were served tea. Wilson’s eyes seemed very blue, and he looked well, and fresh.

The date of the Khans’ dinner of sixty covers at the Hotel Ritz was March 6, 1919, three weeks after this meeting with President Wilson. They kept the menu, gilt-edged, with its embossed Persian seal in gold: the majestic sword-brandishing lion, sun rising above his back, surmounted by Persia’s royal crown, the whole encircled by a victor’s wreath.

Menu

Crème Princesse

Consommé Rossini

Truite saumonée au Chambertin

Suprêmes de Volaille aux pointes d’Asperges

Selle d’Agneau Richelieu

Mousse de Foie gras à la gelée

Salade

Bombe pralinée

Corbeille de Fruits

Haut Barsac

Volnay 1906

Lanson 1911

Paris 6 Mars 1919

Hotel Ritz

That year the Ritz was so fully booked it would have been impossible to give the dinner there, had not Queen Marie of Romania made her own dining room available.

‘The dinner was served with great style’, the Paris Herald reported March 7, ‘and being the first of its kind given for the Americans of the Diplomatic Corps, it seemed that Washington had been transferred to Paris; and with an orchestra playing throughout the evening, it recalled the pre-war days at the Ritz. The table ... three sides of a rectangle, was gorgeously decorated with spring flowers.’

Mme Ali-Kuli-Khan, the paper reported, had on her right Mr

Robert Lansing and on her left the head of the Persian Mission, 'followed by Mrs Joseph Grew, Mr Bernard Baruch ...' Other guests whose names are still in memory included General John J. Pershing, Commander in Chief of the Allied Armies, General Tasker H. Bliss, Colonel Bowditch, Colonel and Mrs E. M. House, Ambassador at Paris and Mrs W. G. Sharp, and Miss Winifred Holt of the Lighthouse for the Blind. (A few days later Miss Holt wrote inviting Florence 'and his eloquent Excellency' to 'a very frugal wartime luncheon', and added 'How my heart sang for you, and your people the other evening.')

Persia's Foreign Minister welcomed the guests, told of Persia's tribulations during the war, and expressed his conviction that the United States would come to her aid.

Khan had already, in Washington, laid the groundwork for attention to Persia's dire needs in correspondence with the Secretary of State.

Now America's favourable attitude toward Persia, much enhanced by Khan's efforts, is shown in Lansing's speech at the Ritz banquet:

I am deeply honored by being asked to respond to the toast to President Wilson on this occasion and particularly so because he would rejoice with all his heart in the spirit of friendship and good will which is manifested here.

No man in America—I think I may say that no man in the world—has a greater solicitude for the welfare of Persia and her people than the President of the United States. He is and will remain Persia's friend and on that friendship Persia may rely in attaining to those aspirations which are just and in harmony with peace and good will among the nations.

Persia has had a wonderful past which should inspire her people to attain to that place in the world to which that past entitles her. It was Persia, first

among the great Aryan race to which we all belong, that entered upon the stage of history and contended with the ancient empires of the Euphrates and the Nile for dominion in the earth. It was Persia who for centuries was the repository of the learning and art, of the culture of the world. It was Persia, in spite of the domination of the Greek and the Roman, the Saracen,

the Mongol and the Turk, who has preserved her national solidarity and has kept alive in the hearts of her children an intense and unchangeable love of country; but Persia's ruin as an empire, as well as her glory, found its roots

in the lust of conquest and in the autocratic spirit which so long ruled history. Today autocracy is no more. In its place a new spirit has arisen—the spirit of liberty. That spirit will rule the era upon which the world has entered. It is to that era and to that spirit that America and Persia alike turn

their faces for their future happiness and prosperity. With mutual good will, with a desire to be mutually helpful, Persia and America should join hands and build upon the ruins of the old a new structure which shall be eternal.

It is with that spirit that I pledge to you, Mr. Minister, and to your country, that helpfulness and encouragement which it is always the aim and purpose of America to render to her friends.

I bid you, therefore, join with me in a toast to Persia, her rulers and her people, and to the glory of her future.

When Khan asked for the text of Lansing's speech, Lansing was pleased to hand him the original.

After the banquet, the head of the Persian delegation, Musháviru'l-Mamálik, said to Khan, 'We've heard Lansing's promise. Now we want to talk to him officially to find out whether he meant all that—or was it just oratory?'

Khan telephoned Mr Lansing and asked for an appointment on behalf of the Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs. They met with the Secretary of State at one in the morning in his office at the Hotel Crillon. Mushávir asked him frankly (Khan translating) if he would help Persia, and reminded him of his promise.

Lansing replied that his speech was not mere after-dinner oratory—those words were the instructions of President Wilson and in conformity with what America had promised Persia before the Peace Conference. He told Khan to cooperate with advisors, technicians and so on, and as to 'any needs that Persia has—economic, financial—I am very glad indeed to respond to and will instruct our various experts—on finance—petroleum—administration—to meet with you.'

At the close of the meeting the Foreign Minister had arisen with a very cheerful face and said to Lansing, 'I am leaving this office extremely happy—satisfied that I have accomplished the purpose for which I came to Paris.'

Khan and Florence were infinitely encouraged by a Tablet received from 'Abdu'l-Bahá which blessed their efforts in Paris:

To His Excellency Alikuli Khan and his honorable wife, upon them be Bahá'u'lláhu'l-Abhá

He is God

O ye two blessed and respected souls! Your letters were both received, and their contents brought radiance and joy, for praise be to God, ye are the manifestors of divine bounty and the objects of confirmation from the Kingdom of Abhá. Consider what means have been brought about! The conference of Universal Peace which was set down by the Pen of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh fifty years ago, which was considered by all the wise

men of the world as impracticable, as impossible to achieve—hath now been organized through the tracings of the Supreme Pen, and His Excellency Khan is Persia's foremost delegate thereto, and enjoys acquaintanceship with and privileges from His Honor the President of the American Republic. So likewise is he connected with America's Secretary of State.

From every direction, confirmation hath surrounded you. Therefore offer ye thanks, and know ye that this confirmation is due to the pervasive power of the Word of God.

The various parties of Persia—the party of Union, the party of Revolution, the party of Democracy, the party of Harmony ... have during these several years of the war become the root cause of the turbulence and turmoil in Persia. Thus Persia hath been ruined. At last, Persia's case hath fallen into the hands of a Bahá'í personage, so that the

Power of the Word of God might become clearly manifest. Know ye this for a certainty that ye are confirmed; that ye shall succeed in rendering a great service to the Government and nation of Persia.

No Persia is left: she is utterly destroyed. Internal warfare on one hand, the conflict of parties on one hand, terrible famine and scarcity on one hand, epidemics of mortal diseases on one hand—and mal-administration on the other. No Persia is left. She is a ruin. But we hope the Bahá'ís will be sustained in the rebuilding of her. Now the first cornerstone of the rebuilding of Persia is this appointment of His Excellency Khan. It is my hope that he will be confirmed and made to succeed; so that it will become clear and plain that Bahá'ís act and comport themselves in accord with the Teachings which have issued from the Supreme Pen, and thus find prosperity and success.

O Thou Creator! Make Thou Khan's household to be lofty in both worlds, make them manifestors of confirmations on earth, and objects of the bounties of the Glorious Lord in the Kingdom. Make their future enduring, adorn their coming days with infinite glory and success. Thou art the Confirmer, the Bestower of fortune, and Thou art powerful and mighty in all things.

Take Rahim Khan in your company to Persia so that he may, for some time, study the language and customs of his native land, at the Tarbíyat School. Afterwards, take him to the schools of America, so that at the San Francisco university [Stanford University] he may study branches of learning that will be of value.

The entertainment which ye gave in Paris was highly suitable and opportune. Such entertainments are conducive to the promotion of affairs. As regards a meeting with Lord Harding, there is no harm in this, rather, it may be useful.

I read the letters of the handmaids of God, Bahíyyih and Marzieh. Convey to both of them the utmost affection on my behalf. God willing, afterwards I shall write a letter especially for them. Upon you both be Bahá'u'l-Abhá.

15th Nísán, 1919

(Signed) Abdul Baha Abbas[94]

It turned into a family tragedy that Khan was not able to carry out 'Abdu'l-Bahá's instructions regarding Rahim. Looking back over his life in old age, Khan told Marzieh, 'I never had any choice.' (See

Appendix C.)

How Florence managed to have the Persian delegation received in Woodrow Wilson's box during an entr'acte at the Opera, when leaders at the Conference were all there on display before the world, we do not know. Everyone there could see the Persians being thus honored by America's President. She herself wore her black velvet dress, decorated at the squared-off neck with Persian zar-dúzí, lavish embroidery with gold, silver and seed pearls, and the papers wrote it up.

Fortunately, during their years in Washington, the Khans had made many friends among the leading American officials and members of the diplomatic corps. They knew that through social means it would be possible to gain favorable publicity for Persia and make her problems known to people who could help. Thus the teas and dinners given by the Khans, or attended by them, served Persia indirectly. They established Persia and her cause before the then world. No doubt many would have preferred, for their own ends, that this harassed country should be kept out of the spotlight and ignored.

Florence gave a Friday afternoon musicale for Mrs Lansing, wife of the American Secretary of State, to which former Ambassador and Mrs Morgenthau came, and 'Ralph's friend, the American consul and Mrs Reed', and Prince Arfa-ed-Dowleh, once Ambassador at Constantinople. Florence also wrote of another guest, a 'charming French nobleman, called Vicomte Clair, whose châteaux were destroyed and his poor mother killed; whose only son died in the war, and who is himself temporarily paralyzed from wounds. He is one of the inner circle of the highest aristocracy, who so jealously close their doors to the outside world. He is going to give a dinner for Khan and me at the Ritz. The week before he had given such a dinner for the American Peace Commission ... Tomorrow Secretary and Mrs Lansing have invited us to dinner at the Hotel de Crillon, at the first dinner party Mrs Lansing has given since her illness.'

Florence could not help confiding to her parents afterward, 'She copied my flowers and menu, but my dinner at the Ritz still stands the finest of the season, and the largest ...'

Florence had other social successes that spring. In Paris people saw Colonel House as the way to Wilson, for he was the President's closest confidant. He and Mrs House gave a dinner, followed by a small reception and supper, at the Crillon in honor of Paderewski, the Prime Minister of Poland, and his wife.

Among those present were Marshal Joffre (hero of the Marne) and Mme Joffre, Mrs Willard, Ambassadors at Madrid, whose daughter married 'young Roosevelt', Mrs Whitlaw Reid, Henry White, General Bliss, Mrs Garrett, wife of the American Minister to the Hague, Lady Alan Johnston, Gifford Pinchot's sister, Secretary and

Mrs Lansing.

‘Shall I tell you how we went into dinner?’ Florence wrote her mother.

1. Col House and Mrs Paderewski

2. Mrs House and Mr Paderewski

3. Signor Orlando, Premier of Italy, one of the “Big Four”, and Mme Ali-Kuli Khan.

‘On my left sat Robert Lansing ... Could the Houses have been more kind to your daughter? Orlando was I thought a great man, “une grande lumière”. He was charming to me—although he sat at the left of Mrs House, he talked nearly all through dinner, in French, with me. Of the Bolsheviki, he said, “I do not fear the Bolsheviki politically, but I fear them economically.” Then he outlined to me the European present industrial situation, and said all the countries are prostrate since this war, “on all fours”. Even England! And America alone is not. Lansing says America alone has money, no other country has any.’

Khan always said that in Paris it was Florence more than anyone else who had served Persia the best. Certainly she worked constantly to help.

One day she told Khan, ‘Nothing is being done for Persia! The delegation is doing nothing but sleep till noon ...’

After this outburst Florence wrote two letters, one to President Wilson, one a covering letter to his wife, in whose care the first letter was sent. The two letters follow, together with the response of Colonel House to whom Florence had also written:

May 2, 1919

Dear Mrs Wilson—

Please pardon me, if I requested an audience at a time when you are so

1. In the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Ali-Kuli Khan and Florence, Washington DC, 1912

2. In the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Baha: the Khan children: Marzieh, Hamideh, Rahim, Washington DC, 1912

Top left: 3. Alice Ives Breed, Florence’s mother

Bottom right: 4. Florence Khánum, in Washington DC

5. The Khan family in front of the Persian Legation when Kahn was Chargé d’Affaires, Washington DC. This house was visited by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

6. Florence and Ali-Kuli Khan in Washington

7. Ali-Kuli Khan in Washington DC at the Persian Legation

Top left: 8. Florence Khánum in Washington

Bottom right: 9. Ralph Breed, youngest brother of Florence Khánum

10. Florence Khánum with her three children

11. Marzieh at Highmount in the Catskills, NY

12. Marzieh in 1916

Top left: 13. President Woodrow Wilson. A signed photograph to Ali-Kuli

Khan

Bottom right: 14. Florence Khánum as she looked at Versailles

15. Photograph taken by Shoghi Effendi in Barbizon, France, 29 May 1920.

The handkerchief in the future Guardian's hand conceals the bulb with which he took the picture by remote control. L to R: Florence, Ralph Breed, Hamideh, Marzieh, Shoghi Effendi, children's French tutor, Mlle Montaudon

Top: 16. Ali-Kuli Khan as Head of the Persian Embassy in Constantinople

Bottom: 17. Rahim Khan, circa 1924

Top: 18. Marzieh with her first husband, Dr. Howard Carpenter on the ship in San Pedro, California, when leaving for Persia, 9 September 1932

Bottom: 19. The Khan family in New York City, 1944

20. Marzieh, New York City, 1944

21. Ali-Kuli Khan in later years

busy. But as it was in the interest of a suffering nation, I hope you will forgive my seeming haste. The enclosed appeal to the President, I desired to hand you, I now enclose.

Knowing the dreadful agony of the Persian people, and their many untold sufferings, from foreign aggression, and fully realizing that President Wilson is their only real hope at this Conference, I have ventured to approach him through your kind intercession.

I consider this step which for me is unique, made imperative by the extreme need for timely justice towards a noble people and an ancient nation.—I need only add that Persia will always remember you, for presenting their appeal to the President.

Very faithfully yours

Florence Khanom

Mme Ali-Kuli Khan

Honorable Woodrow Wilson,
President of the United States of America,
PARIS.—

My dear Mr President:—

At this anxious moment in the life of the ancient Persian nation, may I, as an American woman married to a Persian diplomat, appeal to you, on behalf of the claims of that country, which have been presented to you, and the Peace Conference? Your sympathy and kind promise of help to have Persia's case considered and justice done her by the Conference, is the sole hope, to which the Persian Peace Mission still clings. This Delegation, of which my husband forms part, are extremely dejected and anxious lest you may not find time to have their case considered before Peace is signed and you return to America. It seems some invisible hand is at work here to shelve the Persian question. The expression of sympathy and friendship by your Government encouraged Persia to send a Delegation to Paris. This Delegation was actuated by an implicit faith in your High Character and lofty principles to undertake the duties and responsibilities of this difficult Mission. The Persian Delegation consists of men, noted for integrity,

capacity and patriotism. They do not, however, know how to answer the expectant Persian nation, if they return home with their mission unfulfilled, as the Persians, who believe that this Peace Conference is founded on broad justice, will be compelled to charge to this mission the failure of their national aspirations.

For a hundred years, Persia was victimized by unjust foreign interference. When the war came, at the request of the Allies, Persia declared her neutrality. Later she offered to enter the war on the Allied side, but was prevented from so doing by certain of the Allies themselves. For four years Persia has been invaded and devastated by the belligerents of both sides, who had made her the Belgium of Asia.

As a consequence, her population was decimated by famine and disease. She now appeals to you to ask the Conference to guarantee in the Peace Treaty her political and economic independence, to restore territories

wrongfully, taken from her, to indemnify her for the property destroyed, and to order the evacuation of her territory by all foreign troops.

Persia asks for a minimum of the blessings of Justice and Humanity which your great principles have pledged to the world. If this is granted, Persia as a member of the League of Nations will be able to work out her salvation and contribute to the World's progress as she did to the World's civilization during the past. Besides, a just settlement of Persia's claims will

insure the peace of the Near East, and have a quieting effect upon the turbulent elements in the Moslem world.

I, who have visited Persia twice, and witnessed the great hospitality of her people, have been deeply impressed by the genuine love they have for the American people. It is pathetic to see their implicit faith in the Americans, who, as a people not politically interested in Persia, are heartily welcomed to render economic and technical help, and to assist in their commercial development.

My husband who has for 19 years worked for closer relations between his country and America, recently assisted in the formation of a 'Persian American Commercial Corporation,' at New York, with sufficient capital to open Persia's great resources to the world. But the realization of all Persia's just aspirations depends upon your timely assistance, to expedite the hearing of the Persian case before the Peace Conference and secure justice in its behalf.

Believe me, Mr President, this appeal represents the cry of agony raised by millions of men, women and children in that ancient land, who look to you for justice, and for deliverance from the foreign yoke.

I am, faithfully and sincerely yours,

(Signed)

American Commission

To Negotiate Peace

Paris, 5 May, 1919

Dear Madame Ali Kuli Khan:—

I have read with close interest the eloquent appeal on behalf of Persia which you addressed to the President under date of May 2nd and I appreciate the charming note with which you were good enough to communicate its contents to me. As you know Persia has my sympathy and my support for her just claims and I am sure they will be recognized. But—may I say? This is a time when we must all, hard as it is, practice the virtue of patience.

Sincerely yours,

E. M. House

Madame Ali Kuli Khan

5, Avenue du Colonel Bonnet

Passy, Paris.

Colonel E. M. House, one of the experts selected by the President as a member of the Peace Commission, was known as Wilson's right

hand man. Far from acting on his own as his enemies often charged—so Joseph Tumulty, a man who was like a son to the President, says Wilson depended on his carefully winnowed personnel. He would tell his people: 'We will be deluged with claims plausibly and convincingly presented. It will be your task to establish the truth or falsity of these claims out of your special knowledges, so my positions may be taken fairly and intelligently.' [95]

Wilson was then sixty-three. He was in delicate health. 'More than once', wrote Ray Stannard Baker, 'there in Paris, going up in the evenings to see the President, I found him utterly worn out, exhausted, often one side of his face twitching ... No soldier ever went into battle with more enthusiasm ... more devotion to a sacred cause than the President had when he came to Paris; but day after day ... we saw him growing grayer and grayer, grimmer and grimmer, with the fighting lines deepening in his face ... he worked everybody ... to a standstill. Not only the American delegates, but the way he drove the leisurely diplomats of Europe was often shameful to see.' He would even attend two meetings at once, 'oscillating between the two'.

'It was he who was always the driver, the initiator, at Paris ... he was the central figure there.'

His study was 'the true capital of the Peace Conference' where everything of import was decided. Everyone arriving 'upon any mission whatsoever' wanted to see Wilson first. 'Representatives of the little, downtrodden nationalities of the earth—from Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa—thought that if they could get at the President ... confess their troubles to him, all would be well.' [96]

If the European diplomats were 'leisurely', one can imagine what most of the Persians were.

Who could know that Wilson, still under-valued in his own country as we write, once President of Princeton, Governor of New Jersey, twice President of the United States, winner of the Nobel

Prize for Peace, would rule the world in Paris for only a few brief days? Of that first week, says William Bolitho: 'No one has ever had such cheers; I who heard them in the streets of Paris, can never forget them in my life. I saw Foch pass, Clémenceau pass, Lloyd George, Generals, returning troops, banners, but Wilson heard them from his carriage, something different, inhuman—or superhuman. Oh, the immovably shining, smiling man.'

But his political enemies were already busy behind his back at home, trampling out his dream. Nor had four years of demented slaughter changed the old leaders of Europe in the least. They were still ready, as world leaders have always been, for the blood sacrifice of multitudes of strong young men, men other than themselves.

Wilson's goal was to bring permanent peace through a League which would provide collective security for the nations. After months of parleys, of trying in vain to achieve a just settlement of all the complicated and conflicting territorial claims, he finally came home with, he knew, a not perfect Peace Treaty and the framework for a League of Nations that could not possibly please everyone. He recognized the faults in what had been worked out—who knew them better?—but believed the defects in the Treaty could be overcome through the League. He was confident, too, that the weaknesses in the League's constitution could be remedied in future years. The vital point was that a long stride had been taken toward his goal of a world ruled by law instead of murder.

On July 8, standing in his open auto, he had been driven up Fifth Avenue and acknowledged the welcoming shouts of the crowds, but once back in Washington the cheering stopped. Here he faced bitter enemies in the Senate, resolved to bring him down, though not yet strong enough to risk an open battle.

Wilson saw only one way to defeat them: He must win the public over to his side, gain their active support for the Treaty and the League. Advisers had warned against a speaking tour, for the Senate would see it as an attempt to undercut powers given them by the Constitution. In the end, the President overruled his advisers.

Exhausted as he was, he took to the road, speaking up to five times a day. He had never spoken better, in all his long platform life, than that autumn night, September 25th it was, 1919, when he stood before the crowd at Pueblo, Colorado. Thousands heard him that night, among them mothers who had lost their sons in the war. 'I ordered their sons overseas,' Wilson said ... 'I consented to their sons being put ... where death was certain ...' But still, he said, the mothers were blessing him, believing, rightly believing, 'that their sons saved the liberty of the world'.

He told of going to visit rank on rank of American graves on a hillside near Paris, and how Frenchwomen tended them as if the dead were theirs, and said he wished American opponents of the Treaty

and the League had been with him to look. And ‘a great wave of emotion’ swept over the amphitheater and mothers wept and some men added their tears.

That same night, September 26 at four in the morning, on the train, Tumulty was called by Doctor Grayson to the President’s car. Wilson, fully dressed, was seated in a chair. His whole left side was paralyzed. The left side of his face had fallen in. He could barely bring out a word. The tour was cancelled.

Later on, back in Washington, Wilson learned that the Treaty was sure to be defeated by the Senate. Tumulty came to see him, found him weak and shattered in his wheel chair, and told him, ‘You are looking very well today.’ Wilson shook his head and answered, ‘I am very well for a man who awaits disaster.’ Then it was over and Wilson said, ‘They have shamed us in the eyes of the world.’

When Tumulty said, ‘Only the Senate has defeated you. The People will vindicate your course,’ Wilson replied, ‘Ah, but our enemies have poisoned the wells of public opinion ... If I only could have remained well long enough ...’

More years passed, and it was March 4, 1921, and Wilson, brave in his tall hat, his cutaway coat and striped trousers, supporting himself on a blackthorn stick, attended the inaugural of the next President, and limped out of history. As he lay dying, on February 3, 1924, crowds knelt in the closed-off street before his Washington house and prayed.

The United States never signed the Treaty of Versailles, never joined the League of Nations which his foes derisively referred to as ‘Wilson’s League’. His nation made separate treaties with Germany and the other Central Powers, and surely his martyred ghost still haunts the earlier and later and seemingly unending parade of bloodsoaked battlefields.

At the close, Tumulty wrote: ‘Yes, Woodrow Wilson is dead. But ... I hear ... drums. I hear ... bugles ... His spirit still lives—the spirit that tried to wipe away the tears of the world ...’

The tributes this President received from Shoghi Effendi assure his high rank in the life of the human race. ‘[T]he immortal Woodrow Wilson ...’[97] the Guardian wrote; ‘illustrious and far-seeing’;[98] and elsewhere, ‘martyred’.

I hear drums. I hear bugles.

Exactly twenty years after the President’s death, on February 3, 1944, the Bahá’í Assembly of New York City presented an anniversary program in memory of Woodrow Wilson, chaired by the Honorable William Copeland Dodge. Khan was the featured speaker, and his theme ‘Wilson’s Ideal World’. The program for the event quoted these words from Shoghi Effendi:

‘The ideals that fired the imagination of America’s tragically

unappreciated President ... bitterly reproach a heedless generation for having so cruelly abandoned them.' [99]

Thirty-two

And what of the future?

With its heart, the President, gone home to America, the components of Versailles, like atoms when the body dies, drifted away and Paris so far as the Khans were concerned gradually emptied out. The time had come when Khan saw that he must look to the future for himself and his family. His memoirs say nothing of this period but from a scattering of letters it can be seen that he was engaged in a number of projects having to do with developing oil resources in the Near East, certainly a coming thing. But Khan's timing was bad, for he seems to have spent considerable energy trying through Tchermoyef, a relative of his by marriage, to promote oil exploration in the Caucasus, which was in a few short years to come fully under Russian control.

Khan's finest opportunity to enter the international business community may have come his way with the forming of the Persian-American Commercial Corporation before he left the United States. He had been made an officer of the company but had turned away the offer of a substantial binder. The reasons for waving this away lay partly in an inherited lordliness about money, partly in a naïveté about business: he did not realize that by not binding his associates financially he was freeing them to bargain elsewhere if it seemed advantageous. Eventually he was left with a set of corporate papers and, so far as we can tell, nothing more.

Now, having done all he could for Persia, various other projects took Khan away from Paris on frequent trips, mostly to London with Prince Farmán-Farmá. Events remembered by Marzieh for the gifts her father never failed to bring back.

The children viewed Tchermoyef with great interest because he had 'a price on his head'. The idea of knowing someone in that condition was fascinating. His exotic wife (she looked Persiany—it was she who was Khan's relative) served lavish teas to guests in her little mansion that had been the home of actress Gaby Deslys. Tiptoeing on the fringe of wickedness, especially in Gaby's bathroom with its, for then, somewhat risqué wall designs, thrilled the girls, enhancing what they considered their European sophistication. Although he admired Americans more than they did themselves,

Khan was a Persian patriot all his life. He would stand over the children's sequential cribs and go 'Kh—kh—kh' and 'Gh—gh—gh' deep in his throat, so that the incumbent would acquire a Persian accent and not mispronounce the Khih and Qáf and Ghayn as Americans did—sometimes with laughable, even indecent results. For example, an American wanting sugar (Qand—the Arabic-Persian parent of candy) would ask for gand, stink.

Spread over the wall above his child's crib there would be a Persian flag. Children readily understand symbols. There above them was the great lion, sideways on the flag, a curved sword brandished in one mighty paw, and back of his shoulder, the rising sun.

Throughout his career Khan bitterly resented the foreigners who ruled Iran by buying up leading Persians, or worse. He was horrified to hear a western oil man casually tell him about some troublemaker, 'I'll have to get rid of that fellow.'

As for Americans, because of the shared language, the British could influence them for free. Language exerts an often unrecognized influence in many phases of life, especially perhaps, in the diplomatic world. Some personalities even vary from language to language. Americans are not linguists. They have no need to be, living as they do in a huge, federated country, a 'pattern for future society', with one common language coast to coast, one currency, and state frontiers that say 'Welcome to ——' being invitations rather than barriers.

Khan said that in all countries the American representatives frequented the British, since they shared the language. He said in Tehran the American representatives virtually lived at the British Embassy, deriving their views of the host country from that source. (The British, on the contrary, called in Persian teachers.) This understandable tendency of Americans to frequent the British made the local inhabitants believe that Americans—instead of pursuing their own independent policies—were carrying out those of the British.

At Paris Wilson complained that his close associate Colonel House—known by some as 'the small knothole'[100] to events and also dubbed 'the great little agreeer'[101]—was too much influenced by British friends, who were in constant contact with House, for example through Sir William Wiseman.[102]

French was the language of diplomacy then, but most Americans did not learn it well.

Years after the Versailles Conference, in the fall of 1961, Khan reminisced about the old days in Paris. He said that the Persians had not wished to attend the Peace Conference, and that England

maintained that only belligerents had the right to be present. Khan, however, had insisted the Persians come, and after the British finally agreed, they came, but did nothing. Florence then prodded them into action, the Khans gave their historic dinner for the two delegations (the American and the Persian) at which America's Secretary of State was the main speaker, and they also brought the Persians into contact with America's President.

Marzieh had to drag the memories from her father during these talks. He kept saying, 'Later! Later!' but Marzieh, visiting America temporarily because of his recent severe illness, kept thinking, 'What

if there is no later?’ and went on taking notes.

After all that had been done, then and subsequently, to gain from both Secretary Lansing and President Wilson the firm promise of American aid in developing Persia’s economy, Khan was stunned to read in the English-language newspapers published in Paris of an arrangement made by Sir Percy Cox with the Persian Foreign Office. This was the Anglo-Persian agreement of August 19, 1919—whereby Persia would give every concession to England and get advisors for every department from England. The United States Government was much displeased, for this represented a breach of ‘open covenants openly arrived at’, one of Wilson’s Fourteen Points, and a continuation of the secret diplomacy of yesteryear.

Khan remembered bitterly how, some months earlier, Persia’s Foreign Minister had stood up, smiling, after his meeting with the American Secretary of State and announced how happy he was because he had now accomplished his purpose in coming to Paris. Khan felt betrayed, and that his country had put itself back in the same old hands.

The price of this agreement, according to Khan, was £500,000 paid out to one prominent official, and £300,000 to another.

Khan himself had always stood for American investment in Persia. When his being appointed a delegate to Versailles was announced in the press, a group of Americans asked him to serve as Vice-President of the Persian-American Commercial Corporation which they formed, based in Newark, New Jersey. Some time before the Anglo-Persian agreement was entered into, Khan had written Prince Fírúz Mírzá, son of Farmán-Farmá (Persia’s greatest landowner) that this organization formed before he left the United States, would supply Persia’s requirements and told him not to make an alliance elsewhere. When he learned of this agreement to turn Persia’s economic development over to the British, Khan was not only infuriated but puzzled. Perhaps he was not aware then of those powerful arguments in pounds sterling.

Time passed and Khan had grown weary of waiting for the

Foreign Office to make good on the promise of an important post. He was on the point of sailing with his family back to America when he received a wire from Prince Fírúz, requesting him to remain in Paris till he arrived. Fírúz explained that he was about to negotiate the details of the agreement with the British to develop Persia through British companies, and that he did not speak English and needed Khan’s help in the negotiations.

Khan responded indignantly: ‘You know that I have always stood for American investment in Persia and I had arranged to meet Persia’s requirements through this American company. I cabled you. I wrote you. And now you want to substitute British influence, so that things will be just as they were in the old days. Why on earth did

you make this agreement with the British? ... And here you ask me to help you promote this!

Whether, as Khan tended to believe, Fírúz appealed to the Master, Khan did not know. What we know is that 'Abdu'l-Bahá placed strict limits on his participation. He directed Khan to help Prince Fírúz but to have nothing to do with his politics.

Khan and Fírúz would spend three days in London, then three in Paris, representatives of British companies continually coming to them for negotiations. One of the men who came to see Prince Fírúz every week about certain concessions was Lord Somebody, name best forgotten, at that time a Sir. He came to the Hôtel Meurice with a project to build a Persian railway. Fírúz handed the plan to Khan and Khan looked it over. He noticed that the first part of the plan was to build the railway only between inner cities in Iran with no line to the sea in the south or to the Caspian in the north.

Khan said in Persian to Fírúz, 'This is impossible.'

'Why?'

'The British have no money,' said Khan. 'They will have to request help from America and America will not finance a railroad unless it extends from sea to sea. This plan would tie us to the British imperial system, including India.'

Then Khan turned to Sir Gawain (definitely not his name) and said, 'This is impossible. I must speak quite frankly. You British have no capital, and the United States would not finance a railroad with no links from sea to sea.'

The Englishman replied, 'You, Your Excellency, dictate whatever rail system you wish.'

Following this, he asked Prince Fírúz to bring Khan to his hotel.

Here at the hotel the British host produced a large portfolio in which there were at least fifty one thousand dollar bills. He said, 'I know you diplomats work hard and you incur heavy expenses.'

Khan told him, 'Sir Gawain, you misunderstand. Please don't

think I am anti-British because I am not accepting this money. If you have any project for the good of my country, I don't want any money to further it. I'm not that kind of a Persian.'

This attitude made him enemies for life, not only among the imperialists but also their Persian clients, members of the club.

Privilege and corruption continue to be the world's way. Perhaps the glare of publicity to which officials in all countries are now subjected will help to change things as the world turns.

Quite unruffled, the gentleman said, 'Well then, would you like to be Ambassador at London?'

'I'm already appointed to Poland,' Khan told him.

Judging by a letter of Khan's to Florence written from London October 19, 1920, whatever hopes he had entertained of entering the corporate world of oil development were now of the past, and there

were problems as to his diplomatic future. 'I don't think I ought to go to Poland now,' he says, referring to the post at Warsaw with the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary offered him by Persia's Foreign Office.

The rest of the letter gives a fair sample of Khan's perplexities at this time, but ends with his usual hopes for the future. Khan's hopes were a permanent feature of his psyche. He was always an optimist. As the years went by and Marzieh grew up increasingly disappointed and world-weary, she came to define a pessimist as someone who has lived with an optimist.

'It's more dignified', he tells Florence, 'that I await developments, and only insist on getting funds for my Paris services.' Money due him from the Persian Government was a never-ending problem. 'As to the Prince [Fírúz Farmán-Farmá] I told him unless he wants me to co-operate with him and he assists me now, I will have to go to America for good and try to live, as I can't serve such governments any longer. Before he sails, he will tell me one way or the other, and then I will make my plans accordingly. At least, I shall make him tell me what he proposes to do for me.—Everything is so blank before me I don't know what to do. But I trust in God and hope the way will open to what is best for us. We return Saturday and not later it seems.

'This far here, I have done nothing, and when I return, there will be again the question of [a] living to worry me. But I shall do something somehow!

'This morning I dreamed of my mother who seemed well and younger. I held her face in both hands and kissed her forehead and wept and left. This must mean happiness.'

Thirteenth

Other days

Marzieh was affronted to be handed over to a governess in Paris. She thought this was beneath her, that she had long out-grown such custody.

The governess life included, besides continual French, walks across Paris cobblestones on vague errands, or visits to the wide avenues and dark, over-arched paths of the Bois de Boulogne, where invisible tentacles of the past reached out and embraced you, crowds of souls long gone holding you tight in a gray-green mist.

After a chic Parisian lady, other governesses came and went. The girls resisted those who did not pass muster. Hamideh, practical, drove one away by scratching on a plate with a knife during lessons. One governess following the next would begin her French history with: 'Our country, it is now two thousand years before, called itself the Gaul.' Normally neither side could put up with a succeeding lesson, and the next one would begin with the same sentence. Be it said that French textbooks were excellent. Each chapter was carefully

divided into sections, thoroughly analyzed, and summed up at the end. If you wanted to, you learned.

Finally, Sorbonne-educated Georgette Dupuy, young, tiny, and with a soft accent from Pau, became one of the family, and brought some order into the girls' academic life. She soon had them reading about Charlemagne with the flowering beard, and Yseut of the fair white arms. Then she had to leave temporarily for Spain, to prepare for an advanced examination in Spanish at the Sorbonne. They loved Georgette, perhaps because she loved them and best of all was no disciplinarian. 'Fancy it,' Florence wrote, 'when the children thought she looked pale, they put her to bed and forcibly administered castor oil to her in a big spoon. Now they have a governess they are obliged to step around for. They are astonished, and occasionally rebel. It takes work to educate children, does it not?'

Khan had gone to some topflight London agency and secured a Parisian, Mlle Montaudon, who had recently been French teacher and governess in Scotland, at the home of the Earl and Countess of Eglinton and Winton. These personages lived in a castle and had their own hunt. Even their children followed the hunt, leaping the lesser fences and hedges. Besides, the whole family fished in their

huge park, and would go out in a body to catch salmon and trout by moonlight. The girls never could live up to all that. And worse, from their point of view, the new find would establish some discipline.

To begin with, Mademoiselle directed Marzieh to memorize Alfred de Musset's poem in which he likens a poet to a pelican. It will be remembered that the only nourishment the exhausted pelican could bring back to his starved fledglings was his own heart, which he dug out of his breast and thrust down their throats. 'Poets,' wrote Musset, in one of the world's notable poems, 'even thus do the great poets do.' To thwart the new governess, Marzieh said the idea made her sick to her stomach, and managed to produce an attack of nausea. On April 20, 1920, there were pink and white tulips in the gardens facing the Khans' apartment, and trees advanced into green leaf. Along the Champs-Élysées, Florence also wrote, there were beds of forget-me-nots and red tulips mixed, these colors carefully changed from year to year. Khan was to learn what his new post would be within a week, as the Shah had to sign the necessary documents before quitting Paris May first. In the interval, Khan was assisting Prince Fírúz. Florence said all good Parisians, if they did not leave the city, would get themselves provisioned for several days around May first, and stay indoors, while the Labor Party thronged the boulevards and the Government ordered out the troops. Always, year after year, the French seemed to fear something on this date—'But, as yet, it never comes.'

As the days of Versailles wound down, occasional, rather formal

parties were still being given by the Khans. One such became memorable because a Persian cabinet minister, stately, middle-aged, black bearded, happened to retire briefly after dinner. On his return to the salon, it was noted by all but himself that below his dinner jacket in back, a long length of shirt tail was extruding. With his back to the roomful of guests, he proceeded to engage a young French woman in an earnest conversation. What to do? Consternation. Khan approached two of the dignitary's closest friends, and asked each in turn to tell him, but they replied with the Persian for not on your life. One by one, the Persians disappeared, to explode in the hall. Even Florence, trying sedately to pour coffee, broke down. The children were not invited to these parties, but hung on the fringe in their night clothes, listening from ambush. On one of these occasions, the Minister who headed the delegation cooked a Persian meal in the family's kitchen, his evening dress and decorations under an apron. After supper he did not fail to invite brunette Madeleine, the maid, to an elegant rendezvous, which perhaps after all was the point of the whole exercise.

As part of their French experiences the girls were taken to see Sarah Bernhardt in Racine's *Atalie*, having been made to study the play beforehand. When the old, crippled actress was carried on stage and seated in her chair, she looked like a frump to them, although she had gathered around her only old people like herself—a trick which the Persians would call the bride-beautifier method, meaning choose homely attendants for your wedding, do not have pretty faces blotting you out. But then Sarah began to speak, and they were in the presence of greatness. Every syllable cut across the silent house. Where others would have declaimed, her speech was a miraculous reproduction of natural tones, even when rising and strident. When she came to her dream of Jezebel, her mother, about to be devoured by mad dogs, and told how in the dream Jezebel was still painted, still wearing 'that borrowed brightness, to repair the irreparable outrage of the years'—she sighed as she said the words and looked up despairingly and gestured helplessly at the old actor beside her, to share as if alone with him an understanding she knew was common to them both.

Suddenly a minute noise was heard in the tomb-silent house, followed by a disapproving hiss. Then the hiss was answered by other hisses, taking either the first noisemaker's side or the first hisser's, and for terrible moments the great actress was neglected while the audience hissed and counter-hissed.

'It will please you to know' (Florence, dutiful daughter, wrote), 'how much the French people compliment me on my French.' She goes on to analyze the children's French: Hamideh chattering away with a pretty accent, Marzieh's 'both correct and intelligent', Rahim's still American (but he learned French better than all of them,

later on at St-Cyr.)

One day Marzieh, on her way in, caught sight of a little girl in the glass street door of their Passy apartment—a girl in a sky-blue coat with black hair spread over her shoulders and a bouquet of white flowers in her arms. To her surprise, she saw it was herself. From about this time, the proposals of marriage began to come in, for Persian fathers, as a compliment and show of friendship between families, would often affiance each other's small children years in advance.

One probably more serious fiancé than the others was Sháhrukh, son of the famed Zoroastrian Arbáb Kay Khusraw. This young man, intending to visit the Khans and go on to England for his studies, left his Tehran home for Europe, along with two other students and the old Prince Arfa-ed-Dowleh. The last-named was then on his way to the League of Nations as the representative of Persia. The four were traveling by carriage, stopping at post-houses for relays of fresh horses along the route.

They had just, with an armed-to-the-teeth escort of a dozen guards, quitted the unique Persian city of Yazdí-Khást and were heading for Shíráz, when they caught sight of armed tribesmen on horseback, watching them from the hills.

'Who are these?' asked the Prince. The chief guard, who had been riding alongside the carriage, boasting of his victories over brigands, paled and fell silent. Almost immediately thereafter shots were fired at the carriage, the guards vanished, the coachman was wounded, the horses halted, and Sháhrukh cried, 'I'm hit! I'm dying!' and fell across the Prince's knees. Seeing the streaming blood, Arfa-ed-Dowleh thought he himself had taken bullet wounds as well.

The marauders galloped up and forced them out of the carriage and removed the dead boy, tore away their clothing and all their possessions and sent them off barefoot over the thorny, stony hills. Arfa sank down after a few steps and said, 'Let me die here.' The brigands argued with each other about shooting him, decided they were low on cartridges, better let the old man die on his own.

Then they loaded the corpse into the carriage, and drove away, taking horses, luggage, body and all.

Coming out of shock, the Prince saw the blood on him was not his but Sháhrukh's, and stood up and led the two remaining youths back to the road. They trudged for some time and came to a mud-brick watchtower with a door on the upper floor. Challenged by a watchman they told their story, climbed up the ladder now let down for them, and were served hot tea.

Our family learned that it was Bahá'í villagers who received and comforted the victims.

Soon the Prince was in Shíráz, guest of the new Governor (who would be Prime Minister later on, and known to the world as

Mossadegh). A thousand armed men were sent out to scour the countryside. They brought the brigands back in chains, and recovered most of the stolen possessions, but never the lost young life.

An account of this tragedy will be found in *Under Five Shahs* by Hassan Arfa, the Prince's son. A typically Persian story had it that friends of the former Governor, Farmán-Farmá, wishing to prove that only he could maintain order in the province, had urged on the tribes to prey on travelers and make trouble for the new man, his replacement. (Marzieh would meet the old Farmán-Farmá in years to come, and noted that even when he was so advanced in age that two attendants had to hold him under the arms so he could shuffle about, he still seemed to produce a new baby every year.)

As for the mother of the dead youth, even when Marzieh was in Tehran long afterward, Sháhrukh's mother would never receive her. Like so many mourners, she clung to her terrible grief and kept it burning in her heart forever.

That was the story of Marzieh's first fiancé. There would be other proposals as time went by. 'We marry the father, not the daughter,' a Persian would say.

Thirty-four

Shoghi Effendi in Paris

The Khans were living in Passy when word came from the Holy Land that 'Abdu'l-Bahá's grandson, Shoghi Effendi, was coming to Paris on his way to Oxford, and would be staying a while in Neuilly, to rest from his hard labors.

Khan had lived over a year in the Holy Household and always told the family, 'The Household is not the Master.' Thus, unknowingly, he prepared them for future Covenant-breakers, who would raise themselves up against the future Guardian. Now, when Shoghi Effendi was due to arrive, he was an unknown quantity, but to be cherished because he came from 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Florence and Marzieh went out to Neuilly and waited for him in an ivy-walled garden, ancient, misty with memories and foreshadowings, late afternoon light sifting down through the leaves. He came out to greet them, boyish, his Persian hat pushed back informally from his forehead, showing a little dark brown hair, his face with a subdued, inner glow, his look smiling but not a wide smile. To Marzieh he seemed of middle height—she was small herself, and the Persians and French of that day were not tall. In much later years, listening to pilgrims' reports, she thought that the crushing weight of the Cause must have bowed him, and also thought that, somewhat bowed, he fulfilled the Master's hope expressed in the Will and Testament that he would grow to be 'even as a fruitful tree'.

Now young and standing straight, he wore the trench coat of the

photographs, and the black, brimless Persian hat. He continued to wear his hat, the kuláh, no matter how the French stared, and the French of that day were champion starers. Part of their genius is their attention to detail. In the trams they would fix their gaze leisurely on your feet and work their glance all the way up to your top, totally unconcerned as to your human discomfort under scrutiny. He was not disturbed by this. He wore his hat because the Master desired him to. We were told that on the last night he ever saw the Master, the night he took his leave to go forward, unaware then, to his agonizing destiny as Head of the Bahá'í Faith, the Master's last instruction was: 'Learn not the ways of Europe.'

The date of this first visit was probably April 9, 1920. We know from a letter Florence wrote her mother on April 11 that 'Shoghi Effendi, the Master's oldest grand child is in Paris, and we gave him a lovely dinner last night, with real Persian music after. With him, is Mírzá Lotfulláh [Hakím].'

The children, in awe of him and feeling that he was a trust to them, had a belief that they must protect him from Europe. At Florence's first dinner for him, that night in the Passy apartment, Edna True was present, and quietly dressed, but the girls were embarrassed because another lady guest was very décolletée. Shoghi Effendi, from babyhood, had met people of all kinds, from all over the world. He was quiet, unobtrusive, friendly, natural. Escorting him around Paris, Khan was amazed at the substance of him. 'He has all the qualities of 'Abdu'l-Bahá,' Khan said to Florence. 'It is as if a small diamond were cut from a large diamond.' Khan took Shoghi Effendi to the renowned Paris shops, like Charvet's for shirts and accessories, but Shoghi Effendi did not want anything. 'I might get to liking these things,' he said.

We were told that he had gone to the Paris opera alone. He was a music lover, and would attend classical concerts in Europe later on, but this time he had bought a ticket for Samson and Delilah (Florence says Ida Rubenstein in Cleopatra) not the choice Florence would have made for him had she known. What he saw on the stage impelled him to rise in the midst of it and walk out, making this silent comment on the corruption of our age, in Paris of all places, walking before sharp and mocking eyes through the darkened house, up the red carpet and out and entirely alone.

Around this time (1920), Marzieh kept a somewhat haphazard diary concerned more with frequent colds and different governesses than with great events, but it may be one of the very few records of Shoghi Effendi's visit to France on his way to Oxford. Since the small, leather-bound, gold-edged diary allotted so little space to each day, and entries ran over, it is not easy to pinpoint the dates. Another problem was the diffidence that Marzieh felt about writing of the Master's grandson.

‘The entries in my diary,’ she wrote years later, ‘the use of the name-place “Neuilly” rather than Shoghi Effendi to indicate a visit to him, the atypical reticences, show something of how I felt toward

Shoghi Effendi. But I cannot say we knew anything then about who he really was.’ He himself did not know, then.

As to his impressions of Hamideh and Marzieh there is only this, from a later notebook: ‘We two sisters, not yet in our teens, must have seemed very strange to Shoghi Effendi. He remarked once to Florence, that when, sitting on jump seats facing them in a Paris taxi, we produced two little yellow and metal oblong objects, he thought they were our prayer books. But when we started looking inside them, they were, he was amused to note, our powder compacts.’ Florence did write that he complimented her ‘very earnestly, several times’, on her children’s character and spirituality.

The family used to retreat to a small pension in Barbizon, in those days still the village of Millet’s Angéelus, on the edge of the enchanted forest of Fontainebleau, sombre and dark, with great overhanging trees, pine-needle carpeted paths, black pools and mossy boulders. It was a Saturday, after lunch, when they took a carriage from Barbizon, met Shoghi Effendi’s train at Melun, and drove back with him through the golden, silent fields. This was long before the rich earth smells were gone, and death-dealing highways hammered away at the brain, destroying inner privacy and boarding up necessary escape-spaces in the mind. The wheat was white gold, shot through with sapphire bachelor’s buttons and flame-red poppies. The Guardian-to-be photographed the family in these fields, he standing with them, his handkerchief concealing the bulb in his hand, remote control an innovation then, and all laughing at a camera taking their picture without a photographer. Besides Shoghi Effendi, Florence and the girls, the others in the photo are Florence’s brother Ralph Breed, and the governess, fresh from her Scottish nobility.

Looking back to those faraway days, we note how selfless Shoghi Effendi was. People in the West even referred to him as Shoghi, which seems very wrong now. The Master’s oldest grandson, yet quietly, unobtrusively being with them in comradely fashion on what must often have been uneventful days, hardly to the taste of other young men. This was the way ‘Abdu’l-Bahá brought him up—to mix with all in kindly fashion. He was not like those others, the flamboyant Persians the girls knew in Paris.

As for Ralph, tall, sophisticated, he was the girls’ ideal of guessed-at wickedness. When he would come over from America and visit with Florence, the girls preferred to hang about unnoticed, knowing that their mother would soon be stopping him with, ‘Little pitchers have big ears.’ One day in Paris he relayed to Florence an anecdote about the noted dancer Mistinguett, famed for her legs. ‘A man called

on her', Ralph told her sister, 'when she was still in bed. And—a pause here for a hasty, hyphenated, 'Children-run-out-of-the-room'—and then the dreadful part: 'She got up and dressed before him.' It was during the Barbizon visit when Ralph heard a knock at his door, and there stood Shoghi Effendi, offering him a morning-fresh garden rose, much as 'Abdu'l-Bahá would do for a pilgrim in 'Akká. 'There is something very noble about Ralph,' the future Guardian once commented. Ralph, much later, became a Bahá'í. Meanwhile in Paris he hosted a luncheon for Shoghi Effendi at the Ritz.

As we ate at the pension, outdoors under an arbor, there was wine on the table. Wine and other alcoholic drinks were still used by many Bahá'ís then—'in moderation', as they used to quote: 'Moderation in all things.' The trouble seemed to be, nobody could agree on what moderation was. All French children drank wine, parents saying the water had to be 'cut with wine' for safety. Some said drinking water was only for taking pills. Shoghi Effendi told us, 'Wine has never touched my lips.' Not reproachfully, just stating a fact.

Most of the family rode bicycles in Barbizon, and the rental man had a postcard made of them, two girls and the governess, each with a bicycle, strung out across the front of his shop. One morning, just briefly, Marzieh rode with Shoghi Effendi, he on Florence's bicycle, which was ungainly and too large. It was only a trial run, on a back road. Inevitably, they began practising riding without hands, when his front wheel caught in a deep rut of sand and he took a spill. Marzieh was terrified. 'What', she thought to herself, 'will 'Abdu'l-Bahá think of me for not taking better care of His grandson!' Shoghi Effendi was not hurt.

He was always agreeable company, dignified, unaffected, kind. Few young men could have been overly delighted with the society of a middle-aged woman, two little girls, and their rather austere governess—but he entered companionably into the small events of their life.

This visit included a climb under the tall trees, past green-gray boulders, along forest paths studded with stones and roots and alive with lizards, to a deep pool among the rocks. As they neared the pool a French party came down and passed them. 'It's the Shah of Persia, no?' a somewhat mocking voice drifted back. But how much greater than the Shah, thought Marzieh, remembering in after years.

Again they left the wide, dusty village road, and drove through the opening to the huge dark womb of the forest, to see the palace of Fontainebleau. Here the downstairs, rather worn quarters for the servants, appeared much more immediately alive than the remote magnificences above: perhaps because living people would foregather here after hours, or more likely because those old dead retainers' ghosts were often drawn back to this place.

The Fontainebleau visit was, says the diary, on a Tuesday, June 1, 1920. With Shoghi Effendi, Florence and Hamideh returned to Paris by train, while the others rode back to Barbizon in the carriage, Chaybany, Khan's secretary, on his wheel.

Florence was anxious for the youthful visitor to see the treasures of Paris, and with the girls she escorted him to the Louvre. She led him to the long, statue-lined corridor at the end of which, under a vaulted ceiling, the Aphrodite of Melos stands all by herself. Better known around the world as the Venus of Milo, discovered in 1820, the Aphrodite waits on her pedestal with a hint of a casual slouch, secure in the knowledge that to her, humankind would beat a path. Her beauty unchanged down the ages, her left arm gone at the shoulder, her right a stump, but she still flawless.

Another day Florence arranged for Shoghi Effendi, accompanied by Chaybany, the young Persian chemist who was serving as Khan's secretary and Persian tutor to the children, to have a picnic lunch at Versailles. There the future Guardian saw the palace called the greatest on earth, the life passion of Louis XIV, the Sun King—who had, it is said, both Jewish and Moorish blood in his veins, and like them loved magnificence. Here, against the wishes of his nobles, Louis established the seat of his government, and here, after a reign of seventy-two years, he died.

Versailles, embodying all the dazzling riches of France at her peak, all her creative forces combined, all the arts and skills of her flowering great. The painted ceilings crowded with cloud-borne beings looking down from their separate life, the murals, the canvases, the Gobelins, the marble busts, the mirrored galleries and fluted pillars, the flights of marble stairs, the floors parquetry or mosaic, the gilt chairs upholstered in velvets and tapestries, the tall cabinets by Boulle or Cucci of precious woods and gold, and strips of green marble, and inserts of painted birds or fruits or flowers, the whole of such splendor held up by sculpted figures or ebony feet. A silver table with silver legs, the Sun King's inkstand of red jasper and gilt, his lapis lazuli cup with a silver Neptune perched on the rim, the leather cover of his book, on it a profusion of fleurs-de-lis and encircling laurel leaves worked in gold.

But best of all at Versailles was the out-of-doors: the wealth of wide skies, the expanses of blue water, the orange trees in tubs along formal promenades, the parterres intricately embroidered with shrubs and pebbles, the long carpet of green grass, the clumps of marble statues and the spurting bouquets of tall white fountains.

Then elsewhere, as a relief from all the planned and plotted

splendors, intimate pathways, mysteriously winding away through dark, overarching trees, speaking of old court intrigues long unraveled, long forgotten, and dead amours.

On their pilgrimage in 1924, when the young Guardian had led

Florence and the girls to the Shrine of the Báb, then a solid gray stone building on a worn mountain slope, with some fruit trees, palms and flowers, and a patch or so of emerald grass that he and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá before him had, with infinite pain, conjured out of the rubble— Shoghi Effendi looked back at the Tomb as they started down hill and said, ‘It has not yet attained the grandeur of Versailles.’ Marzieh was astounded at the boldness of his previsionings for Bahá’u’lláh’s Cause. She believed with all her heart that this then almost unknown Faith was tomorrow’s world religion—but Versailles!

On Thursday, June 24, 1920, Shoghi Effendi, accompanied by a Persian prince brought up in Russia, stopped by to see the family at 4 Avenue de Breteuil, on what was to the girls a sombre afternoon. Marzieh had virtually never been away from the family at all and both girls were in a state of fear, since they had to leave for the hospital, be there some days, and have their tonsils out. She understood much later how thoughtful it was of Shoghi Effendi to pay this visit, but when you are growing up you notice little outside your inner universe, and take everything that comes to you for granted. The way you find events is the way things are.

As it turned out the operations were quite sanguinary, and the doctors also succeeded in removing Hamideh’s uvula, from which she never really recovered. Also, released from the hospital, they still had to make several return visits to have their throats cauterized, adding to their other woes the unforgettable smell of burning human flesh, their own.

For enduring the operation, Florence gave Marzieh a green photo album and a box camera, and for months afterward she took snapshots of Hamideh, her feet posed in the fashion of the day, pointing one east, one west, or one foot daintily behind the other, and always in the background Napoleon’s tomb, guaranteed not to move. In later years Khan remarked to his daughter of her efforts as a photographer, ‘If you want to keep your friends, throw away that camera.’

The green album is historic because, one day on pilgrimage, they showed it to the Guardian, who liked photographs, and holding it, he leafed it through.

On the ninth of July, to reward them for all they had been

through, Florence took the girls to the opera, Romeo and Juliet. She wrote home the next day: ‘I forgot that dear Callie [Hamideh] had seen no ballet before, and when the first dancers appeared in tights, she asked me what they were. I explained they were womendancers, dressed as pages. Then each time the “premiere danseuse” whipped her diaphanous little skirts up in the air, Callie gasped and looked inquiringly at me.’

On July 10 the girls and Florence went up in the Eiffel Tower and

stayed over two hours. Afterward, they found Shoghi Effendi walking alone in the park under the Tower, and he gave them some of the Barbizon photographs. Perhaps he was lonely that day, and had gone there to capture the memory of the Master, photographed with companions in that same place. On July 13 he came to call and this was apparently his last visit to the family.

In the large gathering on July 5 at Loulie Mathews' apartment, when Lady Blomfield and Mme Laura Dreyfus-Barney were also present, the girls had probably hovered on the fringes, and would hardly have been at the center of the proceedings. A letter from Florence describes the gathering thus:

'A knock at the tall double-doors during the afternoon,' she wrote in later years, 'and a young Zoroastrian Bahá'í stepped into the room and in some excitement announced the arrival of Shoghi Effendi who immediately and joyously then entered the room.

'What unspeakable delight ensued, amongst one and all, as we were individually greeted by him. He appeared so fresh and radiant, so powerful, and joy-inspiring! ...

'The Guardian (as he was to become) was invited to address us, and he did so, in his perfect and cultivated English. He read the Tablet, written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, that introduced him to the friends in Europe and other foreign lands.

'In this Tablet, the first names mentioned were Ali-Kuli Khan and Madame Khan, with loving words of praise; Mon. and Madame Dreyfus, with praise; the two American painters (in whose studio Bahá'í meetings were often held) Mr. and Mrs. Scott with praise, and in the end, the names of "Mrs. Mathews and her daughter" (Wanden) of whom 'Abdu'l-Bahá had written this line—"They are faithful."'

Among the friends that day, was Mrs Agnes Parsons of Washington on her way home from 'Akká. 'I recall', wrote Florence, 'hearing her say to Mrs Mathews—"The Master called you and Wanden 'faithful': What more do you want?'"

The 'children' of 'Abdu'l-Bahá were only human, and on occasion like other children jockeying for position. The good side of this is that they tried to out-do one another in service. The bad side is

obvious. They would suffer from imagined put-downs and tend to nurse their wounds.

A later case comes to mind of the American Bahá'í couple in New York City who had read the Guardian's early statement as to the future 'Hands (pillars)' of the Faith. The couple knew they were called 'pillars' by the Master. They cabled Haifa to find out if they were Hands. The Guardian cabled back: 'Hands not appointed. Persevere meritorious endeavors.'

'Abdu'l-Bahá says that 'self-love is kneaded into the very clay of man'. [103] Hates and meannesses and coddled wounds are found in all

societies and show that the self comes first. The serpent in Eden ‘is attachment to the human world’, [104] the Master tells us. The self turns to the world, and ‘by “the world” is meant your unawareness of Him Who is your Maker, and your absorption in aught else but Him. ... [w]hatsoever deterreth you ... from loving God is nothing but the world. Flee it, that you may be numbered with the blest.’ [105] The normal tendency is complacently to consider one’s virtues (which is the real object of backbiting), like the Pharisee in the Temple (Luke 18); whereas the publican there, not daring to lift up his eyes to Heaven, said he was a sinner and begged for mercy. Nothing can unify humanity except the love of God and a contrite heart. Humanism can never serve as a basis for society, because people are human.

It must have been in the Passy apartment that Shoghi Effendi went into the next room and prayed, then returned and gave Florence and Khan ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s soft gray coat, with a light green and white plaid lining, given the future Guardian by his great aunt, the Most Exalted Leaf, a coat often worn by the Master, not just briefly put on at some pilgrim’s request—and on which Khan found a silver hair. With this coat there was also the gift of another holy relic that Shoghi Effendi told them not to speak of. The one is now in the United States National Bahá’í Archives, the other is kept in a round silver locket here in our home in San Francisco.

Thirty-five

The Embassy at Constantinople

Khan had been offered Persia’s important Indian post, but felt he could not accept it because of Florence’s health. He was then appointed Minister Plenipotentiary at Warsaw, but due to an administrative reorganization, occurring while he was still in Paris, he then received a higher post, to head the Persian Embassy at Constantinople with the title of Minister Plenipotentiary and Chef de Mission. Once more the Foreign Office was willing to have him bear the responsibilities of a top diplomatic post—only the Embassy at Moscow was considered more important—but denied him the rank of Ambassador.

While in Paris the Khans had felt as if their American family was really close, say a week by ship. In fact Ralph paid them several visits, commuting across the Atlantic for his work with haute couture collections. Now this was ending for the moment. Aunt Alice, who had been visiting the Khans, did not dare go so far away as Constantinople from her son Charles in New York, and she too sailed for home. One by one the family’s western ties were being severed, and after two months in Berlin’s Charlottenburg their balloon took off and floated away to the East. In Belgrade Marzieh inhaled once more the old acid smell of thick, soft, historical dust, the powdery remains among the living of long gone animals and

people—the scent of the East. Against a blood-red sunset seen from the train, Marzieh watched, across a wide desert, the black frieze of a camel caravan. Against a gold-red sunset at Constantinople, sharp as cut outs, and mirrored blackly in the waters of the Golden Horn below, she saw great domes of mosques, and tall, balcony circled minarets pointing to heaven.

As the Orient Express pulled into Constantinople, high drama.

The station bristled with international police posted by order of the recalled Chargé d’Affaires to keep representatives of the local Persian community from receiving Khan. Blocked from entering the Embassy, the family sought refuge at the Pera Palace Hotel on the European side of the Golden Horn.

Marzieh wrote in her diary on July 10, 1921 that they had stayed there a couple of weeks, the recalled Chargé refusing to vacate the Embassy, an old rose-red mansion with sentries at the door, on a hill

in Stamboul, not far from Turkey’s seat of government, the Sublime Porte. Finally the Persian Consul General posted a spy to watch the comings and goings at the Embassy and one day when the deposed incumbent was out to lunch, the Khans, the Consul General and their party simply walked in, Khan pausing at the gates where the sentry stood at attention, to tell him who was now in charge. As they entered the downstairs hall, the Consul General, a tall, corpulent man, whose very girth emphasized his righteous indignation at what had been done to Khan, pounded on the floor with his cane as if it were a mace and cried: ‘This is the house of the state!’ (In Khániy-idawlatast.)

That first night they camped out in one of the smaller salons on the second floor until the family quarters above, with their dazzling views, their ebony and mother-of-pearl furnishings, could be put in shape for them. One piece of furniture up there even provided ‘running water’ and intrigued them very much: ebony and motherof-pearl, the tall back of it (not unlike an upright piano) contained the water; spigots ran into the basin, which emptied into a slop jar concealed in the bottom of the intricately decorated cabinet.

Looking over their new home, Florence and Khan went back in memory to the luncheon the then Ambassador, Prince Malcolm Khan had given them in 1906, when they were on their way to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in ‘Akká.

The Embassy had a chain of salons ‘wondrously rich with Persian art’, Florence had written her parents at the time, and walls hung with precious rugs, in shimmering dove-colors. The then Ambassador had on a memorable vest of reddish cashmere with the tree of life design, fastened with buttons of enormous rubies, each encircled with diamonds. (That was what we personally would call a diplomatic corps.)

Luncheon had been announced by a footman in a black Persian

flower-pot hat, and, over black trousers, a long, double-breasted Prince Albert frock coat.

Encouraged by the host, Florence conversed with Malcolm Khan in her rudimentary Persian, but when he asked her a question involving a number, her age, she was stopped cold and implored her husband across the wide table to ‘Please tell the Ambassador I can only count to twenty in Persian’.

In the big salon, after luncheon, especially to please their baby, Rahim, Malcolm Khan ordered a table to be brought in, and on it he placed a large golden, dome-shaped cage. Then he took out a golden key, wound up a mechanism, and within the cage a jeweled golden bird swung on its perch, opened its beak and produced melodies from European operas.

As we read in *God Passes By*, this must have been the very building which was a center of fierce opposition to Bahá’u’lláh, under the evil Persian Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, Mushíru’-d-Dawlih, ‘denounced by Bahá’u’lláh as this “calumniator” ...[106]. One could

only marvel that in a few short decades the Almighty would casually, as it were unobtrusively, replace that man with a Bahá’í. Khan could not help but remember an even earlier visit to the Great City in 1899 when, traveling with Jináb-i-Furúghí and other pilgrims headed for ‘Akká, he had spent three days here penned in a caravanserai while waiting for their ship (and for the first time in his life been attacked by bedbugs). That self-imprisonment was necessary because Sultán ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd was then on the throne, and believed that everyone was out to murder him, so that his whole city was alive with spies. Bahá’í travelers were particularly suspect, now that the Faith had grown stronger in spite of its leaders being imprisoned and its followers killed in their thousands—and had even reached the United States.

That year, 1899, ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd, the royal jailer of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, had ten years left to rule, before the Young Turks would sweep him off the Ottoman throne—Ottoman from ‘Uthmán I, the ancient dynasty’s founder (1259–1326). Wearing his secret coat of mail, he lived in terror. He had his tailor sew hidden pockets in his clothes, pockets where he could tuck his three revolvers and the voluminous reports from his spies. He also made it a crime for anyone around him to put a hand in his own pocket. He turned his Yildiz Palace into a fortress, with tunnels and secret passages, its doors steel-lined, and in each room mirrors reflecting every corner, and a cage full of parrots which served for alarm bells, it being their habit to screech at the entry of strangers.

His main obsession was, says Hungarian Orientalist Vambéry, his old acquaintance, the persecutions by (except for the Germans) the Christian world: over time, they took away Greece and Romania,

Turkey's 'feet'. Then Bulgaria, Serbia and Egypt were gone, so that Turkey had lost her 'hands'. And what with the Armenian agitation, he said to Vambéry, they 'tear out our very entrails'. He thought the only way to eliminate the Armenian question was to eliminate the Armenians. Toward the end he turned against Vambéry for suggesting that philosophy and political science should be included in his new university's proposed curriculum: too dangerous, was 'Abdu'l-Hamíd's opinion, like handing a child a sharp knife. The plan was dropped.

When the inevitable hatchet blow was about to fall, he spent hours lying on a divan, a shawl covering his knees, while a chamberlain read him the latest adventures of Sherlock Holmes. Most of his

people had fled the Yildiz, down to cooks, scullions, carpenters, electricians. Thousands of attendants had melted away. The fires went out. The eunuchs managed to bring him a cold meal and 'for the first time in thirty-three years', Joan Haslip writes, he ate with no terror of poison. No candles. His band of musicians (there had been over three hundred) deserted. So did the palace guard. The two hundred unfed animals in his zoo set up roars, yelps, brays. His women moaned and wailed. He wandered through his great establishment, passed from house to house, through halls and tunnels.

When four deputies from Parliament came to get him, a parrot was chattering in Arabic, and a cuckoo clock sounded. He appeared before the deputies, a berouged, bearded skeleton, wrapped in a military great coat.

'What do you want?' he said in his deep voice.

'The Nation has deposed you,' they told him.

'This is Fate,' he said, 'this is qismat, my share, my portion.' And begged for his life.

As they bore him off, it is said that a parrot cried out: 'Long live the King of Kings.'

They exiled him to Salonika, twenty hours away by rail. At first he was shown consideration, sent for his cats and for younger women, then when they arrived, paid them no mind.

After a chief eunuch was publicly hanged, and exposed on the Galata Bridge, the next one in line revealed the Sultan's secrets, and showed how to open up the vaults in the Yildiz. The public got in and marveled at his two thousand shirts. But what the new ones wanted was the bulk of his fortune, hidden away in Europe. Once they had their hands on this, they turned more stringent. In Constantinople again on the Asiatic side, all he asked them for was a small back room where he could not see his Yildiz Palace on its hill or his Dolma-Baghtche at the water's edge. Everyone was gone. He alternated from tears to rages. Only one woman stayed on, to nurse him and read the newspapers to him. He died in January, 1918.

This man had owned, Haslip says, heaped-up treasures beyond price—some of the world’s largest diamonds, rubies and emeralds big as hens’ eggs—but ‘they had not been able to buy him either the loyalty or the affection of his subjects’.[107]

Here one can only contrast the statement of British Orientalist E. G. Browne, entering in April, 1890 the presence of Bahá’u’lláh, prisoner and exile, long ago despoiled of His wealth. ‘No need to ask in whose presence I stood’, writes Browne, ‘as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain!’[108] And one can only

wonder why so many of those in power are unable to learn the old, simple lesson that enough is as good as a feast. Why they exchange the one thing that is really theirs, the span of their life, for burrowing and tunneling and piling up fortunes in what they imagine to be secrecy—why they busy, busy themselves with useless personal accumulation, while their people go bare.

When Muhammad’s Household came to Him, complaining, ‘We roasted a goat and Thou hast given it away to this one and that one and now only the shoulder remaineth,’ the Prophet answered, ‘The whole goat remaineth save only the shoulder.’

Of those they rule, Bahá’u’lláh has written to the kings: ‘Do not rob them to build palaces for yourselves ... choose for them that which ye choose for yourselves. ... Your people are your treasures. ... By them ye rule, by their means ye subsist Yet, how disdainfully ye look upon them!’[109]

And what of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Sultan’s captive? The Young Turks’ Revolution in 1908 saved His life. The tyrant’s religious and political prisoners were let go. The Master was freed from His strip of sand along the Mediterranean Sea, and, old and ailing as He was, went on to the most brilliant triumph of His long, victorious years—His teaching mission to the Western World.[110]

The first time when, in spite of the pleadings of His family and friends, He left Egypt for the West, illness turned Him back. The next time He was gone from the Middle East for three years. The travel records are there, the written events by those with Him and those He encountered, the innumerable individuals He met, the homes, churches, universities, conference halls that opened their doors to Him. Paying His own way, accepting no gifts—except the flowers and confections brought in and distributed, or the handkerchiefs embroidered with His name (which we have yet), or the pomegranate which Mrs Hotchkiss searched for all over Washington and at last found, when He asked her for one for His health, or the button her daughter Mary sewed on his shirt. His garments plain, sometimes even shabby, Mahmúd writes; the way when visiting a city He would seek out the poor and give; the way He was continually besieged by people and could reach and help all minds,

all classes—and finally, the last of His strength used up,[111] He turned back to the Holy Land. But He continued to serve, direct the Faith, receive the pilgrims who crowded around Him, until at last, three years after the wretched end of ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd, His deposed and royal jailer, He was gathered to the glory of Bahá’u’lláh.

It was while Khan headed the Embassy at Constantinople that he received a long Tablet from the Master, telling him how to go about

making his own decisions from then on, and saying that Florence (who had hoped for another pilgrimage) must not come to the Holy Land this year, as she would not be happy there—a mysterious statement, to them, for she had always been happy in the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Only afterward did Khan understand what the Master meant, and see what dark days were destined for that holy place.

The Tablet may have been, in this world, Khan’s final communication with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, after a lifetime of guidance from Him, and utter dependence on Him, ever since the days of Khan’s early youth.

Some 20,000 Persians now lived in Constantinople, and this one with Moscow were the only two Embassies Persia had, the other missions being Legations or less. The ground floor offices were always crowded during the day, with Khan often working well into the night.

Tutors were brought in for the girls. They studied Persian, French and painting. There was no real theater in the city, and for entertainment, only receptions and dinners. Although dazzled by the loveliness about her, Marzieh wrote in her diary, ‘The more I stay, the more I like Paris ... No modern conveniences ...’ She even missed Berlin at times, although in those years after famine and defeat, German antagonism to foreigners had been very marked. The suffering had been indescribable, and people said, true or not, that during the worst of the starvation human flesh was eaten by some. She herself had seen suitcases full of paper money, almost trash, the value drained away.

Although she found Constantinople ‘pretty much in ruins’, she preferred Turkish Stamboul to European Pera.

‘Here you have to be very careful about what you do or say,’ she cautioned herself, ‘because it’s awful the way people find things out.’

During this time of the family’s being at the Embassy they were invited to visit Turkey’s Crown Prince, Abdul Medjid Effendi, in his long ivory palace of Dolma Baghtche along the Bosphorus. Marzieh learned about then that people often take the side of whatever royalty or other eminent personage has received them; for otherwise, of course, their own audience is trivialized. Historians should watch out for this. The President whose hand you shook, the General who bowed to you, these are apt to acquire a favorable emphasis when you write about them. Marzieh remembers vaguely a large palace

room with a fine carpet and the Turkish Crown Prince, who seemed middle-aged to her, an amiable host. As everyone knows, the true 'upper classes', always cosseted, always deferred to as their right, are the most courteous and often the easiest people to be with. (No

doubt if everyone cosseted and deferred to everyone, there would be many pleasanter people in the world.)

They had the usual talk about languages, and how a language slips away from your mind, how what you always need to speak it is 'the practice'. At one point the royal host asked Marzieh if she knew German. Her German governess was gone by then, and she replied in what remnants of German came to mind, 'Ich habe alles vergessen', which got a laugh.

Other memories of that day in the vast palace room, discreetly lit by sunlight reflected from the Bosphorus hurrying by below the windows: a thick white confection was passed around, a sweet liquid, served with a spoon. Again, two tiny princesses, fair with blue eyes, Circassian blood quite probably, for it was Circassians who peopled the harem, ran in to see the company.

But Marzieh's real interest in this memory of the Crown Prince of Turkey is that, once the then Sultan was gone, this particular man became Sultan—Sultan and Caliph, custodian of the Prophet's cloak, and head of Sunni Islam; and as things turned out, the last Caliph ever, for the Caliphate was abolished by a Muslim, Mustafa Kamal, and the Ottoman rulership that had lasted 650 years came to an end. Thus, quite by chance, she met both the last Sultan and the last Shah of the Qájár dynasty and of what Shoghi Effendi called the Qájárs' 'ignoble rule'. [112]

Thirty-six

Fires in the night

Marzieh's memory is that you climbed the ceremonial white marble stairs of the Embassy and entered a chain of salons on your right, but directly in front of you was the magnificent great salon, an endless walk from portal to windows at the farther end, giving on to the Embassy garden below. The grounds stretched out on a high shelf, with a sheer wall at the edge. Way down at the foot of the wall she could see a cobbled, winding lane, and beyond, hoi polloi houses full of cluttered life. Far below in a corner of a wall a small, drunkenlooking graveyard, a cluster of stelae, slabs standing awry, each with a turban on its top.

Marzieh, a sort of captive in the garden, would pace up and down the paths, and languidly watch the shapes moving dimly in the windows way below, or listen to snatches of Greek and French

popular songs wafting up. One predictable favorite was about a closed garden of roses:

In a garden of roses

My heart is enclosed—
None has the key to it
Except thee, my beloved.

When the family first arrived, there were two ducks in the garden, but one disappeared, and the gardener refused to buy another, saying it was fate.

The girls' tutor, an old black-bearded Turk, would sit with them under an umbrella tree in the garden, continuing their lessons in French. The main thing they remembered of his teaching was his explanation that while the Turks had several wives, they took care of them, maintained them, whereas western men had several wives but dropped them as they went along.

Marzieh liked to venture by herself into the great salon that was lined with small gilt chairs for parties, and wander up to the tapestried and gold armchairs at the receiving end. Here nothing broke the quiet except perhaps a tree branch from the garden below, brushing against one of the long windows. She would spend a long time wandering through the scenes on a huge Dresden vase with its serene landscapes and skyscapes. Placed on a wide mantel it provided an escape.

Here in his salon the dignitaries would be received. Here Khan, on the edge of his gold chair, would nervously listen to Florence's American statements, correcting any which seemed (and indeed were) undiplomatic. 'She means ...' he would explain to the eminent visitor, following some disclosure that would have been perfectly all right in Boston, Mass. The girls would enjoy such episodes and go around telling each other, 'She means ...' They had long been warned by Florence, who did not always heed her own advice, that people would try to 'pump' them, and that it was all right to answer indiscreet questions with, 'I don't know.'

Here Florence and Khan had received the French Ambassador when he came to call, an 'older' man (in those days, to the girls everybody was older) of such charm that he lingered on in their memory. The conversation had touched on the French writer and naval officer Pierre Loti (Julien Viaud), whose books on Constantinople—like the one on Isfahán, for example, and on Iceland, and on Tahiti, and on Japan—are still being read.

'Madame,' said the Ambassador, who had met Loti, still living then, 'This I should not speak of in front of your daughters, but the truth is, il se fardait, he painted his face.'

Climbing up on the Embassy roof, Marzieh could sit and go dizzy with the beauty of Constantinople as it was then, spread out for miles below her. Down across a tangle of lanes she could see a forest of masts on the Golden Horn, and a skyline of mosques and minarets (with no high rises, destined to humble them in decades to come) and off to her right, leading to the European quarter of Pera, was the

long Galata Bridge.

At night, leaning on her elbows at the window, she would look down across the city to the Bosphorus, enjoying the cool night air, and like as not watching a star and reciting to it Musset's 'O star of love, do not come down from heaven.'

Immediately below her window she could see a small mosque and minaret, but great Santa Sophia was off to her right, somewhere close, but not visible. She could hear the watchman's regular pounding on the cobblestones with his iron-shod club as he passed through the street below. This was supposed to make the neighborhood sleep at peace. Rumor was, however, that the relentless thump had so angered a visiting British insomniac that he ran after the watchman and gave him a sound beating with his own club.

Constantinople was still a wooden city then, and the dark down there would often be pierced by a long, high wail—'Yangin var'—there is a fire! and then came the thudding of bare running feet and Marzieh could visualize half-clothed firemen on their frenzied way with water and hoses, while the quarter burned.

One moonlit night the family slipped out of the Embassy to watch from the sidelines while the Shiahhs commemorated the death of the holy Imáms. Chopping at the front of their shaved, dripping skulls, they ran by, dyeing their white robes red, crying while they ran, 'Hasan! Husayn! Hasan! Husayn!' As they rushed past, Marzieh glanced at Javád, her father's secretary, and saw that his eyes were filled with tears.

Once the mourners had gone by, blood glistened on the cobblestones, in the moonlight.

Marzieh in those days knew little of this city which had so enchanted her that she vowed, on the night she left it, never to return again, but to keep it as a monument to revisit in her mind. Later she found out a little of its past.

Constantine, carrying out a dream, they said, which he had inside Byzantium's walls, had there laid his city's everlasting foundations 'in obedience to the commands of God'. Then Justinian had raised up its principal church, and dedicated it to Saint Sophia, the eternal wisdom, and shouted at its completion, 'I have vanquished thee, O Solomon!' Describing this building's vast glories, its inestimable

riches, its thin leaves or solid masses of costly metals, its sanctuary's 40,000-pound weight of silver, the holy vases and altar vestments of purest gold studded with priceless jewels, its matched and colored marbles (the rosy Phrygian, the green of Laconia, the Carian, white and red veined, the African, saffron) its spectacular design, Gibbon cries: 'Yet how dull is the artifice, how insignificant is the labour, if it be compared with the formation of the vilest insect that crawls upon the surface ...'[113]

Constantinople had stood unconquered for a thousand years, until

that Christian city was brought down by Christians under a Christian Pope, Innocent III, of Rome.

Again, in 1453, by which time Europe's crusading spirit was long disappointed and spent—we are seldom told that the crusaders lost—the great city fell to Sultán Muhammad II (d. 1481), and Saint Sophia was turned into a mosque.

Thirty-seven

The royal visit

When word arrived that Persia's Crown Prince was coming to Constantinople, everything was done to welcome him with great *éclat*. Under Khan's direction he enjoyed much more success than had his brother the Shah on an earlier visit, and Florence's letter home, dated September 4, 1921, 'In Bed', shows that she was tired out but pleased with her efforts and Khan's.

A flotilla of beflagged motor launches set out to greet the Prince as he floated down the Bosphorus from his exiled father's palace, and Turkey's Crown Prince gave the royal guest a memorable luncheon at the Yildiz, Khan reporting that he had never seen anything like it anywhere, for beauty and magnificence. Every luxury was provided, every due ceremony observed, while the Sultan's own remarkable band played throughout.

The next day, a Monday, it was the turn of the Persian Embassy to receive him. For hours, crowds had jammed the streets outside the Embassy and when the Prince arrived they gave him an ovation, with cheers and loud applause. Men servants in uniform wearing their decorations and white gloves were lined up, on either side of the courtyard. The vast entrance hall and the reception rooms were decorated with rugs, cashmere shawls, tapestries, palms and flowers.

Khan and other officials greeted the Prince at the foot of the steps,

Florence and the girls stood in the doorway, then advanced half way down to welcome him. For a final touch, thirty little Persian boys from the Persian School stood at attention and saluted.

Florence and Khan followed the Prince upstairs to the Grand Salon, Khan conducting the Prince to the main balcony, where he acknowledged the crowd's cheers with dignified salutes.

Later they sat down to a 'royal Persian feast'—about twenty-eight persons in all—served in the vast ground floor room leading to the gardens. The two girls were present, one at each end of the table with a Persian male guest beside each, and Rahim (then visiting from his school in England) placed near Marzieh.

Florence commented that this was the first time in history that a woman, chatelaine of this Embassy, sat at table with a Persian Crown Prince. Afterwards, hundreds of Persians flocked in to pay their respects to the Crown Prince.

Every day, Turkey's Sultan entertained the Prince, with Khan and

the royal suite, these parties being for men only. By the Sultan's command, the treasures of the Yildiz, and the many palaces forming the Yildiz group were thrown open to the visitor. Royal museums were shown him, he was taken on excursions by water in the Sultan's launches, and refreshments of course were continual. Then came the Khans' big soirée at the Embassy, of which Florence wrote that she, after so many parties all her life, had never seen such a night. It 'dazzled and upset the town', 'and the newspapers have gone mad over it'.

Later on their soirée even made its way into a book, Zia Bey's *Speaking of the Turks* (Duffield and Company, N.Y. 1922). Everybody came. All the Diplomatic Corps were there, and Turkey's highest officials, brilliant in uniform and decorations, and all the High Commissioners and officers from all the Interallied fleets and armies. When the Khans' invitations to the American officers had been misplaced, the Admiral, who was also the American Ambassador, wirelessly the lost invitations from his own ship to the American battleships and every destroyer in Constantinople waters. The British came in scarlet uniforms, Khan wore a black Turkish evening coat, Florence her gold-and-pearl embroidered velvet gown from Paris, made for the gala at the Paris Opera when they were received by President Wilson. The British Ambassador's wife wore her diamond coronet and decorations, an Arab prince came in his burnous and regalia, and even America's General Harrison, the 'so-called Boss of Constantinople', was there. The Sultan sent his own Master of Ceremonies to present the magnificent Turkish delegation. In short, everybody came.

The gardens were lit with colored Japanese lanterns and red, white and green Persian glass lights, and over the entrance gates was a large, electrified Lion and Sun of Persia. The Turks had sent their finest military band, all in white uniforms, playing the Persian anthem as the Crown Prince turned in at the gates. The great ballroom soon filled with guests dancing to European music, the Khans having obtained the best Russian band in the city.

As for Marzieh, she was forced to attend, reluctant as ever to be in society. The seamstress was sewing on the hem of her rose-colored crêpe-de-chine dress at the very last moment, when no hope of staying away was left. She looked briefly into the grand ballroom and was amazed to see that even the air seemed colored, from the bright uniforms and lights and mirrors and jewels and blazing decorations. Then she walked a little in the soft lantern-lit gardens. Florence believed that God had blessed this party, which was so much more than a party, given over that powder keg of bellicose representatives, in that country that had lost a fourth of its population from war and diseases following the war, and famine, and massacres.

‘The shifts in international policy’, wrote Zia Bey in his book, ‘make the official social life in Constantinople a very delicate matter indeed ... no one can foresee, a few days in advance, what the ... policy will be on the day the reception is given. The only reception that I know of which was given with a total disregard of international relations and at which all officials and prominent citizens of all nations were invited was the reception given at the Persian Embassy in honour of the Crown Prince of Persia ...

‘They had dared’, he writes of Florence and Khan, ‘to bring together all the representatives of different nations at war and of nations who had not yet concluded peace and they had been most successful in their endeavour.’

For Florence he has a special tribute: ‘The Khanoum wore her beautifully embroidered Persian court gown and her diamond decorations and greeted us with the ineffable charm which has won for her the hearts of all who have met her in three continents.’[114]

The third party for the Khans during the Prince’s visit was in honor of the ‘Monster’, the Prince’s exiled father, from his palace up the Bosphorus. The ex-Shah accepted a luncheon invitation to be hosted only by Florence and the two girls, since his ladies wore the veil. He would bring his Queen and a princess who was her companion, his son the Crown Prince and bride, his twenty-yearold, recently married daughter Khadíjih Khánúm, educated in Odessa, his younger daughter Ásíyih, and his two younger sons (in school and reportedly playboys who financed the passing of their examinations). Florence referred in her letter to Ásíyih as ‘Marzieh’s

old friend from Teheran’ but in point of fact this was the princess who, in 1914, had slapped water all over her in the garden. Friend indeed.

Muhammad-‘Alí Sháh had never before accepted such an invitation for himself and his family, and his coming showed the surrounding Muslim world that the Khans, in this case Florence, were signally honored by the Royal House of Persia.

The Embassy halls were empty and silent on this occasion, even Khan and Rahim were banished, five women served, there were no male attendants except the kavasses at the gates, although three Russian musicians, well concealed, played throughout the luncheon and a few male servants were hidden in the cellar.

Twelve in all sat down at the table for the exquisite Persian meal. Florence had decorated the table with illuminated menu cards done in gold by a Persian artist, and place cards with the usual Lion and Sun. Along about course number three the Queen Mother began to compliment the food and the others echoed her, all the way to the ice cream. In the midst of the luncheon the Crown Prince told Florence, ‘Madame, His Majesty would like to say a little word to you.’

Florence had placed herself at the foot of the table, and the Shah

(even Ahmad Sháh called his deposed father the Shah) at the head. She looked at him over the flowers and saw he was holding up a glass of champagne. 'I drink to the health of Madame,' His Majesty said. At the same time the Crown Prince raised his glass and father and son toasted Florence together. (The ladies never touched wine.) Khan was delighted when he heard about the compliment, to which Florence had replied with a general toast to all.

The guests stayed from half past two until half past six.

Marzieh's only memory of the event is that, lunch being over, Ásíyih Khánúm was standing near her in one of the salons, holding a balled-up handkerchief, when the Crown Prince suddenly appeared in the doorway. You are not supposed to be carrying or holding anything in the presence of Persian royalty. Ásíyih quickly got rid of her handkerchief by cramming it into Marzieh's hand.

The Crown Princess told Florence the Embassy was 'superbe, magnifique'. And the Queen proved she was an observant housewife by commenting that she had never seen the redecorated Embassy so clean, even in the corners.

The leaders of the Persian colony praised Khan for his handling of the royal visit and said they would never let him go. They were pleased, too, to have a hostess at the Embassy.

Less agreeable among Khan's functions was to supervise the slaughter of sheep on behalf of the Embassy at the great Feast of

Sacrifice, which commemorates Abraham's offering up his only son to the Lord. The specially chosen animals were perfect and in their prime, and they were beautified for death, with kohl lining their eyelids. Sugar candy was placed in their mouths, their heads were turned toward Mecca, and the skilled butcher said, as he performed his symbolic task, 'In the name of God!'

Khan could hardly bring himself to kill a mosquito.

Nearing the end of his visit the Crown Prince made a decision which would profoundly affect Khan's future. He had been much impressed with Khan's organizing ability, his efficiency and capacity for hard work, not to mention the lavish fêtes Khan and Florence had given in the Prince's and Persia's honor. Because of all this, he asked Khan to head his Court. This meant much more than it might seem at first glance, for during the Shah's long absences in Europe, the Prince ruled Persia in the sovereign's place.

Khan, a Goethe man and a romantic, was attracted by the thought of becoming a sort of mentor to the young Qájár, whom he liked, and playing an influential role somewhat, *mutatis mutandis*, along the lines of Goethe's at the Court of the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar.

Thirty-eight

The crushing blow at Stenia

After Khan had been carried off to Paris by the Crown Prince,

Florence and the girls stayed up the Bosphorus at Stenia, renting a cottage from a Persian doctor. Visiting them for a time was cousin Ameen Sepehri and a friend, Madani, on their way to Persia. In back of the house a cemetery climbed up the hill, its turbans awry on their narrow, every-which-way stelae. The downstairs was given over to a small cafe where fishermen spent their evenings, talking, singing, listening to Turkish not quite honky-tonk music. The magical Bosphorus with its powerful, stiff currents was virtually at the door. The cafe sent up meals, or they ate downstairs, mostly salads and fish just-drawn from the Bosphorus, that wide, windy, stiff-waved, bright blue strait that rushes, covering about twenty miles, from the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmora and Constantinople. Going up in a boat was a battle against the current. Coming down they swept quickly past the banks, where gardens, some untended, reached to the water's edge, and villas, some decaying, were set in a bower of trees, and jutting, upper-story wooden balconies leaned

out over the current. The Bosphorus was alive with fish; if you trailed your fingers in the water their tips were nibbled. Florence and the girls would watch the fishermen hauling ashore great nets bursting with the leaping, tossing silver catch. A few years afterward, when Florence, at table in Haifa, mentioned this to the Guardian, he said, 'I hope the deeds of your children will be as numerous as those fish.'

It was when they were in the cottage at Stenia that the family learned their life had been changed for all time. Their Persian Bahá'í teacher, Dánish, came to them one dark evening, and badly shaken, told them that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was gone from this earth. They all cried together. From its beginning, this family's entire life had been founded on, grounded in, the Master. He had been there at every turn, to guide, explain, and help. You could say that Florence and Khan were among His many 'spoiled children'. Now they were on their own. Under the Guardian the Cause would enter a new phase, more responsibility would now have to be shouldered by individual believers even though Shoghi Effendi daily and nightly led, guided and watched over the Bahá'ís, denying himself in order to sustain them, until finally, in the far-off future, their burdens and the burden of the rapidly growing Faith crushed him when he was hardly sixty years old.

On a rainy night they went down to a big meeting at Constantinople, and discussed Khánúm's cable from Haifa, telling of the Guardian's appointment, and Florence, soon to leave for Persia, was asked to take in the first copy of the Master's Will to reach that country. On the journey she would guard it carefully, concealed about her person, and once they had crossed the Black Sea to Batum, and gone on by train to Baku, some believers at the Hazíratu'l-Quds sat up much of the night, each, including Javád Khán, a Muslim,

who was escorting Florence and the girls, transcribing a different section, so the believers in that area could have their copy as well. Now, with the winter, Florence and the girls moved down the Bosphorus from the cottage at Stenia, to a hotel in Pera. She wrote sadly home about how Khan, far away and surrounded by Muslims, dared not weep for the Master 'nor let himself go on the human side until we rejoin him'. How at different ports, stricken believers would come on board to see him. And how he had written her 'to teach his children a living Lord!' the Master being with them always. 'It certainly was a severe blow to fall upon this family when we were separated, Rahim in London! Khan on the high seas! The girls and I in Constantinople! and you in America!'

'I, like Khan,' she wrote of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'place my attention on the spiritual verity, on the ascension of His Glory. Now He is

universal, even more clearly so, than when in His blessed body ... Now, Khan writes, "He shines from the horizon of the hearts and souls and lives of His true believers". The friends here are very brave. Naturally there has been and is great and deep sorrow, but equal joy and illumination, and acceptance. None', she added, 'could recall Him to this painful life, who loves Him truly.'

She asked her American family to seal their letters with sealing wax, since she was receiving them open. The letters went first to the American Embassy, then over to Florence wherever she was, usually by way of the Consulate, and arrived open, and reached her open. She also asked them not to write on any political matters, and to be discreet—pretty useless advice to free speech Americans who, much of the time, could not differentiate between what seemed to be political and what did not.

Florence was very short of funds that winter, as money due her was being, as usual, delayed.

She commented on the great bounty Florian and Grace Krug had been given, to be present in Haifa when 'Abdu'l-Bahá passed away. She heard that He had sent away most of His secretaries and others beforehand. He had written Khan in that Tablet toward the end, answering Khan's request that Florence and the daughters might come to the Holy Land, by saying that in case she was not happy there 'it would be very heavy on His heart!' She had not then understood what the Master meant, since she was always happy in His presence. As she confided, 'that is one reason I do not dare give way to grief, and am waiting to rejoin Khan, so we may serve together and bear both this loss in the body, and the glory of His ascension together. In one way, all the true Friends died with Him, and so we must ascend with Him to higher places and glory.' She went on to note the manner of His going, and how 'our Beloved ascended so gently and unselfishly'.

Another time she wrote of the quiet life she was living, how kind

the Persians and Americans were being, and of how she had a few friends who were ‘all-powerful and strong people, so we are entirely safe’.

She said Constantinople was the gossips’ Home Sweet Home, and complimented herself on attracting little attention. What with her modest way of life: ‘I have no dog to “keep the boys off”’ she told the family, but judging by a few things that happened, ‘I fear that were I ever to become a widow—which God forbid! as I am really “married” to Khan and hate all others—I would not be allowed to remain one, very long.’

If she could see this, she said, what about other women who were out all the time, ‘dancing, dining, and in the whirl?’ Khan had, she

said, strategically placed various ‘guardians’ to watch over her during his absence, not realizing that all of them were now ‘a little bit in love’ with her, and one ‘so hopeless he has had to quit the job!’ Khan ‘always tells me I am now too old for anyone to look at, and I sincerely believed it, up to two months ago.’

Thirty-nine

Black Sea, Caspian Sea, and Model T to Tehran

It was early spring in 1922 when Florence and the girls, escorted by Javád Khán, left Constantinople for Tehran. That last night was snowy and as they drove through the dark streets of Pera for the last time to board the ship, Marzieh felt that she loved the beautiful city so much she never wanted to see it again.

Khan was already in Tehran, having carried out his mission to bring the Crown Princess Mahín-Bánú home to Persia so that she, very near to term, could bear her child in the capital.

Besides the long sea passage and the mountain journey through deep winter snows, there had been the problem of Hájí Mubárah Khán. A tall, reed-thin, powerful black eunuch, a royal from Abyssinia, he was a fundamentalist Shiah, and great regard had to be shown him at all times. He hated being among unclean foreigners and eating their unclean food, and had even been seen publicly brandishing an áftábih (bathroom ewer) for his ablutions.

Khan could not help, during the journey, making some apparently complimentary reference to him in his presence, which a few others in the party, also chafing at their restrictive traveling companion, warder and spy, would appreciate. It is Persian custom to single out an individual in group society and openly compliment him to the others. Stifled, Khan devised a way of translating an occasional Persian insult into fabricated French which sounded like an encomium. For example, he would say, ‘Hájí Mubárah Khán is indeed a pétophage,’ which got across well to the complimented one but was simply Khan’s French version of chus-khur (one who eats broken wind—a miser).

At last the royal party reached Persia in the dead of winter with

Mahín-Bánú's pregnancy far advanced and intervening mountains deep in snow. At one point, finding the slopes completely blocked, Khan raised a small army of a thousand men, half clearing a way up one side of the mountain, the other half digging from the other side to meet at the top of the pass.

A few days before term, the Princess was safe in her palace in the capital. And then, after all Khan had been through, she gave birth to a girl. A girl could not sit on the Peacock Throne.

Khan ordered official celebrations anyhow.

From Constantinople, Florence with her daughters and Javád, sailed up the Bosphorus and across the Black Sea to Batum, then went on by rail to Baku.

A slight problem with Marzieh arose on the train when they were nearing that port. It was night and the darkened windows had turned into mirrors. As Marzieh left her compartment she passed by Javád, standing in the doorway. Once designated in Marzieh's diary as 'a sweet little fellow', he had by now, when she was thirteen, made a deeper impression. As she was walking past him he kissed her on the cheek and Florence saw it all from the next compartment, reflected in the train window. She was very displeased and began to interrogate Marzieh, who decided to go into total silence and kept this up for some twenty-four hours.

After Baku, they were three nights on the Caspian, sleeping fully clothed, on red velvet divans along the wall in the dining saloon, 'lights on, windows open and Bolsheviks everywhere about us'.

'We motored from the Caspian Sea to Teheran in a "Flivver",' Florence also wrote her sister Ruby, 'we three on the back seat and one secretary in front with the Persian chauffeur, while the Persian mechanic rode outside [on the running board of the Model T "touring car"], sitting on a tin of petrol all the way.'

She wrote of mountain summits, snow fields, and the haunts of man-eating wild beasts. At night the family slept in caravanserais and Marzieh, exhausted, lying on the floor with the others, remembers being grateful to the driver, because he once brought her an armload of inner tubes for a pillow.

They spent a long sequence of dark hours when the 'Flivver' broke its right rear wheel and they had no spare. They waited, completely alone in emptiness, except for a camel caravan that swung and padded by during the night, with one of the drivers singing a rollicking song that Florence found 'heartening'. While the chauffeur and the mechanic tinkered, the four travelers, sitting ducks, all nerves and prayers, wrapped themselves in robes and tried to sleep. Eventually they made it to an inn for camel drivers and slept again, this time on a hard wooden platform amidst their luggage, the six of them plus the innkeeper and a few other travelers each in his chosen corner.

About an hour before they hoped to arrive at the capital the mechanic on his running board kicked at a wolf, which came toward them out of the shadows. Florence saw no others with the animal, only the one, but she offered a prayer that the Model T would not fail them again.

There was an eerie look to Tehran when they finally rattled into the city toward midnight. Here and there along wide, black avenues was a small open-air grocery store with a lamp among its wares. They did not know where Khan was living but they stopped and asked the first passerby they came to and he did know, and guided them to a handsome residence on the Du Shán-Tappih. Marzieh was impressed to find that, when they entered a vast city in the dark, the first stranger they spoke to on the street could tell them where her father lived.

She was also happy that Khan had a present waiting for her: a palomino stallion which she rode in the garden to the horror of the servants, used only to women in chádurs.

They had hardly reached the capital when one of the Crown Princess's eunuchs came over to see if they were veiling as befitted their position. Florence cheerfully told the Khájih (which besides eunuch, means a master, a man of distinction, a teacher) that they had had the chádurs since arriving at Enzeli. This was true enough in its way. Just before leaving Constantinople Marzieh had chanced to read Loti's *The Disenchanted* about Turkish women in seclusion, and had determined never to veil. When, after disembarking at Enzeli, she found that she was supposed to veil, she ran a fever and took to her bed in the Báqiroff home, for she had been a militant feminist from the cradle on up.

Florence, writing to her sister Alice, said that the young modern progressive Persians of both sexes were against the chádur. Three complete outfits were awaiting them at the port city but 'all the charming young officials', Bahá'í men, and military officers, and all the women, 'begged them not to wear the chádurs', so they hid them under the car seats till the last stop before Tehran, where Florence decided to put on an 'abá with a veil over her hat, and the girls reluctantly bundled up but refused to cover their faces. In the event they arrived by night, unheralded, their wire predictably not having been received.

Many of the royals, as it turned out, did not wish Florence and the girls to submit to the chádur, except perhaps on occasion, for Persia was yearning to be free. 'All are sick of it,' Florence wrote, hoping the social isolation of women from men would be modified. 'But of course, to palace eunuchs, the loss of the veil meant the death of their reason for existence.'

Hamideh was furious over the Khájih's visit. 'The idea', she said, 'that somebody who is neither a he nor a she but an It should dare to

tell us to veil!' Whereupon she picked up a pair of shears, cut her black satin chádur into rags and threw them down the toilet—an oblong slot apparently over China.

Once in Tehran, Marzieh had been disconcerted to see relatives avalanching into her bedroom with vigorous cries of welcome while she was still in bed.

Meanwhile she stayed at home, jailed—not entirely Khan's fault since the two of them had reached an impasse about the matter of Javád and she on her part was on strike against the chádur, thus limiting her activities chiefly to within the walls of the compound. Khan had never refused anything to Marzieh before, but he now refused her surprising request to marry Javád, and forbade him ever to come near Marzieh again. Khan then placed his daughter under house arrest. She could not understand why, since all her life whenever she had sat on his lap and asked for something she had gotten it, this time Khan was adamant, against Javád. (In those innocent days, the family had never heard of Sigmund Freud.) 'But it wouldn't have to be right now,' Marzieh had assured Khan. She had just turned fourteen.

Javád's mother had sent over, balanced on the heads of attendants, elaborate trays of sweets that are a fiancé's gift to his intended. Florence, however, did not acknowledge the courtesy. (A number of families eventually turned against the Khans as their overtures were discouraged. About this, nothing could be done.)

'Please keep it confidential,' Florence wrote Alice, 'but the first young man to desire to marry Marzieh since our arrival, has already had to be denied the house. I feel sorry things are beginning so early ... but also she is deeply interested in study.'

Florence did not add the indignant statement made by Khan after he had expelled Javád: 'And if any other man comes after my daughter, I will cry "Avaunt! Avaunt!".'

Inevitably, this Shakespearean announcement became a part of the family repertoire.

Fortunately for Marzieh, Munírih Khánúm Ayádi[115] sympathized with her plight, and at night when Khan was away would sneak her out for a walk, unveiled. It was like being Hárúnu'r-Rashíd, going in disguise through the streets of Baghdad. Munírih Khánúm, wife and daughter of Hands of the Faith, was afraid of no one and although in chádur wore her píchih high on her head, leaving her face bare. One night when they were accosted by a lout, crying 'Who goes there?' Munírih Khánúm answered him calmly, 'Bandiy-Khudá', a servant of God. Not veiling, Marzieh was sometimes taken for an Armenian, since Armenian girls did not wear the chádur and had to accept many an insult from the Shiah rabble: 'Armaní, sag-i-Armaní', the street boys would cry, 'járúb-kish-i-jahannamí.' Armenian, dog of an Armenian, you are the sweeper-out of Hell. Other times she also

heard the hostile cry, 'Bábí!' This meant follower of Bahá'u'lláh's Herald, the Báb. The name Bahá'í was slow to reach the masses. One day while still confined to the house and grounds Marzieh saw a youth in the garden cranking away at something in a wooden bucket.

'What are you doing?' she asked in Persian.

He blushed and stammered. Probably he had never talked to a strange unveiled girl before. 'Making ice cream,' he said.

'What kind?'

'Sádih,' he said. 'Sádih.'

'What does Sádih mean?'

Someone translated: 'Plain.'

This boy was about fifteen, and his name was Karím Khán Ayádí, the son of Munírih Khánum, and the grandson of Hájí Ákhúnd, appointed by Bahá'u'lláh a Hand of the Cause.

In after years he would become famous as Shah Muhammad-Reza's doctor, one of only two men in the palace, Queen Soraya wrote in her memoir, whom she could trust.

By April 13 the family had been in Tehran two weeks and four days. 'Dear Shoghi Effendi's first two glorious Tablets have reached Teheran, and I have heard them,' Florence wrote on that date. She said the friends were rejoicing over the youth and leadership of His Highness Shoghi Rabbani.

Florence thought of sending her daughters off to school in Europe. Meanwhile she wrote, 'Rahim is all alone in England, God help him ... but he must get educated.' Whatever Florence and Khan were able to provide for Rahim in the way of education, and they always tried to find the best, would in the end prove barren of results, a fact which, although they bore it with Bahá'í 'radiant acquiescence' as best they could, embittered their later life. Rahim's visit to the family at the Embassy in Constantinople when he was sixteen had shown them a splendid and brilliant young man, but he would remain such for only a few more years. Certainly in this world, as Khan often said, we see but a short distance along the way, and the mysteries of our earthly misfortunes will be explained in the life to come. The reasons for the tragedy of Rahim, on whom such hopes had been placed, he being 'the first fruits of the spiritual union between East and West', were not easy to grasp. However, the

myopic statement often heard in America that 'life is unfair' does not express the truth. 'God truly will not wrong anyone the weight of a mote,' the Qur'án says (4:44). Elsewhere, so much as 'the husk of a date stone' (4:52).

Marzieh and Hamideh were already receiving Persian lessons and Bahá'í education from qualified women believers, and Florence joined the classes when she could. Wherever the family went, tutors

were arranged for, to teach the girls, the training of girls being stressed even more than that of boys in the Bahá'í Faith, since mothers are the first trainers of the race.

Florence wrote that because of the chádur, 'poor Marzieh says she won't leave the gardens as she hates to give in'.

Meanwhile, an expert rider, a graduate of Sandhurst, Sultán Mahmúd Khán, called regularly on his own initiative to teach her proper riding in the walled garden.

The family health was attended to by Dr Arastú Khán and Dr Susan I. Moody, the latter a famed American homeopathist who devoted most of her life to caring for the Persians. Florence, Khan and Hamideh stayed well, but Marzieh was up and down with malarial chills and fever. Homeopathy did not work for her: a shotgun dose of everything available in the hope that some part of it would prove effective, was her preference. 'She wears as few clothes as possible,' Florence reported wearily, 'and whenever she gets a cold, we begin all over again.'

Khan was working himself to exhaustion, just as he had done in Constantinople, and come to that, in all his years before. He was hoping they could relieve their financial situation by selling Florence's diamonds in New York and the beautiful property in East Hampton, Long Island.

Ironically, it was at this time of stringent finances that Florence received an invitation to a great banquet at the Shah's palace and had to appear in borrowed jewelry. She wrote her father, 'This year, I was invited, which was the first time the wife of a Persian official was ever present at such a dinner at the Shah's Palace.' Then, because she was always somewhat on the defensive about her marriage—Boston society girl married to strange foreigner—and liked to inform her parents of any social success that came her way, she could not help adding on the earlier triumph in Constantinople: 'I also was the first lady to receive as hostess and Châtelaine of the Persian Embassy at Constantinople, since History began. Other ladies have either veiled, or have received only a few ladies or close friends there. But I received the Diplomatic Corps;—and here, altho' I hold no Court position I receive the Foreign Ministers in our home ... The Persian notabilities of the Shah's Court, and the Cabinet and

Government, and of the country, call continually, as well as of the Valí-'Ahd's [Crown Prince's] Court ...'

For this occasion, the anniversary of the Shah's coronation, she was loaned an emerald necklace by a cousin, widow of the brother of Muzaffari'd-Dín Sháh. Another cousin provided a diamond bracelet and two enormous diamond and sapphire rings. 'So with my own few jewels here and my decorations, my lovely Parisian gown of silver flowers on black velvet was well helped out. The Áftáb decoration is a huge round sun, set with rays of diamonds, and in the

centre is a little miniature of the “lion and the Sun”. The Shah decorated me with this on my last visit, but the Crown Prince decorated me again, so that I hold the third and second degrees and am thus entitled to wear the great diamond-rayed sunburst. This decoration is bestowed upon the wives of Prime Ministers of Europe sometimes. And I believe the First *Áftáb* decoration of the sun is given to foreign queens.—I carried my lovely Austrian feather-fan with the tortoise-shell sticks. We drove to the Palace in two carriages, Khan in one, according to custom, and I in the other.’ The two passed through crowds of spectators and entered a series of antechambers, all brilliantly alight with Persian lamps and hung with precious rugs. Then on through gardens over a tiled walk covered with rugs, between rows of young soldiers at salute, in full dress uniform with bayonets on their guns—as smart as West Pointers, she said, after their own fashion. The vast garden was a fairyland of red, green, and white lights and banners, the Persian colors. Here they met Reza Khan, then Minister of War, who saluted them and indicated they should precede him. ‘In his hand, today, rests Persia,’ Florence percipiently remarked. (It would not be long before this very Reza Khan would sweep the *Qájárs* away.) Florence and Khan kept walking on and on, over costly rugs, along streams of clear water and a series of blue-tiled pools, and guided by crowds of attendants, toward the brightly shining palace. They left their wraps and entered the great reception hall, and here the ministers of state were walking about in their cashmere-shawl robes and black lambskin hats, their decorations sparkling, especially the *Timthál* or Shah’s portrait, the highest decoration of all, worn around the neck and set with diamonds. She saw, too, other decorations—the *Quds* set with even larger diamonds, if possible, than the *Timthál*, and the *Aqdas*, surmounted by a diamond crown. Khan’s diplomatic uniform, fully embroidered in gold, with small loops on the breast for decorations, and hidden tucks to make room for expansion when the young diplomat would be young no longer—had been laid away for the higher dress worn at court, the cashmere robe of honor.

A hundred and twenty guests went in to dinner, and Florence entered on the arm of Reza Khan, walking just behind the Prime Minister, who went first.

A self-made man, the Minister of War had risen from the ranks (he had even been a sentry at the door of a hospital). In addition to his own unswerving ambition, he owed his opportunity to events going back to 1907. The Anglo-Russian Convention of that year had in effect shared Persia between Russia and England. Like Gaul, they divided the country as we saw, into three parts, the worst being left to Persia, with their two good sections being called spheres of interest. At that time, using Russian officers, the Russians created an

elite Persian military corps, the Cossack Brigade.

Then came the Great War and the Russian Revolution, eliminating Russia from the world scene for the time being. Immediately after the November 1918 Armistice, Sir Percy Cox arrived in Tehran as British Minister and over a nine-month period negotiated an Anglo-Persian Agreement which in effect made Persia a British protectorate. When the Persians discovered by what dubious means this

Agreement was contrived, they arose in fury, there was a coup d'état with the backing of the Cossack Brigade, Siyyid Zia-ed-Din came to power (1921) and abrogated the Agreement. Then he himself would be overthrown, and replaced by Reza Khan of the Cossack Brigade as Minister of War and Commander in Chief. Thus an illiterate (after all, so was Charlemagne) one-time army private, onetime sentry at a hospital gate, would eventually (1925) become a powerful Shah.

After the dinner many others also attended a reception and light supper in the garden and watched the fireworks. Hamideh, 'a real sport', was brought to the palace and given a special supper—but Marzieh, inveterate hater of parties, stayed home. To social occasions, she much preferred rides, tennis and tête-à-têtes with personable young men.

Florence said later that the royal eunuchs were horrified to see her, 'but no one else was. They, the eunuchs, want me to retire under the veil.'

As the days passed, Khan and Florence met members of the Diplomatic Corps, including the newly-arrived United States Minister, Joseph S. Kornfeld. While at the races one day, Florence thanked the Russian Minister and his wife for the courteous treatment she had received throughout the Caucasus. Not bound by the comrade-this and comrade-that proletarian style which obtained in those early years after the Revolution, this couple lived in what was almost the finest palace in Tehran, Morgan Shuster's old palace and park, home before that of the assassinated Prime Minister, Atábak.

That same April Florence wrote her father of the gardens around their house: the white fruit blossoms were gone, the garden was green now, there were tiny fruits forming on the boughs, the first nightingale had sung a few nights back and sure enough in the morning the first roses had bloomed.

She longed for mail from home, also the Sunday newspapers with the sensational 'Society revelations' and the shiny brown photographs in the 'rotogravure' sections. American letters would, she feared, take about two months to arrive, and that in good weather.

About this time the Crown Prince was expected back from Europe. (Just what determined the royal visits to and fro one has no idea. No doubt the Shah and the Crown Prince did as they pleased.) Khan meanwhile had no funds. As usual he felt the future would be

an improvement: some of his arrears would be paid when his chief returned, in spite of 'the financial difficulty from which the country is suffering temporarily'. How long was temporary, one can but ask. 'At present,' he wrote, 'the country is without money and they don't want to accept the Standard Oil-British partnership in the northern oil fields and so a loan is not yet available.' Meanwhile, Rahim's school in England 'costs like fury!' Khan tells of the recent arrival of the new American Minister, Kornfeld, and judges that he is 'a fine man'.

The letter closes with these words to Khan's father-in-law: 'Rest assured the appointment of dear Shoghi Effendi which is a balm to my wounded heart, will eventually right all wrongs and effect union amongst all the friends. Be assured God shall not abandon His Cause.'

Florence's same confidence in the future of the Bahá'í Faith, then of so little notice in much of the world, is seen in a fragment of one of her letters from this time: 'Abdu'l-Bahá has come and gone! Yet what a rich harvest He has sown and garnered—and what untold thousands of hearts will yet ripen into perfect bloom, as His fruits ... How many of us He has blown the breath of life into—and now, how we must arise in service to prove our devotion and sincere love and gratitude ... May God help and protect and guide and save us one and all.'

She had visited the fine Bahá'í School, the Tarbíyat, and addressed the students briefly in Persian. Afterward she went to the grave of Lillian Kappes, the pretty young woman who had come from America in 1911 to serve Dr Moody. Lillian had spent years in the face of unnumbered difficulties to build up Persia's Tarbíyat School for Girls, and when she died of typhus, December 1st, 1920, hundreds of weeping mourners accompanied her coffin to its place by the Varqá Tomb. But a cable soon came from the Master which said: 'Miss Kappes [is] very happy. I invite [the] world [to] be not grieved.' [116]

Lillian had ridden out to wave Khan and Florence goodbye when they had left for home in 1914. 'She was the last friend we saw, at the gates of Tehran ... the last of all, and waving gaily to us, full of life and youth.'

Her grave, with a simple brown tile at the head, was covered with violet plants. Florence laid roses on it and read a prayer in Persian.

Forty

The imperial eyes

The Persians endured their Shahs like an act of God, along with so much else: poverty, smallpox, typhus, famine, the sálak (a face-boil that could last a year and usually leave a disfiguring scar), babies dying nine out of ten. Their life as described by Sa'dí, writing his Garden of Roses in the thirteenth century, was still recognizable in the

twentieth. Sa‘dí has one of the Shahs consulting a holy man as to what course to pursue. (Holy men were valued, since, possessing nothing, they had nothing to lose by telling the truth.) ‘What would be the best thing for me to do?’ the Shah asked him. ‘For you’, said the holy one, ‘to take a nap in the middle of the day, because at least during that interval you would be harming no man.’

In 1788, the eunuch-founder of the Qájár dynasty selected Tehran for his capital. This city, mentioned only as a stronghold by a thirteenth-century traveler, is thus fairly new, about seven hundred years old, but it is hard by ancient Rayy, the Rhages of the Book of Tobit.

The actual progenitor of the Qájárs was Fath-‘Alí Sháh, he of the wavy black beard and the jewels, who compensated for his uncle, the eunuch, by marrying an estimated one thousand wives, and producing some one hundred and five children. Next came Muhammad Sháh, who ruled in the days of the Báb and died in 1848, and after him came Násiri’ d-Dín, the third of the dynasty.

Call it quirks, crotchets, perversions, whatever, the Qájárs had them. It was Khan’s fate to be associated with their waning rule during the days when Reza Shah-to-be was preparing to seize the throne through control of the army.

One prince was terrified of cats, not too apt a syndrome for royals in a country known for splendid cats and that was, indeed, shaped

like a cat itself: for Persia on the map is a cat sitting down, shown from behind, its head turned to the West. Another prince would shake and tremble if he had to come in close contact with any human being. Some at Court would deliberately ask to share his carriage, if, say, he was heading for Tehran from the summer palace in the foothills, and enjoy his reasons for not taking them along. The tiny daughter of exiled Muhammad-‘Alí Sháh (the Shah who bombarded Parliament with members in it, not caring for representative government) affirmed that every morning her lady-in-waiting had to pound and knead her arms for her, or she could not get up, and every night she had to be read to, or she could not sleep. Idle palace retainers, in their hordes, insured the dependence on them of their royal masters.

This daughter, laughing, mischievous, much engrossed with her young husband, was given to long accounts of palace life that she punctuated with the venerable saying *ín gú, ín maydán*—this is the polo ball, this is the field, an expression meaning, ‘Here you go! Get cracking!’ The only trouble was, instead of *gú, ball*, she had somehow substituted the word *guh*, excrement. Khan was disgusted. ‘To think’, he commented, ‘that the granddaughter of Násiri’ d-Dín Sháh would say “*ín guh, ín maydán*”.’ That Shah was a traveled king who encouraged education and had some literary attainments.

If you think of the Qájárs, you think of eyes. Long eyes, long lashed. They were a Turkish tribe, and looked like the people in old Persian miniatures—fair skin, penciled noses, small, delicate mouths. Even with their eunuch-founder, Ághá Muhammad Khán, you think of eyes. Sir John Malcolm describes how that founder dealt with one of his own governors, a man named Zál. Leery of Zál, Ághá Muhammad Khán ordered the governor's eyes put out. When Zál cursed him, the eunuch said, 'Cut out his tongue.'

It was commonly believed by the Persians that the Qájárs were under a curse, and again you think of eyes. Some said one of them had forced a man to copulate with his wife in the presence of the Court, and the man, intolerably dishonored, cursed the ruler and tore out his own eyes.

Saghaphi, a page at the palace, comments on the eyes of Násiri'd-Dín. They were, he says, 'abnormally large, deep ...' and he flashed them 'like searchlights, knowing their powers ...'[117] The Shah could stare down any wild beast, and all animals, it seems, trembled under his gaze. The chief of the equerries told Saghaphi that of the three hundred pure-bred stallions, cream of the Shah's stables of four thousand Arab horses, he, the equerry, would always choose the quietest for the Shah to mount, because the spirited could not endure

the Shah's eyes and would go mad and rear and shudder as if ambushed by a tiger. Even Victoria, it was said, was conscious of and disturbed by the imperial gaze.

Násiri'd-Dín was the one who took England by storm when he visited, so that 'Have you seen the Shah?' became a catchword of the day. Stories abound of his European journeys. One hears that when he attended the Paris opera, the dancers pleased him so much that he thought of purchasing the entire corps de ballet for export to his harem. On his return home he did put all the Court ladies into ballet skirts, not light and airy tutus but heavy and pleated, and worn over long tight trousers. Framing a lady's face was her dark, hennaed bangs and side curls, and in back under the head covering were maybe a dozen long, tiny braids like today's Rastafarian 'dreadlocks'. Meanwhile her makeup was an enameled mask, and her eyebrows were joined, or at least had a vertical line of hair between, as beauty of the time and place required. Even into the 1920's, Khan's oldest Muslim sister still favored ballet garb, inspired by the old Court. While he enjoyed the dancers at the opera, it is related that His Majesty did not cotton to the music. There was, however, an occasion when some part of the overture pleased him, and at the first entr'acte he sent word for the orchestra to play it again. They tried to oblige, replayed this, replayed that, but no, no, the Shah said, and na-khayr. At last they gave up and started tuning their instruments. Instant clapping from the royal box. That was the piece. It sounded just like Persian music.

It is also related that when asked to attend the races the Shah refused, because, he told them, 'It is not unknown to us that one horse will run faster than another horse.'

A former Ambassador, an Austrian sinologist named Arthur von Rosthorn (referred to, incidentally, in Loti's book on the Boxer Rebellion, *The Last Days of Peking*), described the sojourn in a Vienna palace of Persia's royal suite. He said that when they vacated, it was discovered that stacked-up carcasses of slaughtered sheep had been left behind. We assume those pious Muslims could not accept non-ritually slaughtered sheep and simply did the best they knew how. After all, one cannot pack everything.

Násiri'd-Dín reigned seemingly forever, like his contemporaries Victoria and Pope Pius IX. He was born in 1831 and ruled from 1848 to 1896. He was on the throne when the Báb was martyred, when Bahá'u'lláh was chained in the Black Pit, when Persian soil was soaked red from the blood of twenty thousand believers, when, exiled far away on the Mediterranean Sea, Bahá'u'lláh left this world. To him Bahá'u'lláh, Who was then a captive in Adrianople, wrote

His famous *Lawh-i-Sultán*, His longest Tablet to any one sovereign. In it the Manifestation of God sets forth His teachings, and reminds Násiri'd-Dín that just prior to Bahá'u'lláh's exile out of Persia, the

Shah himself had recognized His innocence of any crime, and He asks the Shah to let Him demonstrate to the clergy the proofs of His prophetic mission. It is here that Bahá'u'lláh proclaims in words the world will never forget: 'O king! I was but a man like others, asleep upon My couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been. This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing. And He bade Me lift up My voice between earth and heaven, and for this there befell Me what hath caused the tears of every man of understanding to flow.' [118]

In 1869, the second year of His imprisonment in the fortress at 'Akká, Bahá'u'lláh had this Tablet hand-carried to the Shah, the instigator of His banishments, by a seventeen-year-old youth name Badí'. Badí' walked four months, knowing he would never retrace his steps, until he reached Tehran, and then started a fast and vigil, waiting for His Majesty to ride out to the hunt. Respectfully, when the Shah rode by, the boy approached him with the letter. The Shah commanded that it be taken away and delivered to his clerical friends the mujtahids, and ordered them to answer it. Instead, they recommended that the messenger be put to death. For three days they branded the boy with red-hot irons and then, using a rifle butt, they smashed in his skull. [119]

Certainly, the Shah had in mind that other time, that August day in 1852, when he had ridden out as a hunter and found himself a prey. He was attacked then by two frenzied youths, armed with

pistols ineffectively charged only with birdshot, they pulling at him, hanging on to his legs from either side of the plunging stallion, he first remaining in the saddle, then thrown to the ground, and then the slight pain in his arm and side.

That day his doctor, Cloquet, had hurried him into a walled garden and soon there was total chaos: ministers of state summoned, messengers galloping in and about the garden, trumpets blowing, drums beating, contingents of the army marching in, everybody issuing orders, nobody seeing, nor hearing, nor listening. In the midst of it the governor of Tehran had sent a courier to ask for news and instructions. The rumor was that the Shah had been assassinated, and the merchants had closed their shops in the bazaars, and the bakers were besieged by people clamoring for bread. The governor had shut the city gates, drawn up armed forces and readied his enormous cannon, fuses lit, although he had no idea what enemy to confront.[120]

The two youths, his attackers, had been Bábís, and there had followed, the Shah recalled with satisfaction, a general public slaughter of the believers in the new religion. One of the attackers was killed on the spot, dragged by a mule to Tehran, cut in two halves and exhibited to the people. His accomplice, after other tortures, had molten lead poured down his throat. Then an orgy of murder exploded in the capital. An Austrian captain in the Shah's service, von Goumoens, resigned his post, his civilized heart revolted by the butchery, which he described in a letter home, saying he could no longer go outside, but was remaining indoors, so as not to witness it. Later a French historian, Renan, called that great massacre at Tehran 'a day perhaps without parallel in the history of the world'.[121]

Bahá'u'lláh, guest at the time of the Grand Vazír in a mountain village, disdaining to hide, rode straight to the headquarters of the Imperial army and was delivered into enemy hands. He, gently bred, Son of a favored minister of the Court, was then driven, barefooted and bareheaded in the August heat, abused and mocked by the crowds, down the long miles to Tehran and chained with criminals in the Black Pit, three flights underground. Four months He was there, and there the 'Most Great Spirit' first began to stir within His soul.

Meanwhile the true instigator of the attempted regicide confessed, and with the help of powerful friends, notably the Russian Minister, Prince Dolgorouki, Bahá'u'lláh was released from the Pit, and, virtually destitute, sent out of Persia with His family to Baghdad, starting forty years of exile, never to see His homeland again.

The life and death of others meant little to Násiri'd-Dín. Was it not he who decided who was to live, and who was to die?

In the winter of 1882–83, appointed by President Arthur as

America's first envoy to Persia, heading its newly-created Legation there, S. G. W. Benjamin arrived for a two years stay in Tehran, and wrote a valuable, detailed report on the country as he saw it. He was much awed by 'the tremendous power of an Eastern King'. The special case he cites is this: One day the Shah was out taking the air when a small group of soldiers crowded around his carriage, trying to petition their sovereign, because their pay was long overdue. Their paymasters knew where the money had gone, and not wishing exposure, blocked the soldiers off. There was something of a disturbance, stones were thrown, it was not known by whom, and struck the royal carriage. Immediately driven back to his palace, the Shah sent for the soldiers, who had been arrested on the spot. He was told that the soldiers were Bábís, a tale, says Benjamin, probably invented by those who were the real cause of the soldiers' plight.

(Ever since 1844, and still today, people have been killed in Persia on the excuse that they were followers of the new Faith.) Benjamin goes on to relay an eyewitness account of what happened next. The great outer court of the Arg, the Citadel, or royal palace, was jammed with attendants and populace. The witness, there on other business, tried to avoid what he knew was coming, but attendants forced him to stay where he was. Near him, shaking, was the Prime Minister. On the portico opposite them, the Shah stood alone. He was leaning, with his arm outstretched, against a pillar, and with his other hand, violently twitching his long moustachios. He did not know the facts of the case, knew only that his life had been endangered, and remembered that other attempt on him in 1852. Before him, tightly bound, death pale, stood a dozen young soldiers, waiting. He looked at them with his big eyes for terrible moments. He asked them nothing. Then he made a sudden gesture with his hand. Instantly, cords were thrown around the young necks, and all were strangled as the Shah looked on. All but one. That one was too strong to die fast, and finally the executioner had to stamp up and down on his breast.[122]

The years went by, and finally to crown his long reign, the Shah ordered nationwide celebrations which were to be the greatest that Persia had ever witnessed. As Saghaphi tells it, there were to be revels and feasts throughout the land, triumphal arches and bright lights. Decorated shops, no business for a week, no going to school for a week, children to have all new clothes just as if it were New Year's Day. Nomadic tribes were to ride in from the provinces, line up along the streets, present a pageant such as had never been seen before. Thousands of holy men and priests swarmed in, sacred fountains were enlarged so as to hold still more holy water and perform more miracles, the mullás were taking cough medicine the better to chant the Shah's praises in the mosques. Prisoners were to be freed from their jails. Peasants were not to be taxed for two years.

Young men forcibly recruited for the army were to be returned to their homes. The poor were not to go hungry for months. It was also related, among other facts and rumors, that the Shah's harem would be emptied out and the former inmates exchanged for new. And the Shah would proclaim himself the Majestic Father of all the Persians, and from then on the country was to be heaven on earth.

One day—it was May 1, 1896—on the eve of his jubilee, the Shah drove southward to the golden-domed Shrine of 'Abdu'l-'Azím. In humble dress, unbedjeweled, swordless, he was on his way to pray at the Shrine. He drove down from Tehran in a closed carriage, the Prime Minister with him, outriders trotting alongside. Crowds

jammed the whole long road, and vendors by the hundreds had lined it with their tents, to sell sweets, sherbets, roasted meat. The Shrine town itself was packed, but while the Shah was there, none were to enter the inner sanctuary, for he wished to pray alone.

As Násiri'd-Dín entered the Shrine, a man came up to him, a letter in his hand. And suddenly a shot reverberated under the arched dome, and His Majesty lay stretched out dead on the ground. An era had ended. A murderer's bullet had sought and found the royal murderer. It is said the Shah's body, dripping copious blood, was hustled out by the Prime Minister, who propped him up in a corner of the carriage and had the coachman gallop the horses back to the palace in Tehran. Along the way, the multitudes were bowing low before their sovereign, and his blood was seeping out the carriage door.

Násiri'd-Dín was killed by Mírzá Muhammad-Ridá of Kirmán, who was a disciple of the agitator, Siyyid Jamálu'd-Dín the Afghan. Luckily the assassin was a known foe of the Bahá'ís.

The Shah who came next, son of Násiri'd-Dín, is the one who lay dying in Tehran while Florence was having her own life-and-death illness in that same city. He was Muzaffari'd-Dín, who, after the determined but bloodless revolution, finally granted his people the Constitution of July 1906, which for the first time in Persian history knocked some of the absolutism off the imperial block. Now the citizens could boast of a national elective assembly (majlis, parliament), and they would have a voice in affairs of state.

When this ailing Shah passed on, his son Muhammad-'Alí came to the throne. This is the one called by W. Morgan Shuster 'a perverted, cowardly and vice-sodden monster'. [123] Be that as it may, he promised to observe his father's new Constitution, but then joined forces with the Russians against the Persians. At a time when Persia's debts were shooting skyward, he also tried to obtain, from Russia and England, a large, secret loan for his own use. Stopped by the mullás and the majlis, he decided that the majlis had to go. At sunrise, June 23, 1908, with Russian officers in command, over a thousand Cossacks with six cannon laid siege to the Parliament.

Those inside fought back for several hours, but finally ran off or were killed or caught and the Parliament buildings were badly damaged.

Plumping for the Constitution, the nationalists kept up their struggle at key points throughout the country, while the Russians kept on supplying arms to those who were for the Shah. The British were not delighted with the Constitution either. Troops were massing around the capital and instead of random battles and takeovers a real civil war was shaping up when, on July 16, 1909, the

Shah—who it turned out had to go himself, instead of the Parliament—took refuge in the Russian Legation, up in the foothills to the north of the city. He abdicated in favor of his little son, Ahmad, and constitutional government was restored, the new majlis being solemnly opened November 15. With his queen and a small retinue, Muhammad-'Alí was finally exiled to a long yellow palace on the Bosphorus, near Constantinople.

The family went up there occasionally, in the days when Khan headed the Persian Embassy. First they would be driven in the Embassy's American car, with uniformed chauffeur, footman and flag, across the Galata Bridge, and once on the other side would climb carefully down into a long caique, rocking along the sea wall. From there it took two or three stringy, muscular brown boatmen all the strength they had to row up the Bosphorus against the stiff current. Some of the time the boatmen had to leap ashore and pull the boat along with ropes.

Florence and the girls would have tea with the former Queen, a portly matron with black-dyed hair, swathed in folds of crisp, diaphanous white garments. Sighing, she would drop four sugar lumps into her cup of tea. Behind her, on the bright blue Bosphorus out the window, the ships went sliding by. Her conversation was one long lament. This was true of most old Persian women, who preferred to dwell on their lost youth, their never-to-be-forgotten ailments, and the calamities inevitably befalling, somewhere along the line, one or another of their large brood of children. Carrying on in this way seemed to be their expected role. But the ex-Queen had even more to mourn than most, and when a large, regal woman sighs, it makes a bigger impression.

We all rose as Shuster's 'vice-sodden monster' who had bombarded the Parliament and lost his throne, came unobtrusively in for tea. The ex-Shah was a roundish, harmless-looking man, in spectacles, wearing European clothes and a black Persian hat. He sat down on a divan, curled one shortish leg under him, and glanced with indifference out of the window. It was clear that he was dying of prisoner's boredom—acedia.

Afterward the family would visit his tiny Qájár daughter who was pregnant at the time with her first child, and seemed to be preparing

for the event by spending long days at the center of an enormous bed with red coverlets. Pretty and gay, she sat up against her pillows to receive Florence and the girls.

Forth-one

Shoghi Effendi becomes Guardian

Florence's letters home conceal as much as they tell, but some of Marzieh's own memories supply the gaps. Florence wrote for example of driving out with the girls through the streets of Tehran by moonlight, in the victoria drawn by two black Arab horses, and she told of the little one-room, lighted-up shops along the avenues—cook shops, bake shops, groceries displaying a row of fruits—'every kind of trade and activity upon which human life depends'. But why those drives at night? The reason was that Khan, to keep Javád away from Marzieh, still had her under house arrest, and she could not go beyond the garden walls. In the garden she could ride her palomino, being taught by her young cavalry officer friend, Sultán Mahmúd Khán. Only Khan's absence in the early evening offered possibilities of escape, and occasional walks through the dark avenues with Munírih Khánum Ayádí.

Florence tells of taking Marzieh to tea with the Crown Princess in her garden-courtyard. 'She is lovely,' Florence writes, blithely translating what she looked at in American terms, 'so dainty and sweet.' The Princess, Mahín-Bánú although fair-skinned and fairhaired, was not considered lovely to a Persian: not enough 'salt' perhaps, that indefinable *namak*. 'The young mother of a threemonths old daughter,' Florence went on. This was the very infant whose mother Khan had had to escort from Paris to Tehran for its birthing, so that 'he' could be the heir. A small and wispy wife, plus girl-daughter, added up to tragedy.

The Princess wore 'a delicate gown, ornately embroidered à la Marie Antoinette, with panels of flower-baskets in velvet, set like paintings on a silken tissue. She was covered with royal jewels. One was a watch, its back a single sapphire set in diamonds, with a barpin in sapphires and diamonds holding the watch by tiny diamondstudded chains, which was a wedding gift sent by the Shah. It had been mounted in Paris.'

They learned (the Princess spoke in French) that she changed her costume over and over all day. She had to be at concert pitch, exquisitely dressed at all times, for who could tell when her royal husband might deign to stop by. This was the more pathetic as the Crown Prince, so people said, had married her accidentally. Mahín-

Bánú had a beauteous sister, and in that time and place, with the woman veiled, a family with one daughter easy to marry off and one less so, might just before the wedding switch daughters. Apparently this had happened to her. The story went that as the Prince pushed back her veil after the knot was tied, he cried out, 'Dust be on my

head!' (Persian for 'What the Hell gives?').

Like all Persian ladies she knew how to peel a fruit, say an orange, to look like an intricate flower. They watched as she prepared two fruits in this way, one for each of the tall Abyssinian eunuchs standing by in attendance, and had the gift carried over and courteously presented, since the eunuchs were important people at Court. These two looked much alike—in fact Marzieh used to think if you'd seen one you'd seen them all—and Florence said afterward, 'Wasn't it awful, I was about to ask, "Are they father and son?"'

This tea was in the gardens of the Shamsu'l-'Imárih, the Sun of all Buildings, a women's pavilion put up in the 1880's.

Aside from the palace, Florence wrote of teas in other handsome homes, taking walks in the vast, landscaped gardens, looking into blue pools and listening to the young nightingales. It seemed like a dream to her, coming into Persia in the first days of spring—'and the most bewitchingly coquettish garden and lovely view of the snowcovered Alburz mountains is our own'. Their 'charming and

adorably situated' place was formerly the Legation of Afghanistan. There were a couple of villas in the family's rented compound, with the usual reflecting pool to double the graceful image of the main house, the pines, lombardy poplars, and flowering jasmine bushes. The Bírúní ('the without', the building for the men) where the Khans lived, had a covered walk with supporting columns on all four sides, and its back gardens were rich at that season, with hundreds of rose bushes waiting to bud, and plum, cherry, apple and peach trees all in blossom, tossing white and pink against the gleaming Alburz range above the walls. Inside the high rooms, running about a foot below the ceiling, were moldings of carved tulip heads made out of plaster-of-Paris, gach, the flowers fitting one into the next and painted pink and pale green.

The compound had its own hammám, (Turkish bath), and on days when this was not fired up Marzieh sponge-bathed in what was then regulation style, with bowl and pitcher and slop jar, drenching herself afterward with rose water that came in amber-colored, lopsided, hand blown glass bottles from Káshán. All the while, through the high windows, blue swallows—protected by tradition, they were never to be killed—wheeled in and out of the room.

An old body servant of Khan's from thirty years before had made a bee-line for Khan when he arrived, and assumed command,

Florence wrote, 'of ourselves, servants and guests'. When last seen the man had a different wife, and Khan told him he would cheerfully kill him if he changed wives again. A number of women out of the man's past did seem to call around, apparently to share his wages, but were promptly chased away by the then incumbent. Like many Persians, who had to select an official name when the Government had so decreed, this one had chosen a quality in which he was

deficient. His new name was Sádiq Khán, the truth-teller. Few believed a word he said. As for the Khán title, servants in leading families were often addressed by titles, a kind of snobbishness, the implication being that titled persons were in one's service.

Florence still was not sure why destiny had carried her diminished family to Persia. Rahim was at school in England and he had to learn of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing in The Times. He sat down then and wrote the family a deep and tender letter, which they have always taken as his declaration of faith. She had, as said, hoped to go to 'Akká with her children that fall of 1921, but Khan told her afterward she would have died had she been there when 'Abdu'l-Bahá passed away. 'As it is,' she wrote, 'the great sorrow of the Great Change at times still falls on my spirit ... Our first and very best friend has gone. Just today Khan said impressively, "What great mercy He always showed to us and to our children!"' The three were all born in the Days of the Center of the Covenant, Florence said, prayed for by our Beloved before they ever came, and blessed by Him and loved. 'Sometimes, I walk alone in my garden amid the tossing blossoms, with the tree-tops swaying in early leaf against these Persian heavens, and I weep for the days ... that are no more, and my courage fails for I do not want or know how to live without His constant presence.' Every spring she had felt herself renewed, she said, but this year for all the bursting life around her there was sorrow, desolation, and then she could not tell but what her joy in the world had fled for always.

'He Himself gone and we live!' she wrote, telling how, at that moment, 'We are amongst many of the high ones in this world ... but what taste is in victory, what sweetness in triumph?

'The only sweetness to come', she concluded, 'will be in a service more worthy of Him and His great memory ... a daily, ceaseless sacrifice before His Holy Threshold. He is all, the world is naught.'

She knew that only the 'cloud of His body was gone, the cloud which hid His glory'. The day they reached this country and had seen it bathed in shimmering light, seen the shining high mountainranges along the Caspian, 'The spirit and sweetly smiling face of 'Abdu'l-Bahá seemed to be above Persia and He seemed to be welcoming us with outstretched arms ... He is ever pervading the universe.

'Never did a great soul pass more gently from our human view—more compassionately, more stilly.' He had not desired, she said, that this Great Passing might trouble even 'the petal of a flower. He went softly, that not one human heart should be disturbed by the mighty Event!'

This was the first springtime of their joined two lives when 'Abdu'l-Bahá had not been living in the world. Still, she and Khan

did their best to avoid ‘the weaker moments of human grief’. Word had come early from Khánum, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s sister, that the Master had not abandoned the believers to themselves, and provisions of the Will and Testament began to circulate. Florence herself, as we saw, had brought in the first copy of the Will to reach Persia. Khan had written from somewhere along his journey that if ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had told him to bow down before a stone, he would have worshipped that stone, and here the Master had left us a wonderful young man to be our Guardian. Khan and Florence were of those who accepted the Will instantly, although the believers had never before heard the word Guardian in its technical Bahá’í sense. They knew about the Universal House of Justice, it was in the Aqdas, and they had a vague notion that it would be established after the time of the Master.

Shoghi Effendi himself had not known of his appointment as Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith until a day or so after he had returned home to Haifa from Oxford. Khánum, in whose charge was the Will, felt he should have a brief respite first. John and Louise Bosch who were present when he returned, said he came over to lunch at the Pilgrim House and was full of plans of what needed to be done at that crisis in the Faith. The way Louise put it, ‘He was all right.’ Then the crushing blow of the Will fell upon him, and he took to his bed, feeling totally unequal to the task—‘frail’, ‘unworthy’, [124] he

called himself, even years later—and knowing that this appointment meant the death of his personal life, which had hardly begun. ‘... from the third day on, I didn’t see him,’ Louise said. ‘Then on the fifth day past sunset I went over ...’ She would never forget what she saw: Shoghi Effendi entering the room of Khánum, a youth no more, but ‘like an old man, bent over and he could barely speak ... wholly changed and aged and walking bent and he had a little light or candle in his hand.’ [125]

Just about the time when Florence was sending these letters home from Persia, that is, April 1922, Shoghi Effendi informed the Bahá’í world, in a letter undated but probably written in May, that for the present he could not remain in Haifa, because he had been ‘so

stricken with grief and pain and so entangled in the troubles (created) by the enemies of the Cause of God ...’ [126] He could not, he wrote, fulfil his ‘important and sacred duties’, in such an atmosphere. For this reason he had left the affairs of the Cause ‘under the supervision of the Holy Family and the headship of the Greatest Holy Leaf [Khánum] until by God’s grace he should have ‘gained health, strength, self-confidence and spiritual energy ...’ and could take over ‘entirely and regularly the work of service ...’

Since the friends in those days did not know how they should approach him, he wrote about the same time that, worldwide, ‘they

should regard me in no other light but that of a true brother', and should address him as Shoghi Effendi, the name by which the Beloved Master had called him.

By December 1922, some seven months later, he would be back, but again, in November 1923, he would write of a second enforced absence, brought on by 'ill-health and physical exhaustion' and of how he had been sustained by the 'diligent and ceaseless efforts' of the Bahá'ís, his fellow-workers, 'during these two trying years'. [127] Many in those days rejoiced, as did Florence and Khan, at the advent of the Guardian, saying, "'Abdu'l-Bahá is young again, the Faith is young again.'

The Kitáb-i-Aqdas directed all to turn to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and the Aqdas (Bahá'u'lláh's Most Holy Book) 'are inseparable parts of one complete unit', the Master's Will voicing His 'directions and wishes' for all time. [128]

A few had still to be won over, as they were by the Guardian's own generalship, and a very few took themselves off, which, to believers, was like jumping out of the Ark into the storm. There were, indeed, dropouts but as the years passed there were dropins as well.

Florence went on to remark that as usual the Persian Government had paid Khan nothing, never reimbursing him for his expenditures in Paris or Constantinople. The Crown Prince was away at this time, there was no money in the country, what little the Government could borrow, 'the army absorbs', nearly everybody was awaiting payments (see Appendix D). She mentioned that her trunks had been boxed in Rasht and were on their way to the capital by camel caravan.

Hamideh and Marzieh were studying, and learning about Persia. Both were now eligible to be married off, by Persian standards, which would have eased the family problems, and the proposals began to come in, but Khan did not wish them to marry before nineteen or twenty.

Forty-two

The man who lived nowhere

The legendary Hájí Amín called on the family and said to Khan of his faith, 'You have composure of the heart. You have a well-assured heart, and God brings about the impossible for those whom He loves and chooses.' He said Khan's rank had become very lofty, very great.

Hájí Amín was the old man who lived nowhere, but journeyed here and there on his donkey, staying briefly with the believers in their homes. Loved and revered, the trustee of the Huqúqu'lláh (Right of God), he was the keeper of the purse, his duty being to collect funds for the Faith. Florence had met him in 1906, and remembered that he had made nineteen pilgrimages to the Holy

Land. She said he was now, in 1922, eighty-six years old. Feeble, but his spirit and presence like the freshest rose, and his eyes as shining as a boy's.

He had now served the Faith some fifty-nine years. When he first came into the presence of Bahá'u'lláh he gave up his entire fortune and all the rest of his life to the Manifestation. Homeless now, he was told by 'Abdu'l-Bahá that his nest was everywhere, and wherever he served and taught he would eat and sleep. All his children and grandchildren had prospered, and they would send him thousands of tumáns for the Faith.

On this visit, for the New Year's recently past, Hájí Amín gave Florence and the girls three large gold coins, together with yards, for each, of Persian silk. When the believers heard of it, they smiled.

'From us he takes,' they said, 'to you he gives.'

Khan's sister Marzieh, a devout Muslim living in her own part of the compound, saying her obligatory prayers and blowing other prayers to the six directions of the world (right, left, before, behind, up, down) entertaining the girls and telling them ancient tales, limped out to converse with the distinguished visitor. There was some bit of theological discussion between the two old people and finally she asked him what the next world was like. 'Old woman,' he cried, 'I haven't been there!' (man kih naraftam).

This aunt longed to convert the family to Islám but was pretty certain it was hopeless, the main obstacle being that, since they were Bahá'ís, they already believed in Muhammad and His Book. She

was, or thought she was, often on the point of death, and at one of her several deathbeds, the old lady, with astonishing vigor, seized her large family Qur'án and, as a sort of baptism, banged it down on Marzieh's head. Finally, because she loved them, she said that if she could have a dream to guide her she would accept the new Faith. But the dream never seemed to come.

She liked to hobble down and watch the girls and their friends playing tennis. One day after some reflection she called Marzieh to the edge of the court. 'The whole trouble is', she told her niece, 'that long net that is spread across the center of the court. It catches most of the balls. Take that away and you'll see, the game will go much better.'

Florence reported in May that the Guardian had recently said if God did not help him he could do nothing, and that he and the Greatest Holy Leaf would visit the Master's tomb together, and seek 'renewed assistance for the friends' and 'a new life'.

She wrote about the mail schedule, very pleased that Rahim's letter from England dated April 17 had reached them May 14. Twice a month, she said, mail went between Tehran and Baghdad by courier, from Baghdad to Cairo by airplane, and from Cairo to London by the same means. This route should get them mail from

America in six weeks.

Rahim's English school, Storrington, sent in a good report; he was improving in mathematics and chemistry and grasping the latter 'at last', and his conduct was excellent. Rahim himself admitted having beaten everybody at tennis.

As for the girls, they were now reading the Bahá'í Writings in the original, and Marzieh was reading *The Garden of the Roses* by Sa'dí 'the Persian Shakespeare', and also the odes of Háfiz. They wrote with Persian reed pens and the black-powder-like Persian ink to which water was added, because 'Abdu'l-Bahá has said this is best for the writing of this ancient and beautiful language'.

Florence's birthday, May 26, came and, along with Taqí Khán and the French countess, his wife, as guests, was celebrated by a picnic up at Prince Farmán-Farmá's garden where the Khans had visited in 1914.

That May the Crown Prince, so important to Khan's immediate future, was still on his way home from Europe, but had only reached Turkey. And Florence was solemnly adjuring her parents not to allow any of her letters to be printed, at any time, because the Khans' situation was so delicate.

She wrote again of that 'two-part, two-society' world created by the veil; that she and many others felt a change was bound to come

soon. And wonderful as she found most of the Persians, her servants were a quarrelsome lot, and mostly thieves. It was the hardest housekeeping she had ever endured, and Mr Truthful, arch liar and thief, had had to be dismissed.

In June she began to wilt down in the summer heat, and the family slept on mattresses under mosquito nets out on the veranda. To escape the high temperatures of the city they would often drive up to the cool foothills of Shimírán. Slow though the life was, and often irksome to the girls, Florence was lost in the 'awesome, divine, ecstatic beauty' of it all.

Still, she began to miss the 'water-life' she was used to, wanting at least a big lake or river, although she had plenty of waterfalls, pools and streams where she was.

The Crown Prince finally arrived—it was part of Khan's duties to go and greet him in Qazvín—and was now Regent, with Khan as his right-hand man. For his Tehran welcome there had been a parade, crowds, carriages, prancing outriders, and the courtiers in full regalia.

Even with the Crown Prince back, money continued to be scarce.

'It is a very bad moment in this country as practically all money has vanished,' Florence wrote. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Khan's devotion to the Crown Prince—which was taken advantage of—was one reason for the family's lack of funds.

Some time afterward, when Marzieh was walking along the

Alburz foothills, a stranger addressed her. He was an old peasant in sky-blue clothes, and a dome-like tan hat, and he had several cages of chickens on his back. He stopped and told her, 'Your father has suffered, because he did not eat the substance of the people.' Then he walked on in his white cotton shoes, on over the thin green line hedging the path, and for ever, she treasured what he had said. With no media except the human tongue, news would still permeate the minds of the people.

Visiting Mu'ín-i-Khalvat in a hill village, Florence told of one of the birds nesting in his garden called the Bird of a Thousand Songs (Hizár Dastán), among its melodies being the nightingale's. The Prince also had a waterfall all his own.

The stars were even closer here than down on the plain, seeming near enough to pick, and that night, going down the hill to their carriage, Khan and Florence felt as if they walked in the midst of them.

Sir Percy Loraine, the British Minister, gave them a dinner along with Reza Khan (Pahlavi), in the fine old park where the British

Legation was lodged in the hill country. Sir Percy loved flowers and had them everywhere, even growing them in winter in Tehran. That night he received them Persian fashion in an elaborate tent, carpeted with costly rugs. The British Legation people were present to meet them, and so was 'young Huxley, grandson of the great Huxley, and looking like him too'.

Florence said that Sir Percy invited her and the children to read books from the Legation library, and this it turned out was Marzieh's introduction to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, in venerable, precious tomes, leather-bound and gold. All the s's looked like f's, so that the reader felt as if his front teeth had been knocked out. (The earliest to discard the long S was Joseph Ames in his *Typographical Antiquities*, 1749.)^[129] Thus Gibbon's first volume began: 'in the fecond century of the Chriftian era, the Empire of Rome comprehended the faireft part of the earth, and the moft civilifed portion of mankind. The frontierf of that extenfive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and difciplined valour ... Their peaceful inhabitantf enjoyed and abufed the advantagef of wealth and luxury.' Marzieh was frustrated to discover that the most interesting parts were down in the Latin footnotes.

Leaving Marzieh to her books and horseback riding, Hamideh was a great social success with Persian relatives and friends. She would sit on the floor with the others in her aunt's apartment, cracking roasted watermelon seeds between her front teeth, and listen to stories of the fairy king's beautiful daughter, who was fat and white and pink, and the details of whose marriage night were apt to be carefully enumerated.

On June 25 Florence told of looking forward to a dinner that night where Hájí Amín would be present, and also Dr Yúnis Khán, the first believer they would see who had been in 'Akká for the Master's funeral.

Informing her family about such events, Florence, a very open woman, sometimes remembered to use theoretically discreet words in her letters, such as 'friend' for Bahá'í, but the girls would tell her

she needn't bother—no censor could read her (elegant) writing anyhow. It reminded them of old days in America when she would use French for confidentialities in front of the servants, but put the key words in English: 'Je dois dire à your father que j'ai besoin of some money cet après-midi.'

She told her parents she was sure the family would get back to America 'one of these times and days', because the Master had revealed a Tablet for the girls when they were in France saying He hoped they would visit 'Akká 'before returning to America'.

Evidently the Breeds were still distressed over their daughter's marriage almost two decades before, since it had often taken her so far away from home. 'You must try not to grieve over my marriage, as you know it not only has been so sacredly blessed,' she now wrote, 'but our Beloved said, "This marriage was made by God." So you see there is Kismet. [Qismet, share or lot in Persian.]

'I sink into a good deal of sorrow over the passing of our Best Friend, and at such times I feel my own life to be at an end, because my chief inspiration has gone. Then nobler thoughts come, and I say to the children, "We must try with each breath we draw, to render a harvest with Him, for all the loving prayers, words and kind deeds. He showered upon us during His precious lifetime on earth!" Certainly on earth His cup was that of living martyrdom. And now the rest.'

Nostalgia, the ache for return, is the exile's lot, and on June 26 Florence wrote her father, 'Today is little Helen's birthday.' Helen was her sister, who died at seven, and had never been forgotten although she was long gone now, about forty-five years. Grandmother said that Helen was too sensitive to live in this world—that when she saw the wind rippling over the long meadow grass, she would cry.

'Be sure I remember my wonderful childhood and youth in our beautiful, happy homes at Deer Cove and Baltimore Street,' she went on. She said that if her family saw the Big Dipper, 'please know it hangs over the mountain back of our house.'

On one hot day the gardener asked Florence to go down to the cool tiled rooms below the Tehran house, where, in the central room, there was a pool, and showed off with pride a special arrangement of potted trees and flowers there, for a tea she was

giving that afternoon. These rooms, looking out on the front garden, were built a little below ground level and were at least fourteen degrees cooler than the upstairs.

To Marzieh, the daily chores in and around a Persian establishment might have made a ballet and should have been choreographed. The work was done in age-old rhythms: the gardener, trousers rolled to knees, tottering and swaying with his two filled water cans, one grasped in each hand; the woman rhythmically sweeping a terrace with a tied bundle of twigs; the man with a heavy goatskin bag carefully knotted where the legs and head had been, in traditional motions tossing out water to settle the dust.

The family had good stables for their carriage and riding horses, but at one point the animals grew listless and thin. They were telling the humans something. It was easy to guess that the head stableman was robbing them of their food. A Bahá'í stableman was substituted

and they were soon sleek again. Each year, by tradition, for two months in spring Persian horses were as a rule kept on grass, supposedly therapeutic. They trotted along willingly, pulling the victoria, the coachman from the heights of his box disciplining the passersby, addressing each according to his social category:

'Look out, woman!' (khabar-dár, Bájí).

'Watch out, Lady!' (Better dressed than the bájí).

'Watch out, Uncle!' (Old man).

Or shouting reproaches at some male who was defecating alongside a wall, and at whom he might flick his whip, as an indignant reprimand.

When the carriage came down from the hills, the horses, going home to their stable, ran tempest-tossed. There at home would be fodder and drink.

By now, Dr A. C. Millspaugh was in Tehran, heading an American financial mission which Persia, still with warm memories of Morgan Shuster, had requested. Millspaugh had met Khan in Washington, and had told him that the two best-known Persians in the United States were 'Umar Khayyám and Ali-Kuli Khan. The new man was soon called by the Persians Dr Níst-Púl, a play on his name, because he had to use the words púl níst, 'there is no money', so often.

It was four years, Florence noted, since a large sum was owing to Khan, and not one tumán had been paid. Nor had Khan received anything at all on his salary from the Crown Prince. This despite praise from all sides for the services Khan was rendering him. It is likely that Khan did not press sufficiently hard at this time for salary arrears because he thought it demeaning to have to ask for money.

This old-fashioned, aristocratic attitude was to cost him much throughout his career. As said earlier, in 1918, interested with American business men in forming a company to develop oil resources in the Middle East, he had even refused a large sum they

wished him to accept to seal the agreement which would have bound all parties, saying he did not lack for funds. In those days he had a lordly, indeed Byronic, attitude towards material wealth, the importance of which, for the purposes he had in mind, he understood only when it was too late.

At this time of Khan's unremunerated services for the Crown Prince he may also have had a vision of his future which he did not wish to jeopardize by too much emphasis on financial affairs—his role as mentor to the Prince, and of all the good he might be able to do for Persia through this connection. Whatever the reasons, he was now hard-pressed to meet his obligations. Most of Florence's jewelry was held as collateral against funds advanced by a New York

bank and he was endeavoring to raise money by selling his land at East Hampton, Long Island.

In examining Khan's worldly career one should also bear the times in mind, and the history of those whom he had engaged to serve: the Qájár dynasty was unraveling and would be gone in three years.

There were further indications that various outside interests did not wish the Crown Prince to have the support of a qualified right-hand man. Efforts were made to separate the two, and somehow strings were pulled so that eventually Khan would be sent away as envoy to the Five Republics of the Caucasus which were themselves in the process of crumbling down, being taken over by the Soviets. That the separation was regretted by the Crown Prince later on is clear enough: at one future twist or turn in Iran's troubled history, there was talk of putting him on the Peacock Throne. At that time he wanted Khan with him again, but nothing came of it—the last of the Qájár dynasty dropped dead in London.

Coming back to 1922, letters home tell of discouragements. It seems that on the Crown Prince's return plots had been made to destroy Khan, both by the Court and the clerics. Seeing that he was, however, a favorite of the Prince's, they dared not keep on with their plans—at least not then—for fear of being ruined themselves. Such is normal Court life. When Queen Soraya wrote that she trusted only two persons in the whole royal palace, His Majesty was not one of them. The Bahá'í Court doctor was.

Khan wrote the Breeds of his many difficulties and the fact that his high position in the country was actually a drawback.

'I always', he told them, 'think and dream of my beloved America.' Till the end of his life, although never changing citizenship, he would remain a more enthusiastic American than many American-born. Even when Marzieh, disillusioned with her native land in after years, would point out to him how the beauty of the country was being savaged and the quality of American life corrupted, he still did not agree, seeing all as it had been, full of hope and vigor at the century's turn.

Florence said all foreigners and all traveled Persians had but one longing: to get out of Persia. By now, the women of Persia had grown discontented—with their men, with their social conditions, the veil, everything. And the men seemed to be asking themselves when ‘this life-breaking, nearly soul-breaking state of Persia will end’.

Florence recalled what ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had written Khan, then at Nice, ‘Be thankful you are in such a nice place as Southern France, and out of all that confusion at Tehran.’

As well as the constant intrigue at Court, she was troubled by the ‘dreadful decadence of men and women servants’, and the continual petty thieving. But the family did have a seamstress who was a delight (Khánúm Mushír) and a lady housekeeper ‘above praise’, both of them Bahá’ís.

She admitted that she herself would be sorry to go away, especially since the girls could now read, write and speak Persian, but recognized that they would be needing more European or American schooling in future.

Again and again she would return to the beauty of Persia, to the rented garden they would soon be going to up country with its flowing snow waters and pools like fire opals in which goldfish gleamed and flashed. There in the walled garden would be the stone building where they slept, and the large decorative tent, its roof and sides lined with cashmere weaves, hand-blocked cotton prints, embroideries. This tent formed an outdoor salon, furnished with rugs, chairs, little tables, oil lamps, where they would receive their guests and enjoy the summer breezes, and beyond the garden the bright-tinted wall of bare mountain slopes looming over all.

Forty-three

The Abode of the Birds

That September everyone went into mourning clothes for two months to commemorate the martyrdom of Imám Husayn at Karbilá (680 AD) as well as the poison death of his brother Hasan. Driven on by the mullás, crazed processions passed by of whiterobed men thumping their breasts, tearing at their hair, and chopchop-chopping at the shaved front of their heads with knife blades,

so that their white clothing was a red plaster of blood, as they went hoarsely shouting, ‘Hasan! Husayn! Hasan! Husayn!’

Many a Persian watcher shed tears for those events that took place thirteen centuries before, just as Christians still weep for what happened two thousand years gone. It is fitting to mourn the world’s great wounds. Even Gibbon writes with emotion of Karbilá and says: ‘In a distant age and climate the tragic scene of the death of Hosein will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader.’ [130] And Matthew Arnold, in ‘A Persian Passion Play’ (the same essay in which, following Gobineau, he tells of the Báb), describes various

other aspects of these mourning months.

Unfortunately, the Muslim clerics had turned those tragedies into an orgy of blood, and were not averse to awaken, by means of those noble deaths, terrible hatred in the Shiah which could be aimed at Jews and Bahá'ís. This was not always the case: as a special show of respect to Khan, about two hundred young men and mullás thronged the family's garden one evening, chanting, sobbing, pounding their breasts.

The family continued to enjoy their summer garden on the mountain slopes, and even with winter on the way, Florence was reluctant to return to the capital. Here, they could surround the girls with outstanding Bahá'í friends, but in Tehran the Khans were closely observed (although they had now moved just beyond the city gates) and there were many restraints on the family's life, particularly on Florence and the two girls.

The Crown Prince had sent his Princess back to town and gone off hunting in the mountains. With so many leaving the hill villages, Florence found life still more delightful. It was now all lotus-eating—cool air and gentle winds and 'such a dreamy delicious sunshine pours down from the blue heavens'. There were fewer guests: she had been dining up to twenty persons a night plus the servants. One long day, forty of the Court had invited themselves for a lavish banquet.

She longed to stay right in the foothills all winter, or at least to visit a neighbor, a hospitable Qájár prince who always remained there. Give her books and a friend or two, she said, and she could stay away from the city nine months out of the year, if not more.

Though it was said that the Government had not even paid the Crown Prince, some money did come Khan's way around this time by a kind of Persian trickle-down effect and he was full of hope and energy again—this being his normal condition.

The prospects for continuing the girls' American education improved with the arrival of Florence's friend, Genevieve Coy, who had come to head the Bahá'í Tarbíyat School for Girls, probably the best in the country.

Horses gradually were being added to the family stables. General Habíbu'lláh Khán sent Marzieh a chestnut polo pony, and another officer gave her a tall giraffe of a horse, with blue eyes, calm enough looking, but who enjoyed tossing her off onto her head.

Such accidents were carefully never reported at home; they were kept confidential as between Marzieh, groom and horse. On one occasion, however, she rode back in a visibly dilapidated condition, and Dr Meserve, a gentle, older Englishman who lived across the road, happened to witness the return. Inside the compound she had made it safely to her room and was hastily sponging off damages and

settling her habit to rights, when he sent over to the Khans to ask if there was anything he could do to help.

At fourteen, she found her popularity exhilarating, but realized there was no competition, since the other girls veiled. Khan wrote that he missed the daughters when they were babies. He also thanked the American family for all the newsprint, the 'personal clipping bureau', since for their information he would take the accounts to Persian officials, including among other notables, Reza Khan, the Minister of War, 'who holds the country together today'.

The letters said nothing about the long struggle to keep Javád away from Marzieh, though Florence did write, 'Our difficulty is that they still marry girls at fourteen here, and Khan and I are having rather a time of it, "keeping our hat on in the wind!"' She felt that she should send the girls back to the West, and provide Marzieh with six more years of schooling.

Marzieh, who was never allowed alone on her daily rides, a groom going along armed with a club or even a rifle, had no one to confide in—her mother and father were both allied against her and she was learning to keep her thoughts to herself, meanwhile sometimes contriving a hasty meeting with Javád out in the bare countryside along the foothills.

Hamideh caused her parents less trouble and was content with a donkey, a white kitten and a lamb. If young men called on Marzieh she would be sent in to supervise the visit. But Marzieh had learned to introduce some topic of conversation that would bore her sister (history for instance), and Hamideh, finding nothing to report, would wander away.

Between hunting parties, the Crown Prince lingered on in his summer palace. Florence's letters were full of the luncheons and teas she had given, the two, day-long entertainments for each Court (the Shah's and the Crown Prince's), the luncheon for Minister Kornfeld and another luncheon for his staff of four young American men. These last told her the Minister had nothing but praise for her household arrangements, and kept asking, 'Why can't our cook do this or that, the same as Madame Khan's does?'

On their last holiday of the season the family hired a donkey caravan and rode up into the mountains. Horses were not nimble enough for certain kinds of mountain travel, especially if some of the riders were unsure, and donkeys were the alternative mounts, but they too were not without their perils, primarily on the way down.

The smallish beasts, mouse-gray with black velvet ear-tips and decorative black trim, maybe relieved by a turquoise bead or so to ward off the evil eye, had occasional sores and worn places on their hides to show that life was not a bowl of cherries.

The dynamics of the donkey caravan was supplied by the donkeyboy's vocabulary even more than by his stick, applied to the hindquarters of the last animal in

the line as they plodded along on the flat. The boy would thud along behind his charges, letting out a string of oaths. The donkeys, always overburdened, would lay their ears back and, obviously disapproving, still would run. The boy's profanities were not directed at the animals themselves, nothing so unsubtle as that: they were aimed at the caravan owner's mother, a woman whose morals, according to the boy, were in question. Why it should impugn the donkeys' honor to belong to a man whose mother's favors were generously available, was not clear. Anyhow it worked.

The other members of the caravan would strictly follow the doings of the lead donkey. When he took it into his head, rocks or no rocks, chasm or no chasm, to urinate, every donkey behind him regarded this as a signal to do likewise. Polite riders had to ignore the proceedings, which called for a lot of ignoring.

On the return journey down the mountain paths the riders prayerfully hoped they were firmly anchored to saddles that would not spin off into space. The donkeys, however, teetered along unconcernedly, and the lead animal's preferred trick—copied of course by all the others—was to come to an unaccounted stop and put his head down on the path to smell something left by donkeys gone before. When this happened, on account of the wide, bulky saddle, his head totally disappeared and the rider found himself apparently seated on air and suspended over the abyss. The animal would then raise his head, wrinkle back his long upper lip over large yellow teeth, and putting his whole soul into it, agonizedly blare, duly echoed by the caravan behind him. This made a chorus which even the Creator dislikes, for the Qur'án says that 'the most odious of voices is surely the voice of the ass'.[131]

'He is looking for Solomon's lost ring,' the donkey-boy would explain, 'and he hasn't found it.'

The family's goal that day was 'The Abode of the Birds' (Murgh-Mahallih), a garden which had been the summer residence of Bahá'u'lláh, and they luxuriated in long hours spent in that holy place. It was from this neighborhood, these fresh green shades, these leaping waters of melted snow, that Bahá'u'lláh had ridden out to face His enemies when He learned of the attempt on Násiri'd-Dín—ridden out to be chained below the earth with criminals in the suf-

focating dark: He Who so loved the earth's loveliness that He said it was a pity that even dead bodies should be placed underground.[132]

Riding back down the steep rocky paths alongside the gorge below, seeing gilded plains spread out before them, distant flatlands and surrounding mountains shimmering in opal sunset light, with Tehran far away under its dark green line of trees, Florence heard the rushing streams and falls of that 'garden next to Heaven' still sounding in her ears, and felt that from soft skies the Divine Love

‘still descended upon us’. Thus their last visit of the summer was paid to the Blessed Perfection, Bahá’u’lláh.

Forty-four

Parliament voted yes

Back in the capital, they had sunshine to enjoy, and tranquility and peace in what was essentially a life much slowed down—‘a good antidote to American life’. The endless lingering drowsy hours within the privacy of walls, the waiting for the noon gun so that lunch could be served, the siesta, the hushed day broken only by occasional galloping hooves, or a boy’s soprano voice out beyond the moat, wailing of unreachd love—all these pleasing soporifics America had long lost, or never had.

The social comings and goings kept on, and the longing for Rahim, and the scarcity of funds. Mrs Kornfeld, the American Minister’s wife, arrived, and Florence welcomed her with flowers and a note. Genevieve Coy also received flowers and proved ‘very lovely’.

One day Florence took Mrs Kornfeld and her thirteen-year-old daughter, with Hamideh, to the palace to meet the Crown Princess, and the Crown Prince came in for a while, Florence doing all the translating in French and English. Another day she took the same lady and her children to see the Shah’s palace and museum. On this occasion the two ladies and their small daughters were to wear hats and European clothes but Marzieh, considered Persian and told she must veil, was still fuming over Persian customs regarding women, and refused to go.

At the American Legation one day the Minister’s daughter asked Hamideh about eunuchs, perhaps because she had seen Qulám-‘Alí, the family’s small smooth-faced Bahá’í servant. He served about the house, carried messages and sometimes rode out on the box when they went for drives. He could have served at the palace, but preferred to stay with the Khans. He was born a eunuch, and was

gentle and sweet. Sometimes he was too slow for Marzieh: once when the phone rang she picked him up bodily and made him answer. On a hot day she might ask him for a cooling drink, and in due course a glass would be forthcoming. ‘Is it cool?’ she would ask suspiciously. ‘Co-o-ol,’ he would reply Persian fashion, with a toss of his head and a lift of his voice for emphasis. She knew it would be sticky and lukewarm.

‘What is a eunuch?’ asked the American Minister’s daughter.

‘It’s usually a servant for Muhammadan royal ladies,’ said Hamideh.

The American child pressed for more information.

‘I believe,’ Hamideh elaborated, ‘it is a man who is born crooked.’

‘Is the Crown Prince a eunuch?’ the American wanted to know.

There is a rather cryptic letter from Florence, dated November 12, to

her family back home. She was usually as frank and open as a child, and anyone could decode her attempts at discretion. Typically, she wrote around this time that when Genevieve Coy arrived in Persia, her 'literature' (obviously her Bahá'í books) had been confiscated at the port of Enzeli, and over three hundred fanatics wanted to burn them publicly. 'But I can't write this,' she added.

According to this letter Khan's hopes for Persia looked bright. She informed her parents that the Government, subject to Parliamentary approval, had just given Khan authority over all railroads and mines, he receiving the mandate to go abroad and seek international capital to finance all these projects. 'If Parliament passes it,' she wrote, 'it becomes law.' But Khan's foreign opposition did not 'wish any good to this neglected country', and if, despite his strong Persian backing, Parliament did not pass the measure, 'so be it'.

On the 25th she even sent the family a Paris mailing address, and warned them never to write in care of the Persian Legation there, as the letters were sure to be opened.

The bill empowering Khan to seek foreign capital over a twelvemonth period for the development of all Persian railroads and mines came before Parliament toward the end of the month, but voting on it was delayed until close to Christmas.

Since the girls had to some degree won the battle of the chádur by late 1922, they were taken to the races unveiled. Quite conscious of rank, the sisters would sometimes match notables with each other, and Marzieh remembered that this was the only time she had ever shaken hands with the big Minister of War, Reza Khan. Both girls had shaken hands with General Pershing in Paris, and he had touched Hamideh's cheek and said, 'Petite'. Prince Fírúz Mírzá had kissed

Hamideh's hand at the Hôtel Meurice, and she had refused to wash it for two days. She had more of a gift for encountering celebrities than Marzieh. She even met Andrei Gromyko once in the United States, and spoke to him in remnants of her Russian. And later on, Carlos P. Romulo of the Philippines.

The girls were now taking lessons in English with Genevieve Coy, who tested them and found that, through constant reading, Marzieh would actually be ahead of her age group in America.

For Thanksgiving, she and Hamideh ordered a turkey cooked American style and were pleased with the results. 'I am not sure it was not a goose,' wrote Florence, 'but everybody called it a turkey, so I hope it was.'

On November 28 the family were going to dine with other Bahá'ís, including Dr Moody and Dr Coy, and watch part of the night out in prayer, for it would be exactly one year since the Master had left the earth. Florence hoped the second year would find them all 'accomplishing more and more in loving service'.

She said Khan's hair was showing much white, and her own was

fast getting that way too. 'How life passes. I hear the dear Master's hair began to whiten after the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh.'

One moonlit night, they had a thief in the girls' bedroom. He had tried beforehand in the garden next door, been chased away, and made for the Khans'. It was about three in the morning, their armed guard was asleep as usual, and so was everybody else except Florence. Hearing a rustling in the girls' room she called out in Persian, 'Go to sleep, Marzieh!' The thief took fright, slipped and nearly fell as Florence hurried in to look around. Reassured when she saw the girls peacefully asleep and no one else there, she went back to bed only to hear a gun go off. At this everyone woke up, but the man, tall and thin and wearing a long white coat, disappeared.

It was customary for Persian thieves to wear white when they were operating under a full moon. This one had made a neat little pile of the girls' clothing but left it behind, also dropping a dress in the garden. Around this time a more remarkable event: Khan's salary from the Crown Prince was virtually paid up.

Beyond the wall the Alburz range was already white with snow, but there were still roses in the garden.

Florence wrote rather mischievously of Professor and Mrs Clark, Bahá'í friends who had now left Robert College in Constantinople. She admired them much, said they were very sincere, but 'perhaps a touch too serious in their religion'. She recalled how frequently the Professor had announced, 'My wife is pure as the driven snow!' And she added, 'I had really thought so, until he repeated it so often.'

As December came on, the family moved to just beyond the city gates to a modern European-style house with a tennis court set in a rose garden. Here, instead of outbuildings, the bath, kitchen, laundry and conservatory were all in the main house. It had a modern stable and a fruit orchard besides. The girls could be freer here and there would be less to worry about from prying eyes.

Florence said that sometimes she felt as if she had done nothing for four years but pack and unpack trunks. Not counting hotels, this would be their nineteenth 'home' in four years. Still she kept on, 'fighting the good fight'.

Marzieh was her chief concern, though there were some fine Bahá'í women who were Marzieh's companions, and she rode every day with her father, and the officer from Sandhurst and some other friends. 'She is too young for love affairs,' Florence wrote, 'and very innocent. At times I am nothing but a policeman.'

As for Hamideh, after her early indignation about wearing the chádur, she had now become typically Persian, veiled gracefully on request, and sat under the 'kursí'—that ingenious contraption made up of a low table with a charcoal brazier beneath, and spread over with quilts and blankets which stretched all the way to the tall cushions at one's back, so one sat or slept in cosiness all winter,

meanwhile dining, writing letters or playing cards on the table. Hamideh was especially partial to Florence, always taking her side, whether her mother needed it or not. One night, thinking of family finances and her jewels in Paris, Florence spoke to Khan about the 'dog collar' of rubies in her collection, forgetting that Hamideh was in the room. Suddenly they were interrupted by a snort. 'Dog collar! Dog collar!' said an indignant voice. 'I should call it an angel collar!'

Early in December the family got themselves re-vaccinated for smallpox, as this was usual enough in Tehran during the autumn season, and apparently Dr Moody herself had once contracted smallpox there.

Rahim, in London, remained yet another source of continual anxiety. The Persian Minister, instead of getting him into Horsham College to prepare for Cambridge, or alternatively having him tutored in Cambridge itself, had let the boy run up a (to the Khans) staggering bill at a London hotel. So there Rahim had been, having accomplished nothing all the past autumn except to pile up a hotel bill. Whether the situation was contrived, the Khans never knew. The fact is that through no fault of his own Rahim was growing up to be a problem, and in retrospect one sees little hope for the handsome young boy he had become. Back on July 25, 1920 while the family was still in Paris, Florence had written her mother that she

had over-indulged him, while Khan had been far too stern. Khan's vain solution had been to tell Rahim 'to study and make a man of himself'. When he joined the family in Paris after his preparatory school in Morristown (New Jersey) Florence found she could not 'hold him in a little apartment all day!' She encouraged his sports, at which he excelled, and arranged for him to join a country club. He was a fine dancer and in time was socially much in demand.

Life was punctuated with Rahim wanting money for some project or other, and Khan, harassed as he was, withholding it. Back in the United States Rahim had once asked for a professional drum. 'We had a drum,' said Khan, referring to Rahim's toy drum when he was three. 'We had a drum' became a family saying. Now he wanted a tennis racket—that, too, he had had as a small child, where was it? Like everyone else in Paris at the time, Rahim wanted to visit the recent battlefields, the 'devastated regions', a strong attraction. 'The devastated regions are my pocketbook!' Khan would protest. Rahim managed to visit, and came back proudly with a dead man's helmet. The truth was, Khan, a typical Persian patriarch, considered members of the family to be his possessions, while a mother such as Florence, brought up happy and indulged, wanted the same for her son. Discipline would have been best. She noted in her letter: 'Even Shoghi [Effendi] has had 'Abdu'l-Bahá get after him, with a big stick!' We cannot document this, but we know it happened to Rúhí Effendi.

When in America, Rúhí Afnán told how once, expecting punishment, he scuttled away, and was sure he had outdistanced the Master when, looking back, there was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on the fugitive’s heels. In the Aqdas there is a reference to God training humankind with the whips of wisdom and of laws, even as fathers train their sons.

In a remarkable letter on education which Shoghi Effendi wrote years later to Helen Inderleid (1939) he said, ‘... there are certain natural deficiencies in every child, no matter how gifted, which his educators, whether his parents, schoolmasters, or his spiritual guides and preceptors should endeavor to remedy. Discipline of some sort, whether physical, moral or intellectual is indeed indispensable ... The child when born is far from being perfect. It is not only helpless, but actually is imperfect, and even is naturally inclined towards evil. He should be trained, his natural inclinations harmonized, adjusted and controlled, and if necessary suppressed or regulated, so as to insure his healthy physical and moral development. Bahá’í parents cannot simply adopt an attitude of non-resistance towards their children, particularly those who are unruly and violent by nature. It is not even sufficient that they should pray on their behalf.’

He advocated in Helen’s letter, ‘tactful and loving care’ which would enable the children to become ‘true sons of God’ ...[133]

During the Paris years the girls were docile enough, but when it came to Rahim, Khan found himself confronted with a large cuckoo, protruding from an inadequate nest. Rahim did what he could. He would box with himself in a mirror, having bestowed on himself the nom de guerre of ‘Kid Khan’, which he hoped to see in the sports pages one day. Later, in their family quarters at the Embassy in Constantinople, he would very skilfully slam tennis balls against the wall.

It all had to do with the clash of two widely different cultures, and the fact that usual, normal people do not contract out-of-theordinary marriages. One thinks of him as a sacrifice to the unity of East and West. On the family’s pilgrimage in 1924, as the Guardian looked at Rahim’s teenage picture, showing the boy smiling, proud, grown almost up to his mother’s shoulder, Shoghi Effendi said, and we did not understand why, ‘I pity him.’ This was perhaps a year before disaster struck.

Around the time of Rahim’s London stay, the family drove some miles out of town to see the Shah’s palace, a building several stories high, looking westward across the plains to the capital. There the Shah lived in peace and freedom, went motoring, or rode out to hunt deer and other game in the foothills back of his large park. The palace, built by his grandfather Muzaffari’ d-Dín, was called Farah-Ábád—The Fair Abode of Joy. The Shah himself was in Shíráz at the time, and not due back for two weeks, because the current month,

according to superstition, was evil both for journeys and arrivals. The day the monarch finally came home, all Tehran was in the streets and on the rooftops. Costly rugs hung from balconies, there were marching musicians, dignitaries in their cars or carriages, a mounted escort in royal scarlet liveries, on dancing horses. Florence had invited the American Minister's wife and her family to watch from the balcony of the house where the Khans were guests. Some other Westerners were present, among them the foreign dentist, their landlord Dr Stumpp, who made a typically European remark: looking down at the crowds, he said of the Persians in general, 'His prayers will keep him straight'—a pun, since he meant that five prayers a day with the required bending and kneeling were good not only for the character but the posture as well.

Marzieh resented his speaking of Persians as an anthropologist might refer to a native tribe. This was of course the general attitude of most Westerners in Eastern countries—a startling contrast to Florence's approach. Her heartfelt praises of the Persians were so

copious that they have had to be considerably abridged for the purposes of this book.

When the Crown Prince, alone in his carriage, passed beneath their balcony, he half rose and bowed to Florence and Mrs Kornfeld, the only time he greeted anyone along the route. Khan rode the whole way alongside the Prince's carriage, the two of them smiling and chatting together as they went. Khan, in black Persian hat and court robe of figured cashmere, was mounted on a white Arab thoroughbred from the royal stables, white crescents circling its great black eyes, neck curved, tail slightly arched and dyed a bright magentapurple. To Florence, Khan looked that day like Joseph in Egypt, his face shining, and she wrote that he was admired by all, and that the Bahá'ís especially were very proud of him.

The Crown Prince soon honored the Khans and their daughters with an invitation to dine with him and Princess Mahín-Bánú at the palace one evening, a rare courtesy, but if this ever took place there is no memory of it. There were afternoon visits to Mahín-Bánú, when her royal husband would drop in (and immediately become the center of attention), but the only time she really wanted him to see Marzieh was when the latter was burned a dark brown from her long rides in winter sun and mist. Persians admire white skin. It was known that the Princess used magic rituals to hold her husband's love, but one doubts if the world had any magic strong enough for that.

Florence became good friends with the elegant French wife of Taqí Khán, and wrote home that she no longer missed the theater because Madame Taqí's accounts of life in Persia were enough. She came from a small coterie of aristocrats, had spent much of her life in Paris, and like her French maid, hated Tehran, most of her acquaintances, and her stately old collapsing home in its neglected garden.

To please her, Taqí Khán tried to train the maids on how to wait on table, but his task was not an easy one, for they preferred to load all the food on at once in the good old way; and they always removed and heaped up their slippers of whatever vintage at the head of Madame Taqí's grand staircase. Madame Taqí averred that her husband would swoon away after each training session.

Florence, of course, took Persia's side. She thought Persian veiled women-servants could do well enough in their own way. Meanwhile, the little Taqí children were encouraged to look down on them, because, after all, those women were committing the crime of not being French, and there were screaming episodes of sarcasm and despair.

Florence's heart ached for her faraway son, but Khan put his foot down and would not let her speak to him of the long separation, knowing the words would never end. Khan's sister Marzieh loved Florence dearly, insisted that she was the daughter of an American Shah and said she made the princesses look like her serving maids. She loved the girls as well, again in spite of their Bahá'í Faith, and luckily the troublesome niece that Khan had imported to America now lived in Isfahán and could do little damage. Florence looked forward to seeing her American loved ones 'before long', not knowing she would have to wait two whole years to be with them and Rahim again. Indeed, these were the last years of Rahim's sanity, and she would miss all of them. It was a good thing his future life was veiled away from her.

For the moment she was pleased enough with the teenaged daughters, and had them tutored at home by an outstanding Bahá'í, Ishráqíyyih Dhabíh. She looked forward to lessons for them, especially arithmetic and algebra, from Genevieve Coy, which like most informal arrangements, never really materialized. She wrote home that the babies and little girls had disappeared and what she now had was two young ladies. Marzieh kept battling the chádur, but it was downright dangerous for her to go about the capital unveiled. The proposals came in, according to Persian custom, and had to be dealt with diplomatically.

Weddings seemed to be the chief diversion of the Tehran women; the men favored hunting, riding, dining, and music in the garden. Florence wrote home that 'Khan and I had to "show our teeth" recently to a dangerous suitor.' (No doubt, Javád.)

The Court, which they visited every other week (the girls in chádurs, though no one veiled from the Prince) was the usual nest of intrigue.

Some kind of upheaval was probably on its way, and Florence, prompted by an attack on the Jews, which happily came to nothing, wrote to quiet family fears in a way that must have frightened her parents to death. Should they hear of troubles, they were not to

worry, the Khans had friends among all the religious and national groups, the State Department could always find them. Someone—we can only speculate who—maybe the future winnertake-all—had started paying himself more and more government money each month, thus reducing everyone else's salary. On Christmas Day the family awoke to snowfall and Florence went back in memory to that day of her youth when her father drove her in his sleigh to the Floating Bridge Road to look at the bare crystal trees after a New England ice-storm. She was having servant problems as usual, twelve were not enough, the butler threw up his job and left, just before a Christmas luncheon party, because the family were still not properly settled in. But Khan's bill passed the Parliament and became law. The deputies all rose to vote yes on it, all except for four persons known to be on foreign payrolls. Now, article by article, the whole bill had to be approved. As usual, on the last day of the year, they all devoutly hoped that the new year would be better. Florence's sister Ruby had produced a baby boy. Her parents would be celebrating their Golden Wedding in the spring, and Florence wrote the Guardian and asked his blessing for them.

Forty-five

The summer of the young violinist

The long winter, much like the winter views in a medieval Book of Hours, was finally surrendering. This was the time when the streets turned to canals of mud, and visitors arrived splattered, and one American took annually to what he called his mud suit. The story that horses and carriage, driver and passengers had suddenly disappeared in the middle of a street was probably apocryphal, but in any case mud was not in short supply. The cooked beets man went around town hawking his wares (the peddlers' cries were the singing commercials of the day), and he was a Johnny one-note who continually reiterated the single word: 'Labú'. A French guest complained to the family, 'Why does he go around yelling "La boue"?' (the mud). We can see it for ourselves.'

As usual the family was living on hope. If only, as Florence put it, 'words and promises would materialize into facts'. She had to keep her letters vague. Over and over she warned the family to be careful what they wrote, since all the home-letters reached her with the bottom of the pages glued together, showing they had been opened and carefully researched.

By February of this year, Rahim, Florence's continuous longdistance worry, had been enrolled in a French school at Vincennes.

Luckily there were friendlier people to help them in Paris, see to Rahim's progress and proper expenditure of funds. Poor Rahim was financially, as Balzac once said of owning a house in the country, an

open wound.

Meanwhile an ugly religious crisis blew up in Tehran. In a move to frighten away the American advisers who were trying to bring order into the country's finances, religion was as usual brought into play. Some unknown plotters even cabled newspapers in New York

about American Bahá'ís in Tehran. Mullás aroused the crowds and rioting broke out in the streets. Killings of minorities might have ensued, but the riots were sternly quelled and the crisis subsided. Florence assured the family that the American Bahá'ís would have the protection of their Legation and said that the family's holy Tablets were their spiritual safeguard, adding, 'We have friends everywhere.'

Along toward spring Florence felt as if she and Khan were living at the center of conditions that reminded her of the great furnaces of an ocean liner, with Khan working away like a stoker. She said that, as Louis Bourgeois had done for the Temple at Wilmette, they too would have to sacrifice everything for their work—which she saw—another metaphor—as building 'a clean rock-bottom under a slimy, filthy, slipping, sliding mess—to bring out a clean society from putrid corruption'.

Confidence in Persia's future never left her. Due to the diversion of public funds into private pockets, the country was nearly bankrupt, and many of Khan's projects for development were frustrated by endless intrigues, but she could still say, 'Yet it is a country easily made prosperous.'

On personal matters she wrote, 'I fear I have been guilty of much unhappiness over Rahim.' Her health was sporadically bad. Khan had not been able to collect the money the Government had owed him for what was now four years, although his services to Persia had been 'above price'. Khan told her they might leave for the West 'even in three weeks', but she had been disappointed so many times she could never really know.

A few last snowflakes would soon be drifting among white blossoms on the fruit trees, and across the plains leading up to the Alburz were drawn lines of Judas blossoms, bright magenta against the gold. It was still too soon to hope for roses.

The appropriately-placed 'New Day' ushered in spring, the most longed-for season of the year, when, as a Persian song went, 'Battalions of flowers have set up their tents in the meadows.'

The family were now preparing for the thirteen-day festival of the New Year (Naw-Rúz, new day) beginning the twenty-first of March as the sun entered into the sign of the Ram. This solar festival came out of the mists of the past and was far more ancient than the comparatively recent lunar calendar of Islám.

New clothes had to be provided for everyone, including servants, and money gifts, and heaps of small, thin gold coins, and tables set

up, loaded with refreshments for callers. Open house was kept all over the city every day till the thirteenth. On that last day everyone went out on picnics into the country, because it was believed that devils were loose within the city walls.

Florence complained that ‘every innocent thing dear Marzieh wants to do is pretty bad for Persia, considering she is half Persian.

Hamideh is much easier for me.’

Along about April 15, 1923 another proposal came Marzieh’s way, making still more difficulties for the Khans. This time it was the Shah. Khan reported that under the terms of the royal offer, Marzieh was to be the only wife. When he told the Crown Prince of his brother’s plan, Khan’s chief said, ‘Well, Khan, you know that if Marzieh is available, I ...’

‘She is only a child, Monseigneur!’ Khan said hastily, using the title by which the Crown Prince was often addressed.

Florence sent off the news of the Shah’s request in great secrecy to her family, adding, ‘his emissary has been assured that there is “Nothing doing!” We are determined to educate our children.’

This decision may well have been a critical turning point in Marzieh’s life, and it is probable that her parents’ taking on the burden of her education instead of allowing her to become a royal bride involved a sacrifice that is difficult to measure, if only in the matter of cost—for a family already hard-pressed for funds. The whole episode reached Marzieh only as a distant echo; she was not attracted by the prospect in any case, and had seen enough of the Court to form an opinion of what the Shah’s wife would be expected to endure. Florence and Khan saved her from that quicksand, and three years later, inspired by the Guardian’s insistence on higher education for Bahá’í youth, and his telling the Khans to ‘give them the best in America’, she would enter Vassar, having done, with tutors, three years of high school work in one, and passed the College Boards.

In those days Vassar was hard to get into, and some parents registered their daughters at birth, but President MacCracken knew Khan and undoubtedly helped matters along.

After a year, since the family had by then moved to California, she would attend Mills College as a sophomore, then go on for her junior and senior years to Stanford University. It had a quota, to keep women out, but again, Khan’s influence was operative. ‘I got you in here,’ David Starr Jordan told Marzieh, he being President emeritus by then. All this time she was working too hard, not knowing one could take things easier and still get by. As it turned out she garnered a B.A. ‘With Great Distinction’ at Stanford—they were off Latin then and this was their summa cum laude—a Master’s at Berkeley, an American husband and a Phi Beta Kappa key.

All this was in the future. Now, it was still 1923, the Khans were in Tehran, everything back home was shaping up for the Breeds' Golden Wedding anniversary on June third. Florence told her mother, 'About your precious Golden Wedding, Darling, you must read our hearts. The most beautiful and perfect example and inspiration we could have, you have given us in your own life.' She added a vignette about herself and the girls taking tea with the Shah's beautiful aunt, her salon done in rose-colored brocades, the lady in rose velvet with royal gems, her little tables covered with candies, nuts and cakes in silver dishes. Persian fashion, their hostess carefully peeled oranges for them in flower-forms.

The girls had worked out a strategy at these entertainments, knowing it was not etiquette to help oneself even from one's own little table with too free a hand. Their method was simply to offer the dishes to each other. To curb them, Florence would remark in English, using dulcet tones belying her purport, 'Don't be little pigs!' 'Thank God for the language barrier!' Florence would tell herself. More enjoyable were the Persian picnics at country houses, with American guests present, no chádurs, and fine Persian musicians: a male singer, a prince who was the country's best amateur violinist, a tár player, a drummer (not with sticks but palms and fingers). For the festive meal, a wide cloth would be laid on the floor, and servants in their stocking feet (shoes left at the door) would walk about it, arranging the copiously-filled platters and dishes, the food itself, with touches of orange or saffron or cherry red, as bright as Persian carpets.

By early May, Florence was able to gather over a hundred rosebuds in her garden, besides full-blown La France roses, and yellow tea-roses, to send to Dr Moody, Elizabeth Stewart and Genevieve Coy.

Evenings the family would drive north toward the moonstone mountains between miles of flowering white acacia and cherry trees and English may, pink and white, and seeing through rifts in the bordering trees, the wide gold plains. The air was filled with scents of spring and the noise of bird-notes and running streams.

Florence recalled how, two Ramadán's ago, when Khan was Persia's representative to the Sublime Porte, in all the city's mosques, before thousands of people, prayers were chanted for the Sultan and Crown Prince of Turkey, the Shah and Crown Prince of Persia—and next after these, for Persia's Envoy, Nabílu'd-Dawlih.

This Ramadán in his native country, by contrast, not only Khan but also the girls and Florence were denounced from the pulpit of the great mosque for being what the mullá called Bábís, and for the girls not veiling. He exhorted his congregation, if they saw them driving

by, to drag the women out of their carriage, which meant handing them over to a mob. The cleric then proceeded to curse both Shah

and Crown Prince.

Apparently, protests resulted and the offender was deported. The royal personages were angry, Khan was disgusted and offered to resign if the Crown Prince felt embarrassed by the affair, but his resignation was not accepted.

Florence wrote over and over of powerful friends and relatives in the Army, and of notable Bahá'ís ready to help, and of the American Minister's kindnesses to the family. Politicians were, she was sure, fanning anti-Bahá'í, anti-Jewish feeling in the country, and the agitators were on the payrolls of various foreign interests. Then as always, most sudden outbursts of religious fury were financed and contrived.

The girls' attitude toward all this was fatalistic. They took everything for granted. After being plunged so often into different environments they saw this present situation, frightening though it was, as just another turn of the wheel. This was the way things were in the world. It was the same with the lesser crises of daily living. Marzieh was sixteen and had returned from Tiflis before she realized that people have to have money every day, to eat. She found this out when helping with Persian household accounts during the summer in their mountain home.

Two years before that, she was aware of the personal danger, aware that she could be dragged from the carriage by a mob, but assumed that most people went through experiences very like her own. A small whitewashed room, a chain of Embassy salons, a millionaire's one-time mansion, were simply habitations. A victoria in Tehran or a riding horse, or a donkey in the mountains, or a beflagged car in Constantinople with chauffeur and footman, or a bicycle in Barbizon or a bus in Paris—these were simply transportation. This was merely the world—the way things are in life.

Meanwhile, thousands of miles away at 106 Northern Avenue in New York City, preparations for the Golden Wedding had been completed. And wistfully, Florence yearned to be with her parents on this day, and to be presenting them with golden gifts.

Over a hundred guests joined the Breeds at their home June third. They included playwright Edwin Milton Royle, Professor Carter Troop, president of the New York Lecture Bureau, Professor Fred Barry of Columbia University, Professor Clarke of Robert College, Constantinople, Edward Kinney, composer, who had studied with Dvorák, Dr Schirazi of Karachi, Mayo Zeia, Russian sculptor, and several imposing women with the apparently obligatory three names such as Mrs Norma Drew Butterfield, formerly Mrs William Horace Drew, Mrs Harriet Holt Dey, ex-president of the Women's Press Club of New York, and Professor Anna Gerls Pease of Western University. According to an illegible list of Alice's, notable Bahá'ís present included Hooper Harris, Mrs Inglis, Mrs Moore, and Mary

Hanford Ford.

The list indicates that Alice's old-time New England friends were mostly under ground by now, but that she had as usual discovered many new people of interest in New York.

A cable was read to the guests from Florence and Khan, who were described in a Lynn paper (June 7) as residing in Tehran and connected with the Court of the Prince second only to the Shah. Florence had previously warned her parents not to emphasize that she was their oldest, because 'in the Orient my age is forty, so look out for Miss Coy catching on!' The paper reported that the host and hostess were 'far from aged' despite fifty years of marriage, had dispensed rare, gracious hospitality, and that all the guests went home with flowers.

Family accounts were that when the program got to Florence it featured a poem showing the destiny of two lovers who by some magic were brought together from the ends of the earth: 'Two shall be born the whole wide world apart, and speak in different tongues ...' We have long looked for this poem, but not very hard. It was also at the Golden Wedding party that Ralph Breed, their youngest, gave a talk and told the guests, 'Florence was their love child, but I was their *pièce de résistance*.'

Putting her family in the picture of their daily life, one letter mentions that the Minister of War, Reza Khan, wanted the Khans to give him a party, but it was almost mid-June, the summer was coming on, and they were of two minds about it. 'He is the only Minister in the Cabinet who never falls, and has, from a humble Cossack, become a very powerful and rich man, since the coup d'état of Zia-ed-Dine.' The Cabinet certainly fell with alarming regularity. Hamideh took to saying, instead of 'three months ago', 'three Cabinets ago'.

The *chádur* still came into the family's life, especially on visits to Court. Florence reported that she and Marzieh looked awkward when they wore it, but that Hamideh had learned all the tricks and managed both *chádur* and *píchih* (the small, twistable horsehair rectangle over the face) correctly and gracefully. 'She is deeply absorbed with the Persian life—and evening after evening you will find her out in her Aunt's room, listening by the hour to stories of the family.'

At Bahá'í and other gatherings they met with Florence's New England acquaintance, Mrs Millspaugh, also Dr Moody, Dr Coy and Elizabeth Stewart. 'I hear praises of Dr. Coy from the Persians on all sides,' Florence reported. 'She is too high for the present educational conditions at the Tarbíyat School, but she alone suffers from this. Like Khan she is ready, she can do it. But they do not let her. The Tarbíyat School [Bahá'í] is still under the Government and a Muslim Minister of Education—whereas the Missionary School is

free, and also the Zoroastrian School.’

Genevieve was tall, with smooth blond hair coiled on her head. She was American, a qualified psychologist, a Ph.D. In after years she became principal of the famous Dalton School in New York City. That summer Genevieve visited the Khans in their rented country place up in the foothills north of Tehran at Darrús. She and Marzieh, always attended, went for long rides and hikes together across the empty land north of the city, taking care to avoid the qanáts—the long line of uncovered, unmarked, deep shafts for drawing up water from underground aqueducts. Whoever stumbled into a qanát was not likely to reappear. They visited hill villages, bought a melon or a bowl of yoghurt from village grocers sitting with their wares along the road, dropped in on Persian families summering about the countryside.

One day they discovered an ancient walled park, its high, empty villas silent and abandoned, its old-time stately circumstance given over now to a lone caretaker and his brood. Walking into one of the houses through an open door they came upon a vast room with a pool in the middle, and posted about the rim of the pool were four life-sized, beplumed and painted wooden pages, obviously exiled from some palace in the West, and waiting here forever.

Upstairs were other rooms with richly decorated walls, and small, delicately paneled doors covered with painted figures out of Persian miniatures, mysterious doors opening stealthily as if on some forgotten love intrigue (not unlike that subtle, twisting stairway leading up from a corner of the King’s bedroom at Brighton).

They, two intruders, watched up there from a high, uncertain balcony, looked dizzily down across the vistas of the park, and beside them also seemed to watch, in diaphanous veils, the one-time lady inmates who belonged here, now long-buried and gone.

These lavish, forsaken structures were shells which the Qájár Shahs had left behind, the Qájárs who had ruled by then for a hundred and twenty-five years (America as a nation had existed only a couple of decades more) and whose day was hurrying to its close. Only these shells were left, their royal builders were blown away on the wind.

Genevieve, a sharp-eyed psychologist always studying people as case histories, studied Marzieh, and Marzieh, very young and without academic training, studied Genevieve. She learned, for example, that when they went out, if she wanted to go north she should suggest going south, and almost always Genevieve would prefer the opposite, as Marzieh had planned. Sometimes Genevieve was rather overly scientific. She had noticed that Ibráhím, their young escort, the violinist, always devoted, usually wanted Marzieh to walk on his left, where he was accustomed to holding his violin. The exact degree of his devotion, however, Genevieve was not sure

of. One day the three of them were out walking across country and Genevieve suddenly disappeared. The other two sat under a tree, wondering where she had gotten to. Then Marzieh chanced to look up in the tree, and there was Genevieve, doubtless carrying on her scientific observations.

She and Marzieh were out riding one day, for once without an attendant, and Genevieve suddenly cascaded off her horse and collapsed on the ground. Looking for help, Marzieh saw a man sitting alongside the road, and rather peremptorily (she was used to having her orders carried out) called him over to hold the horses. Reluctantly, he complied. Here were two unveiled, unclean foreign women in trouble. They should have stayed at home where they belonged. Luckily the accident had taken place not far from an English doctor's country house, and the doctor saw to setting Genevieve's broken arm. The rest of the summer Marzieh combed and coiled up Genevieve's long blond hair.

Genevieve was hampered by having her arm in a sling when they hiked about the countryside, which in the event might have been the death of both herself and Marzieh, and of the young violinist as well. One afternoon the three had wandered away to the empty foothills, and it was getting toward sunset, and the shadows were lengthening out. Turning somewhat wearily back toward their village down in the plain, they passed an open garden, like a park by the roadside. It was fragrant with tobacco flowers and circled a large artificial lake having at the center an island, joined to the lake's edge by a narrow causeway. At this hour the garden in its hollow somewhat lower than the road was turning black dark.

Suddenly from the middle of the island there exploded a wild, bellowing roar and they heard the thud of human feet on the causeway.

'We had better run for it,' muttered Ibráhím, the slender violinist, theoretically their protector.

They started to bolt down the road, Genevieve delaying them, clumsy in her sling but gamely doing the best she could. The

monstrous, animal bellowing did not let up behind them. At one point, thinking they had gained on whoever or whatever was after them, Marzieh risked a quick look behind and saw a misshapen form, blacker than the shadows, almost upon them. Her heart was hammering, chest heaving, throat raw, legs giving out, but she knew there was no one to help in all those miles of lonely space, nothing to do but run on. At last the road, where it reached the plain, led along the wall of their village, and they ran to the end of the wall, swerved left, and made it through the gate of their securely walled-in garden. They had collapsed on chairs under the big guest tent with its Persian carpets among the lamp-lit trees, and were still rasping, aching and heaving, and not daring to tell the family what had

happened for fear of being denied their freedom, when they heard a high, frustrated wail, like an animal's cheated of its prey, rising through the darkness from beyond the village wall. The next day they were warned that a killer maniac was loose in the countryside. As for Ibráhím, that year he wrote a poem to Marzieh, set it to music and begged her to sing it every day forever. (Males, sentimental creatures, are not incapable of making such unlikely requests.) She promised, but twelve hours later she realized what she had let herself in for, and took her promise back. Some of the words lingered on, however:

If what doth sunder us is but my penury,
And this is what explains thy cruelty,
It is no fault of mine, for the Prophet said:
'My pride is poverty.'

Forty-six

Black winding-sheet

Later in June Florence wrote how weary she and Khan had become of the situation in Persia, 'as every man active for the general good is checked on all sides here, by intrigue, jealousy, and money poured out against him'. Khan told her he felt like a man in a graveyard, trying to carry on business with the local residents.

Some of the distinguished Muslim princes, Florence observed, 'help themselves unblushingly to a young wife when Wifie No. 1 gets on a bit, and so produce what they term their "second series", or third or fourth "series", which seldom rises to the level of the first, as Papa himself is getting on, like Wifie No. 1.'

Farmán-Farmá had just visited the Khans with a 'second series' son, who recited Persian poetry 'like a bulbul' [nightingale], and held a poetic match with Marzieh that delighted the famous old Prince. This kind of poetry match, called *mushá'arīh*, was played by each contestant reciting a couplet from Persian literature, the other reciting a couplet beginning with the last letter of the opponent's. It would not work out in English, the word endings not being varied enough. The first five lines of Shakespeare's Sonnet no. 29, for example, end in s, e, s, e, e. Persian poem endings are so varied, however, that a poet's odes are classified according to their final letters. To find an ode in Háfiz, you have only to remember the last letter of one of the couplets, say m, and there, somewhere among the m-endings, the whole poem will be.

Several of Khan's men-relatives were present and, perhaps not totally impartial, they all declared Marzieh the winner. 'A Káshí' [person from Káshán], they said, 'will always win against a Qájár'—meaning their blood was better than present royal blood.

The heat overtook the family down in the plains and Khan moved them all to one of the villages up toward the Alburz. By now he had

some fine horses in his stables (several were gifts, like the Shah's Arab and Marzieh's two from assorted generals). He also owned two wild carriage horses, 'more like lions' in Florence's view. One episode with these on a mountain road was enough for her. They were harnessed to the family victoria without outside traces, and the left one had developed a trick—he would suddenly wheel. The coachman could not stop him, and the carriage had to follow. The usual practice of the occupants was to jump out quickly as soon as they saw the horse start to wheel. However, this particular day he wheeled himself into a deep ditch up to his neck. Florence and Marzieh got out fast and the horse scrambled out on his own, but now the right-hand horse fell in, also climbing out 'like a cat'. Then the right forward wheel crashed in and both horses, back on the road, wrenched it out. The equipage then took off down the mountain road at a gallop, the Cossack driver shouting at the horses and lashing away with his whip, leaving the two women, badly shaken, stranded on the road. Marzieh was angry with her mother for visibly giving way to emotion, and her tone must have revealed this to a passing peasant, because he chided her with, 'dil-dá'í bidih nanih-ra'—'You comfort your mamma!'

The peasant was right to protest. Both the Qur'án (9:113) and Bahá'í Writings state that one should give good advice, enjoin the good, forbid the evil. (Too often in the West, people have taken the don't-want-to-get-involved attitude and walked on by, thus becoming accessory to the wrong.)

Melancholy teenager though Marzieh was, real death had not yet crossed her path. But one morning the few passersby could see, just inside the city's Shimírán Gate, a boy stretched out on the ground. The early sun was reaching toward him. He was perhaps twenty, ruddy and healthy looking, lying on his back in his sky-blue peasant's clothes, but he was not asleep. He lay without moving at all. He did not disturb the coins laid over him: on his eyes, his hands and about his clothing. He had started out with a caravan and died on the journey. The camel drivers had set him down here, inside the gate, and gone their way, and pious people in the neighborhood had brought him coins to pay for his grave.

In a much later year Marzieh was reminded of that dead youth. A friend of Khan's, the supreme head of the dervishes, was by any estimate a distinguished man, a cosmopolite, Europe-trained; especially memorable was a token of the old ways and new, of East and West: his visiting cards, made for him in Paris, which were engraved with his dervish beggar's bowl and his string of prayer beads. He was much respected, and when, after some years, he died, he was laid to rest under an oak tree to the north in the foothills. Gradually, as the custom is, friends and disciples followed him there and an informal cemetery collected. The dervish who had been his

doorkeeper in life came and made a home in a makeshift hut, put together out of flattened petrol tins and other scraps, and watched over him. One day when Marzieh happened to wander that way the old doorkeeper greeted her and showed her around the little place, on a rise under its tree in the clear air with a view of empty plains sweeping miles away south to the faraway city. He guided her about, introducing the unmarked slabs. 'This was ... and this was ... and this ...' he told her.

'It is very peaceful here,' she said. 'It would be good to remain here always and to be dead like these.'

'These are living,' he answered. 'We are dead.'

The attacks on Khan had coalesced and intensified when he had tried to obtain a year's option which would empower him to go abroad seeking international funds for the development of Persian railroads and mines. 'They must have spent lots of money to keep Khan from getting the option,' wrote Florence, 'because the entire Parliament except for four members voted for it. Foreign money was spent to postpone it.'

It should be pointed out that although Khan was attacked by politicians and others in the pay of foreign interests, Khan's position as head of the Crown Prince's Court was not a political one. And, in fact, Shoghi Effendi had said that Khan's holding such a position

would bear fruits for the Faith and its effects be of far-reaching influence. No Bahá'í had ever held such a high rank before, and had the chance to stand so firmly for the Bahá'í Cause, against newspaper attacks, attacks in the mosques, anonymous letters—against mullás, mujtahids, editors, run-of-the-mill fanatics, the jokes of princes, the cool detachment or unawareness of otherwise good friends. For two solid years the Crown Prince had defended Khan and the Shah had become increasingly appreciative and friendly.

On paper, the Government acknowledged its entire debt to Khan, even financial. On paper. Signed, sealed, and never delivered. He did not receive, as people used to say, one sou of it.

The intrigues against him, financed from abroad, centered on his religious views. Every few months certain mullás, obviously in someone's employ, attacked him from pulpits in the mosques.

Florence thought the primary instigators of the attacks were not Persian. Certainly it was to the advantage of those who had already obtained economic and strategic positions in Persia to maintain the status quo, that is, to keep Persia backward. One widely spread calumny was that the Khans had brought Marzieh with them to marry the Crown Prince and found a Bahá'í dynasty.

The Crown Prince wanted Khan to join him in hunting for deer and mountain sheep but Florence discouraged this, fearing a shot in the back. With so many enemies, this was not a far-fetched idea. For one thing, Khan had tried to get the Prince to cut down the number

of persons in his court (he had over two hundred and twenty) as the Shah had done with his. He also tried to introduce some fiscal responsibility, set up a budget, economize—attempts that did not suit many of the hangers-on. Actually these were in no danger of losing their easy-going life. The Prince, while both charming and intelligent, was in love with his Persian fardá (tomorrow).

Not till they were out of the country did Khan tell Florence of receiving nearly daily letters threatening his assassination unless he quit his post.

The Shah and the Crown Prince kept admonishing him to stand firm, always to stand firm. (Excellent advice!) Florence was less sanguine. She said things could happen in Persia with impunity that could never happen in America, ‘where the Law is not only respected and obeyed but where it is upheld’. Worldwide terrorism had not appeared then. No one visualized it, even in the small hours.

She found one point of stability, admittedly not too reassuring: the Army was in fine shape and promptly paid, under Reza Khan (Pahlavi), ‘a common soldier and servant, who has risen to be a sort of military dictator, today, as well as very wealthy and capable’.

Florence made several references to her and Khan’s graying hair

and thought they had aged ten years in two, but averred that ‘if one’s spirit is happy, one forgets the color of one’s hair’. A matter of secret distress to Marzieh was Florence’s often-repeated statement that guarding her had brought on the gray hair. It did not occur to her for a long time that even persons who had never laid eyes on her had gray hairs, gray hairs were a part of life and she couldn’t be held responsible for everything.

Florence’s life in Tehran, however intermittently pleasant, and although she never worked hard and had ‘a servant in every corner’, included too much entertaining, and in any case she always felt as if they were in prison, waiting to be delivered. Not surprisingly, in view of their stressful situation, she came down with a heart condition, partly brought on by Tehran’s altitude, just before setting out on an arduous trip to the Caspian that fall.

‘There is no law, nor system, nor rhyme nor reason, in the work here,’ she reported. For example, Khan, suffering from the heat, could not get away to the mountains until the Prince made up his mind to move. And the summer before, the Prince had waited ‘until everybody got parboiled’, before he released them by himself leaving for the cool foothills.

She went back in memory to the Master’s Tablet to them of 1919, where He said Persia lay in ruins—a place of turmoil and confusion. Khan told the family that when an Arab in the desert is exhausted and cannot take another step even should he lose the caravan, he picks up a large rock and runs with it. Then he throws it from him, and by contrast, relieved and refreshed, he can face the miles again.

For Khan, the labors in Tehran were such a rock.

The man makes the position, not the other way: an insignificant person keeps any job insignificant. Khan had greatly enhanced the status of the Crown Prince's Court. That his services were much valued by both Shah and Crown Prince there is no doubt. The Shah's comment was, 'He is a man worthy and able to fill the very highest positions in this land.' And the Crown Prince told him face to face, 'I swear by my sword, by my honor, by the throne I share, that never in my life have I seen such honesty, such sincerity, such great loving kindness as is yours. And I swear it by my sword, by my honor, by the throne, that I shall be devoted to you throughout all my life.'

Unusual words to be uttered by two Muslim Princes to a wellknown Bahá'í.

Best of all, Khan's salary as head of the court was being paid.

Their personal life in the hill village that summer was cool and tranquil, but involved a great deal of entertaining. There were meetings with national figures of note, visits with fine old historic families, kinsmen staying over. 'We have had them here, one at a

time; two at a time; three at a time; four at a time, and five—catering daily for fifteen or twenty people, not counting the odd guest.'

All this was being done with a minimum of servants: a Baku coachman, a Bahá'í hostler, a stable-boy, a fine Bahá'í cook, a wonderful Zoroastrian woman as laundress, a stylish maid descended from Khan's father's staff, a eunuch footman, a manservant, a gardener. Florence averred that the family could not exist a single day with less.

Then there were the small parties in the moonlit summer garden, with songs and music and recitations by poets. One man whose memory lingers was 'Ishqí ('Belonging to love'), considered the best Persian poet of that day, a frequent visitor. He was tall, still fairly young, with hair longish, and large luminous eyes, well suited to a poet. He had written by then his famous epic called Black Winding-Sheet. In this poem he said that once as he was brooding over the fate of his country, he saw a woman, a Princess of the old days of Persian glory, suddenly rise up before him out of her tomb. She was wrapped only in a black shroud, and as she gazed about her, she moaned and wailed, 'What has become of Iran? This ruined boneyard, this is not Iran. Iran, where have you gone?'

Not long afterward, the family heard of how 'Ishqí died. There had come a knocking in the night, he got up, went to open the street door and was shot dead. Many believed that his criticism of the state of affairs in Iran (which Florence called 'disorganized in every particular, ruined and beggared') had been the cause of his murder, and that it had been ordered by the dictator-to-be.

'Ishqí's coffin, spread over with his blood-drenched clothes, was paraded through the city next day by crowds of mourners, and a fellow-poet, using the abjad system—the numerical value of the

Persian letters—incorporated the date of his death in this verse: ‘Read ye the year of his martyrdom thus: ‘Ishqí of the twentieth century.’ (The letters in ‘Ishqí-y-i-Qarn-i-Bístum add up to 1342 AH or 1923.) July 24 found Florence and Khan with all the usual worries, except that Rahim had been accepted as a cadet at Saint-Cyr, the French West Point, training at government expense with a Persian unit for two years in France. Then if he wished he could secure a release from the military and enter a university in the United States. He was, with other Bahá’ís, under a Persian general, Habíbu’lláh Shaybání, who was a relative of Khan’s.

The Persian mission split up and trained with the French Army all over France, among their choices being aviation, cavalry, engineering and infantry, Rahim choosing this last. The life was arduous. He said the French had a fine army and his respect for them had risen greatly. His letters at this time indicate the beginnings of paranoia, although it is true that his being different from the others attracted hostility. ‘I am destined to be more or less unhappy all my life,’ he wrote prophetically, adding that whenever he found true friends, his fate took him away to another country, and another place.

No one except Khan knew that he was about to give up his post. Life in the foothills carried the rest of the family through the summer months. Their country garden, with its reception tent and several buildings, was full of roses and cosmos, and the swelling quinces and crimsoning pomegranates bowed their branches to the ground. Guests came daily, for luncheons, teas, dinners. They included Dr Millspaugh, his wife (who had been Miss Macdowell of Lynn) and a State Department colleague. ‘Our daily reunions’, Florence called the gatherings. Dr Moody and Elizabeth Stewart came up for a day. The Doctor, resting in Florence’s room, said she found there a wonderful sense of the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and all through the rest period seemed to be communing with His spirit.

In the capital, Khan attended the memorial services for President Harding at the American Church. Dr Kornfeld had been a warm friend of Harding’s, and he shared with Khan parts of the President’s personal letters to him.

Around this time Khan obtained a leave of absence from the Crown Prince and accepted the post of Persian Minister to the Five Republics of the Caucasus, the Legation being at Tiflis (Tbilisi), in Georgia. Although the post was not considered ‘big enough for Khan’ it had its importance, for both Persia and Russia had vital interests in the region. Many Persians were resident there, and oil was being discovered in increasing quantities. This last brought in a number of Americans seeking concessions. In those days the Caucasus, like Russia itself, had no official relationships with the United States. Looking back, one remembers that everything to do with the Soviets, including the number of countries under their

aegis, was in a state of flux. There had not been time yet to produce a new Soviet society, and the people in the Caucasus were half in, half out of the past. Although beginning, hatred of the West was slow in coming, and one still met traveled, mannerly cosmopolites of the old regime.

Important or not, Khan regarded the post as temporary, as a mission for the Government on his way West.

Being pushed to the wall is what caused the move out of Tehran at a time when Khan's fortunes were apparently at their highest. That his being a target, as a Bahá'í, is not in question. Also, there were the usual foreign interests at work, inimical to Khan's projects, who

wanted no change in the status quo unless it brought advantages to them. Then there was Reza Khan, the most powerful man in the Government, using the army as his lever. Minister of War, then Prime Minister, eventually Shah. He had made efforts to be friendly to Khan, but Khan had buttressed the Crown Prince, his chief, and Reza had no use for the Qájárs.

And just as there were those who would like to see Khan out of Persia, there were forces within himself and within the family, urging him to be gone. He was frustrated nearly to the limits of endurance by the constant blocking of his plans for reform and development: unending hindrances and no help.

The Shah was no longer the real ruler, and neither was the Crown Prince, who loved hunting in the mountains and visits to Paris more than the business of government, even had he possessed the power to carry on. Something new was going to happen. Persia was trembling on the edge of a great change. Qájár rule, dating from 1788, which had wielded absolute control over all the people for so many generations, and under which countless thousands of Bábís and Bahá'ís had been ruthlessly slaughtered, was tearing apart like a cloud in the wind.

Besides all this, there were the death threats, the family members were not safe, the situation was turning 'ugly'. When they did leave Tehran, it would be in haste.

Preparatory to leaving, the Khans wound everything down, had household supplies purchased only from day to day, found places for most of their servants, sold off their horses and carriage. Once when Khan returned home he told the family: 'Today in the city I happened to encounter all my one-time possessions strewn everywhere, and now in the hands of others; my riding horses, my mad carriage horses drawing my carriage and whipped on by the same Cossack driver, even my Packard that we took to the Versailles Conference.'

And so yet once again the family was packing up. They tried to take as little as possible, especially as the cost of shipping luggage was exorbitant, but still could not make do without a dozen or more

trunks and innumerable traveling cases. They had to jettison many of their carefully hoarded letters from home, keeping only the most precious. They also engaged a chauffeur and car, hoping to set out before the rains came, and to reach the Caspian Sea in a single long day. As it turned out, they traveled in two Ford cars with a large camion following.

Florence was glad to get the girls away from the ambience created by the chádur, but her ever-present dream was to marshal all the family back to the United States, at least for a long visit. Khan,

among other things, looked forward to attending the opera in Tiflis, as he missed occidental music. This was strange, since he would of an evening play for hours in the garden with cronies such as the Qájár violinist and a tár player, and was himself excellent on the drum.

The Khans did not forget that they had reached the limits of their strength by the time they left, but Florence and the girls still had happy memories of Tehran, of its great beauty, and their many loving relatives and friends. 'I look back on it as a kind of Paradise, all golden with perpetual sunshine ...' Florence could still write, from rather bleak Tiflis. Khan said it had been a nightmare. But Florence still saw the good along with the bad. 'Dr Millspaugh's mission is working hard under very difficult conditions and the usual jealousy towards our great America, hidden but not absent I fear.' She reassured her family in America as to the latest move, and told them of the many Bahá'ís in Baku, Batum and the Georgian capital itself—all 'very welcome and entirely safe'.

While in Tehran Florence had been less sure of her safety in Tiflis and expressed some fear to a Bolshevnik diplomat. He simply burst out laughing and said in the kindest way possible, 'Madame, it will be our duty to protect you.'

Forty-seven

Out of Persia with their lives

One early dawn the Khans hurried out of Tehran, but in spite of all their haste, after the long drive to the coast, they were forced to wait five days for a ship. Writing home about their leaving, Florence said, 'We are out of Persia with our lives! ... Even the Shah has left.'

As they finally neared the docks at Baku following a stormy trip across the Caspian, the family were surprised to see crowds, Russian uniforms and also a brass band, which began to play the national anthem of Ádhirbáyján. 'No doubt a celebrity aboard,' they thought, as they waited on the upper deck. Moments later it turned out that they were the celebrity: high Soviet and Persian officials were there to welcome the new Iranian Minister Plenipotentiary, and so were Bahá'ís and other citizens. The Persian Consul General gave a luncheon party for the Khans and escorted them to the station that evening, and they found themselves dispatched in a de luxe Pullman

train, complete with interpreter, to Tiflis, which they reached October 23, 1923.

Three weeks later Florence was writing home to say Khan could not have stood twenty-four hours more of his high position at the Court. Continually thwarted there, never given a free hand, he had lasted out two full years, and left a faultless record behind him, but, she added, to what purpose?

The town was pretty, in a valley between high hills, with a winding river through it. The air was sweet and mild, and there seemed to be still a natural Georgian gaiety about the place. This was only six years after the great upheaval, and later exploration showed them how once fine houses had come down in the world, the inmates not one family but several now, rent-free, the doors hanging open on hallways smelling of urine. Any still well-kept building stood out. Well dressed people also stood out, for like the houses, clothes too had come down in the world. Any rare, beautifully turned-out woman was almost certain to be the mistress of some high official.

Genteel poverty was the order of the day, and one felt that those who had died were probably the better off. A new woman friend of Florence's had had her property plundered nine separate times. Her husband was recently dead and she confided that she no longer cared for anything, nor desired anything, nor looked forward to anything. Florence consoled her with the usual 'This too will pass.' (But there is a more vigorous note in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's teaching for the sorrowful, when He quotes Háfiz to the effect that these poison bitter days will pass on by, and life will yet again be sugar sweet.) She wore a soldier's khaki overcoat, ankle-length, and a knitted cap. 'I bathe at night', she smiled, 'like the chambermaids in good houses, long ago.' She and others like her walked through the streets of Tiflis even up to midnight, safely enough—and except for the fate of any still-living menfolk they might have, they were beyond fear.

The city streets seemed peaceful, although an exception to this occurred one evening when Florence and Marzieh, out walking in the early shadows, strayed on to what they did not know was forbidden terrain, a pavement running along beside a grim building with blank walls. Suddenly from out of the dark they were challenged by an animal snarl, a threatening guard loomed over them, and they hurriedly retreated across the street to where they apparently were meant to belong.

That the population was becoming indoctrinated with hate did not seem to be in question, although none of the family had heard of the revolutionary prisoner Nechayev's 'Catechism' (written about 1873), which had so much impressed Lenin with its advocacy of general, ruthless destruction of the wrong people. It is said that when, during the family's stay, Lenin died (January 21, 1924) and the streets of

Tiflis were suddenly jammed, an old woman arriving from the country and not understanding the reason for the crowds, asked innocently, 'Is there a festival today?'—Whereupon she was arrested and carried off. True or apocryphal, the rumor illustrates how the city was at that time.

The Near East Relief, an American organization, employed many of the genteel poor at what had to be a modest salary, twenty-five gold rubles a month (about \$15). Their payroll in Alexandropol alone bore two thousand names, many being natives, such as ex-Russian officers and wives of ex-governors.

A family who lived across the street from the Khans and became close friends were typical enough. The widowed, white-haired mother, her son and two daughters, all three of these in their twenties, shared a single room, with a communal toilet down the hall. They had divided up their one room, kept immaculate, into small areas—kitchen, living room, sleeping place. They often received guests, and would also visit at the Consulate General.

The Khans found a merging of old and new: the churches were there, but boarded up. People crossed themselves as they went by the place where they once had worshipped. Signs against religion were everywhere. One day when the maid was washing Marzieh's hair, she murmured in Russian, as if to herself, 'Ah, when God was here, it was better then.'

Holy Russia had always been the empire's name, and as Marzieh's Russian improved and she attended a (silent) movie, she noted that when a quotation from the Bible flashed on the screen as part of the film, a sudden electric vigilance seemed to run through the audience. Most people were kind and hospitable, with the Bolsheviks mostly in government. After all, the Revolution was only six years old, not enough time had passed to rear a new generation, while the adults who remained had learned to keep quiet.

Directly across from the Consulate a handsome young man was glued hour after hour in his window. No matter how often the girls smiled at him, he retained his immobile, hating face. Sitting on the street at the corner, dressed all in black, watching their door, someone they took for a beggar woman slumped all day long. Sometimes a dark stream would run out across the pavement from under her dress. Why a beggar woman on a street with so few passersby? The girls, naive, did not draw the obvious conclusion. The two studied Russian with a young woman teacher, who would stay on with the family for lunch at three. Everywhere, their governesses had been friendly enough, but not Olga. She would look at them out of baleful green eyes. They did not realize that like the others, she had been taught to hate.

The French literature teacher brought in for girls was 'the first Princess of Georgia', the Princess Obiliani, descended from the last

Emperor of Georgia, and a lecturer at the University. Like such other princesses as were allowed to remain in Tiflis she had to work for a living. As Florence put it, 'Every body has lost everything, everywhere ... The people used to be very rich, very gay, very educated. Now all the big families are exiled—their husbands and sons shot—or else they live here at work, all of them in one or two rooms, while the Bolsheviks occupy their grand apartments, paying no rent—this after their all in the bank, in their houses and on earth, has been taken away from them by the late Revolution.'

Ordinarily, she wrote very discreetly, for her, except when a letter could go out by diplomatic courier as must have been the case with the above. In another place she warned the family of a secret society, 'the Chek-a', a continuation of the old Russian secret police.

Since Florence's letters were personal and in any case the family could not take sides, it was mostly by chance if she recorded some happening in her current outside world, and those wishing to learn the history of that time in the Caucasus would surely have to look elsewhere.

Her letters from Tiflis still showed fresh Persian scars. She could not forget 'the tempests of jealousy and opposition, without cause, and the fiercest from those we have fed, clothed, housed at times, and elevated in the world by giving to or finding for them honorable situations they could never have gained in life without us ... all these and others have turned and rent us ...' Just who they all were, the girls were never told, for much was concealed from them. Certainly Florence's lament recalls those bitter words of Sa'dí, written over six hundred years before:

If loyalty exists I do not know,
For none today is loyal to his friend.
And no man did I teach to draw the bow
But made me his own target in the end.[134]

The name of Khan's post was ambiguous, as was his own position. Letters were normally addressed: Représentation Diplomatique—or Persian Diplomatic Mission. All was in a state of flux. When Khan first arrived in Tiflis, representatives of the large Persian community called and explained that the little mansion he had just moved into was now demoted to a Consulate General and that the 'Five Republics of the Caucasus' had in fact disappeared. As he sat talking to these dignitaries in one of the salons, a cat slithered in the door and Khan interrupted the formal conversation to say to the family, 'Isn't that a pretty cat!' He was making up his mind to move on very soon. In the event they stayed eight months. They met members of the foreign colony and locals, too, left-overs from other days. Florence started her teas.

But all the time something strange was going on. People, especially the educated middle classes, targets of the 'cleaning out'

process, were disappearing. At tea there was only a space where the awaited guest should have been: a guest trained to be punctilious, to let his hostess know if he could not be present that day.

The Communists shunned official social life and did not invite foreigners to their clubs or their homes, meeting with them only at work. They were 'shy as wild birds, and conspicuous by their absence', Florence said.

Tiflis had a fine system of education for girls, but Marzieh and Hamideh did not know enough Russian to benefit from such schooling. They were tutored at home, studying, besides Russian, literature, history, art history, geography, grammar and composition, all in French. Hamideh in particular was not only a social success in Tiflis but did everyday translating for the family—shopped in Russian, or accompanied her father to his tailor when he went for measurements or a try-on.

The Khans were happy with what they were told of Rahim's education at Saint-Cyr, and Khan, more than Florence, felt the 'discipline and stern realities of life' were exactly right for him. He said if other men's sons could go through it, his son could. Looking back, one remembers the Persian story of the candle and the brick. The candle knew the brick was strong because it had been through the fire. Accordingly, to obtain that strength, the candle leapt into the flame—and vanished away.

The Khans enjoyed excursions, perhaps up a mountain in the funicular, perhaps to a distant monastery in the wide countryside. Here the monks seemed to be under a vow of silence (who did not watch his words in Tiflis?), but one monk showed them his special patch of green grass—and when they looked down, miles away across the wide plains, they saw a distant convent and knew that spiritually at least the two communities were not alone in all the wilderness.

The Tiflis opera ranked high, attracting stars, and there were theaters and cinemas. The city still had an intellectual life of sorts, though many top-flight people had disappeared. The Khans met professors, fine Georgian doctors, musicians, singers, dancers at the Opera.

People crowded the Conservatory of Music to hear an excellent young pianist named Gorovitz; and the institution itself must have been well-staffed, for an instructor brought in to teach Hamideh had studied in Vienna with a famous pupil of Anton Rubinstein. The piano at the Consulate, beautiful in tone and appearance, had given Florence, once an accomplished pianist herself, the idea, but the lessons soon languished.

Florence was delighted with Tiflis, its plains and mountain ranges. It pleased her, too, that Khan was treated 'like a king' by all the Consuls traveling to see him, bringing such gifts as boxes of

mandarin oranges and crates of selected apples. They represented the great numbers of Persians living and doing business in the Caucasus, hundreds of thousands, she thought. She enjoyed also her position as *châtelaine* of the handsome Consulate General, a millionaire's wellplanned abode, built to last, the only trouble being that he did not, himself.

Entering the big foyer one found marble staircases sweeping up to left and right, with an open passageway at the next story where guests would be greeted as they arrived for formal parties. The salon was mostly Louis Quinze, all tapestries and gold chairs, and on the wall was a vast oil painting which if understood might have displeased the authorities, because it showed Lord Byron in a bright red cloak, disembarking from his ship to help the welcoming Greeks in their fight for independence.

All the family suites were on this floor, as was a stately dining room where, after a dinner, the custom was for the hostess to stand by the doorway, and as each male guest left the room he kissed her hand.

A small study with a fireplace was much used by the family, and there were bedroom suites and several bathrooms, and a long upstairs balcony at the rear of the house looked down over the garden, spectacular in the moonlight when the great pear tree was in its white bloom.

Pleased as she was with Tiflis, Florence was never really happy because she longed for her family and above all for her son. 'Since early September we have not had one word from him or about him,' she wrote on December 4. 'This is terrible for me.' Probably he was even then taking his first early steps into the long dark, and if his mother's story proves anything, it must be that no one should love another human being too much. In years to come, even when they were together, he had ebbed away from life.

Looking back over the record, one remembers 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words when He saw Florence and her baby for the first time: 'I see that you love Rahim very much.'

Bahá'ís are told not to question the personal tragedies that inevitably accompany life, but to accept them with 'radiant acquiescence'. There is a story from Rúmí's *Mathnaví* which illustrates such acceptance.

Luqmán, often identified with Aesop (the Ethiopian) and for whom the thirty-first chapter of the Qur'án is named, one day received from his master a slice of melon. He ate it as if it were honey, and his master, always anxious to please him, gave him another slice. This too he ate with pleasure. The master then gave him slice after slice.

'I'll eat this last one myself,' the master said, to share Luqmán's delight.

The melon was so bitter it blistered his tongue. 'Why did you not decline this?' he asked.

'How could I refuse from thee one thing that is bitter,' Luqmán answered, 'when I have had from thy hand so much that is sweet?'

Forty-eight

Marzieh again under house arrest

At Thanksgiving, Captain Yarrow, head of the Near East Relief, invited the Khans for a long weekend in Alexandropol, northwest Armenia, and they traveled in his private car, left over from days of Russian splendor, attached to the train. In that city the Americans were feeding, housing, providing for the education of some 16,000 orphans. During the recent war they had had as many as 24,000 to care for—believed to have been the largest colony of orphans since history began. In Tiflis alone they were feeding 5,000 a week.

The Near East Relief's expenditures were high for that day, a hundred thousand dollars per month, but the mission was not only distributing food, it was working to produce it as well. Captain Yarrow had put thousands of acres under cultivation near Alexandropol, using Ford and McCormick farm machinery; they were grazing more than 7,000 sheep, plus a large herd of cattle, and improving the breed by importing seven prize bulls from Switzerland. The Caucasus itself was rich in natural resources, and as usual foreign capital was eager to get in, but Moscow said, 'You may come, but you must divide with all of us,' which made little sense to capitalists.

The only Americans in Tiflis were those with the mission, and they and the family shared many welcome hours. The Khans could only be impressed with the good and generous work America was constantly doing, so often (even now) ignored or denigrated by the rest of the world.

They were given an example of this while in Alexandropol. As they drove about with Captain Yarrow, noting what Americans had done to help the Armenians, someone along the street caught sight of the car and cursed him. 'Well,' said Captain Yarrow philosophically, 'When people fall so far down that they have to accept charity, you do not expect them to exhibit the finer feelings.'

It was there in Armenia that Marzieh had her last horseback ride, on a skyscraper of a rawboned racer, always about to grab the bit in his teeth and bolt. The Cossack officer attending her called out to his colleagues, 'In battle, I was not so terrified.' Although never having been in battle, she felt much the same.

Florence was nearer home here than in Tehran, since mail from Tiflis via Moscow to London arrived in fourteen days, and this meant family mail could be exchanged twice as fast as from Tehran. Some home mail would get to them in twenty-one days.

Making the longed-for visit to America could be accomplished in

less time, too, and the choice of routes was wider. Florence kept looking at maps and schedules and figuring out how many days' journey she was from her son and her parents. From Americans she learned of an American shipping line which sailed direct from Batumi to New York, taking only two passengers each trip, and these had to be Americans. The voyage took a month, the food was good, the fare three dollars a day. A hundred dollars and you were home.

Back in the days of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh a Qájár branch of the family moved into this area and it seemed a fairly recent local Qájár had married twenty-eight wives and was not quite sure as to the number of his sons and daughters. This detracted somewhat from the prestige of royal blood. In any case the head of local Persian society was a Qájár princess, while several Georgian princesses were leaders of their social community, both groups being hospitable to the Khans.

These ladies (one of whom was the sister-in-law of the country's President) invited Florence to join them as patronesses of an international gala to be held at the city's leading hotel. They recruited representatives of each national group to recite poetry in their own tongue, which meant that poems would be heard in Georgian, Russian, Armenian, German, French, Persian and American (Florence). It looked like a good idea at the time.

Obviously, only patches of the audience here and there understood

any given poem, and there was some laughter from the tables, especially when the Georgian poet kept crying 'Geesh!' in the midst of his apparently heart-rending recital. Those at the French tables groaned when a German woman poet went on for half an hour, and all during the Armenian offering people ate their dinner.

The guests at the banquet decided that the Persian poet, a man from the Consulate General, did the best of all: he had arrived dressed as Sa'dí, Persia's great author of *The Garden of Roses*, wearing cotton shoes, two 'abás, a turban, a false beard, and armed with a large book of poems. He had had the foresight to chant instead of reading, and after he had performed in a high, sweet voice, Hamideh went on stage and presented him with a bouquet of flowers, whereupon he chanted an encore holding the flowers, and 'quite brought down the house'. Unfortunately he proved too popular, and was asked for too many encores, which attention occasioned resentment among certain of his own compatriots, who hissed him from a corner of the hall. But all in all, Florence reported, 'courtesy was 98 per cent perfect'.

One of the entertainments attended by the Khans was a Muslim play, a sort of Faust without music, featuring Muslim actors and Armenian girls, and Russian ballet dancers. Called *The Devil*, it featured the Islamic Satan, always appearing in a red flame, his body covered

with long hairs, a hump on his back, his fingers long white claws, eyes gleaming like glass. The huge theater was packed with Muslims of the Caucasus, with Turks, Arabs, Persians and Indians.

Georgian society abounded in princes (at one point these were in demand in the United States as husbands for rich girls). It seems that the Russians ennobled the Georgians, and Georgia ennobled some of the Armenians, until the expression became popular that anybody with three sheep was a prince.

Around Christmas, the Italian diplomatic mission, housed in a former prince's domicile and using what was once his crested glass and precious china, gave a dinner for fourteen guests, and a dashing cavalry officer, Prince Pignatelli, led Florence under the mistletoe, bowed low and kissed her hand. Few Americans failed to be impressed by foreign aristocrats, and this seemed a delicate improvement on the American custom.

Khan planned to take the family on a visit to the Batum area, the Caucasian 'Riviera', but the girls said they were sick of traveling and preferred to stay in Tiflis and study. Khan had sent to Persia for a teacher from the Tarbíyat School, Shamsí Khánúm; something happened, however, to keep this plan from being carried out.

The currency situation was a mare's nest: Turkish liras, Russian gold rubles, Russian commercial rubles stabilized by the government, Russian kopeks and Russian paper money (one million paper rubles was equal to one American cent), Persian tumáns, Indian rupees. Money values changed daily except for the commercial rubles—not only daily but several times each day.

Persian money was strong at the time and Florence enjoyed shopping. No currency ever stayed in her purse, and she would come home laden with parcels and always having lost one glove. She bought gray fur Cossack caps for the girls, and even imports like French perfumes. She had been brought up to be well off, and had evolved her own system of economics: If you did not spend a particular sum for this, then you still had the sum for that, even if the first sum was imaginary. For example, her purse being empty, a jacket she would like to have would cost a hundred dollars; foregoing this jacket would leave her with a hundred dollars to be spent at the earliest opportunity.

One annoyance to Marzieh was losing her rooms temporarily to Khadíjih Khánúm, the sister of Ahmad Sháh, when, en route to Europe, she came through town with her young husband, a lady-in-waiting and a small boy of uncertain provenance.

Although Milton says they also serve who only stand and wait, the lady-in-waiting, who some averred was prettier than the Princess, seemed to do more standing around and waiting than serving. The little boy was a case in point. The Princess laughingly described his

stormy, terrifying voyage over the Caspian thus: 'All during the first twenty-four hours, he uttered only one word, "áb" (water). And all during the second twenty-four hours, he uttered only one word, "nán" (bread).' The child was dressed in a bright green knitted suit, apparently never changed. You could trace his progress through the rooms because whenever he sat down he would leave (on the tapestried chairs) a bright green splotch. Marzieh, although strictly non-maternal, took pity on him as fellow human being, led him to the bathroom and washed his little hands. His look of gratitude was pitiful.

Some time later an American news item appeared to the effect that the baby son of Ahmad Sháh might succeed his father on the throne, and the family believed that this was quite possibly the same child, traveling incognito in his green knitted suit.

The royal party had refugeeed, as it were, in the Consulate General where they felt safe, for they were wary of the Communists, who had terminated their own imperial family only six years before. Now on their way via Constantinople to join the Shah, they had stopped

off without so much as five minutes notice. Khan, quite ill, had to rise from his sickbed to receive them.

This Princess was the same who, when she was pregnant, had received Florence and the girls in her exiled family's palace up the Bosphorus. At that time she lay, a small girl with a pale, Persianminiature face, in the center of a huge red bed.

Now she regaled the family with an account of her disastrous birthing. Her father, the abdicated Shah (the 'Monster'), had walked up and down the room, wringing his hands, and crying, 'Oh God, she is herself a child, how can she give birth!' 'Finally,' the princess said, laughing, 'the doctors got rid of it by chopping the baby out'—and added onomatopoeically, with hacking gestures in the air, 'qárch, qárch, like a melon'.

The young Cossacks did much to improve the scene in Tiflis, with their bandoliers of cartridges across the chest, curly lambskin cap on side of head, very narrow waists—a belt fastening around the waist, they said, should ideally be no longer than a headband—and high, narrow-toed boots, so narrow that to wear them, some would have the little toe removed from each foot.

Marzieh's friend Choura had to have this operation while she was there, and since Choura lived in that one room with his mother and two grown sisters, he was invited to spend a day or two in Marzieh's rooms, she being first removed.

Spring evenings Choura and family would sit with the Khans on the long upper balcony at the rear of the house, and chat in French and Russian and watch the tall pear tree blooming white in the dark garden below.

From the time in Tehran when Javád was forbidden the house, and

for over two years afterward, he managed to evade the family for occasional brief visits with Marzieh. Notes would be passed her: 'I will be at such a place at such a time.' That meant they would have five or ten minutes together, with the servants off to one side. When they left Tehran, Javád followed the family, and obtained a diplomatic post near where they were stationed. Now he was at Batum where, Florence reported, 'he lay in wait, like a wolf at the door of the fold'.

Once when her parents knew he was in Tiflis, Khan again placed Marzieh under house arrest in her rooms. That was the time she sent for a bottle of white wine and drank most of it, and feeling as if she were inside a top, could barely stagger and crawl to the bathroom, before sinking into bed and oblivion. This cured her of alcohol forever.

Her very last glimpse of Javád was in Tiflis when, as pre-arranged, she watched from the Louis XV drawing room as he walked down the hill across from the Consulate General.

A Persian patriarch, Khan resented the fact that his daughter was growing up. There were frequent squabbles between them in those years, once only because, in Tiflis, she came to table with her hair pinned up. Another time, to escape his wrath she locked herself in his study. Undaunted, Khan ordered Mihdí the butler to get a ladder and climb up the front of the building to the study window. Marzieh still had a bolt hole, however: remembering that in her suite across the hall, her bathroom was impregnable, with a heavy door and trusty lock, she ran there, abandoning the study just as the butler, a handsome young Cossack, laughing, loomed from his ladder.

About now Khan took to reading, to Florence and the girls, all his Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá—his wonderful treasures—from the very earliest years until the last, filled 'with the same fresh power and glorious divine eloquence, fire, love and bounty as if they were revealed today, for my life now'.

Khan's finances were improving although the Persian government, while fully acknowledging its past debt to him, paid that only with promises, and suggestions of a more important post by spring. Toward the end of their stay in Persia, both a European post and the option to develop the railroads had been bestowed on him only to be cancelled at the last moment, but a new law gave Khan reason to be optimistic again. This law made it mandatory for Ministers to return home at least every three years, and several big posts would fall vacant by spring. Khan's mind was also temporarily at rest with regard to Rahim, for the General had sent in good reports of the boy's progress at St-Cyr; his needs were provided for at government expense, and he seemed to be getting a good education.

Also, the Tiflis climate suited Florence, and to her the luminous full moon and the clear day and night skies were still the crystalline

Orient rather than the murky West. She noted several times in her recent years when she would have been very happy ‘if only’—enjoying certain months in Constantinople and Tehran ‘beyond anything I have enjoyed since I was a carefree little girl in our sweet garden on Baltimore Street, and at our wonderful Deer Cove!’ From early spring to late autumn they used to have thousands of flowers in the garden at Deer Cove, and then all winter they had hot-house flowers and plants.

Florence could even remember the first day of her life when she had consciously noticed flowers—a June day it was—a red rose, pansies and white infants’ breath, in the garden on Baltimore Street. From that day on her favorite flower was the small Jacques Minot

rose. Like all human joys, these later-life pleasures would have been unalloyed bliss ‘if only’: if only Rahim could be with her, if only they could all be united with her American family, if only ...

At Christmastime Florence gave a luncheon for a few guests, the long table lit by a dozen candles in two great candelabra and by lights from the large cluster chandelier above. The place cards bore Khan’s name in gold and silver (they were visiting cards given him in Tehran and too ‘artistic’ to use). The Caucasian menu was written on cards bearing Persia’s lion and sun at the top. Florence copied it out with impromptu translations for the family at home:

Salade d’olives

Chicken soup, vermicelli

Salmon, with small boiled potatoes

Pilaf à la Stambouli

Roast Turkey aux marrons, with Brussels sprouts

Crème à la Russe

Fruits

(the apples especially, monstrously big and luscious)

Coffee

(served in Russian silver cups—in our Persian salon where the walls are hung with our lovely ancient Persian gold cloths and other stuffs which had been ten years in our trunks at Rasht, during the [1914] war and all.)

She had to keep house by communicating with the chef, maid and laundress in sign language. The Armenian chauffeur knew Russian but only a few words of Persian. Her opinion of the Persian butler’s intelligence was not high, and once when he escorted her to a gathering of some kind, and the hostess referred to him as a ‘jolie personne’, Florence confided that he was a donkey in pants. ‘Our servant, Madame,’ was the rejoinder, ‘is a donkey with no pants at all.’ The girls were on Mihdi’s side anyhow, and believed that some of his bumbling was a device to avoid work.

Social guests came and went all day, and evenings there was either

the cinema or the opera, where the Khans in their special box were pretty much on display, while a good many in the audience were incongruously clad in work clothes and babushkas.

Thieving was universal, and once when the laundress left the washing out all night, by morning, among other things, six of

Khan's best Paris shirts had vanished, along with a Paris tablecloth of eighteen covers that belonged to Florence. The police wanted to arrest both maid and laundress, but the Khans did not permit it, although they did look around for new staff.

That winter the central heating in the big houses began to give out and repairmen were few, so the Khans retired to their smaller reception rooms. The living rooms had stoves, but the bedrooms were unheated. 'As this condition ... touches conditions here, I can't write any more,' she added mysteriously.

To save fuel, the custom there was to cook once a day, and to dine between three and four in the afternoon. Tea with cakes and fruits came along about six, and a warmed-over light supper was provided for after the opera, almost the city's sole entertainment. Mornings, breakfast, or rather two sequential breakfasts, would be served. The Khans had two New Year's Day celebrations for 1924 and could have had three if they had joined with the Americans in observing the earlier Western one.

When it became time to watch the old year out, Florence, Khan and Persian friends celebrated with a midnight supper at a café. The 'cream of the aristocracy' was there—what was left of it—and the cabaret performance featured Russian dancers, gypsy singers, a fine orchestra, a number of comedians, and several Georgian poets reciting their work. As a people, the Georgians sparkled, and knew how to have good times.

The Government maintained sixteen orphanages in the city. Florence and Hamideh visited one of these, found it very clean and most home-like, and planned to visit the institutions maintained for deaf, dumb and blind. Florence was 'increasingly interested in the better side here', she said.

A notable Communist guest came to visit about then, one of the 'real idealists', a cultivated man, a close friend of Lenin's, and who had been eight years in prison under the Czar.

Meanwhile the entertainments continued as usual—dinners followed by dancing, a masked ball, a trip to the circus. The girls' lessons went on, but Florence worried over the daughters' somewhat odd upbringing and how things would turn out, since by now they were half Eastern and half Western, neither this nor that and yet both. The Russians were pleased that the girls could now get along in the Russian language.

Nostalgic letters—the ones from America via Moscow with a string tied around them and the tops split open—continued to be

exchanged. Quite atypically, Grandmother Breed's letters showed she was beginning to think about old age and death, and Florence replied with an experience she had had in their garden at Shimírán: a golden summer afternoon in October, it was, and suddenly she saw it merge or fade or change before her eyes into autumn and she told herself, 'This is how, imperceptibly but surely, we pass from youth into middle age and on through old age into death. Just a silent gliding from the first glory to the last.'

The end of March came on with the Bahá'í New Year and more entertainments. Earlier Florence had written home that they were in the 'intercalary six-day period', the Days of Bounty, for hospitality and gift-giving, to be followed by the nineteen-day, sunrise-to-sunset fast, which would end on the Persian and also Bahá'í New Year's Day, March 21st. Showing the believers' then unfamiliarity with the Bahá'í calendar, she got the number of intercalary days wrong; they are four (February 26 – March 1 inclusive, and five in leap years).

On the first day of the Days of Bounty, say the Persians, the earth breathes, awakening from its long winter sleep.

The festivities preceding and following the fast meant different responsibilities for Florence and Khan. For her, receptions and dinners to plan and supervise, the latter sometimes requiring a Persian cook to be brought in to work with their Russian chef. For Khan, on the morning of Naw-Rúz, delegations of officials from the Persian colony arrived, and about three hundred schoolboys marching to a band playing Persian music. When they appeared before Khan he bestowed on each boy the traditional small gold coin. Speeches and feasting filled the time till one o'clock. The Consulate General's sturdy, armed farráshes (footmen) were decked out in smart new uniforms, the servants in new spring liveries, the three large reception rooms were crowded with tables bearing Persian sugared cherries, cakes, pistachio nuts, cigarettes, European bonbons, and ablaze with great baskets of spring flowers. Foreign officials and their ladies attended the reception that afternoon. Altogether, twelve hundred visitors presented themselves at the Consulate that day.

Soon after this, Khan went to Moscow with other Consuls on official business, arriving April 9th. The journey from Tiflis via Baku, in a de luxe Pullman car with an excellent restaurant, took four nights and five days. Remembering that both the Breeds had visited Moscow, which Khan called the London of Russia, he wrote them a few details of his stay in the nine-hundred-year-old city with its sixteen hundred churches. He found the theater, opera and ballet superb. He said that Lenin's face could still be seen in his casket in the Kremlin wall, but he was told that in a few months they would close

the casket for good. 'He is worshipped here just as Washington is in America.'

(By the time of his death, Lenin had become all-powerful, and the dictatorship of the proletariat was much like the dictatorship of the state under Louis XIV.)

Always interested in clothing, Khan reported that there were no well-dressed or fashionable people in the streets, everyone dressed more or less alike and the shops sold clothing of the same kind. 'This means that today the great masses have a chance. Of course these fellows have tremendous problems still to solve, but they seem to display an over-abundance of courage and hope.' It was hard to judge, he said, since so much depended on one's point of view, but one thing was certain, 'there is a new Russia here. As to its final status and destiny, only history can tell.' He also told his parents-in-law that Persia now had a powerful government and that its Premier Reza Khan was his friend, but that being absent he, Khan, could not do much for his own future at that moment.

In Tiflis Easter brought still more festivities. The custom in Georgia was to go about visiting, and for the men to kiss the women on the lips and say, 'Christ has risen'. It was claimed that the gentlemen favored the households where they had spotted pretty chambermaids.

Florence's Easter Sunday letter of 1924 says, 'Trotsky, the War Minister, has been in Tiflis with great meetings and his speeches broadcast by radio.'

Khan, still in Moscow on official business, was invited by the Persian Ambassador (Musháviru'l-Mamálik, who had headed the Persian delegation at Versailles), to a dinner for Tchicherin.

Writing of Persian matters, she said the Shah and the Crown Prince had only themselves to blame for their vanished prestige, and noted that Khan had been the Prince's last hope.

She told her father that several Azalís had been given high positions and were implacably opposed to Khan because he was a Bahá'í. (Azalís were remnants of the party of Azal, Mírzá Yahyá, half-brother of Bahá'u'lláh and until Bahá'u'lláh's declaration of His

prophetic mission in 1863, the nominal—and often fleeing, often disguised—head of the Bab's followers.)

Also, the Persian government had just named as Ambassador to the highest, or second highest, diplomatic post (Constantinople) a turbaned mullá with no diplomatic experience whatever.

Florence could not praise the Caucasus climate enough, putting it between 'the perfect climate of Persia and the lovely climate of Turkey', but admitted to volcanic conditions and earthquakes—not

serious ones in Tiflis itself, she said reassuringly, although they sometimes played hob with the electric lights. She described the

view from their home's long balcony, 'like the deck of an ocean liner', stretching above the garden with its great blossoming trees, statues, a fountain, and mountain vistas beyond.

By June 15th, Tiflis, in its cup in the hills, would be too warm, and many would leave then for watering places such as Kislevasky.

Often Florence was writing longingly of transportation home: 'There is a boat sailing from Batoum to Marseilles ...' Or the dreamed-of sailing point would Constantinople, or best of all, Haifa.

Back home Grandmother Breed regained her 'pep'. Grandfather attended a big meeting at Dr Guthrie's church, where hundreds of Bahá'í friends were present, and according to Grandfather's letter, his wife Alice was the belle of the ball. On a Sunday morning she hurried away early to speak at a Bahá'í meeting and by nightfall he reported that she had not yet come home. She had gained six pounds and as usual he was simultaneously proud of and exasperated with her as well.

Forty-nine

The Imbrie tragedy

Upon his arrival in Tiflis Khan had realized almost at once that his stay would not be long, but just when he decided on a return to the United States is not clear. Certainly the pull was always there, and his experiences in Tehran had increased it, especially with the visibly growing power of Reza Khan. Despite assurances to the Breeds that Reza Khan—the energetic, actually unopposed, new man—was his friend, and though the latter had made some moves to indicate this was true, the fact remained that Khan had been too closely associated with the Crown Prince for the coming dictator to want him in any position of importance.

Reza's esteem for the Qájárs was hardly even low. Once, after an interview with him, Khan acted out for the family's benefit how the big rough Cossack felt about the dynasty. To him, they were pantywaists. Khan being present, Reza had swiveled his hips, taken a dance step, flopped his wrists and lisped out a few Qájár princely remarks, to illustrate his opinion.

No longer could Khan look to Persia for his future. It must lie in the West.

Khan may not have fully understood all this before he left Tiflis for good in early July 1924. Perhaps there was a last flicker of hope that he could still serve his country in some official way. In any case he must go back to Persia to wind up his affairs before he could leave for America.

Florence was gradually collecting small gifts for the family at home: a little Russian silver, gold-lined—some silks from Yazd to put with it, and some long-lasting, Persian white washable silks, which would become softer the more often they were washed.

They finally left Tiflis on a Wednesday, July 2, 1924, sailed from Baku on July 5, and then took the usual Enzeli, Rasht, Tehran trip, all motorized by now. They would stay briefly in their own Tehran garden that Khan had bought the year before.

This was a large, walled tract of land on the east side of the main road to Shimírán, leading north from Tehran. It was probably down this same road that, seventy-two years before, under another August sun, Bahá'u'lláh had been driven by a ravaging mob, they mocking Him, abusing Him, ripping at His garments, His hat gone, His shoes gone, He harried, vilified all the way down, down to the city to be forced underground and jailed with criminals in the Black Pit.

The garden had perennially-flowing water, and Khan's brother, General Kalantar, had been supervising the development of it, building some rooms of sun-baked brick to live in, and planting flowers, shrubs and over five thousand young trees. By the blue-tiled stream, running into a circular pool, the Khans would receive guests in a red ceremonial tent, furnished with hand-embroidered tapestries, rugs, chairs, small tables for refreshments and for the oil lamps at night. As big as a city block, this was the fifth garden north of the town, and had broad avenues already in place. Above the main gate were blue tiles bearing an Arabic inscription from the Qur'án: 'Say, all is from God.' (4:80) And the road along the southern wall was named for Khan, Avenue Nabílu'd-Dawlih.

So near Tehran, the garden was too hot for them that summer, and again they rented a place up in Imám-Zádih Qásim, in the cool of the Alburz foothills.

Scarcely had the Khans returned to Tehran that year when the mobmurder of Major Robert Imbrie, American Vice-Consul, shook the foreign colony, and the Persians as well. Writing of this on August 23, a little more than a month later, Florence reported that most of the best Persians were 'stunned, horrified, amazed, shamed and grieved at such a colossal tragedy'. The assassination of a foreign diplomat shocked them deeply, and only one other such event in Persia came to mind: the killing of a Russian Minister a hundred years before. Assassination in those days was not routine as it is today, but horror.

On the very day the Major was killed, the Khan family were to have taken tea with him and Mrs Imbrie, at Dr Moody's home, only to receive a hurried word from her that he had been killed by a mob in the streets.

Florence explained that for months confused, irrational political and religious harangues had stirred up the populace and 'brought about the awful mess of late weeks, culminating in the death of a friend of Persia, and a brave American'. Many in all walks of life had thus expressed themselves to her and to Khan.

Khan did not see the official records but had the advantage later on

of talking with Melin Seymour who was with Imbrie when the mob attacked, and had been badly mauled and nearly murdered himself. It all started with the sacred fountain. For some days before the tragedy, a supposedly miracle-working fountain had become the focus of city attention, attracting hordes of the credulous, and old timers wondered bleakly what was in preparation. Manipulators of the body politic have always known that religious fanaticism is a quick way to pit groups one against the other. As provocateurs are aware, divide-and-rule is best attained by the skilful use of bigotry. Also, as Bahá'ís, who live to unify society, well know, it is much easier and quicker to tear down than to build, to wound than to heal, to kindle hatred rather than to foster love.

In this particular case, 'the interests' undoubtedly wanted the United States out of the Persian picture, and as usual the best way to frighten off American capital was a riot, started in the classic manner by whipped up 'religion'. Hence, as far as anyone could tell, the miracle-working fountain, the fanatics, the chanting, the howling. And then, it seems, Imbrie was advised by a fellow guest at a luncheon to try and get a photograph of the picturesque, suddenly holy place. This supposedly casual suggestion to a man newly arrived in an unfamiliar environment seemed like a good idea to Imbrie. He and Seymour strolled out to the fountain, and he aimed his camera at the scene. What the chanters and howlers saw was an unclean non-Shiah-Muslim, smiling pleasantly no doubt, with his camera turned toward them and their fountain. This ended his life. Somehow, both Seymour and Imbrie were snatched from the mob and gotten to a hospital. The Vice-Consul's pregnant wife was brought to him. When she saw the condition he was in she had to leave, for she lost the baby she was carrying. Meanwhile, the mob burst through the doors from the street and killed him in his bed.

Muharram, first of the mourning months for Hasan and Husayn, was then on its perilous way. Since 'Abdu'l-Bahá's departure from the world, a general intensification of hostility towards the Bahá'ís had been noted and there were street demonstrations against them in many places. The Master's name was cursed in the streets of Tehran and it was said that a mob had burned Him in effigy. For these reasons the Bahá'ís of Persia believed that Imbrie's death must, in one sense, have been a ransom, a spiritual blood-sacrifice, for thousands of men, women and children whose names, the friends said, were all written down for slaughter on the tenth of Muharram. This year that anniversary of Husayn's martyrdom was expected to be an intense and terrible day, but when Major Imbrie was assassinated the city instantly went under martial law, and the Bahá'ís were saved.

By then, Dr Genevieve Coy had already left Tehran, and Florence recalled her work for Persia and the Persian Bahá'ís, and how

Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf, had sent a letter to Dr Moody introducing Genevieve with much praise: ‘gentle, patient, loving, cultivated ...’ Dr Coy had suffered much on her mission, all was so different from her academic life at home. ‘To begin in Tehran was a supreme agony at times’, Florence observed, ‘an absolute reversal of all her life and habits and friendships and happiness. It was a real sacrifice.’

Dr Moody and Elizabeth Stewart were about to leave, having made their plans long before the Imbrie assassination. They were ‘angels to tell the real and simple truth’. They dearly loved Mrs Imbrie, and did whatever they could to serve her after the tragic death of her husband. She had sent for them on the same night he died. An unexplained further comment in a letter is that Major Imbrie had saved the lives of Dr Moody and Elizabeth two or three days before he was murdered.

People spoke of Mrs Imbrie’s courage, of how, in spite of her anguish, she was able to take charge of the situation and do whatever had to be done.

When Washington threatened to sever diplomatic relations, Persia arrested some two hundred mullás, formally apologized to the United States and accepted Washington’s terms for full reparations. To transport Major Imbrie’s body home, the United States government had sent a cruiser, the Trenton, to Bushire, and one of the officers in Mrs Imbrie’s military escort on the sad journey from Tehran was a Bahá’í, Major Rúhu’lláh Khán. On his return he said that she wept the whole way, and if a Persian officer approached, she would put her hand up like a shield, and draw down her heavy veil, so as not to see him.

However, she knew Rúhu’lláh Khán was a Bahá’í and a friend of

Dr Moody and Elizabeth Stewart, and several times a day he would approach her car, ask in English if she needed anything, and take her flowers. She would pull down her veil and lay the flowers on her husband’s bier. Once when she was very weary he took her tea. He also gave her a letter of condolence from Florence, in which Florence tried to comfort her while praising the Persian people at the same time.

The foreigners in Tehran were understandably worried as to their own safety. An American lady called on Florence—still unwell from the shock—after Mrs Imbrie had left with all honors, and characterized what had happened as ‘very sad indeed’. Immediately following that, she told of how her little black kitten had just died (a horrid, devilish little brute was Florence’s gloss) ‘and the tears gushed from her eyes as she described how lonely she felt now’.

One effect on Marzieh and Hamideh of the aroused fanaticism was that they now had to wear their chádurs when they happened to be in the city. However, up country in their walled garden and walking

across the foothills they were safe enough.

By day Florence and Hamideh were enjoying sunbaths on the flat roof of the house, and by night Marzieh would sit up there alone and brood under the big moon.

There in that village they had the wide vistas of gardens and plains, of distant southern mountains and the far away dark green line of the city under its fold of dust, and beyond, even the gold spark of Sháh ‘Abdu’l-‘Azím, and they had the scented winds and the changing lights of sun and clouds.

Florence—pulled as she was from pillar to post, had not had an easy life after marriage: uprooted so many times, placed in so many contrasting environments, separated from her beloved parents and son, often living in luxury but uncertain about whether there would be enough money to meet last month’s bills—still retained a capacity for joys of the spirit, and drew delight from the beauty of the world. But now grief and knowledge of failure led to illness, ‘Because I had served so much to bring the two together, East and West.’ Twice in the night she thought she would not live to see the morning—but ‘I took the holy candy [rock candy blessed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and given to Khan in 1899] and prayed, and my forces re-assembled, and rallied ...’

The summer and autumn time of 1924 meant more weeks of long goodbyes, and constant arrivals and departures of relatives and friends. The Crown Prince sent for Florence and the girls for one last visit. For the last time, they heard his boots ringing on the pavement of the women’s courtyard, he coming across the courtyard unattended, entering his own very special domain. There was something about the decisive authority of those ringing boots, the absoluteness of his

coming, in spite of everything the kingliness, that most Americans could know nothing of. American books, films, plays about kings and queens prove that the mystique of royalty escapes them. ‘There’s such divinity doth hedge a king,’ says Shakespeare, but this means little to Americans. George III is in their genes. Marzieh used to think they should listen to sovereignty in music, say in the opening of Handel’s Royal Fireworks Suite. In any case the fact of kingship must fill some need in their hearts, since one notes how consistently they put crowns on the heads of sports figures and actors and beauty ‘queens’, and how they like titled foreigners. ‘[T]he majesty of kingship is one of the signs of God,’ [135] Bahá’u’lláh says, meanwhile favoring constitutional government.

The young Prince sat with them for an hour.

At last the family were preparing to leave Tehran for New York, via Baghdad, Beirut, Haifa and Paris. Khan’s passport, still extant, bore all the family’s photos and stated that ‘His Excellency, a member of the Foreign Office’ was ‘on leave to arrange his personal affairs’.

Their departure was set for October 23, and they were to travel in a convoy of cars and trucks belonging to a new French-English transport firm, the

Nairn Company, which covered the distance from Tehran to Haifa via Baghdad and the desert in a record week. Their actual departure was double, since, Persian fashion, they first removed to a rented house in the city, after long family farewells. 'Amid the scent of our own well-beloved flowers,' Florence wrote, 'in our own beloved, dear, last garden, we embraced and kissed goodbye a throng of weeping, sobbing, lamenting relatives and servants, our auto honking us away at the gate.' As they set out for the Holy Land Florence became truly happy again, although before, since 'Abdu'l-Bahá was gone from them in the body, she 'had forgotten the habit of happiness'.

One member of the party as far as Baghdad was Melin Seymour, the American oil fields technician who had been with Major Imbrie when the mob attacked, and had himself nearly been killed. Now, still bearing scars, fearing public recognition, he was anxious to leave the streets of Tehran forever. They drove away by the light of the morning star.

At Kirmánsháh the convoy's baggage truck broke down, requiring a stopover of two nights. (In those days of frequent punctures, they suffered only two, all the way to Damascus.) Dr Habíbu'lláh Mu'ayyad, who lovingly entertained all Bahá'ís going and coming through the city, invited the Khans to stay with him; and the Governor of the province had them to tea at his palace. That evening Dr Mu'ayyad gave a dinner party, attended also by the Governor's brother, and brought in special musicians including the famed Báqir Khán.

Near the Iraq frontier where they, autos and all, would take a train, the convoy loaded on extra food and water, for they had to travel (being without the recommended military escort) through an area infested with brigands. Here the expert chauffeurs drove like madmen.

When they reached Baghdad the young Dr Aflatoon invited the family for breakfast, and after lunch at the Maud Hotel they set out for Damascus.

They went thundering across the Syrian desert for twelve hours at a stretch, traveling in a twenty-four horsepower five passenger Dodge touring car with a driver trained by the military who knew the desert like a hawk. Either following the ancient Roman road or choosing their own road alongside, over the firm gravelly surface, they 'flew' at forty-five to sixty-five miles an hour and even, across the flat emptiness, up to ninety. They easily overtook a herd of fleeing gazelles, and the driver shot one of them for a future feast. Another car in the convoy ran over a fox, and some nearly caught birds on the wing, upstarting from the ground. One sunrise they catapulted through a Bedouin village where there seemed to be thousands of tents, black tents all open to the east, and many

thousands of sheep. One tent had its ropes stretched across the road. 'Alas! we were into them, snap! and away, zip! before we had seen them, and left the ropes waving in the wind.'

Then they came to the ruins of Zenobia's apricot-colored Palmyra, rested, and hastened on 'from glory to glory', until 'at last, the sea!'

Fifty

The young Guardian

At long last they were driving down the coast to Haifa, for them the Land of All Desiring. The sea was to their right, on the West, and Khan, when he caught sight of Bahá'u'lláh's mansion of Bahjí in the East, marked by its great umbrella pines, half rose in his corner of the touring car and bowed. The new moon was shining over Mount Carmel, and most of the month they were there they had the moon. Khan and Florence could not help grieving as they returned to the Holy Land, 'because the beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá will be visible no more', but they consoled themselves in the certitude that the same reality would greet them in Shoghi Effendi.

That first evening, in the house of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, they were received by members of the Household, and almost immediately summoned into the presence of the Guardian. He came forward to put them at their ease, grasping each one by the hand, greeting each by name, inviting them to be seated. He then inquired about their health, their journey, and the Bahá'í friends they had visited along the way.

'You are very welcome,' he said. 'You have had many difficulties, but I have always remembered you in my prayers.'

This was the usual Thursday evening meeting of the Haifa Spiritual Assembly, and all were gathered in the Master's reception room. Shoghi Effendi occupied the lower end of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's divan, the upper end having been the place of 'Abdu'l-Bahá—the place now vacant, marked only by His folded up shawl, and a small pillow of rose-colored velvet, embroidered with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's initials in gold, just as He had put aside these things for the last time, not very long before.

On November 2nd, 1924, Florence wrote home, 'Praise God with us that He has delivered us from that distant land [of Persia], and greatest of all Divine Bounties for us, has brought us here, to the blessed Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and to the feet and service of Shoghi Effendi. At last we are freed from wasting our lives on a barren soil ... the hands of the friends in that distant land are really manacled, and while they can and do serve the Cause continuously and zealously, and the Cause is progressing, yet there are some forms of service which are utterly futile, as things go at present.'

The Khans stayed in the house of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's daughter, Rúhá Khánúm, and were given two spacious bedrooms, besides her salon

and dining room. The bedroom used by Khan and Florence was the Master's one-time occasional room, and the same that Shoghi Effendi occupied on his return to Haifa from Oxford.

It was eighteen years since Florence and Khan had been the guests of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in these holy places, and still, there He always was. 'Do you ever dream of Him?' Florence asked one of the daughters. 'Oh,' she smiled, 'I never close my eyes but I see His beauteous face. I never sleep but I dream I am with Him. I hear His voice calling me, often and often, as He used to call, and I awake and answer, "Here I am! Here I am! What do you wish, Master?"'

Florence reports having heard the following from another daughter. It seems that toward the last, 'Abdu'l-Bahá would say from time to time, 'You wonder who will carry on my work when I am gone? Such a soul exists. He is capable. He is wonderful! Marvelous! He is indeed worthy! But he is not here now, he is at present in Europe.'

'In Europe!' they would think to themselves. 'Who could this soul be?'

'Is he a Bahá'í?' they asked the Master.

'Yes, he is a Bahá'í.'

And although they knew very well that Shoghi Effendi was then away at Oxford, 'None of us ever dreamed that it was he. And as for Shoghi Effendi himself, he never entertained such a thought.'

His tender reverence for 'Abdu'l-Bahá was very touching, and once, writing to Florence of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master, he said, 'I am their humble follower and servant.'

'With him a new day dawned,' she wrote her family in America, 'a new call as from youth to youth, radiant with a new hope, a new spirit of sacrifice and service, a new power.' And best of all, he gave them the realization of 'the clear permanence and immanence of the Master's blessed spirit'. In her view this realization, learned from Khan, was particularly apparent 'when one reads in the original Persian and Arabic languages the utterly sweet new spiritual eloquence of Shoghi Effendi's written speech'.

In some of the old pilgrims' notes there are glimpses of Shoghi Effendi as a child. Ella Cooper remembered how she had seen him in the Holy Land, skipping about the room where 'Abdu'l-Bahá was seated. The edge of the Master's 'abá lay partly on the floor, and as the child skipped by, without pausing in his play, he lifted the hem to his lips and kissed it.

Fannie Knobloch recalled, 'Little Shoghi—slender, serious—looking just tall enough for his head to be above the table, had on a black worn calico dress. [He] came with a slate for us to write words on because he wanted to learn.'

Even when Shoghi Effendi was very small his future greatness was known to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. A Miss Drayton of New York City wrote

Him at the turn of the century and asked about the successorship. She received an answer, published at the end of Volume II of His Tablets, and badly translated, but striking. It says, ‘Verily that Infant is born ... and there will appear from his Cause a wonder ...’ The child would be endowed with perfection, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá continued, and his face would shine so brightly it would illumine the horizons, and He told Miss Drayton to remember this, all through her life. Robert Gulick referred the Tablet to the American National Spiritual Assembly and they asked the Holy Land and verified that the infant referred to was Shoghi Effendi.

To Dr Fallscheer, the Household’s physician in Haifa whose notes were taken during the period from 1906 to 1911 and later published in Germany’s *Sonne der Wahrheit*—the Master confided that Shoghi Effendi was His ‘vazír’ (vicegerent).

Describing Shoghi Effendi, Florence wrote, ‘The Valí (Guardian) of the Cause is a young and energetic man. He is stately, dignified, and his shining face reflects purity and love.’ She told of his tact, brilliance, quick and gentle wit as he sat with visiting friends at the daily luncheon in the Western Pilgrim House. ‘The kindly wisdom of his eyes. The powerfully developed forehead ... Most unobtrusively he makes vivid suggestions, shows how conditions may be bettered in individual Bahá’í centers. “Travel and teach,” he urged.’ Of his clothing, she reported that ‘He wears a tall, black Persian hat, a black suit, a black European outer coat to his knees.’ Rúhá Khánúm told her that Shoghi Effendi had only one or two suits. They were of fine materials, as was his felt hat, and he was always fresh and immaculate, like ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, though in semi-Western garb, and seeming to many Americans like a young American executive—although none of those could match his English. ‘We are not Eastern or Western,’ he told the believers, ‘we are Bahá’ís.’ He showed great interest in the education of Bahá’í children, looking ahead to their world services. He wished Khan to continue the education of their children in America at the best schools. He advised the children, however, to speak Persian with their father, so as not to forget it. Indeed, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had advised the believers long before: ‘Acquire the Persian tongue ... [t]he Persian language shall become noteworthy ... the people shall study it in all the world. ... by the study of this language great and boundless results are obtained.’ ‘... memorize a commune in the Persian ...’[136]

Of Khánúm, the Greatest Holy Leaf, Florence could not write enough, of ‘her sacrifice in continuing on amongst us, her encouraging sweet courtesy so like ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ... the peerless daughter of Bahá’u’lláh, the first and most wonderful woman ever born into this world’. On his return from Oxford, Shoghi Effendi had no room of his own, and slept in the same room in Rúhá Khánúm’s house now being used by Florence and Khan. Khánúm

built him two rooms or so on the roof of the Holy Household's house. Shoghi Effendi said no money should have been allotted for this, and would not let the rooms be furnished. They stayed bare until, one day without permission, Laura Dreyfus-Barney went downtown and bought some furnishings and a floor covering, and for her sake he gave in. He was, all through his life, very careful as to the funds of the Cause, reminiscent of the Imám 'Alí, who, when finished with his day's work for the state, would blow out the candle he had needed for his official task and sit in the dark. Although the Guardian continued to send funds to those whose need was critical, he could no longer support the (no doubt many) believers and others

who asked for help. He pointed out to the Bahá'ís that while other groups solicit and receive contributions from the public, the Bahá'í Faith was entirely dependent on itself alone.

Asked the meaning of his name (Shawq, a word well known to mystics), he said musingly, 'Zeal, eagerness, yearning, especially yearning.'

The Bahá'í world had never before heard the word Guardian in its Bahá'í meaning. All this was new in those days. The Master's Will had been known only about two years. 'He is indeed the heir', Florence wrote, 'to the spiritual Kingdom established by Bahá'u'lláh.'

'It is undeniable that I am the Guardian,' Shoghi Effendi told her.

'I am under the unerring protection of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.'

'Tell the believers I am their co-worker and their brother; their fellow-worker in the Cause.'

All these points he would gradually make known officially, in such documents as The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh.

At the daily luncheons where the Western visitors did not have to share him with other pilgrims, and at that time were permitted to take notes, he showed himself to be intensely interested in world affairs, knowledgeable about the affairs of each nation, and he eagerly discussed the affairs of the Faith all over the world.

Even in those early years he would share, at table, letters from far away traveling teachers, and was often deeply moved when they came from persons whose health was frail and their means few.

His writings were not to be called 'Tablets'. He continually wished to show that he was on a far different plane from the Master; his station was that of Guardianship; the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and the Master were all apart. If a pilgrim asked him to bless some memento to be taken home, he would lay it on the bed in the unchanged bedroom where, in the Holy Household's home, the Master spent the last three days of His life and died—or else on the threshold in one of the Shrines.

Florence felt that in this new day of the Guardian, no matter what

services a Bahá'í had offered in the past, this day more, more and still more would be expected of him by the Guardian in what Bahá'ís came to know as the Iron Age of the Faith.[137]

His great call was 'Action!' 'You say you loved 'Abdu'l-Bahá, then prove it,' he seemed to be telling the older believers. 'Arise and serve! Elevate personal character and behavior!' And he would remind the Bahá'ís that the Master in His Will and Testament asked them to look to the example of Christ's disciples. How they 'forsook all their cares and belongings, purged themselves of self and passion and with absolute detachment scattered far and wide and engaged in calling the peoples of the world to the divine guidance, till at last they made the world another world ...'[138]

Fifty-one

With the Guardian at the Shrines

The family always had the feeling that they were beings on a lower plane going about their own human devices and that Shoghi Effendi was a being who lived in a higher sphere. This does not mean that he did anything to give them such a feeling. He was the soul of consideration and 'humble fellowship'. But the truth was, he was clearly from another world.

The Khans had come from many visits to the Persian Court and they treated Shoghi Effendi as they had royalty, but he was a true King and, unlike the Qájárs, attracted this behavior from the family as an irresistible thing.

They showed him group pictures of courtiers with the Crown Prince Regent—the one whom Khan had at first served with hope, as mentor to pupil, romanticizing the relationship to some extent as a Goethe-at-Weimar thing. When they handed Shoghi Effendi the photo portrait of the Crown Prince in his elaborate dress uniform and his cap jauntily on one side, the Guardian's comment was, 'Jilf ast', (he is a lightweight).

Shoghi Effendi did not look casually at the photographs, as most would have done, but gave the subjects his close attention, almost as if meeting them. This was the day when he saw a large photograph of teen-aged Rahim with Florence, the boy smiling, nearly as tall as his mother, and made the strange comment, 'I pity him.'

It was at this time that Marzieh showed him the green album her mother had given her while he was in Paris. In it she had pasted the photos Shoghi Effendi had taken in Barbizon. They were like any snapshots—one in fact was double exposed, one image superimposed upon another. The rare one, the future Guardian with the family, except for Khan and Rahim (and including Ralph and the governess) taken by Shoghi Effendi with a new gadget for remote control, was kept out and enlarged. Now he held the album and looked through it. He said it made him happy to see the snapshots because they reminded him of that time. The family knew he meant when the

Master was in the world and Shoghi Effendi was not Guardian.

Working continuously from morning to late in the evening and

eating very little at these midday meals, he would quietly give the visitors his whole attention at the luncheon table and he never produced an impression of being in a hurry.

‘His activity is amazing’, Florence reiterated. ‘The day of Shoghi Effendi is the day of action, of deeds, and good personal conduct and character—action and doing, not talking.’ He wished the believers to bring forth a harvest after all the bounty showered upon them by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for so many long years. She wrote of the gardens he had already developed about the Holy Tomb, even palms and cypresses along the path, now leading straight up Mount Carmel from the avenue which extends down to the sea. ‘Most marvelous of all, he has carried away the great boulders—which for ages have existed on Mount Carmel—between the Tomb of the Báb and the avenue. Except for a small strip, over-priced by its owner, all the land from the Tomb down to this avenue at the base of the mountain belongs to the believers. He has created this new and broad and noble approach straight up the mountain side, and lined it with fastgrowing fan-palms and flowers, and all this in so brief a time.’ It was typical of Florence that to her these great boulders symbolized the obstacles—human evils, selfishness, worldliness—which the Guardian would clear away from the path of the Faith, and out of her devout Christian origins she quoted, ‘Make His paths straight.’ (Matthew 3:3)

In 1924 much of the holy Mountain of Carmel was ragged—weeds and rocks. The Guardian would take Florence’s arm and help her down the muddy, stony slope, and Marzieh wished she were old, so that he would help her down too.

He was very much alone in those years, not only in transforming the mountain but in developing a handful of believers into an international community. ‘[A] mere handful’, he was to write, ‘amidst the seething masses of the world’.[139] ‘He awaits helpers, efficient coworkers’, Florence said in one of her letters home.

He would sketch out the future of the Faith, saying for example (this at a later date, 1933), ‘There must be a chain of centers through the Balkans.’

His method of teaching was not to be harsh or disapproving, but rather to understand, and often to suggest some better conduct with a smile. If he wished to advise, he might comment on something he approved of in another believer. For instance, he told Marzieh that every morning on awakening, ‘Azíz Bahádúr would read some of the Hidden Words. Hidden Words, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has said, is our ‘standard and criterion of judgment ...’[140]

With all Shoghi Effendi’s cares, he was faithful to the old and loyal friends of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, many of whom he had known in his

childhood, and was a loving head of the Holy Household (though many of them would betray him later on, in exchange for his care). The break among his relatives was not glaringly apparent in 1924, although Khan, Florence, and even Marzieh, noticed small things some of them did which failed to ring true. These were matters which Americans unfamiliar with the East would not, perhaps, have detected. Shoghi Effendi would write in *God Passes By* of the four-year agitation which had followed on the departure of the Manifestation, and how it ‘created an irreparable breach within the ranks of Bahá’u’lláh’s own kindred, [and] sealed ultimately the fate of the great majority of the members of His family ...’[141]

One of those persons was the Guardian’s cousin, Suhayl Effendi, a small thin man with large green eyes, who often sat at the foot of the long luncheon table, his back to the entrance, while the Guardian sat at the center, cater-corner, about half way to the top. Very early during this pilgrimage, Marzieh was seated on Suhayl’s left and engaged in some light conversation which was inappropriate because, although seated at some distance, the Guardian was present. Suhayl, according to Persian etiquette, should have demonstrated the correct way to behave at the Guardian’s table, but did not. He began to speak of the new transliteration system—arbitrary, non-phonetic but very exact—established by Orientalists at an international congress, and selected by the Guardian to bring order out of chaos in Western Bahá’í publications. When one realizes that the Persian alphabet has two ‘h’s’, three ‘s’s’, two ‘t’s’ and four ‘z’s’, and that even such a familiar name as Muhammad was spelled by English writers in four or five different ways—Mahomet, Mehmet, Mohammed, even Mahound—the difficulty becomes apparent. Suhayl’s comment was on the new spelling, according to the Guardian’s chosen system, of *Jináb-i-Fádíl* of *Mázindarán*, then traveling in America. Instead of Fazel he would now be Fádíl, though the pronunciation would be the same. (Actually, following the Guardian’s example, individuals were free to transliterate their own names as they wished.) Suhayl—as Marzieh realized too late—himself knowing very well that in a Persian sense he was daring to criticize the Guardian and indeed acting contrary to the Master’s Will, which directs all the leaders to ‘be lowly before him’ (the Guardian), gave out at his end of the table with a pun: ‘It will be lucky if Fazel (erudite) does not turn into Fazleh (excrement).’ Marzieh could not help laughing. Afterward she knew it was wrong. The next day the Guardian did not appear at the pilgrims’ luncheon, and while he did not seem to have stayed away deliberately, it was a lesson.

Frequently, as he would leave the luncheon table the Guardian would, with charming courtesy, ask Khan if he would be free, to

join him at four o'clock on his long afternoon walk around Mount Carmel, which except for the privilege of being with him, could exhaust the most tireless.

At dusk the Khan family would climb the mountain to pray at the Báb's and the Master's Shrines.

They would find them softly lighted by electric chandeliers, and wall-lights shining through gold-glowing, Tiffany globes—appropriate, Florence wrote, because 'Abdu'l-Bahá loved best the yellow rose—better than the white or red—and here the light was a diffused and spiritual, soft yellow glow. Usually Shoghi Effendi would chant 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Visitation Tablet, and no one can tell befittingly of his chant. The solemn, unaffected sweetness and power of it, the total lack of sentimentality or studied, clerical 'pear-shaped tones'. No one could ever have loved 'Abdu'l-Bahá the way Shoghi Effendi loved Him, and the Guardian stood there in his Grandfather's very presence, outside the inner room of the Shrine, chanting the prayer of which the Master says, 'It will be even as meeting Him face to face.' The prayer which asks for selflessness, and asks repeatedly to be dust in the path of God's loved ones. In those days a family member had hung a great portrait, the Taponier photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, on an inner wall of the middle room, and His eyes looked lovingly down on those who came. (This large picture, perhaps as being contrary to Aqdas laws forbidding pictures and statues in Houses of Worship, and placed there before Shoghi Effendi's return, was removed after a time.)

Of three rooms, the eastern was for women pilgrims, then came the flower-heaped threshold, then the inner room beneath which was the vault for the holy remains, and beyond another flowered threshold, the room for the men pilgrims. With the Western pilgrims, men or women, the Guardian would pray in the east room. There was reverence but great freedom of attitude; the Guardian would stand to chant the Visitation Tablet or kneel to pray, but unless he was present each would do as he wished, bow at the threshold or lean his head against the wall or even, in the case of an ailing woman (the wife of Mountfort Mills) sit in a chair which the Guardian had them place for her.

It was not usual for either of the two groups of pilgrims, the men and the women, to look across the inner Shrine to the other side, but Keith Ransom-Kehler (who would go to Persia and die for the Faith) once told Marzieh of an embarrassing experience she had there. 'I entered on the women's side and I thought the whole building was empty. I set about praying, and when I pray they know there is something doing in Heaven. I knelt down, I sobbed, I cried out.

Then all of a sudden I looked across at the men's side and found that a whole group of Eastern pilgrims was quietly observing me.'

'Oh well,' Marzieh thought to herself, 'they're probably sure

Americans are crazy anyhow.'

Outside the Shrine of the Báb and the Master would be two heaps of pilgrims' shoes, most of them dusty and piled every which way, but the Guardian's easily recognizable, because they were always carefully together and perfectly polished.

Whenever the Guardian appeared, people wished to gather around him, but because of his rank they kept at a respectful distance. On Sunday evenings both men and women would accompany him to the Shrine, but often at other times the family and one or two other Western pilgrims would be there, alone with him. There was one panic-stricken time for Marzieh when the thought had come to her that Shoghi Effendi would ask her to chant in the Master's Shrine, and she had mentally selected for herself the little prayer, *Iláhá Ma'búdá*: 'My God, my Adored One, my King, my Desire!' (Marzieh was given to short prayers, much like the well-known small boy in Sunday School who, whenever he was called upon to recite from the Bible, recited John 11:35, 'Jesus wept.') Then the Guardian sent word that he wished her to chant in the Shrine. Soon afterward, as she knelt a few feet behind from where he was kneeling, Florence and Mountfort Mills kneeling off to one side, Shoghi Effendi looked over his left shoulder and smiled at her indicating the time had come for the chant. Wobbly and reedy, she was able, somehow, to get the words out, and was afterwards drained. Like many teenagers, she lived mostly in a turgid, selfabsorbed, embarrassed dream. She was afraid to look at the Guardian, but stole glances. In his presence she often wanted to weep, and many others were affected in the same way, but she knew he did not care for displays of extreme emotion.

Contrary to those who wished to see in him the continuation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi stressed that although his rank was Guardian, and he was under the unerring protection of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, he was the Bahá'ís' fellow-worker and their true brother. This fact of Shoghi Effendi's being her true brother was a consolation to Marzieh when her own brother disappeared forever into the windings and turning of his frightening mind.

In that age of dictators (where many countries took to multiplying ad nauseam the likenesses of their local secular deity), Shoghi Effendi did not wish his picture displayed. In spite of his modesty, however, the believers could not be long in his presence without sensing that here was one different from all the rest. To many, he was all the proof one needed that God exists: indeed, the Will refers to him as

'blest' and 'sacred', and as *Áyatulláh*, 'the sign of God'. To many, of

all the paths in the world, this path of Bahá'u'lláh was the one to follow, because he had chosen it.

On their first pilgrimage to Bahjí with Hamideh and Marzieh, the

Khans drove north along the curving sea beach beside the little waves, to the white town of ‘Akká with its promontory, ‘Akká of the Crusaders—lost by them to Islam in 1291—with its ancient Fortress that stopped Napoleon, and his cannon balls still embedded in its implacable walls. ‘Akká that had been once at the very center of the world, ‘as it were in the middle of the inhabited world’, the fourteenth century Villani wrote, ‘both source and receptacle of every kind of merchandise’, and with it went the West’s last foothold in the coveted Holy Land. Hard to believe that once, merchants from everywhere had journeyed in their crowds to this quiet place, and that every known tongue was once heard spoken in these meandering lanes. With the loss of the Fortress, ‘all our good maritime places of trade never afterward derived half the advantage from their merchandise and manufactures,’ Villani says. He ranked it in those palmy days as ‘the aliment of the world’.[142]

It was here, to this place, by then an ugly penal colony with a double system of ramparts around it, that the farmán of Sultán ‘Abdu’l-‘Azíz sentenced Bahá’u’lláh to be imprisoned for life, cut off from His followers forever. They, however, were unable to stay away. They would come, some on foot and even from Persia, and station themselves beyond the double moat, and watch His prison window, hoping for a glimpse of His face. One of these waited for many long hours until at last, there in the distant window stood Bahá’u’lláh, but because of failing sight, the pilgrim could not make out His features, and went away grieving to a cave on Mount Carmel.

During part of this first visit the Guardian was present with the Khan family. He himself stood at the outer door of Bahá’u’lláh’s Shrine and poured a special scent into their cupped hands. It was not the usual attar, but a rare, enchanting perfume which Marzieh had never encountered before. Then he led them down along the inner garden under the glass roof, stood at the threshold with its heaped-up handfuls of tuberoses that gave into the small corner room, richly adorned, beneath which Bahá’u’lláh lies entombed, and chanted the Tablet of Visitation.

Here in the Guardian’s presence they stood closer than they had ever been to Bahá’u’lláh, Bearer of the Holy Spirit, the ‘supreme embodiment of all that is lovable’.[143]

Later they went through the Mansion of Bahjí which—the Sultán’s farmán, although never rescinded, having become a dead letter[144]—

was the last home of Bahá’u’lláh. On a cushion they saw His táj, His tall felt head-dress. On the floor they saw the bed He had died on. Here in this very room, with eight or nine others, Hand of the Faith Samandarí, then a boy of sixteen, was present when Bahá’u’lláh lay on his death bed, a believer seated on either side of Him, He leaning

against them, they with fans in their hands, fanning Him to cool His fever—and He citing words from the Most Holy Book: ‘Be not dismayed ... Arise to further My Cause ...’[145] With great power, in spite of His feebleness, He directed them to ‘shun disharmony’, to remain at peace one with another. Suddenly the blind poet ‘Andalíb (Nightingale) could stand it no longer. He sobbed, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá told them to walk around the bed, and then Bahá’u’lláh dismissed them, saying: ‘Go in the care of God.’[146]

Fifty-two

The heavens declare the Glory of God

The family were surprised to find that Bahjí was also like a book, an ongoing record of the Bahá’í Faith in the world, for here they saw not only treasures and beautifully executed murals, but contemporary records and photographs of Bahá’í achievements, and a model of the (at that time not completed) House of Worship at Wilmette—a great lamp shedding its soft light in the central upper court. A large calligraphy on one wall was by Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí, archbreaker of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant, a man who burned with neverending hatred of his half-brother but who, when he made this calligraphy, was still within the Faith.

As viewed by Muhammad-‘Alí, second in rank only to the Master, Bahá’u’lláh’s Testament concerned only the Household’s personal and private interests, whereas to the Master it was a document unique in religious history, and concerned the whole world. Had this Faith been left to Muhammad-‘Alí instead of to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, so virulent were Muhammad-‘Alí’s attacks, so relentlessly did he set his axe to the Holy Tree, that except for Bahá’u’lláh’s

promised aid, the Master tells us, Muhammad-‘Alí and his people would have exterminated His Father’s Cause in a matter of a few short days.[147]

This Mansion of Bahjí, the Shrine and adjacent buildings were at first in the hands of the Covenant-breakers. These, after their Father’s ascension, lived here in luxury, storing up goods and finery, feasting among themselves, inviting dignitaries to sumptuous

repasts. They corresponded with or sent emissaries to centers and individuals all over the East, heaping abuses on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and corrupting high-placed officials only too happy to see turmoil among the believers, who over a period of four years were intensely disturbed. This emergency created by Muhammad-‘Alí even ‘eclipsed, for a time, the Orb of the Covenant ...’[148]

When the Covenant-breakers forbade ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to worship at Bahá’u’lláh’s Shrine, He stood beyond on the plain and performed His visitation. He concealed their misdeeds, and complied with their requests, and when gifts came in, had them taken to Bahjí.

So far as the world could see, it was the Covenant-breakers,

leagued together, and including ‘members of Bahá’u’lláh’s family, relatives of the Báb and eminent figures and teachers of the Cause’, [149] who then headed the Faith, the Master being abandoned by His followers and virtually alone in the city of ‘Akká.

Fierce rains and battering winds had been attacking Haifa, but now all was clear and calm, and the day was here for calling to remembrance that November night, only three years gone, when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s passing had shattered the Bahá’í world.

Members of the Household and pilgrims from East and West went into the Master’s bedroom and prayed, a candle burning and fresh flowers being almost the only change from that night, when His daughter had brought Him rose-water to drink, offered Him something to eat, and He had told her: ‘You wish me to take some food, and I am going?’ [150]

The House now began to ring with loud wails and sobs, and despairing chants, at which the Guardian, suffering the most, but reserved and dignified, commented, so it was reported, ‘It would be well if some of this grieving were translated into action.’ There are at least three Bahá’í themes in these words of Shoghi Effendi: that grief is a dynamic which can be put to valuable use; that at death, as the Aqdas says, one should show forth neither excessive grief nor joy, but seek a middle course, and be mindful of one’s own sure-to-be ending life; that in what Shakespeare would call the ‘bravery’ of this mourning, the display and showiness of it, there was something not true about it—and indeed a number of these mourners left the Faith later on.

I was in Shoghi Effendi’s presence twice, when he was in bitter mourning—once this time, for the Master, and some years later for the Greatest Holy Leaf—but never did he impose his anguish on anyone else.

Meanwhile, seeing the Household chaotic and the adults in disarray, the children began to weep too, and Khánúm calmly and patiently gathered them to her in a separate room, petted them and assured them that all was well.

Climbing up Mount Carmel to the Shrine in the soft darkness, along Shoghi Effendi’s new path, and pausing on a terrace to get her breath, Florence reflected that all around the world, Bahá’ís were together in sorrow this night, and she overheard Esslemont, pausing nearby, above the quietly following footsteps and the murmuring sea, as he recited: ‘The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork ... there is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.’ [151]

She looked up and saw, above the Báb’s and the Master’s tombs, ‘tier upon vast encircling tier of serried stars, wheeled in endless hosts. I seemed to see the angels with bowed heads and folded

palms.’

They went into the Shrine and kneeled down at the threshold of the inner room under which was the vault where the Master had lain these three years, and prayed and called His life to mind, in the golden light, the jasmine-scented air.

Afterward, with Munírih Khánum’s permission, Florence and Hamideh walked over to the Pilgrims’ House on Mount Carmel where the Guardian was receiving men pilgrims at the midnight meeting. When he caught sight of them he rose, and the whole assemblage rose with him, and the two were invited in, to come forward and sit by his side. The tea was being served, and there were impassioned addresses by young Bahá’ís and chanting by others, all this intermingled with sobs. Khan wept without restraint, going back to the time when he was young, and toiled virtually day and night in the Master’s service, and had struck his head against the outer wall of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s house where the steps go up, because he was being sent away from Him, far far away into an unknown world. As the hour of the passing approached—it was after 1:15 in the morning—Florence whispered to the Guardian, ‘Why does he weep so much? ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is here!’ And Shoghi Effendi whispered back, ‘‘Abdu’l-Bahá is everywhere.’

The Guardian was unobtrusive in the many kindnesses he bestowed on the believers, and the girls, as always, took everything for granted. It was not until years afterward that they realized how much bounty they had received, for at Bahjí he himself had poured a rare and precious scent into their palms at the door of the inner Shrine garden under its glass roof, and he himself had stood at the threshold of the sacred inner room under which Bahá’u’lláh lies buried, as well as in the Báb’s Shrine and the Master’s, and chanted the Visitation Tablet in their privileged hearing.

Fifty-three

‘You will speak to millions’

Florence and Khan were never to see Shoghi Effendi again in this world, after they returned to America late in 1924, but he continued to be the guiding light of their lives. They frequently corresponded with him about the Faith, about their own problems—and he was always preeminent in their hearts and minds.

He had told them to travel about and refresh the friends. Since these were very early days in the Guardianship, and some were not sure what a Guardian was, he had said tell them I am their true brother, and under the protection of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. It is undeniable that a few, even old-time Bahá’ís, needed to be brought closer to this Personage whom the Master had willed to them. Khan jolted these and started them going again. He had a contagion of the spirit which reinvigorated the older ones and at the same time made new Bahá’ís. Once back in America, on encountering one of the older Persians,

Khan was asked, 'How is Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf?' Being a Persian, Khan knew at once that the man should first have said, 'How is the Guardian?' As with others, he was able quietly to restore this man's faith.

After the return to the United States—the Hudson blocked that day with chunks of ice, Grandmother Alice Breed very pale as she looked up from the crowded pier, seeing their faces at last after so many years—the one-time lustre was over with.

From now on the Khans were specially privileged no more. No more guests-of-the-nation, no more make-way-for-them, no more immunity to the police (years later Marzieh was amazed at the roughness of a policeman who addressed her about a parking situation), no more sweeping past customs or being received in private rooms at railway stations. The diplomatic uniform was packed away in attics and trunks, the loops on it for medals empty, the medals themselves, meaningless now, thrust into the backs of bureau drawers as the family traveled about the country.

Echoes of the old prestige helped. They were still 'known' to many. Editors were generous with newsprint, and platforms were made available for teaching the Faith. Khan was asked to speak on the radio, new then, and thus fulfilling 'Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecy made long before. When, in 1901, Khan bewailed his being sent

away to America, he had cried to the Master, 'But I can hardly speak to two people!' 'You will speak to hundreds,' 'Abdu'l-Bahá had replied. 'You will speak to thousands. You will speak to millions.' Khan believed this because he believed every word of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's, but he could not fathom how he would ever 'speak to millions'. He remembered this conversation during his first radio talk and included it in what he had to say.

They were private citizens now. Khan opened galleries of Persian art (in New York, then San Francisco, then Los Angeles) traveled, lectured, showed his collections in museums such as San Francisco's Palace of the Legion of Honor, or in art departments of large stores. Wherever Khan went, he served the Bahá'ís, and his past career assured him of media attention, which also helped to publicize the Bahá'í Faith, then relatively little known in the United States, and idly dismissed as one more cult with a strange name.

Each new home was dedicated to spreading the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh; and Florence, like Khan and the daughters, would give public talks sponsored by Bahá'í groups.

Khan was active on various Local Assemblies in cities where he might reside, including Los Angeles and New York, in both of which he served as Chairman. He was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly, and his name is among those listed in the National Assembly's historic Declaration of Trust (1926) which became the prototype for Assemblies throughout the world.

Around 1939 the Khans settled permanently in New York City, since the Guardian wished Khan to remain there to counteract the efforts of Ahmad Sohrab, who, with substantial backing was then actively attempting to make a breach in the Faith. Here, Khan became a member of the Bahá'í Assembly, lectured frequently throughout the East, gave courses at Green Acre, the Bahá'í School in Eliot, Maine, and maintained a gallery of Persian Art in Rockefeller Center. The two lived many years, Hamideh at home with them much of the time, in a dignified, high-ceilinged old apartment house (now torn down) on 58th Street, near the Barbizon-Plaza and just across from the tall office building which housed the Bahá'í Center. Upstairs from them lived Theodore Reik, the well-known Freudian. The Khans furnished their embassy-like salon with fine Persian rugs, Persian art objects like the great, centuries-old wine jar with its shimmering blue fish-scale patina, and French hand-carved furniture upholstered with old petit point (so fragile that guests could be evaluated by the cost of the repair work following their visits). Their fellow-believers were good to them, and Khan continued to teach. Emma Rice, later a pioneer to Sicily, saved both Khan's and Florence's life when each had a serious case of pneumonia.

Then in 1949 Khan's pull toward the East, his 'Drang nach Osten', asserted itself again. If only he could get back 'home', his powerful friends would see to it that he received a post worthy of his abilities, and who knows, he might even be paid all the money the Government owed him. Their letters encouraged him to come, and Lawrence Hautz (later a pioneer to Africa) supplied the funds. So far as Khan's health went, 'It's now or never,' his doctor assured him. This was the distinguished James Ralph Jacoby who treated many Bahá'ís, had 'Abdu'l-Bahá's picture in his consulting room, and sent Khan a bill with no figures on it. 'It's now or never,' he said.

That last day in New York Florence went out to the airport with him. Always before, from many journeys, he had come back to her. Even that time in California, when, virtually alone, she had had her third baby, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá had sent her a Tablet to say that Khan would come back, and bring her pleasure and delight. This time it would not be so. He would return, but Florence would be gone. She would be gone

where all will be,

Where rose leaves go,

And leaves of the laurel tree.[152]

And he would wear black ties in memory of lost days, and would die holding to what every believer can keep for always, the faith in his heart.

That day at the airport she stood and watched as the jet took off—defiant triumph of the human brain over natural law—stood and

watched until Khan was only a small black dot in the sky.

Epilogue

Fifty-four

A great rock in a weary land

It is not easy to look back. I hardly have the stomach, now, to reopen my graves. But when you were in the presence of someone who will never pass from the world's view, you must write of him, no matter how your words falter, no matter how often you listen in your mind to the lines of Lamartine, describing your own soon-to-drift-away life:

So all must change, all be effaced,
So we ourselves shall not abide,
Shall leave no sign that can be traced,
Like this boat in which we ride,
On this sea where all's erased.[153]

Not that Shoghi Effendi has ever been absent from my thoughts, not even for a day. And I would like, somehow, to recreate my times in his presence, the only really important times of my life, except for the moments with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, when I was a small child. Most of those we love and our relationships with them are cloud formations, soon wisped and blown away, but Shoghi Effendi was Isaiah's 'shadow of a great rock in a weary land'.[154]

Perhaps visual memories will bring him back, now that so many are dead and there is no one else left of our family to corroborate anything, today. Also, memories of an event by different witnesses will differ sharply, one from another.

As was said earlier, the family had received word from the Holy Land that 'Abdu'l-Bahá's grandson was coming to France on his way to Oxford. He had been working too hard and needed a brief rest before attending the university. We learned that he was in Neuilly, and Florence took me out there to welcome him and invite him to dinner at our home. Thus my very first memory of him was in Neuilly, in an ivy-walled garden. An old French garden, misty in the afternoon light, filled with the extinct voices of the past.

We were aware that this was his introduction to the Western world, although he had been meeting Western visitors all his life. He had even, Mahmúd tells us, been with the Master on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's journey to the West, but had suffered the heartbreak, as a young boy, of being turned back by some functionary almost at the start. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had told him that he must wear his distinctive Persian hat even in the West, and this caused him to be much noticed. Unlike the young Persian men we knew, he deliberately avoided certain aspects of the new life he saw around him. He did not seek for luxuries. A perfectionist like his ancestor, the Báb, he

recognized excellence, always wanted the best, but not for himself, for the Faith. His own unobtrusive clothing was always of good materials, well maintained, but never lavish or flamboyant (in that age of bemedalled dictators, of arrogant overlords glittering magnificently against the downtrodden herd).

In time I would learn that Bahá'ís must be different. That the Cause, as the Guardian would put it, was 'a challenge wherever it comes'—taking away beer from the Germans, and wine, called 'the glory of France', from the French. Regarding alcohol, even among Bahá'ís, those were the old medicine-and-moderation days, the only trouble being, nobody could agree on what moderation meant. Wine was on my parents' table, and on occasion, after the guests had withdrawn to the living room, I would go the rounds and helpfully drink up what they had left in their glasses.

'Abdu'l-Bahá repudiated suggestive plays, gross movies. As Louis Gregory told us, the Master had attended a film in the Holy Land with two little boys of the Household, and disapproving of the picture, had taken the boys by the hand and left. We were also told, by other believers, that Shoghi Effendi attended the Paris opera alone, and what he saw on the stage impelled him to rise and walk out.

One wonders how much deeper, in our present Augean age, art, films, plays and books can sink. Strange how we expose our generations to the things we allow to be laid before them, and at the same time expect well-led lives and tranquil homes.

Since, obviously, the men will not effect reforms unless pushed, the creation of a decent society is primarily up to the women.[155] So far, they have interpreted the 'single standard' to mean that they should stoop to the level of men, instead of pushing and pulling the men up to what should be theirs. The result has been chaos, miserable divorces, and such torments of jealousy that we, quite routinely, read in the papers that a man has not only murdered the woman who left him, but at the same time has shot to death available members of her family as well.

Speaking of relationships between the sexes, Shoghi Effendi said the Bahá'í principle is to avoid temptation, and Bahá'u'lláh recognized

the fact that men are weak. (Indeed, the Qur'án says that man, *insán*, (4:28) i.e. either sex, 'hath been created weak'.) Bahá'í standards of sexual conduct are admittedly high, but they are essential if we are to have happy marriages and a harmonious community life.

The gods are known by their gait. I often watched Shoghi Effendi walking ahead of me with my mother, and thought you would know him anywhere by his walk, dignified though then so youthful, kingly but as it were incognito, and reserved. All in all, Shakespeare's

line applied to him exactly, 'There's such divinity doth hedge a king.' [156]

At table he sat tall. He gave himself to the pilgrims, ate little, treated them with a friendly though contained informality. He had what mystics call the custody of the eyes, he did not stare when he looked at me. Often, when deep questions would come up, he would look off into the distance, lost in thought. His eyes were hazel, that is, their color would vary as Khan said the Master's would. One day when sky and sea were blue I saw Shoghi Effendi standing at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's gate, under the magenta-purple bougainvillea, and that day his eyes were bright blue. When he placed Marjory Morten at the head of the luncheon table and sat on the side at her right, with the light from the windows back of him, she said she had never seen more luminous eyes.

His nose was extraordinary, perfectly formed, Greek, not the great nose of Old Testament prophets. He had a firm, sculpted mouth, and on his right cheek when he smiled, a sort of vertical dimple, not soft and round but almost carved. He had a custom of rubbing his hand, held horizontally, down over his face, and then his skin would look refreshed and seemed to glow. His hands were strong, delicate, beautifully shaped, and made you think of his high lineage: he went back, uniting in his person Aryan and Semitic, to ancient Persian kings and Abraham through Bahá'u'lláh, and to Fátimih and her Father, Muhammad, through the Báb.

In those days he smiled often and the pilgrims would all laugh together as well, and Fujita, serving at table, would laugh with the rest of us. Although Shoghi Effendi was kingly he was also approachable. It horrifies me now to think of some of the blunders I made in the Guardian's presence, like saying the prayer ablutions ruined my makeup.

'You can wash your face once a day, at noon,' he told me.

I saw him angry only once, on a matter I knew little about. It had to do with abstaining from partisan politics, and he wished Marjory Morten to speak with Edith Sanderson in Paris on this theme.

'But she is my old friend,' Marjory protested, apparently not wanting to deliver the message.

In a strange way he seemed to rise in his chair and suddenly to be much larger, towering, stern. 'Politics is a filthy mess,' he said. The Guardian was an idealist but not starry-eyed. He knew individual human traits and national traits the world over. In his presence it was no use pretending to be something you were not. He knew. But although you were in awe of him, he did not frighten you. You felt he would not judge you, he would leave that to Bahá'u'lláh, and maybe even put in a good word for you. (After all, the Qur'án says that God has 'imposed mercy on Himself as a

law.’[157])

There are many examples of his realistic view of humanity.

One such time was about the Summer School at Esslingen, Germany, when the Guardian learned that boys and girls shared the same dormitory. ‘So they are even worse than the non-Bahá’ís!’ he commented. (In those years the sexes were usually segregated.)

‘It’s all right,’ he was told, ‘Mrs Braun is there.’

‘Yes,’ he said, ‘but at the moment of temptation, Mrs Braun might not always be there.’

Fujita nearly dropped a plate.

When Alice Dudley showed him a letter she had received which began with many compliments, the Guardian said, smiling, ‘He wants something.’

At table one day we were served a delicious honey dessert and he told us it was called a luqmatu’l-Qádí, the choice morsel for the judge. Many synonyms for bribery and corruption in Persian life are included in the Dawn-Breakers.[158] Once when I mentioned a certain Persian Minister, not unfavorably, he said the man was ‘probably a smaller scoundrel’ than the others. He said the Master had referred to Persian officials as ‘ashes’.

Shoghi Effendi’s ministry was dedicated to people, and continually, he taught us how to be; he carried out the injunction to ‘enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil’;[159] he was, perhaps, a teacher above all, but then he was so many things above all.

In his presence we could bring up virtually any subject for enlightenment:

The Guardian said art must inspire, that the artist’s personal satisfaction is not enough. Of music he has written that there will be world music, no Bahá’í music per se. ‘He has freed the artist’, was Mark Tobey’s comment on this. Shoghi Effendi wished the ninesided Bahá’í Houses of Worship worldwide to be different, not imitative of Wilmette’s.

He said Bahá’u’lláh has come to establish justice, not love, not

forgiveness and the like, and this is why He has named His Supreme Body of the Bahá’í world the House of Justice.

Of the three marriages of Bahá’u’lláh, the Guardian said they were contracted long before the Manifestation set forth the laws of the new Faith, and he quoted ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to the effect that there was a mystery in them which would be understood later on.

One day at table he brought with him a letter which apparently he had just written to America—this was in 1933—on eventually obtaining a non-combatant status for Bahá’ís in wartime, and he told us that in future many books would be written on this particular letter.

He surprised us, who had taken it as symbolic, not literal, when he said that Bahá’ís believe in the Virgin Birth of Christ by the ‘direct

intervention of the Holy Spirit'. He said that otherwise Mary would not have been in such dire distress. (See the sūrih of Mary in the Qur'án, where she cries, 'Oh would that I had died ere this, and been a thing forgotten, forgotten quite!')[160]

Bahá'u'lláh, in the Íqán, refers to Mary as 'that veiled and immortal Countenance'[161] 'Veiled' is the Arabic mukhaddarih, implying a maiden behind the veil of chastity.

He told us that the soul has individuality as well as the body, and said, when the question came up, that Moses taught immortality, since the Master says in Some Answered Questions that Socrates learned of the unity of God and the immortality of the soul from the children of Israel.[162]

Of Bahá'í prayer he said we are not obliged to concentrate on Bahá'u'lláh in prayer, but that we must pray knowing His station. He explains in the Maxwell Haifa Notes that God has no beginning and no end, and 'Man has a beginning but no end'. The Manifestations' body and soul—because this part of Them is human—'have a beginning too, but the spark from God in Them partakes of the preexistence of God.' 'The soul has developed ever since the embryo ...' Its three stages are 'the embryonic world, this life and the future life ...' 'We retain in the next world our identity and selfconsciousness, but our self-consciousness is greatly increased.'[163]

The Guardian's titles are set forth in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament. He is 'sacred'.[164] He is the 'priceless pearl'.[165] He is the 'chosen Branch', branched from the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. Believers without exception are to 'show their obedience, submissiveness and subordination unto the Guardian ...'[166] Obligated by the Will to protect his own rank, he still insisted on being treated as 'true brother' and 'co-worker' and did not care for either the obsequiousness of some Persians or the off-handedness of some Americans.

The Guardian stated that he was surprised at the 'strong emphasis' placed in the Will 'on the institution of the House of Justice and of the Guardianship', and the 'vigorous language ... with reference to the band of Covenant-breakers that has opposed Him in his days'. Shoghi Effendi said of the Will that only future generations would understand 'the value and significance attached to this Divine Masterpiece'.[167]

Very early, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will—which delineated the Bahá'í World Order, already founded in the Aqdas, and of which 'Abdu'l-Bahá was the architect—was translated for the ages by Shoghi Effendi. This Will was written entirely in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's own hand, a script well known all over the East. This was the Guardian's first English work addressed to the whole planet. A paradigmatic translation on which other-language renditions are based, this is a textbook study continually referred to along with the original by

persons in the field.

His letters to Bahá'í institutions and to Bahá'ís in general began almost at once, and many will be found in Bahá'í Administration, beginning January 21, 1922. Early or late, his communications were not merely writings, they were the dynamic that moved the Bahá'í world. These letters in effect built the Administrative Order, its most vital features being found there. They taught the Bahá'í Assemblies how to be, how to consult, what their duties were. The book also contains the Declaration of Trust and By-Laws drawn up by the international lawyer Mountfort Mills, carefully reviewed by Shoghi Effendi, and adopted in 1926 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, at this time under one jurisdiction. (Khan, back in America by then, was one of the members of this Assembly.)

Shoghi Effendi wished all National Spiritual Assemblies to adopt, with necessary local adaptations, this Declaration of Trust and By-Laws, which set forth the character and objectives of Bahá'í communities worldwide.

His translation of the *Íqán* was published in 1931, and *Hidden Words* in 1932. Also in this year appeared the unforgettable early chronicle by Nabíl, *The Dawn-Breakers*, with voluminous notes. Shoghi Effendi's meticulous research (much done in the library of the British Museum) and the translation and organization that this seminal work required, would by themselves represent a life-task for many a scholar.

The collection of his vitally important letters, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, was published in 1938. In that year also came out his *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, containing 184 pieces, untold wealth, especially when we realize that Christianity has existed two

thousand years with only one prayer of Christ's, the Lord's. His *Gleanings* translated from Bahá'u'lláh and published in 1939 is a lifelong treasure for meditators. His *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, perhaps the most literary of all his translations, was copyrighted in 1941; and his *God Passes By*, appearing that same year, is not only a fascinating history of the Bahá'í Faith but one which gives the position of the Faith on various leading issues and an analysis of our major texts. This work of 412 pages is a concentrate from which many volumes will be derived in days to come. His *Messages to America* came out in 1947, and *Messages to the Bahá'í World* in 1958. Official letters to various National Assemblies have been published in book form, while his letters to individual believers, though some were printed in *Bahá'í News*, are being collected around the world. To facilitate early and broad distribution, some of his work appeared first in soft covers, later as books such as the epoch-making *Advent of Divine Justice* (December 25, 1938), called 'the Bible of Bahá'í pioneers', and his *The Promised Day is Come* (March 28, 1941), in

effect a survey of the world in relation to the Bahá'í Faith during our first century.

The above hardly exhausts the list of the Guardian's literary achievements. Among his most important writings were his communications in Persian and Arabic. Like his English and French, his scholarly use of Persian and Arabic was such that in Iran when I was there a learned believer was delegated to attend the meetings where the Guardian's letters were chanted and explain the terms he used. Nor does the above list include Shoghi Effendi's translations from the Master's prayers, nor the Guardian's own prayers still in the original Persian and Arabic and widely known throughout the East. These tongues he knew so well are subtle and complicated. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whose impeccable Arabic is used as university texts, reportedly said, 'Arabic is a bottomless abyss.'

Learning a language is one thing, but learning it so profoundly as to move people to the point where they will uproot themselves and go out across the world to teach the Faith, is quite another.

In order to make his decisions, the Guardian also had to know the technical languages of architecture, since he was a builder and landscaper; of the law, especially in such matters as the formal establishment and consolidation of Bahá'í administrative institutions, acquiring Persian holy Bahá'í sites for the Faith, or properties needed to complete our holdings in Haifa and 'Akká, or the purchase of Temple land, or national Hazíratu'l-Quds locations across the globe. He had to solve the problems connected with establishing our administrative procedures in dozens of countries and territories with differing cultures and often with little-known tongues. In finance as

well, Shoghi Effendi's understanding of this intricate subject was such that Siegfried Schopflocher, Canadian multi-millionaire business man and later a Hand of the Faith, sought his advice.

Questions of all sorts would be asked of the Guardian—concerning music, art, economics, personal problems—and all through his thirty-six years of toil for the Faith would receive their answer. When we consider how the average person begrudges the effort of writing even one letter, and that one on his own concerns, we can better evaluate the Guardian's enormous, sacrificial expenditure of energy for his communications with Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís—who wrote in by the thousands, many on vital subjects but too often selfishly or trivially, at least one even asking for cancelled stamps (which Shoghi Effendi sent him).

If we take, at random, some others of his constant activities from his residence in the Holy Land, 'heart and nerve-center' of the Administrative Order, to promote the Bahá'í Faith and develop its adherents into world citizens, we again see the bewildering variety of his initiatives. He prescribed the rights and duties of the National Convention, at which the delegates freely and fully 'advise,

deliberate on the actions, and appoint the successors of their National Assembly.’ [168] He encouraged and supervised the founding of schools to inspire the youth, train Bahá’í teachers, and deepen the believers in Bahá’í studies, showing as well how these goals could be reached. He worked tirelessly with leading officials for Bahá’í recognition worldwide, made sure of a Bahá’í presence in the great congresses of non-Bahá’ís held for humanitarian purposes, and engendered Bahá’í participation in the United Nations. He collected tributes to the Faith from figures of note, and personally, in writing, encouraged the former son-in-law of Albert Einstein, Dimitri Marianof, to proceed with his fictionalized biography of Táhirih. He founded the International Archives. To pay them due honor, he had tombs erected on Carmel, the holy mountain, for the Consort of Bahá’u’lláh and the Purest Branch, after he had built the delicate tomb-shrine of Khánúm, the Greatest Holy Leaf.

Shoghi Effendi’s spirit permeated the Bahá’í Faith as ‘the wine must taste of its own grapes’. He taught continually, in letters to individuals and the Bahá’í world, in talks to pilgrims, in personal guidance as to the believers’ many troubles, in setting an example of continual dedication and the disregard of his own life. Sa’dí tells us that wherever there is a spring of sweet water, people and birds and insects will gather around it, and this is what happened with the Guardian. He was what kept you going, what moved you to action—sometimes with a specific mission, as when he wrote me to go to Iran; sometimes only with a general comment, as when I was forced

on account of the mortal illness of my first husband, Howard Carpenter, to return to America, and asked in Haifa what I should do for service—and he simply said to devote myself to Howard’s care, and added, ‘The field is wide. Maydán vasí’ ast.’

He knew the world map of the Cause of God and he knew the time schedule, and no one else did. For example, not long before Mussolini went into Ethiopia, Shoghi Effendi went in: that is, he chose Sabri Elias to go to Addis Ababa as a Bahá’í pioneer. Later would have been too late. And such appointments and assignments of personnel were always in his mind. To achieve some idea of this, imagine an individual believer, busy with his own problems in, say, Sandusky, Ohio, concerning himself with at that time almost unknown peoples and places: Dukhobors, gypsies, pygmies, the Arctic Circle, Magellanes, the Nicobar Islands.

One personal example: some ten years before the start of the Guardian’s Global Crusade, Howard and I were in Vienna prior to leaving for Persia when Shoghi Effendi directed us to visit first in Sofia and Tirana, places we had never heard of, in fact terra incognita to most Westerners of that day.

A puzzled believer once asked Rúhíyyih Khánúm, ‘How does the Guardian find out about all these places?’ ‘He makes it his business to

find out,' she said.

To me, the destiny of the Bahá'í Faith in my time was completely dependent on Shoghi Effendi. About 1940, rumors were running across the United States as to the Guardian's health. I was terrified, and urged Hishmat 'Alá'í to cable a friend in Haifa. A member of the Household cabled back, 'Guardian well,' and I quieted down. 'I may fail, myself,' I would think, 'but the Cause is safe.'

In 1953, when Rúhíyyih Khánúm invited Persian women to a tea at the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago during the Temple dedication ceremonies, I asked her, 'How is the Guardian? How does he look?' and she tossed her head triumphantly and answered, 'More beautiful than ever!'

A year earlier, Frances Jones (Edelstein) was at the table with other pilgrims, including Alice Dudley. The Guardian came in and said he had been seeing to his papers that day and they had exhausted him. (Rúhíyyih Khánúm has written that they fell on him like snowflakes.) He added that toward the end of Bahá'u'lláh's life His papers were also too much for Him. (This matter of the Manifestation's papers was related by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to His gardener, when the Master was about two weeks from death: 'I am so fatigued ... the hour is come when I must leave everything and take My flight. I am too weary to walk ... It was during the closing days of the Blessed Beauty, when

I was engaged in gathering together His papers which were strewn all over the sofa in His writing chamber in Bahjí, that He turned to me and said, "It is of no use to gather them, I must leave them and flee away." I also have finished my work. I can do nothing more.' [169]) When Rúhíyyih Khánúm heard her husband's words she began to cry, rose and left the table. As soon as she had calmed herself and come back, the Guardian told her, 'I didn't mean to frighten you. It isn't quite that bad with me yet.' He was to be with her five years more.

In those long years, now forgotten since the Bahá'í Faith has prospered and become so widely known, Shoghi Effendi continually reinvigorated the believers and assured them of future success, in the face of their discouragement, when they found people rejecting them or projects failing, and could see little progress in their own area or only two steps forward and one step back.

He asked the believers to realize 'that though but a mere handful amidst the seething masses of the world, we are in this day the chosen instruments of God's grace, that our mission is most urgent and vital to the fate of humanity', and he urged us on to 'arise to achieve God's holy purpose for mankind.' [170] We noticed that all without exception were urged onward, whatever their age or condition. Amelia Collins, noted believer, was quoted as saying, when exhausted from her labors, that she wished someone would tell

the Guardian how old she was.

The World Order prophesied by the Báb, founded by Bahá'u'lláh, delineated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was actually built by Shoghi Effendi. Although he himself gave the credit to the whole community of the Bahá'ís, defined by him as 'this many-hued and firmly-knit Fraternity', [171] we know very well that without him this accomplishment, global, national, regional, and local, could not possibly have been brought into being by the scattered, greatly diverse, and then untrained believers of that day. The members of the Universal House of Justice, supreme body of the Bahá'í world community, first elected in 1963, found a totally different Cause to develop and build upon from that which Shoghi Effendi inherited in 1921.

Fifty-five

Rejoice for a season

People very often bring back from their travels only themselves. If they do describe some great experience, they are apt to assure you that it was indescribable, and they had never seen anything like it before. Since you have no way of knowing what they had seen before, this and their similar comments are of little help. On the other hand, visitors to Haifa, however inarticulate, often return with an atmosphere, a scent or an aura which means much. The Guardian encouraged the believers to share their pilgrimage with those at home. He also made it clear that pilgrims' accounts are not authoritative; it is the Bahá'í Texts themselves which are the standards of belief, the rest is of interest but not authoritative, like any believer's personal interpretations of the Teachings.

The Guardian was always exceptionally kind and thoughtful when disaster had struck an individual. He arranged for Howard Carpenter to be taken by ambulance to Bahjí as well as the Mount Carmel Shrine when he returned paralyzed from Iran on his second pilgrimage. He told me not to dissipate my efforts, but to think only of Howard's recovery. He told Howard his primary consideration was to recover, and everything else, even teaching the Cause, was secondary. He said he would do the praying and Howard must make the effort to get well.

Shoghi Effendi told us he would pray for Howard's mother, A.

Elizabeth Carpenter, at the Shrines, particularly Bahá'u'lláh's, so that

she would be able to form a Local Spiritual Assembly at her home in Santa Paula, California. Also that he would wire the friends at Beirut, Alexandria and New York to meet our ship, and that we were to cable him from New York. He gave us each a tiny, perfect photograph of the Master's portrait, found in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's papers after His ascension, and certainly blessed by the touch of His hand. This was the Paris portrait, and Shoghi Effendi said the reproduction was made in Germany. One copy is still with me, but when Howard

died I put his in the jacket of his suit, since it belonged to him. The Guardian said not to think our two years in Persia were a failure (we were both inwardly devastated, feeling that at the very outset of his life and his medical career, Howard was destroyed, and that I would never recover from the hammering blows). Our stay in Persia ought, the Guardian said, to have far-reaching results. Listening, we both wept. He said we could come back after Howard's recovery, and told Howard he would never forget him. At a time when the Guardian needed qualified people to send around the world, then almost empty of Bahá'ís, and he had few to help him in Haifa, several of his own family turned traitor. Insolently disregarding the commands given them in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will, these hostile relatives, like the serpents wound about Laocoon, tried continually to trammel him at every step, while he had also and at all times to guard the Faith from its implacable enemies without. Again, he had to bear disappointments which resulted from the inevitable faults and shortcomings of many believers, however devoted. It was a relief to hear Dr Hermann Grossmann, Hand of the Faith, as he advised me in after years how to teach the public, saying, 'Tell them we are not angels.'

Shoghi Effendi also had the burden of the believers' personal griefs. Florence once asked him for a very powerful prayer, and he answered, 'What could be better than Yá Alláhu'l-Mustagháth?' This is rendered 'O God, the One Who is invoked'—its implication being, Who is called upon in times of extreme distress and peril. It was her understanding that this was the prayer repeated over and over by the Master, as He paced His garden when the Turkish ship was coming to take Him away.[172]

The Guardian's words remained in a person's mind. To Florence (whose heart was on her sleeve), he said, 'Be kind, but not intimate.' And again, 'Study people's motives.' To Khan, about the progress of our Faith, 'The invisible Hand is at work.' To Mildred Mottahedeh, 'The bodily life is the opportunity given to the soul for its development in this world.' [173] To H. Cornbleth, 'The troubles of this world pass, and what we have left is what we have made of our souls.' At table in 1937 when Rúhíyyih Khánum, then Miss Mary Maxwell, was taking down what became the famous 'Maxwell Notes', he said of one's past griefs and disappointments, 'Forget the past, don't brood over it, it paralyzes us.' To another, elsewhere, 'We must trust in the mercy of God but not impose upon it.' To Howard Carpenter, in Haifa, 'Suicide is discouraged but not forbidden.' [174] Of conception he taught that 'conception is the beginning of the soul'.

To Edris Rice-Wray, '... the core of religious faith is that mystic feeling which unites man with God'. To the same in 1938, defining the chief goal of the Bahá'í Faith: 'The development of the individual

and society is through the acquisition of spiritual virtues and powers. It is the soul of man which has first to be fed ... Otherwise religion will degenerate into a mere organization and become a dead thing.' To Agnes Alexander he wrote through his secretary (1 Nov. 1934): 'In regard to your question concerning evil spirits and their influence upon souls, Shoghi Effendi wishes me to inform you that what is generally called evil spirit is a purely imaginary creation and has no reality whatever. But as to evil, there is no doubt that it exerts a very strong influence both in this world and the next.' And he urged her to study the relevant chapter in *Some Answered Questions*.

When I found that some Bahá'ís believed there are subhuman entities, perhaps the opposite of the Supreme Concourse, and that 'possession' is a factor in insanity, I sent a list of questions to Rúhíyyih Khánúm, asking her for the Guardian's replies. She answered from Haifa, December 29, 1941: 'We do not believe in devils at all. Insanity is due to causes which science is capable of understanding and has nothing to do with so-called possession by devils—who don't exist. The term Satan is used to symbolize evil, there is no such individual as Satan ... The Djinn signify unbelievers and evil-doers.'

When a friend of ours asked him about the almost unbearable illness of Helen Griffing, a strong Bahá'í, he wrote back to this effect: We cannot explain these things. Martha Root died in agony after months of suffering. But God has ways, as He sees fit, to compensate even Hell.

After the pioneer Dagmar Dole, still at her post, was in such terminal pain that she would beat her head against the wall, he wrote, 'She died in battle dress.'

These are only glimpses of the thousands of seeds he sowed in people's hearts. A Bahá'í's whole life might be determined by a single one of the Guardian's letters, and the influence he exerted cannot be calculated.

It all adds up to his love. Not love as we think of it, but a continual putting of one's self aside in favor of someone else, often someone he never saw, never knew personally, often someone of apparently no value to anybody, like the little old lady in a small California town who received a hundred letters from him.

He was, as the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá says, the Sign of God (Áyatu'lláh), and God's presence is available to whoever turns to Him, including persons so insignificant that in this world they could never get in to see even the pettiest official or the least of company managers.

The Guardian had a genius for detail, unusual for one who had global horizons as well. Among the things I noted in my diary (not only from 1924, but from my other two pilgrimages, that is, 1933 and

1935) was Husayn Effendi's statement that every flower and tree in the Gardens was planted exactly where the Guardian directed. It seems that in the days of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, if the gardener ventured to say, 'Master, may we plant the tree here instead?' he would be allowed to, but now he had to plant each thing as told. Since in the Holy Land the Bahá'ís had to teach indirectly, the Guardian said one such way was to beautify the Shrines.

He told us that acquiring the heart of the mountain, which the Bahá'ís owned by 1935, was not easy, because there were many enemies of the Faith in that place, and the Covenant-breaker Muhammad-'Alí was still active through his son, who was employed in the Land Registry Office, while various other elements were also actively against the Faith.

Shoghi Effendi wished each individual to practice his own religion. For example, when he saw the Jewish electrician working on a Friday afternoon, he sent Fujita to ask why he was not keeping the Sabbath. The man replied that he was a Christian Pole. The Guardian accepted this, but when he questioned him later, the man said he was only joking. Thus, the Guardian told us, he broke two laws: he both lied and broke the Sabbath.

At one point the Guardian said that many of Christ's laws are not mentioned in the Gospels.

He said it is easier to make people accept the Bahá'í principles than the laws. A Bahá'í, he stated, accepts all of the Cause, not selecting part and rejecting part. He defined heresy as choosing what to accept. (Indeed, the word derives from the Greek for choosing.)

The Báb's portrait in the Archives, he told us, is a true likeness. It was sent to Bahá'u'lláh from Persia, and the Báb's cousin, then visiting Bahá'u'lláh in the Holy Land, said it was exactly like the Báb.

Through Fräulein Horn and Herr Nagel he sent many instructions to the German believers. Germans were a people whom he greatly admired. The whole world would learn thoroughness from them. When the Americans, alas, did not know the Bahá'í calendar, he said, 'The German Bahá'ís know these things.' Of England, the Guardian said more than once that there was prejudice in England against the Americans, and also that there was too much separation between classes and too much pageantry. In general he approved of their parliamentary form of government; that is, elected representatives plus a hereditary sovereign.

He said our National Assemblies should distinguish between what a country's laws are, and what its government simply recommends. The laws must be obeyed. I understood this to mean that if there is a law that imposes military service, then Bahá'ís must serve; but if the government only issues an appeal to join up, it is a different matter. Shoghi Effendi said that in such things as obeying customs

regulations the Bahá'ís ought to be exemplary.

Regarding American husbands, the Guardian said he did not approve of their subjugation by their wives, it was a sign of degeneration. When told of a prominent female believer who maintained that women should rule, he said we must stop philosophizing and obey the Teachings.

(A statement by the Universal House of Justice as to the relationship between husband and wife affirmed that we must consider all our Teachings on this 'in the light of the general principle of equality between the sexes', stresses 'loving consultation', and says that '... the husband and wife should defer to the wishes' of each other.)

About people's conduct, Shoghi Effendi said, 'We should be tolerant but not satisfied.'

One day at table, on translating the two marriage verses, he said "abide by the will of God" was closer than "content with the will of God". Then he looked at me, smiled broadly, and said, 'Perhaps we should translate it, "resigned to" ...'

I personally, like many another believer, have long wondered about the mysterious relationship between the Manifestation of God and God Himself. Shoghi Effendi teaches that the Bahá'í Trinity, God, the Holy Spirit and the Prophet, is like the Sun, the ray and the mirror. 'The mirror never becomes the sun, or the ray the mirror, or the sun the ray.' [175]

'It is the worst form of heresy to identify Bahá'u'lláh with God ... we must be careful to explain the relationship.' [176] Officially he has written '[t]hat Bahá'u'lláh should, notwithstanding the overwhelming intensity of His Revelation, be regarded as essentially one of these Manifestations of God, never to be identified with that invisible Reality, the Essence of Divinity itself ...' [177] Even the Manifestations cannot understand the nature of God. [178]

Certainly the easiest way one (or I, in any case) can consider this enigma is to think that the Manifestation is God in a mirror: as Jesus said, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father' [179] Paul wrote of Jesus as the 'image of God', [180] and this is what we mean by Manifestation.

This kind of visualization helps me at least to approach the unfathomable, especially when I recall the case of the clergyman who pondered the nature of God for many years and finally decided that God was an oblong blur.

One cannot help tiptoeing about this mystery of mysteries, finger to lip, and wondering about the relationship between God and His Manifestation. Undoubtedly the thing to remember is that their connection is intense, undying love: otherwise how could the Manifestation bear the anguish that the world inflicts on Him? Saying He is only a mere emblem of God's Reality, and yet 'the

perverse and envious ... deluded by this emblem ... have risen against Me ...' Bahá'u'lláh implores God to deliver Him. Then God tells Him: 'I love, I dearly cherish this emblem. How can I consent that Mine eyes, alone, gaze upon this emblem, and that no heart except Mine heart recognize it? By My Beauty, which is the same as Thy Beauty! My wish is to hide Thee from Mine own eyes: how much more from the eyes of men!'

And the colloquy fades off with the Persian poet's symbol for an interruption: 'I was preparing to make reply,' Bahá'u'lláh says, 'when lo, the Tablet was suddenly ended, leaving My theme unfinished, and the pearl of Mine utterance unstrung.' [181]

These details are few and incomplete. They say nothing of Shoghi Effendi's tenderness toward the believers: cables when they were ill, tributes when they died. All too often, every affliction from which they suffered made its way straight to him. They say nothing of the sums he disbursed for the poor, denying himself, traveling inexpensively when he was abroad for a brief rest, carrying little luggage along. They say nothing of how, when Howard Carpenter fell mortally ill in Tehran, the Guardian, unasked, sent me money through the Tehran Assembly; or how, in California one year later, on the day and at the very moment when I came home from Howard's burial to a life that had collapsed, I was handed a cable from Shoghi Effendi.

Shoghi Effendi was not a prophet of God. Our two prophets are the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, and our third central figure is 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the

'Mystery of God', 'the perfect Exemplar ... endowed with superhuman knowledge ... the stainless mirror ...' occupying a station by Himself, unique in religious annals. [182]

Shoghi Effendi was the Guardian. And yet the words of Jesus about John (who was a prophet 'and much more than a prophet' [183]) haunt the mind: 'He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.' [184]

Only for a season. Measured against the world's life the years of his ministry were brief hours. But while he lived, there was no Bahá'í but had on earth—as Shoghi Effendi often signed himself—a 'true brother'. Many will not forget how he came to them, and was with them during his years, and they built their lives around him,

and suddenly the gift that he was, was taken from them, and he was not with them any more. Then he was like a day lily, been, and gone.

Fifty-six

Earth felt the wound

There had come the first annihilating blow, the disbelief, the long distance calls, the telegrams. Now it was night and the Munich

plane, carrying Bahá'ís from Austrian cities, was flying in over the English shore. Across the dark, a fantastic orange-and-zircon web, a dotted tracery of endless crisscrossed lights, spread out below. And in the sky beside us, the full moon, symbol of the Guardianship, black-barred at first, and ominous, and then riding high and clear. Under the glare of airport lights, the London immigration authorities sat at their desks. They all knew why we had come. They knew of the Guardian and the address of the London Hazíratu'l-Quds, 27 Rutland Gate; they knew of the funeral and its hour: November 9, at 10 a.m. They wrote 'Bahá'í' on our landing cards. 'We've got people coming for this from all over the world,' said one.

All night the moon riding over the quiet London square, where the trees are higher than the narrow, pale yellow houses, with their rows, one above the other, of three French windows each, their pillars at the door, their neat black chimney pots. Early in the morning we crossed London and came to the dignified Hazíratu'l-Quds. The spacious rooms could not accommodate the crowds that were gathering here. Faces of friends not seen for a long time stood out, but often we did not know these fellow believers who had come so swiftly, for no reason but their love, from so many countries, scattered far away.

In one room, forgotten on the mantel, were a thimble and two spools of thread, white and green. Madame Bahíyyih Varqá whispered that it was here she had sewed the Guardian's shroud, many yards of white silken materials together with a green velvet cloth edged with a cream and green border. We learned now that the Guardian had died peacefully, in his sleep, and that Dr Adelbert Mühlischlegel, Hand of the Faith, had prepared the sacred remains for burial.

Faced with this influx of people the British Bahá'ís, their poise outwardly undisturbed, did all they could to insure the visitors' wellbeing; repeatedly, they urged the crowds to control their grief, since

all would be exposed to public view in a country known for its reserve. We thought how only in art do the face and tongue respond suitably to grief, and dim lines kept appearing in memory: 'Earth felt the wound.' Meanwhile our own tongues faltered, and our minds were numb.

10:50. The time had come to get into the forty long black limousines and many private cars; slowly, under bright sunlight, the cortège turned right at the Prince of Wales Gate, and across the Serpentine, and left at Victoria Gate, to Castellain Avenue, to Carlton Vale, to Loudoun Road. At Fairfax Road a long stop; and after that we fell in behind the flower-laden hearse.

Great Northern Cemetery was like a country graveyard, wide and old, with many trees, its roads lined with dark green bushes, some of its stones moss-covered. For a brief time, we were massed there in

front of the chapel and then all who could crowded inside. Here in the silence within the pale apricot walls under brown wooden arches, everything was cool and bright. Over the heads of the people, above the low platform, we saw the Greatest Name. The wall at the back of this raised area where the casket stood, was covered with chrysanthemums and asters, white at the top, shading down into pink and still lower down into light and then deep lavender. From the white flowers at the top, lavender ones extended like wings to either side. The deep stillness was broken only by muffled weeping. Then the strong, beautiful voice of Jináb-i-Faizi, Hand of the Faith, rose in the long Arabic prayer for the dead. Betty Reed of England read then from the Arabic Hidden Words: 'Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee ... I have made death a messenger of joy to thee ...' And from the Gleanings, 'Death proffereth ... the cup that is life indeed.' Elsie Austin of the United States followed with a text from the same book: 'All praise be to God ... the springs that sustain the life of these birds are not of this world.' Outside, the wind was strong in the bare trees. In Arabic again, Adib Taherzadeh Málmírí chanted from the Hidden Words: 'With the hands of power I made thee ...' and we remembered that the Guardian had left us on the first day of the month of Power. Again, he chanted, 'Thou art My light and My light shall never be extinguished', and again, 'Wherefore dost thou grieve?' H. Borrah Kavelin read the prayer: 'O God, my God! Be Thou not far from me, for tribulation upon tribulation hath gathered about me.' And William Sears, Hand of the Faith: 'The companions of all who adore Thee are the tears they shed ... and the food of them who haste to meet Thee is the fragments of their broken hearts.' Then, from the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Ian Semple read those opening lines which with the suddenness of an exploding bomb, had first revealed, thirty-six years earlier in this very autumn season, the station of Shoghi Effendi. To those present who could think back to that earlier time, he would always be the youthful Guardian in the first days of his ministry, not the sixty year old man who lay, crushed by the weight of his own gigantic accomplishment, in the closed bronze casket before them. In fact, to all eternity this quality of youthfulness would attach to him, the primal Branch 'grown out, blest, tender, verdant and flourishing from the Twin Holy Trees'. The brightness of the flowers brought to him attested this; London's shops were full of dark, autumnal flowers but believers had chosen instead colors soft and young. Out of absolute silence, there came a stir through the crowds and now the tall English pall bearers all in black were bringing the heavy casket down the aisle, slowly carrying it out of the chapel door. They came on like a scene in a dream and directly back of them came the procession of the Hands. Led by Rúhíyyih Khánum, and next, Amelia Collins, they seemed hewn out of the same block of marble

as they walked. They were dressed like the people of our time but their motions were the timeless ones of sacrifice in any age; unified in tearless agony, they were like figures in a marble frieze, going forward on their last march. After them came their Auxiliaries, and after these the members of National Assemblies. Within a few feet of where we stood the casket passed, the light gleaming on its bronze, and its deep-red roses; then Rúhíyyih Khánum, all in black, her face marble-hewn and stricken, that we had last seen triumphant, when she dedicated the Bahá'í House of Worship at Wilmette during the Jubilee Celebrations of 1953. And so, in this world, Shoghi Effendi led out his people for the last time.

Slowly, solemnly, the chapel emptied. Among the last, we looked back at the wall of shaded white and pink and mauve flowers, the wide platform before them, the two or three low steps, carpeted in electric blue, coming down; at the head of these steps, in the center of the platform, stood the dais covered with green velvet, where the coffin had rested, and vacant now.

Outside in the sun we joined the long black serpentine of people walking along the road to the grave. What treasures of continued and unobtrusive love; what knowledge and majesty and power we were burying. The papers today were full of the conquest of space, of other physical worlds, essentially no different from this. They were giving the public what it wished; for how few, when they could, had asked Shoghi Effendi about spiritual worlds, or the conquest of the heart.

We followed the others to the open grave. It lies not far from a quiet roadside, in a wide semicircle of high, embracing trees, acacias, oaks and evergreens. As the crowds gathered, thickly circling the

green turf cloth that hid the scarred earth, they lifted the casket from the hearse and placed it on the ground before the grave. At this moment out of nowhere, a rain fell, rustling down lightly, then ceasing. Over the branches above us a gray dove flew. Suddenly, out of the silence, high, immeasurably desolate, the voice of a young woman rose in a Persian chant. For a long time, about an hour and a half, the believers passed, one by one, before the casket; knelt, and sobbed, and kissed the cold metal, or kissed the ground before it; and some scattered perfumes and attar of rose on the ground. Some were prostrated, and could not rise, and the Christian attendants, visibly moved, helped them to their feet. After a time 'Alí Nakhjavání chanted in Persian the Guardian's prayer, unknown in the West: 'Thou seest what hath befallen Thy helpless lovers in this blackest of long nights ... Be Thou not pleased to see Thy lovers resourceless and brought low ... Exalt Thy dear ones in this world ... that we in these brief days of life may gaze with our physical eyes on the elevation of Thy Faith, and then soar up to Thee with gladdened souls and blissful hearts ...'[185] The last prayer was read in English

by Hasan Balyuzi, Hand of the Faith: ‘Glory be to Thee, O my God, for Thy manifestation of love to mankind ...’

There was another watchful silence at the center of the mourners; with long canvas bands, the attendants were preparing to lower the casket into the flower-lined vault. When it began to sink beneath the level of the ground, the crowds suddenly cried out in physical pain, and Rúhíyyih Khánum, grave as marble, turned her face away. Slowly we walked back to the long black limousines. We passed the workmen who were to come and seal the grave. We saw the sun on thousands of perfect flowers laid out, sent by individuals and assemblies around the world, later to be put in a high, wide circle around the resting place. Surely, we thought, there were other floral tributes here as well: surely one from the rainbow shower tree that stands in Hawaii at the grave of Martha Root, she whose twenty years of journeys for Shoghi Effendi took her four times around the world; and from May Maxwell’s grave in Argentina, the flowers of the south. There were the red wounds of Birjís. And these words of Keith, who died for the Guardian in Isfahán, after writing of the life she gave him: ‘Sacrifice with its attendant agony is a germ, an organism ... Once sown it blooms, I think forever, in the sweet fields of eternity. Mine will be a very modest flower, perhaps like the single, tiny forget-me-not, watered by the blood of Quddús that I plucked in the Sabz-i-Maydán of Bárfurúsh; should it ever catch the eye ... garner it in the name of Shoghi Effendi and cherish it for his dear remembrance.’

After the crowds were gone, Rúhíyyih Khánum, with the Hands, the Auxiliaries, and the members of National Assemblies, witnessed the sealing of the Guardian’s grave. She spoke briefly, and asked for prayers in different languages: Swahili, Afrikaans, Persian, Spanish, English, German, Italian, French. There was a large box of flowers from the Shrines of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh, and from Mazra’ih; these she asked the Hands of the Faith to place about the grave, and then others strewed flowers there. At his feet was laid a single offering of blood-red rosebuds, fuschias, gardenias and lilies-of-thevalley, bearing a card with this last message: ‘From Rúhíyyih, and all your loved ones and lovers all over the world, whose hearts are broken.’

The sacred and exalted is its own concealment; the world does not discover its treasures until it has lost them. A holy ministry of thirtysix years, a ministry that changed the course of world events for all the ages, had passed almost unnoticed. Almighty God had chosen to cast His ‘most wondrous, unique and priceless pearl’ before the people of our time.

We knew, as we walked away under the trees, that the ultimate destiny of our Faith was not in the Guardian’s hands, for it was not even in Bahá’u’lláh’s. This ‘dynamic process’ as Shoghi Effendi had

taught us to call the Cause of God, would go forward without his physical presence; we could look ahead to the ‘tumultuous triumphs’ of the heroes of the Golden Age, ‘the age in which the face of the earth, from pole to pole, will mirror the ineffable splendors of the Abhá Paradise’.[186] But we knew as well that our personal world would be darkened now, for the rest of our lives. Walking away, unseeing, we thought of the Man folded into his grave, the grief into the heart.

Appendix A

Letter from Mrs Howard MacNutt to Ali

Kuli Khan

935 Eastern Parkway

Brooklyn

July 22, 1913

My dear Brother Khan

Mr MacNutt has handed me your letter addressed to him, dated 18th requesting that I answer it. The matter in question is for me to consider inasmuch as the ‘Master record’ of Abdul-Baha’s voice is under my control. When Mr MacNutt made arrangements to have the voice taken no money could be raised to pay for it. I voluntarily supplied the money as an act of loving service to Abdul Baha and to the Divine Cause. It has been a supreme happiness to me that I was able to do this. It is my wish and intention that records of the Blessed Voice may be possessed by all at the lowest cost price. I would suggest therefore that a check for \$65 be sent to me. I will then send the check to the Phonograph Company, order one hundred records and deliver them to the Committee to be disposed of according to their judgment. At any time thereafter records may be obtained by them as needed.

As to the paper of agreement given by Mr Grundy, I advise that it be returned to him. There were no rights to relinquish and the paper is valueless. The preservation of Abdul Baha’s voice for future generations, and the widespread distribution of the records of it are questions of universal importance. In my next letter to Him I shall ask Him about the matter. As an individual Bahai devoted to Abdul Baha and the Cause of God I could conceive of no greater happiness and privilege than that of being the servant through whom He wishes to have His Blessed Voice given to the world. Convey my warmest love and greeting to your dear wife and family. I sincerely hope that we may all meet soon, renew the heavenly ties as children and servants of Abdul Baha and give our lives to Him in reality,—proclaiming the Covenant and summoning the world to Its Divine Center.

In the Service of the Kingdom

Yours faithfully

Mary S. MacNutt

Appendix B

Letter from John Grundy to Shahnaz Waite

Miami, Florida

Dear Mrs Waite and

dear Baha'i Friends:

How to write you!! It is a difficult task—details and memories flood in. How to tell you and the beloved friends in Hollywood and Los Angeles and its environs of the passing of that great soul and teacher, Howard MacNutt, is a difficult and sad task, a doubly hard task, for the eyes fill with tears, the pen refuses to cross the paper, but duty is duty and God's work must be done. Allaho Abha! May His blessings be showered down upon us and His strength ours. His arms are about us.

Howard and myself were on our way to a tabooed colored[187] meeting in Colored Town, to which place white men are forbidden by the city authorities and K.K.K.s. At 8 o'clock p.m. we were within 500 feet of our destination when Howard was struck down by a motorcycle driven by a messenger boy, and fatally injured. His right arm was broken, his abdomen crushed (his death was caused by a crushed intestine). I obtained instant surgical and medical help. The bones were set 10 minutes after the accident and he was X-rayed and back in our home at 236 N.E. Terrace 40 minutes after the accident, in his own bed. Within 60 minutes more two of the ablest specialists were summoned who located the trouble and decided an operation was immediately necessary but, owing to Howard's weak heart, it was impossible to operate. It would have been medical murder to cut Howard. They decided best to leave him to nature to correct the damage, but after six hours of agony he died practically in our arms and passed to the Abha Kingdom where he no doubt has been met and taken into the arms of the Blessed Perfection and the Center of the Covenant, 'Abdu'l-Baha, His spiritual work was great and will endure through generations, helping to make the world better for humanity. He had no peer. Where are his equals? His last coherent words were, 'I am so glad I am at home.' We had two graduated nurses to help us. For 30 days Mary was down Julia and Howard did the nursing night and day, excepting towards the end when the doctor insisted there must be a nurse to help them. Poor Howard was run down by his efforts and had lost 40 pounds.

He became silent and absent-minded. He seemed to be living in another world—the Abha Glory.

Much work was laid out here to be done. Julia, Howard and myself arranged and spoke at many colored meetings, in churches, schools and homes; perhaps thousands of colored people have come to our meetings. 'Abdu'l-Baha personally and strikingly instructed us that we must make every effort to help the colored man. Howard died a martyr to the Cause of God—May the Abha Glory enshroud

him!

We had services at Comb's funeral home. It was indeed a very sad sight to see the caskets of Howard and Mary side by side. Their countenances were serene and both had a smile on their lovely mortal temples. Within 30 days we lost our friends of 30 years. We served for love as he did without pay or profit. Our loss is much, but the Cause demands that we carry on. We will carry on the work here with white and black to the end, and our home, quite a large one, is open to all races and creeds.

The services were simple. I (John) read from the Bible—St Matt. 5th ch., verses 1 to 18; ch. 6th, 9th to 13th incl.; Revelation, ch. ? vs. ?; Hidden Words 19 and 50, Arabic, also prayer for the dead by Baha'u'llah; also Springtime Tablet, 'Abdu'l Baha, page 57, 'Ten Days in the Light of Acca'; also the Ali Akbar Tablet; also the famous Breakwell Tablet by Abdu'l Baha—the finest piece of reading for the dead I have ever heard, eloquent and massive.

We used the ring with Greatest Name on Howard's finger, also placed it for all time on Mary's finger. The caskets were shipped to his sister's house, 1329 Asrott St., Philadelphia, Mrs James McMaster, where further commemorations will be held.

It was Mary's wish and Howard's that they be interred side by side on Baha'i ground, preferably Green Acre. We have placed the matter before the Chicago and New York assemblies and they are now discussing possible plans and ways and means.

During Howard's service we had many colored folk present. For the first time in history the doors of Comb's funeral home were opened to the colored man. It seems Combs knew Howard and when I approached him he said: 'Howard MacNutt can have as many colored friends to see him as want to, and in future this door will never again be closed to them despite all prejudices and ostracisms.' **SOME PROGRESS!!** Many came and saw their friend. We were the first to open our doors and give a seat at our table to a colored man in Florida. The service was enhanced further by beautiful lauditories. Here is one:

'Dear friends, we are at the bier of a good man, to pay our last loving tribute to all that is earthly that lies here. His soul has ascended to the Greater Kingdom. For the last 28 years of his life he expended his income and devoted his time to the teaching of the Baha'i Principles and the spread of the Call for the Most Great Peace, the Oneness of Humanity and the Unity of Races and Nations. His life work is done. His work will endure for it was God's work, not man's. He is now at the Threshold of the Almighty. O God, our hope, we ask Thy mercy. O Manifestation of God omnipotent, of His Word and works, take him unto the Father and seat him near the White Light of Effulgence of the Majesty of God Almighty, that He may say: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."! May his

epitaph be: "HERE LIES A MAN!" The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all now and forever. Amen. The Blessed Perfection grant you grace and peace. God is the Most Glorious!! Allaho Abha! Then Julia sang your Benediction and a last look was had before the casket was closed. We have much more to write, but we are too filled with grief. Ask us for any details you want. Spread this letter over Hollywood and nearby, especially Mrs French. With all Abha love, blessings and greetings, your brother and sister in the Cause of Baha'u'llah and the Center of His Covenant, 'Abdu'l Baha.

John and Julia

(Mr and Mrs John Grundy)

P.S. Dear Louise: Herewith clippings from the Miami Herald, a colored newspaper—it shows meeting at Dorsey's Hotel to which Howard and I were going—were on our way when the accident occurred.

Received Jan. 5, 1927.

Appendix C

Rahim Khan

by Harold Gail

My understanding of Rahim's situation, based on letters he wrote home between 1927 and 1928, visits with him in the United States and conversations with Marzieh, may be summed up thus:

He was a handsome, intelligent, vigorous young man, fluent in three languages, good at his studies, and also at sports, especially tennis. Unfortunately, there were numerous disruptions of his academic program due to circumstances over which he had no

control. These prevented him from achieving long-lasting friendships which might have provided some stability, with the result that this period of living away from his family was marred by much loneliness. His situation was further complicated by his being an American in foreign environments, and an atypical American (half Persian) at that.

All the psychological stresses of the past several years were made more severe, and others were added, after Rahim entered St-Cyr, the West Point of France. He had to deal with an exceptionally demanding curriculum while undergoing harassment of various kinds from his Iranian fellow-cadets, most of whom were older. When the Khans returned to America from Persia at the end of 1924, he remained at St-Cyr, but the following year Dr Khan arranged for a leave of absence. As it turned out, Rahim never rejoined his regiment.

When, with the family, Marzieh welcomed him at the New York docks, she told herself there was something seriously wrong with her brother—a strange look in his eyes, glimpsed for only a moment. Instead of a long rest and perhaps psychological counseling, as

would be given him today, he entered Harvard, remaining close to a year.

In 1927 he made a disastrous marriage which, though soon terminated, appears to have precipitated a mental collapse that had been a long time in the making. From then on, the once-promising youth declined into a half-darkness from which he never recovered. Eventually, after many different methods of treatment were tried, but with no permanent success, he became a ward of New York State and then an out-patient of the Orangeburg facility.

This writer first came to know Rahim during a temporary return with Marzieh from pioneering in Europe, called back because of the serious illness of her father. Later, while living in New Hampshire (1964–1981), we made frequent visits to Rahim, and although these visits involved a certain amount of strain, I became quite fond of him.

I found him courteous, thoughtful of others, still a gentleman, non-violent so far as I could tell, friendly with other inmates, and very well liked by hospital staff. Nevertheless, there was no question but that he would always require institutional care. It was a tragic end for one who, the conditions of his youth being different, might well have had a brilliant future.

It is useless now to assign blame. As her firstborn and only son, his mother spoiled him. Later on, she could never fully accept the fact of his insanity (named at first dementia praecox and later schizophrenia, but whatever the terminology, incurable). His father

was too much the Persian patriarch and expected from his son the same strengths he himself had been able to draw upon throughout the many crises of his life. He hoped to make of Rahim, whose character was not the same, another Ali-Kuli Khan. It also needs to be said that few if any fathers in his situation would have seen the appointment to such a prestigious military college as St-Cyr as anything but a splendid opportunity.

In his defense, too, is the fact that while Rahim was growing up (and even afterward), Khan was not free in the choices he could make. In later years he was to tell Marzieh, 'I never had any choice.' Of Rahim as a toddler, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had said: 'All who look upon Rahim Khan love him.' These words echoed throughout much of his life.

Marzieh especially remembers her brother as he looked on a Paris boulevard, he tall and wearing the sky blue uniform of St-Cyr, and the képi with its curving white feathers, and many heads turning as he passed.

Appendix D

Let us not seek to understand it

People, quite reasonably, are inclined to ask about Khan's finances. Where did they come from, where did they go? Khan often seems

to have existed by miracle.

The truth is, he was often helped in strange ways. Once during a crisis in his old age, a plane delivered a Shiah relative into American waves instead of to an airport runway. Khan obtained compensation for him and had him invest the acquired sum in purchasing a Washington house, where the relative's relatives, including Khan, could live,

Besides being a skilled diplomat, Khan was an expert on Persian art and had faultless taste. Persian vendors would bring antiques to him and he knew what to buy, and later could use his jewels, and other treasures as collateral for loans—although circumstances often forced him to sell before their true worth could be realized.

As a youth he had abandoned his home for love of the Master and fled his native place. Seeing how 'Abdu'l-Bahá lived, with total selflessness, he could not narrow his own goals to making money. He was in any case extremely generous and tended to look down on money.

'Money is the very meanest of God's blessings,' the Master had told him.

Florence, of course, had not been brought up to be financially practical. 'Khan will always be able to take care of you,' the Master said. And somehow, Khan always was.

Until 1921, they had 'Abdu'l-Bahá to protect, guide, and help them. After that, the Guardian made it clear that in view of changed circumstances the friends would now have to be to a great extent on their own. They would have to 'do what is feasible'.

Khan was energetic, able, a hard worker, one of the best informed of Bahá'í teachers. He lived to be almost ninety. He was not an American citizen and could not expect the assistance which aging Americans receive as their right.

As he aged, friends and relatives (like Florence's brother, Francis W. Breed, Jr., a prosperous businessman) would assist him. Emma Rice, noted New England Bahá'í and pioneer to Sicily, saved Khan's life when he had pneumonia. Robert Gulick was like a son to him. As for Harold and Marzieh, responding to the Guardian's wishes, they volunteered to pioneer abroad and were out of the country for some ten years, meanwhile continuing to help Khan as they could.

On occasion, during his long years of important service, Khan's Government even paid him. In Tiflis, for example, or in America when he was made Director of Iran's Information Services. (Nevertheless, at the time of his death, they owed him longstanding and considerable sums.)

Debt was nothing new in Tehran, where an early morning group of creditors waiting at the gate of some notable was a familiar sight. The typical response to creditors was 'Fardá,' tomorrow. The story goes that on one occasion a servant told a creditor, 'Come back next

week’—only to be severely reprimanded later. ‘Why did you say that?’ his employer asked. ‘Why did you not say Fardá? Everybody knows that next week will soon be here, but Fardá never comes.’ Khan’s situation reminds one of that Middle Eastern country which sent for a French expert to offer advice on its finances. After careful investigation the expert asked, ‘Have you been conducting your affairs this way right along?’ ‘Yes,’ they told him. ‘Always.’ ‘Well,’ he said, ‘keep right on doing whatever you are doing, and above all, let us not seek to understand it.’

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Notes

- 1 Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings*, no. LV, p. 109, and no. LVI, p. 110.
- 2 Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 200–201
- 3 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Tablets*, vol. III, pp. 492–3.
- 4 Baha'u'llah, *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 171.

- 5 Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith*, p. 140.
- 6 Baha'u'llah, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 253.
- 7 Dr Lutfu'llah Hakim (Hakím = doctor).
- 8 Browne, in Phelps, *Life and Teachings of Abbas Effendi*, Introduction. Quoted in Phelps, *The Master in 'Akká*, by Marzieh Gail, Introduction, p. xxvi.
- 9 Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 129.
- 10 *ibid.* p. 313.
- 11 Quoted in Longford, *Eminent Victorian Women*.
- 12 In an interview with Dick Cavett, July 28, 1981.
- 13 Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 75.
- 14 Sykes, *Persia*, p. 148.
- 15 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation*, p. 35.
- 16 Qur'án 28.
- 17 Baha'u'llah, *Tablets*, p. 219.
- 18 Baha'u'llah, *Hidden Words*, no. 82 (Persian).
- 19 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Promulgation*, p. 31.
- 20 *ibid.* p. 33.
- 21 *ibid.* p. 132.
- 22 Quoted in Blomfield, *Chosen Highway*, p. 98.
- 23 Baha'u'llah, *Hidden Words*, no. 53 (Persian).
- 24 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Tablets*, vol. II, pp. 292–3.
- 25 Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith*, p. 140.
- 26 Quoted in Nabíl, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 213.
- 27 *ibid.* p. 99. *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, pp. 79, 243.
- 28 The date of Robert Turner's pilgrimage with Mrs Hearst was 1898; see Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 257. The *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* quoted here were translated by Ali-Kuli Khan,
- 29 Quoted in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 258.
- 30 The correspondence between Phoebe Hearst and the Khans is from the Khan papers in the possession of the author.
- 31 In the Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California. Reprinted by permission.
- 32 Unpublished, translated by Ali-Kuli Khan. From the Khan papers.
- 33 Sykes, *Persia*, p. 145.
- 34 Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia*, p. 4.
- 35 *ibid.* pp. xiii–xv.
- 36 *ibid.* pp. 21–2.
- 37 *ibid.* p. 38.
- 38 Sykes, *Persia*, p. 15
- 39 See Walter Lord, *A Night to Remember*. Also *Star of the West*, April 28, 1912 and October 16, 1913.
- 40 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Promulgation*, p. 47.
- 41 Noted Bahá'í historian who lectured in the United States.
- 42 Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 139.
- 43 P. 6 of her manuscript. Thompson, *Diary*, p. 238.
- 44 *Dars-i-Akhláq* (*Lessons in Character Building*).

- 45 Balyuzi, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 308.
- 46 Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations, p. 237.
- 47 Balyuzi, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 171.
- 48 Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings, p. 261.
- 49 See also Balyuzi, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 230.
- 50 Abu'l-Fadl, Bahá'í Proofs, p. 17. See also Star of the West, vol. IV, no. 19, pp. 316–7.
- 51 'Abdul-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p. 128. [2nd edn, p. 144]
- 52 Blomfield, The Chosen Highway, p. 220.
- 53 Jeremiah 49:36.
- 54 Luke 22:61; Gal. 2:11.
- 55 Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, pp. 59, 245.
- 56 From Khan papers, no. 1832.
- 57 *ibid.* no. 46h.
- 58 *ibid.*
- 59 See Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, pp. 259, 319; World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 82–3.
- 60 Shoghi Effendi, World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 83.
- 61 *ibid.* pp. 83–4.
- 62 *ibid.* p. 139.
- 63 Thompson, Diary, p. 369.
- 64 *ibid.* pp. 369, 371.
- 65 Khan papers, no. 184.
- 66 *ibid.* no. 1842.
- 67 *ibid.* no. 169.
- 68 *ibid.* no. 171 (copy).
- 69 July 28, 1913. *ibid.* no. 173.
- 70 *ibid.* no. 1842.
- 71 *ibid.* no. 185.
- 72 *ibid.* no. 186.
- 73 June 11, 1913. *ibid.* no. 187.
- 74 *ibid.* no. 188.
- 75 June 18, 1913. *ibid.* no. 189.
- 76 *ibid.* no. 1892.
- 77 *ibid.* no. 190.
- 78 *ibid.* no. 191.
- 79 *ibid.* no. 192.

- 80 Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 309.
- 81 Khan papers, no. 195.
- 82 *ibid.* no. 196.
- 83 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation, p. xx.
- 84 *ibid.*
- 85 Ahmad Sháh came to the throne in 1909 when his father Muhammad-'Alí abdicated under pressure. Browne quotes the London Times, 15 September 1909, to the effect that Ahmad was then twelve. Because of

his youth, a regency was established under Azudu'l-Mulk, head of the Qájár family. Ahmad's official coronation took place in 1914.

86 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Promulgation*, p. 35.

87 Baha'u'llah, *Hidden Words*, no. 2 (Arabic).

88 Baha'u'llah, *Tablets*, vol. I, p. 157.

89 O. Z. Whitehead, *Some Bahá'ís to Remember*. Oxford: George Ronald, 1983.

90 We are indebted for Mr Hannen's obituary to Douglass Thorne of the San Francisco Assembly and Head Librarian. His source: *Star of the West*, 2 March, 1920. Vol. X, no. 19, pp. 345–6.

91 Walworth, *Woodrow Wilson*, p. 174.

92 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 223.

93 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp. 64–5.

94 Translated by Ali-Kuli Khan. The Master signed his name in English as given. The Bahá'í transliteration system was introduced in 1923.

95 Tumulty, *Woodrow Wilson As I Know Him*, p. 338.

96 *ibid.* p. 343 et seq.

97 Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith*, p. 36.

98 Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 30.

99 *New York Bahá'í Assembly: Program, Wilson Commemorative*.

100 Walworth, *Woodrow Wilson*, vol. II. p. 322, no. 19.

101 *ibid.* p. 322, no. 19.

102 *ibid.* p. 239, n. 4.

103 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 96.

104 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 123. [2nd edn p. 139]

105 Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings*, p. 276.

106 Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 159.

107 Haslip, *The Sultan*, *passim*. See also Dorys, *The Private Life of the Sultan of Turkey*.

108 E. G. Browne (ed.), *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. xl.

109 Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings*, p. 253–4.

110 See Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 271–2, 295.

111 *ibid.* p. 309.

112 Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Is Come*, p. 66.

113 Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. II, p. 508 ff.

114 See Zia Bey, *Speaking of the Turks*, pp. 172–8.

115 Munírih Khánum, the mother of Dr Karím Ayádí (later famed as the Shah's and Suraya's much-trusted doctor) was Persia's first official Director of the Tarbíyat School for Girls. She was widely recognized as

exceptional, at a time when Persia's Bahá'í women were only gradually emerging from their earlier state under Islam.

Much respected by the men, her attitude toward them was one of total equality. Her greatness was in herself, her devotion to the Faith absolute, and she was made a member of such advanced committees as the Bahá'í Women's Committee.

Her views were moderated by her sense of humor, which included self-deprecation, so that she never subjected you to her piety. One day during the Bahá'í Fast (which takes place annually from March 2nd through the 20th, for believers from the age of fifteen to seventy, and with many exemptions requires abstinence from food, drink and smoking from dawn to sunset), she asked Marzieh: 'Do you think God would notice if I ducked into that room and sneaked a few puffs of tobacco?'

116 *Star of the West*, March 2, 1921. Vol. XI, no. 19, p. 321.

117 Saghaphi, *In the Imperial Shadow*, p. 181.

118 Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Is Come*, pp. 40–41.

119 See Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 199, 225.

120 See Nabíl, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 637, and Gobineau, *Religions et Philosophies*, pp. 231–3.

121 Nabíl, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 605, n. 1.

122 S. G. W. Benjamin, *Persia and the Persians*, p. 178.

123 Shuster, *Strangling of Persia*, p. xxi.

124 Bahá'í *World*, vol. V, p. 179, and Bahá'í *Administration*, p. 195.

125 Quoted in Gail, *Dawn Over Mount Hira*, p. 214.

126 Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 25.

127 *ibid.* p. 51.

128 Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 4, 133.

129 We owe this information to our friend John Jennings, of Modesto, California.

130 Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. III, p. 127.

131 Qur'án 31:18.

132 From Mahmud's *Diary*.

133 Bahá'í *Education*, pp. 65–6, and *Lights of Guidance*, p. 152.

134 From *The Garden of Roses*, translation by M.G.

135 Baha'u'llah, *Tablets*, p. 28.

136 'Abdul-Baha, *Tablets*, pp. 306, 307, 427.

137 *God Passes By*, p. 324.

138 'Abdul-Baha, *Will and Testament*, pp. 10–11.

139 Bahá'í *Administration*, p. 52.

140 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation*, p. 457.

141 *God Passes By*, p. 246.

142 Quoted in Dante, *Inferno*, translated by H. F. Cary, note on Hell xxvii:84.

143 Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 119.

144 *ibid.* p. 193.

145 Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, p. 137.

146 *Memoir by Hand of the Cause Tarázu'lláh Satnandarí*, translated by M.G.

147 Quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 248; see also 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Will and Testament*, pp. 5, a5.

- 148 Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 246.
- 149 Balyuzi, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pp. 58, 59.
- 150 Quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 311,
- 151 Psalms 19:1.
- 152 From the French of A. V. Arnault, translated by M.G.
- 153 Translated from the French by M.G.
- 154 Isaiah 322.
- 155 '... strive to show in the human world that women are most capable and efficient; that their hearts are more tender and susceptible than the hearts of men; that they are more philanthropic and responsive toward the needy and suffering; that they are inflexibly opposed to war and lovers of peace. Strive that the ideal of international peace may become realized through the efforts of womankind, for man is more inclined to war than woman, and a real evidence of woman's superiority will be her service and efficiency in the establishment of Universal Peace.' ('Abdu'l-Baha, *Promulgation*, p. 278).
- Also: '... when women participate fully and equally in the affairs of the world, enter confidently and capably the great arena of laws and politics, war will cease; for woman will be the obstacle and hindrance to it.' (*ibid.* p. 135.)
- 156 Hamlet, IV, V.
- 157 Qur'án 6:12.
- 158 *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. xxvii,
- 159 Qur'án 9:13.
- 160 Qur'án 19:22.
- 161 Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 56.
- 162 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 18. [both edns]
- 163 May Maxwell, unpublished 'Notes' taken in Haifa, 1937, p. 35.
- 164 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Will and Testament*, p. 11.
- 165 *ibid.* p. 3.
- 166 *ibid.* p. 11.
- 167 Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 8.
- 168 Bahá'í *Procedure*, pp. 83–4.
- 169 Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 310–11.
- 170 Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 52.
- 171 Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 201.
- 172 See Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 271.
- 173 Quoted in Bahá'í *News*, no. 231.
- 174 See also the Master's Tablet in Bahá'í *World Faith*, pp. 378–9.
- 175 Maxwell, 'Note', p. 27; see also 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, chapters 27 and 38.
- 176 Maxwell, 'Notes', p. 12.
- 177 *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 114.
- 178 See Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 173.
- 179 John 14:9.
- 180 II Cor. 4:4.

181 Baha'u'llah, Gleanings, p. 90.

182 Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 242.

183 Matt. 11:9.

184 John 5:35.

185 Translated by M.G.

186 Shoghi Effendi, World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 186.

187 This was correct usage at the time. See, for example, NAACP

— Arches of the Years (Used by permission of the curator)